

Class Is In: Back to School in Buckeye & on the Big Island

SELLING SISTERS — LIVING IN HAWAII

EPISODE 10 · AUGUST 12, 2026

We compare what a new school year means for families on both sides of the Pacific — breaking down buyer-friendly markets, real cost-of-living numbers, family-friendly neighborhoods, and what it actually takes to relocate with kids in tow.



What's Happening Around Town

West Valley, Arizona

Fairytale After Dark: Bookish Market

Sat, Sept 19 · 5–9 PM · Goodyear. A storybook-themed evening market — a perfect post-first-month-of-school treat for the whole family.

HOME & HEALTH SHOW

Fri, Oct 16 · 9 AM · 26275 W Morrow Dr, Buckeye. Local vendors, health resources, and home services — great for new-to-town families building a resource list.

Chalk Art in the Park

Sat, Nov 7 · 9 AM–2 PM · Goodyear Recreation Campus. Free, APS-sponsored event with chalk art, tie-dye, food trucks, and a live DJ. Very kid-driven.

Big Island, Hawai'i

Hana No'eau Hawaiian Arts Festival

August 2026 · Hilo Hawaiian Hotel. A free festival celebrating Hawaiian visual, literary, and performing arts — confirm exact date closer to recording.

O-Bon Festival

August 2026 · Maka'e'o Pavilion, Kailua-Kona. Lantern dances, taiko drumming, and food — a moving, family-friendly evening honoring ancestors.

Statehood Day

Friday, August 21, 2026. A great moment to touch on Hawai'i history and culture for mainland listeners considering a move to the islands.

Market Minute: Arizona vs. Hawai'i

Buckeye / West Valley, AZ

- Median SFR sale price: ~\$398K–\$400K, down ~2% YoY
- 1,750+ active listings · ~80 days on market
- **~7.5 months of supply** — one of the most buyer-favorable West Valley markets in years
- Nearby comps: Goodyear ~\$475K, Litchfield Park ~\$550K, Peoria ~\$505K — **Buckeye leads on affordability**
- I-11 corridor to Vegas/SoCal is a strong long-term growth driver
- Seller concessions and negotiating room are common in this price tier

Big Island, HI

- Median home price: ~\$590K–\$630K, roughly flat to down 1% YoY
- Hilo: most affordable inventory, typically **\$475K–\$575K**
- Waimea: ranges from the \$400,000s to \$1M+ for ranch/estate properties
- New listings **nearly doubled YoY** in spring 2026 — buyers have real choices now
- Kohala Coast luxury remains strong: \$1M+ sales up double digits YoY
- Soft, balanced buyer's market overall — well-priced homes in Waimea move in ~30 days

 **Both markets favor buyers right now.** "Buyer-favorable" means negotiating room, seller concessions, and time to make a thoughtful decision — a rare combination after years of frenzied competition.

Cost of Living Corner

The numbers tell an honest story — here's how the two markets stack up on the expenses that matter most to relocating families.

\$398K

Buckeye Median Home

vs. \$590K–\$630K on the Big Island; Hilo entry point closer to \$475K

0.46%

AZ Property Tax Rate

Maricopa County effective rate ~0.44–0.48%; median bill ~\$1,900/yr

0.25%

HI Property Tax Rate

One of the lowest rates in the nation — but on a much higher home value, so compare the actual dollar amount

\$0.40

Hawai'i Electricity/kWh

vs. ~\$0.17 national average; typical HI bills run \$200–\$600+/month — highest utility cost index in the U.S.

31%

HI Grocery Premium

Hawai'i groceries run ~31% above the national average — nearly everything ships in. Arizona tracks close to the national norm.

~190

Hawai'i Cost of Living Index

Range of 184–193 vs. national average of 100. Arizona sits at ~102 — just above average.

Community Highlight: Marley Park, Arizona

WEST VALLEY, AZ



Beautiful Neighborhood Design

Craftsman-inspired homes with inviting front porches, 140+ acres of parks, and 18 uniquely themed neighborhoods connected by the signature **Arbor Walk**. Thousands of mature trees give Marley Park a lush, green feel that's rare in the Arizona desert.



Resort-Style Amenities

The Heritage Club clubhouse, Marley Park Pool House, and Willow Swim Park are community staples. Walking and biking paths, greenbelts, and neighborhood gathering spaces make it easy to get outside every day.



Family-Friendly Recreation

Heritage Park features a **splash pad, playgrounds, and softball fields** — plus covered picnic areas and large grassy lawns that are practically made for weekend family outings.



Strong Sense of Community

Holiday celebrations, movie nights, seasonal gatherings, and neighborhood clubs for all ages. It's the kind of connected, genuine community feel that's genuinely hard to find in a newer master plan.

Community Highlight: Waimea, Big Island

BIG ISLAND, HI



Cool Mountain Climate

Crisp mornings, cool evenings, and stunning views of Mauna Kea and Kohala Mountain. Waimea's upcountry elevation means mild, comfortable temperatures year-round — a refreshing break from coastal Big Island heat.



Family-Friendly Lifestyle

Highly regarded schools including Waimea Elementary and Waimea Middle Public Conversion Charter School, local farmers markets, farm-to-table dining, safe neighborhoods, and a genuine small-town feel that's rare on the coast.



Rich Paniolo Heritage

Home to the historic **Parker Ranch** — one of the oldest and largest cattle ranches in the U.S. Hawaiian cowboy traditions, rodeos, and paniolo culture create a history and identity found nowhere else in Hawai'i.



Best of Both Worlds

Just **~20 minutes to the Kohala Coast** and world-class resorts, golf, and beaches. Add ranch trails, stargazing, and hiking, and you have a peaceful upcountry lifestyle with everything you need close by.

Relocation Tip of the Week

Moving with kids adds a layer of logistics most people don't think about until they're already under contract. Here's what Lauren and Tiffany tell every relocating family:

Moving to Arizona — Lauren's Tips

- **Confirm school boundaries before you write an offer.** Some West Valley master plans (like Verrado) span multiple districts — your specific address determines your assigned school.
- Arizona's **Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program** is open to any AZ resident student — worth a mention for homeschool or private-school families.
- **Register early.** Many AZ districts require proof of residency (lease or closing docs) before enrollment — time your closing with the school calendar in mind.

Moving to Hawai'i — Tiffany's Tips

- Hawai'i DOE is a **single statewide district** — simpler than mainland multi-district shopping, but confirm your complex-area boundaries (e.g., Honoka'a–Kealakehe–Kohala–Konawaena) for your specific address.
- **Fall break is Oct 5–9, 2026** — helpful to know if you're planning a move-in trip around the school calendar.
- In rural areas like Waimea, factor in **bus routes and drive times.** Private options (HPA, Parker School, Kanu O Ka 'Āina charter) are worth researching before committing to a neighborhood.

❏ The bottom line: in both markets, school enrollment almost always requires proof of address — so your housing timeline and your school timeline are more connected than most families expect.

Sister-to-Sister Segment

THE FUN PART 🎤

First-Day Memories 🌵 vs. 🌺

Desert heat and sunscreen on one side, Hawai'i rain and slippers (yes, flip-flops) on the other.

Morning Routine Smackdown

AC and SPF 50 vs. rain jackets and rubber slippers. Lauren's homeschool-mom perspective vs. Tiffany's take on traditional HDOE school-day logistics — who has it harder?

First-Day Outfit: Desert vs. Island

One of you is dressing for 108°F and direct sun. The other is hoping the clouds hold off until after the bus arrives. Let's discuss the fashion implications.

The Non-Negotiable Supply Item

Every family has that one thing that has to be in the backpack. What's yours?

Listener Question

"We're relocating with two school-age kids. Should we buy a home before or after we enroll them in school, and how do we plan around two totally different systems?"

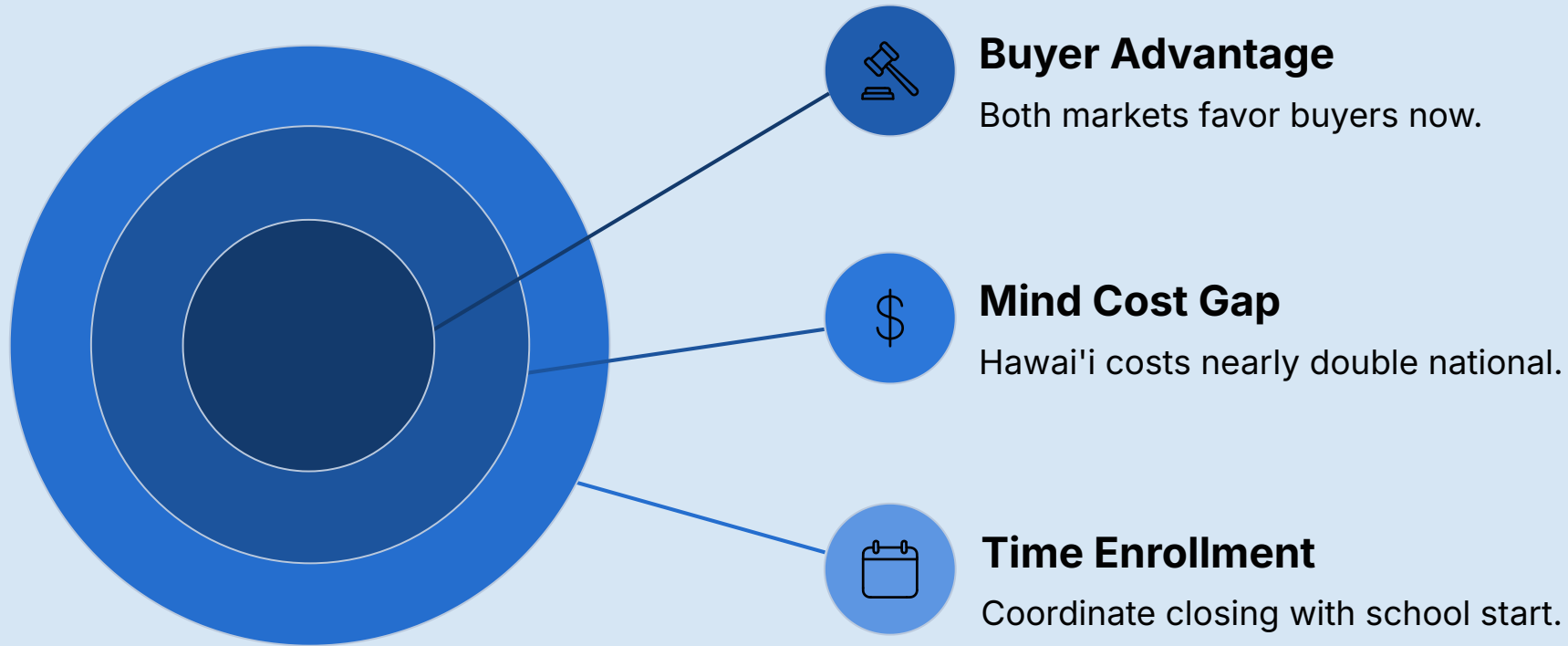
Arizona

Enrollment almost always requires **proof of address**, so you'll need to be under lease or under contract before you can register. In the West Valley's fast-moving new-construction communities, many families **rent short-term first** to lock in the right school boundary, then buy once they know the neighborhood fits. Time your closing around the district's registration windows — many open in spring for the following fall — and get on the list early.

Hawai'i

The good news: **Hawai'i is one statewide district**, so you don't have to play the multi-district chess game that trips up so many mainland transplants. The nuance is complex-area boundaries and limited rural inventory — house-hunting trips should be timed around **HIDOE's registration windows** and the fall break (Oct 5–9). If you're eyeing Waimea or North Kohala, start your search early — well-priced homes in those communities don't sit long.

Key Takeaways & What's Next



Both markets are giving buyers more breathing room than we've seen in years. The cost-of-living gap between Arizona and Hawai'i is real and worth running the actual numbers on — not just the headlines. And if you're relocating with kids, school enrollment timing isn't an afterthought; it's part of your transaction strategy.

Ready to Make Your Move?

Two markets. One conversation.

Buckeye/West Valley?

Reach out to **Lauren** for a no-pressure conversation about neighborhoods, school boundaries, and what's available right now. Links in the show notes.

Big Island, HI?

Reach out to **Tiffany** for honest insight on Hilo, Waimea, Kona, and everything in between. No pressure — just real talk about your timeline and needs.

Subscribe & Share

If this episode helped you think through a move, hit subscribe and share it with a friend who's weighing the same decision. A review goes a long way — mahalo! 👍

Whether you're drawn to the **affordability and growth of Buckeye** or the **lifestyle and beauty of the Big Island**, Lauren and Tiffany are ready to help you find the right home in the right community for your family — no pressure, no jargon, just straight talk from agents who actually live there.