Dear OUSD Employee Award Winners,

I am honored to write this letter acknowledging some of our finest employees. The OUSD Employee Awards are a celebration of the hard work and dedication displayed by Teachers, Principals, Administrators, School Site Staff, and Central Office Staff. The awards also symbolize the transformation underway in the Oakland Unified School District. We are leaving behind a culture that failed to adequately recognize accomplishment and moving toward one that values employees and celebrates achievement.

In order for our vision of high quality, equitable public education to become reality, all staff must contribute to the crucial work that takes place in the classroom. As exemplary employees, you are setting the standard for what OUSD should be and what it will become. Your leadership is critical to shaping the future of our children and of our city. Words cannot express the level of gratitude I have for your work or the impact it has on the lives of students and families. You are everyday heroes whose efforts too often go unnoticed. Today, that will change as we come together in celebration of your character and your accomplishments. We thank you for your service and the difference you have made in the lives of children.

Sincerely,

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
Superintendent
Oakland Unified School District
Event Schedule

5:30-6:30 PM .......... Social Hour & Hors D’oeuvres

6:30-6:40 PM .......... Welcoming Remarks — Superintendent Tony Smith; Board of Education President, Gary Yee

6:40-8:00 PM .......... Award Distribution – Board of Education

- **TEACHER QUALITY AWARDS**
  Director Alice Spearman & President Gary Yee

- **SCHOOL SITE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS**
  Director Jody London & Director Noel Gallo

- **CENTRAL OFFICE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS**
  Director Alice Spearman & President Gary Yee

- **EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS**
  Director Jody London & Director Noel Gallo

8:00 PM .............. Closing Remarks – Superintendent Tony Smith; Board of Education President, Gary Yee
Koy Hill

Koy Hill joined the Hoover Elementary faculty three years ago, and has been a motivating force for school and students alike. Mr. Hill is an exceptional teacher, engaging students with a wide variety of presentations and continually seeking to improve and develop his own teaching skills and resources. His dedication to and respect for his students shows in his punctuality, preparedness, and availability to them, as he actively reaches out to help children through difficulties and to ensure families are involved in and informed about their child’s progress. He checked in at school every day during his paternity leave last year to be sure his kids were still on track. The proof of course is always in results - his 5th grade classes are now meeting 90% proficiency in math.

Hatti Saunders

With 7 years prior teaching experience at ASCEND Elementary, Instructional Coach Hatti Saunders fully understands instructional strategies; however, she seeks constantly to gain additional expertise and support (notably from the Bay Area Writing Project) that will enhance her coaching. A skilled BTSA coach, Hatti is able to guide teachers in being reflective about their practice, and to make changes to their instructional routine in order to maximize student learning. She is positive, constructive, and honest with teachers. New teachers consistently mention Hatti’s support as one of the key factors in being able to successfully sustain the role of teacher in a high-needs school.

Rachelle Tiscareno

Rachelle Tiscareno has grown into a true instructional leader at Community United. A respected and trusted member of the Instructional Leadership Team and Faculty Council, she has created a classroom environment which is an inspiring model for colleagues, and is generous with her time and energy in assisting colleagues, students and families.

Rachelle created the “Sunshine Committee” at CUES to recognize and acknowledge the hard work of faculty and staff, and often organizes appreciation events. Earlier this year, Rachelle learned one of her parents was unable to get their child to and from school, so Rachelle now personally ensures the child gets to and from school. In and out of the classroom, she goes above and beyond.

Shannon Driskell

Shannon Driskell not only furnishes her students with an engaging and effective classroom experience; she supports school life and culture and student preparation for the future through extracurricular activities such as Trick or Treat for UNICEF, prom nights, Grad night and a senior cohort visit to the University of the Pacific. In 2010, Shannon was selected by her students as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction, a student-nominated honor conferred by the National Society of High School Scholars on teachers who have made a lasting difference in student lives by encouraging them to strive for excellence. Ms. Driskell has worked closely as a volunteer with College Summit to increase rates of students attending four year colleges with the result that 96% of the Far West 2011 senior class were accepted into colleges.

Candice Valenzuela

The Media Academy and Fremont Federation community are more than fortunate to have Candice Valenzuela, English teacher, leader and role model. A native of East Los Angeles, Candace has a strong connection with and understanding of the Fremont community, and spends a great deal of time engaging with and guiding students, both in and out of class. Candice was instrumental in restarting the Black Student Union, and continues to participate with and mentor this group. Candice inspires trust and confidence in students who have seen how much she cares; after a gunfight broke out at a funeral of a former student, her facilitation helped the Fremont student community heal and strengthen.

Alykhan Boolani

Alykhan Boolani of East Oakland School for the Arts seeks to cultivate in students the ability to articulate their own ideas and questions about history rather than to recite others’ ideas. He is passionate about the study of history and about the teaching of it, developing engaging and student-centered lessons that pushes students to think outside their comfort zones.

Empathy is Alykhan’s greatest strength and his capacity for this is an asset to EOSA. His gift allows students to feel safe, loved and supported both within his classroom and at school. His ability to connect with students is rooted in cultural relevance, humility, genuine interest in the lives and success of young people, but most of all, it is rooted in love. Students say he is a guide in their quest to identify themselves as learners.
Kevin Augustine, Crocker Highland’s Day Lead Custodian, is very responsible and takes pride in his work. His staff management helps in assure that the students, staff and community always are always welcomed to a clean safe and well-stocked school. He will always accommodate if there is a need to work past his regular working hours, or to assist with special projects at any time.

Diane Warren is the warm, welcoming, and professional face of Emerson Elementary, who inspires trust in parents, affection in students, and the deepest confidence and respect in her professional colleagues. She effectively balances the complex and non-stop demands of managing an OUSD school site office, juggling a never-ending stream of tasks, school communications, and volunteer management - and does it without ever making any caller or visitor wait for a courteous greeting and assistance. Responsiveness is Ms. Warren’s most personally valued trait, and students are her priority. She works a daily miracle of order, graciousness and productivity in the Emerson front office.

Maria Cortez sees to it that Westlake students are served consistently good food, by personally being on the job and by ensuring her team is well-trained. Her paperwork is always up to date and her kitchen is always immaculate. Maria cares about the personal and professional needs of her kitchen staff and is also quick to respond to the needs of the students and faculty at Westlake. She takes her duties and responsibilities very seriously. Her supervisor reports: “Maria is a joy to work with - and she makes my supervision of her site most effortless. She is a great leader and a valuable member of the Nutrition Services team.”

Guillermina Ramos has taken full ownership of the Ralph Bunche kitchen; students continually remark how much the food has improved since she arrived. She cooks as if each student she is feeding is her own child, and the students respond to her genuinely caring attitude; often when she is preparing lunch, she is also listening to a student who has come in to ask for advice, tell her about something important, or just get a hug. Her ability to calm students, diffuse tense or angry dynamics, and listen helps create a positive model for problem solving and conflict resolution. And she does all this while cooking and serving lunch!
**REGION 2 - ELEMENTARY CUSTODIAN**

**MALO PAYNE**

Custodian Malo Payne keeps Lazear Elementary clean, safe, and in good repair by working proactively, reliably, without fuss, and in productive collaboration with OUSD maintenance departments. Because of his fine work ethic, Lazear’s faculty, staff and children are able to focus on education. His initiative and ownership of his responsibilities make him the most valued of employees — one who does not need constant supervision in order to achieve excellent results. Malo also obviously cares about the students, admitting late comers to breakfast to ensure they eat, and listening to what they have to tell him while they eat.

**REGION 2 - SECONDARY CUSTODIAN**

**CHRISTOPHER WOODRUFF**

Christopher Woodruff is Oakland High School’s Night Lead Custodian, supervising 4 to 5 custodians in service to the school’s large student body and staff. He is known for his responsiveness; things literally happen “overnight” with Mr. Woodruff. He leads and teaches by example, supporting and developing his staff into effective team members and independent performers. His work ethic and eagerness to learn have marked him as an employee who will continue to grow and progress within OUSD. Quote from upper management: “I see him evolving into a great Day Lead in the future”.

**REGION 2 - ELEMENTARY CLASSIFIED**

**ROSITA CRUZ**

Attendance Clerk Rosita Cruz is always generously supportive of coworkers at La Escuelita Elementary, helping everyone while modeling caring, helpful and patient behavior. Her principal reports: “I can depend on Ms. Cruz to do what it takes to support the entire school community-taking care of teachers, students, and staff. She always anticipates my needs, arriving early as needed to assist with special meetings or other unusual situations.” Ms. Cruz has mastered all OUSD software and procedures as systems are changed or newly added, but even under pressure maintains a wonderfully warm and welcoming manner. She always makes parents and guests feel valued, respected, and heard.

**REGION 2 - SECONDARY CLASSIFIED**

**MICHELL MCKNIGHT**

Michell McKnight brings from the corporate world a complete and seasoned skill set to Dewey Continuation High School; her customer service, collaboration, financial management and decision making abilities make her a key support to Dewey’s staff and students. She takes full ownership of her site-based budgeting, purchasing and account management responsibilities, anticipating and meeting deadlines without fail. Her ability to superbly and gracefully manage, organize, implement and coordinate events and projects is an invaluable support for the principal of a high-profile site. She listens and collaborates, and always seems to know just when to take the initiative to move something forward.

**REGION 2 - ELEMENTARY NUTRITION SERVICES**

**MARTHA ESTRADA**

Martha Estrada is always busy doing the cook’s job at Garfield and/or anything else that needs to be done! She rigorously follows safety practices and would never serve her students anything she would not serve to her own children. Garfield students and staff alike love her for her friendliness and generosity; she finds opportunities to help all the children and adults around her, and they find opportunities to confide in a friend. Martha never has a negative word to say about others, and sees the good in all her students; she is treasured by the staff and students at Garfield, and by the OUSD Nutrition Services Department.

**REGION 2 - SECONDARY NUTRITION SERVICES**

**KATHERYINE POSEY**

Katherylene Posey has truly put quality nutritional service into the menu! Katherylene effectively manages two very different nutrition programs on one site, ensuring that students and staff of Middle School United for Success and High School Life Academy are presented daily with an excellent assortment of healthy nutritional choices. She maintains an active communication link with staff and administration of both schools, inviting questions and comments, and ensures nutrition support is in place for field trips and rainy days. If this weren’t enough, she is also a Floating Manager traveling to other schools to train Nutrition Services staff on policies and procedures.
REGION 3 - ELEMENTARY CUSTODIAN

IDELFONSO DOMINGUEZ
Mr. Idelfonso Dominguez is a well-informed and extremely conscientious custodian; he always can be counted on to “answer the bell” to accommodate all the needs of the students and staff. He is meticulous in completing daily inspection forms to ensure that all tasks are accomplished and tracked and that nothing is missed. He sincerely cares about the welfare of the staff; often talks about making sure that the teachers are satisfied with the cleanliness of their respective rooms. He is always willing and ready to help parents or guest with any request. He simply takes great pride in his work.

REGION 3 - SECONDARY CUSTODIAN

GROVER PAYTON
Head Custodian Grover Payton is responsible for bringing the Castlemont High campus into the ranks of the very cleanest schools in the district. A large campus, a busy neighborhood and an active teenaged student body don’t faze Mr. Payton, who connects with students and staff at each of the Castlemont schools to stay in touch with what is needed and to be a visible and positive presence on campus. He coordinates his own staff very effectively to provide maximum responsiveness and keep the school sparkling, while he motivates students to take pride in their campus and help keep it clean. His customer service is unsurpassed.

REGION 3 - ELEMENTARY CLASSIFIED

CONSUELO DAVID
Mrs. David works diligently to ensure her library is open and well-stocked for students, staff, and families at Brookfield Elementary each day, managing within a busy schedule to find time also to co-write a grant for the purchase of new books. She has opened the library to a variety of volunteer reading partners and will she read to classes whenever possible. Mrs. David has a very loving and caring manner with students, and has developed personal relationships with several that have made a tremendous impact on their academic achievement. A retired librarian wrote to Brookfield’s principal, commending Mrs. David for “the incredible transformation of the school library.”

REGION 3 - SECONDARY CLASSIFIED

CHARLENE JOHNSON
Charlene Johnson is not only a model parent, but a model employee! Ms. Johnson is actively involved as a parent in all four of her children’s schools and really understands how important clear and open communication can be in engaging parents in school life. As office manager at of Coliseum College Prep Academy she is efficient, energetic, and generous, willing to help students parents and coworkers alike. Ms. Johnson is very effective because of her thorough understanding of office management, budgets, and OUSD systems; she is well known throughout the district, making her a valuable asset to her site and administrator. Board member Christopher Dobbin says of Ms. Johnson: “She is a deserving employee and I wish her well.”

REGION 3 - ELEMENTARY NUTRITION SERVICES

ANGELA NISBY
The word that keeps coming up when people talk about Angie Nisby is “smile”; her smile is described as “infections”, “contagious”, and “ever-present, even when she is being stern”. Angie knows most Brookfield children by name, and making a point of conversing with each one as she serves them daily. She eagerly tackles challenges with confidence and positive outlook, as when she mastered computer skills for use on the job after never having used a computer before. Angie’s positive spirit best illustrated in her successful return to her job from a serious illness last year; today, she is front and center every day and determined to be there for her students for a long time.

REGION 3 - SECONDARY NUTRITION SERVICES

PAC LAU
Pac Lau is a hard worker who brings her best to work at the Skyline kitchen everyday; she is reliable, creative, energetic, patient and caring. Seldom absent, always punctual, she brings a calm and organized energy to her team that results in appetizing food, little waste, and a positive and professional atmosphere. She takes pride in the quality of food she produces, and takes care in her preparations. Pac is great with student interns; she explains tasks thoroughly, and encourages them to problem-solve. Pac treats every customer with respect, and handles every problem with tact. She never has to raise her voice to make a point and people respond to her calmness. She is an asset to the Nutrition Services Department as well as the students at Skyline High School.
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

TROY FLINT
Director of Public Relations Troy Flint is the calm, professional and knowledgeable “voice” of OUSD, always available to the media and the public with information on District current events and future plans. He understands the stabilizing value of timely and factual messages, witnessed recently with his prompt and matter-of-fact bulletin to the OUSD community following the Japanese disaster. Additionally, he produces mammoth amounts of clear and highly professional written content for the OUSD websites, staff, and public, further enhancing OUSD’s image as a professional and responsible organization. And Troy routinely finds time to answer the phone in the Superintendent’s office and help visitors with any question they may have. OUSD would be very different without the asset that is Troy.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

RYAN NGUYEN
Ryan Nguyen is a mainstay of Financial Services because of his combination of technical expertise, creativity and collegiality. His coworkers describe him as (and we quote!) “efficient, trustworthy, customer friendly, humble, very accommodating, dependable, resourceful and knowledgeable.” Ryan has recognized many opportunities to apply his technology skills to simplifying processes, and creating some new tools, which has created better workflow, increased efficiency, and helped productivity, which is always a huge plus, but particularly in times of short resources. Financial Services staff report that Ryan’s contributions have freed up staff to spend less time simply gathering and processing data, and more time analyzing it.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

ANTHONY CODY
Prior to his current assignment as Science Specialist, Anthony Cody taught science and math for 18 years at Bret Harte Middle School. A tireless advocate for teacher quality, urban public education, high quality curriculum, and teacher leadership, he has mentored innumerable teachers, and was one of the first Nationally Board Certified teachers in Oakland. He was instrumental in securing grants for the Project-Based Learning Collaborative, and co-founded the Team Science Project that has trained over 35 teacher mentors to support over 90 novice science teachers. Anthony regularly writes public opinion pieces on the work of public education in and out of Oakland and has maintained a blog for the past few years addressing educational issues and advocating for quality education for urban students.

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

DIANE BRENUM
Diane Brenum first worked for OUSD in the 1980’s, and returned when her daughter went off to college. Today she is a favorite “go-to” person on the Technology Services Help Desk because of her familiarity with District technology and software. Her positive attitude, patience and sense of humor has earned her the loyalty of regular customers who ask for her specifically when calling with a question. She is a trained Montessori teacher and accomplished technical writer; her writing skills, engaging personal style and classroom experience have combined to make her an effective teacher, both in one-on-one situations and in more formal group settings.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OFFICE

LANGAN COURTNEY
Langan Courtney has been instrumental in creating and delivering crucial services for individuals new to the US, Oakland and OUSD. She has built an impressive network of alliances with other agencies and community partners to serve refugee and immigrant families, and works personally with families to ensure they are informed. Her extensive collection of materials and resources, translated into many languages, was the major inspiration for the creation of the online Oakland Community Resource Directory. For the past three years, she has coordinated summer school for all of OUSD’s refugee students. From October through December 2010, Langan took leave without pay from OUSD to visit refugee camps in Asia in order to learn more about her work, to deliver personal messages between separated friends and families, and to make connections that would better serve students, families and the District.

OAKLAND ADULT AND CAREER EDUCATION

BRIGITTE MARSHALL
Director of Oakland Adult and Career Education Brigitte Marshall epitomizes grace under pressure. Even as severe funding cuts have necessitated drastically downsizing OACE, Brigitte has remained a tireless advocate for the district as well as for Adult Education, strategizing on behalf of both entities, loyal and caring toward her peers and staff, professional in her communications, and unfailingly positive in her presentation.

Since July 2009, Brigitte has additionally served as Director of the East Bay Regional Occupation Center, which she was instrumental in creating and staffing. As a direct result of the 2009 budget passage, the ROP became unable to hire a director just as it was being formed, so Brigitte stepped up and for two years has led the ROP in start-up mode as it developed and sustained quality career technical education programming for Oakland and Alameda Unified School Districts.

Finally, as co-leader of the Secondary Experience and Achievement Task Force this year, Brigitte has made a significant contribution to the implementation of OUSD’s Strategic Plan and vision.

POLICE SERVICES

DAVIS TRAN
Davis Tran is the OSPD dispatcher, and has all the technical and people skills necessary to fill this difficult role very well. His Unit Manager reports: “When we set out to fill this position for the first time, we envisioned a number of tasks that this person would be required to fulfill. Davis Tran has far exceeded our expectations. To date, Davis continues to amaze us with his computer skills and handling of the camera system. His demeanor when talking to both parents and school staff has been nothing less than perfect.” Davis takes the initiative to continually coordinate communications in order to ensure the safest outcome for officers, students, staff and the community.
ZARINA AHMAD
Zarina Ahmad demonstrates the confidence and focus it takes to lead and effectively create change. Faced with difficult budget challenges, she has nevertheless continued to successfully create and nurture a college-bound culture in Piedmont Avenue elementary. She actively supports family and community involvement in school life, is a visible and enthused presence at any and all events that communicate the value of education, and ensures that every detail is in place at Piedmont to support the best learning outcomes.

Zarina listens attentively and responds thoughtfully to staff and students, and her respect has borne wonderful fruit: Piedmont’s PAES scores rose 50 points last year to 795, and rose significantly among all ethnic groups. Ms. Ahmad is truly fostering equity and success.

SHANNON YIP
“Shannon Yip is an extremely dedicated educator who demonstrates high expectations for all her students, staff and community. She is responsive to the needs of her community and has created an incredible learning environment where all children are exhibiting high levels of academic and social outcomes. Her no nonsense attitude is respected by those around as she delivers on her promises in a firm and caring manner. She is leaving a legacy at the school which will be warmly remembered by all.”

ALICIA ROMERO
The enthusiastic leadership of Principal Alicia Romero has in just two years significantly improved academic prospects and career technical education for students at Oakland High. A literacy expert, Ms Romero has a strong and clear instructional vision for the school, implementing small learning communities for 9th grade students, and expanding Advanced Placement opportunities. Ms. Romero and her teachers are committed to getting Oakland High students to the next level academically, and increasing pathway opportunities for students by supporting the start and development of pathways in engineering and banking-finance. Additionally the school is anticipating the start of a California Partnership Health and Public Policy Academy, funding for which was just granted after a very competitive process.

DEBORAH DAVIS
Deborah Davis is truly the force behind the “Parker Magic”. Budget limitations have not prevented her from marshalling a wide range of resources, experiences and supports; culturally responsive teachers, instrumental music, art, and the consistent presence of a strong and dedicated volunteer corps to support the students of Parker Elementary. Under Deborah’s leadership, the Parker teachers perform as a cohesive and powerful team working for equity and academic success. Principal Davis’ genuine concern for and faith in all her students is clear in her personal familiarity with each child and through the high expectations she consistently communicates and models. By showing her students what she believes they are capable of, she teaches them to expect more of themselves.

VINH TRINH
Vinh Trinh’s coworkers say: “Mr. Trinh is Skyline’s superman!!! He is the most reliable person at Skyline High School. He is responsible for so much and always pulls through. He is supportive and has faith in teachers, loves the kids and puts forth 200% for them. Mr. Trinh responds immediately to questions and emails. He communicates with everyone and is a focal person on campus. He can cut up and crack jokes, but it is always clear that his focus is the kids. The students and staff love him, because he is so hard working and passionate about what he does. He gets everything done and supports everyone. He makes everyone else look lazy; Vinh Trinh is the kindest man on campus!”
Highlights from the 2010 Employee Recognition Ceremony
Oakland Unified is California’s
MOST IMPROVED
URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
over the last six years!

Since 2003 . . .

OUSD HAS RECORDED 118 POINTS OF ACADEMIC PERCENTAGE INDEX (API)
GROWTH – THE MOST AMONG CALIFORNIA’S BIG, URBAN DISTRICTS.*

INCREASED the number of Schools with API over 700 from 11 to 50.

OPENED 31 new, small schools in low-income neighborhoods with community input.

EXPANDED summer school services from 2,000 to 8,000 students.

EXPANDED afterschool programs from 34 to 91 schools, and from 3,000 to 17,600 students.

In 2010 . . .

OUSD BOOSTED ITS API BY 26 POINTS, THE GREATEST INCREASE OF ANY DISTRICT WITH AT LEAST 25,000 STUDENTS.

The growth rate of student achievement in Oakland Public Schools was double the state average.’

A dozen schools raised their API scores by 50 points or more, essentially quadrupling the state growth average.

The Board of Education unanimously approved a new Strategic Vision, “Community Schools, Thriving Students” calling for OUSD’s transformation into a full-service community school district.

Together, with the community, we started the process of developing a five-year action plan for Oakland Public Schools where every site serves as a neighborhood hub, providing a range of supports for families including physical and mental health care; eye and dental care; job search, job training and parenting classes; language acquisition courses; nutrition, recreation and physical education services; language acquisition courses; nutrition, recreation and physical education services; housing assistance; post-secondary links and mentoring programs.

* Academic Percentage Index (API) is the State of California’s primary metric for measuring student achievement
’ As measured by API
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Acknowledgements

Chef Moe’s Bon Appetit Catering
Aardvark Laser Engraving
slimgim designs
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