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Kalaheo's Gilsdorf Heading To Boston As Science Ambassador

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Science ambassador Philip Gilsdorf of Kalaheo High School. Photo by Jenny Kuwahara.

By JUNI WENDELIN FASTING

Kalaheo High teacher Philip Gilsdorf flies to Boston next week for the National Science Teachers Association's conference, following his selection last fall as the Hawaii Science Teacher Association (HaSTA) Ambassador.

"As a young teacher in my third year, I'm certain I'll gain incredible experience from interacting with the diverse group of teachers and presenters that will be in attendance," said Gilsdorf, 27, who teaches chemistry, honors chemistry and alternate years of AP environmental science.

The North Carolina native has a Master of Education degree from HPU and has been in the Islands for nearly five years. He hopes to learn a great deal about Next Generation Science Standards at the conference and how to implement them.

"As a public school-teacher, I don't always have access to major funding," Gilsdorf explained. "I would love to learn from other teachers what hands-on learning activities they use for the courses I teach, which may be more affordable and applicable for my school."

The Boston gathering offers experts in science education, policy and industry presenting hundreds of workshops and exhibits. What he learns there he will report on to his colleagues in Hawaii.

"Very few teachers from Hawaii attend it," said HaSTA past president Jenny Kuwahara, noting it's the largest annual conference of its kind for professional development. "HaSTA wants to ensure that Hawaii science educators get to attend and bring back resources to share ... to keep us at the forefront."

Hawaiian Electric Company provides a stipend so ambassadors like Gilsdorf can attend.

"We believe (it) will give Hawaii science educators an edge in the classroom and lead to more engaged students," said Darcy Endo-Omoto, HECO vice president of government and community affairs.

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