

# PD IN PALAU

## A Successful Journey with AES

By Ebil Ruloked and Silves Mikel

The Professional Development (PD) experiences at Airai Elementary School in Palau were an integral part of the Pacific Communities with High-performance In Literacy Development (Pacific CHILD) partnership. Local Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) staff received intensive training and then worked side by side with Airai staff to assess teacher and student needs, and plan and provide PD.

Together, we made many discoveries that will stay with us as we continue in education. Along the way, teachers became more aware of some of the best and most widely accepted practices in early literacy, specifically reading and writing. Airai teachers exceeded our expectations, as they began to embrace the opportunities they were given, asking



Photo: Ebil Ruloked

▷ Teachers at Airai Elementary School embraced PD opportunities.

more questions and generally wanting more than the REL staff alone were able to provide. During a PD session, one of the teachers suggested, “Instead of REL staff doing all the training and the work, why don’t we divide the tasks among us?” This was an inspiration for REL staff, and allowed us to be learners, too.

This became the basis of our PD that led to insight and learning that benefited all. The greatest insight teachers experienced was knowing themselves that they needed to become active readers and creative writers before they could influence their students’ reading and writing behaviors and habits. Teachers and students formed partnerships in which learning was the goal.

Teachers’ attitudes toward change became more open and tolerant. Concerns for classroom management decreased, while appropriate instructional practices increased. A literate environment began to thrive as did working relationships with one another. One teacher commented, “One of the advantages of the REL program that outstands other trainings and services provided is the presence and availability of support at the school level at all times.”

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