HONORING OUR OWN
2019

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY
May 23, 2019 • La Escuelita Education Complex • Oakland

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students
HONORING OUR OWN 2019
OUSD Employee Recognition Ceremony

RECEPTION .............................. 5:30 – 6:30

ENTERTAINMENT
Skyline High School Jazz Band
Montera Middle School Cheerleading Squad

AWARDS CEREMONY ..................... 6:30 – 9:00

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
Tara Gard, Deputy Chief Talent Officer

OPENING REMARKS
Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent of Schools

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS
► Teaching Excellence
► Excellence in Substitute Services
► Excellence in Educational Support
► Educational Leadership
► District Leaders
► Students’ Choice Award
► Golden Service Awards
► Classified School Employees of the Year
► Teachers of the Year 2019-2020
► iamOUSD Excellence Award
► Superintendent’s Excellence Awards

Board President Aimee Eng (District 2)
Vice President Jody London (District 1)
Jumoke Hinton-Hodge (District 3)
Gary Yee (District 4)
Roseann Torres (District 5)
Shanthi Gonzales (District 6)
James Harris (District 7)
Josue Chavez (Student Director)
Yota Omosowho (Student Director)
Greetings and Congratulations to Our Award Winners!

Good evening and thank you for joining us as we celebrate the outstanding work done by our colleagues, year in and year out. Honoring Our Own is always one of my favorite events because we get to focus entirely on our most important resource, our people. Throughout the past year, the staff members we are celebrating have shown exemplary dedication to ensuring that Students across Oakland Unified School District receive an excellent education and that their fellow employees have all that they need. Each award recipient you will meet tonight represents a small but remarkable portion of our staff. Their work is deeply rooted in our shared values and the belief that every child in Oakland deserves to be well-prepared for college, career and community success.

I want to say thank you to all of our employees for the dedication and passion they bring to work every day across the District. The academic and social/emotional support at our schools remains steadfast thanks to the educators, leaders and support staff who ensure not only a safe and nurturing environment, but provide Students with the right blend of resources each one needs to excel.

This has been an extraordinary year with some added challenges. But I know that we are now a stronger District with greater resolve to improve the educational outcomes of all Students in Oakland. As a former OUSD Teacher and Principal, and as a mother of two OUSD Students, I see what you do every day to support our young people, and I deeply appreciate it. It is my plan to support you in every way I can, and to attract and retain more of the best people to help us on this critical mission.
Our honorees tonight enrich our school communities in exceptional ways with their expertise, attention to detail, and commitment to our District’s core values, especially putting Students First. We all know that this work is not easy, but it is entirely worth it. And I thank each of our honorees for doing all that they do with love, grace, and joy. You show all of us how to overcome obstacles, how to succeed, and how to lead.

This is the 13th Annual Honoring Our Own, and each year I am humbled by the remarkable stories of our staff. I am excited to learn more about our honorees who were all chosen by their peers, the people who see their value every day. That is perhaps the best thing about these awards; they come from the people who know the honorees’ dedication and hard work as well as anyone. It is high praise to be honored by one’s colleagues. I applaud all of you for being recognized.

Together, let’s congratulate our honorees and thank them for everything they do in support of Oakland’s young people.

Respectfully,

Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent
Oakland Unified School District
STUDENTS FIRST
We support students by providing multiple learning opportunities to ensure students feel respected and heard.

EXCELLENCE
We hold ourselves to uncompromising standards to achieve extraordinary outcomes.

EQUITY
We provide everyone access to what they need to be successful.

INTEGRITY
We are honest, trustworthy and accountable.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS
We resist assumptions and biases and see the gift of every student and adult.

JOY
We seek and celebrate moments of laughter and wonder.

www.ousd.org

OUR BOARD
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2019 Awardees

Teaching Excellence

Teaching Excellence Awards recognize the combination of a Teacher’s skill and passion, dedication, and self-reflection of practice that make for a rich and engaging learning environment for Students.

Derek Boyd
Math Teacher, MetWest High School

“Derek knows how to quickly build strong and authentic relationships with Students and Families, and he leverages those relationships, holding Students accountable to learn Math, work collaboratively, step up as leaders, and push themselves.”

Ana Ferrus-Garcia
Spanish Bilingual Grades 1-3, Bridges Academy

“Ana is a great educator, and it starts on day one. She meets with all Families during the first two weeks of school and gets to know them. She understands that connecting with Families is an essential part of understanding the Child.”

Melissa Gonzalez
3rd Grade Teacher, Think College Now Elementary

“Under Melissa’s leadership, the percent of third grade Students scoring ‘at or above’ on the ELA SBAC grew from 4% to 22%. In Math, the percentage grew from 8.5% to 34%. That is more growth than we’ve seen in any other grade or classroom throughout our school.”
La’Porshi Harris  
Special Ed Teacher, Brookfield Elementary  
“La’Porshi has only high expectations for all Students in and out of her class. I have watched her welcome Students into her class who arrived with behavior concerns and then watched them become new, engaged, and delighted Students.”

April Hawkins-Bubuljak  
Kindergarten Teacher, Garfield Elementary  
“April works tirelessly to ensure that her Students have access to an excellent education. Her classroom is dynamic, engaging and inclusive. Students make great strides—from knowing zero letters in August to beginning to read by December.”

Morgan Kirschbaum  
History, Dance, Public Speaking and Poetry Teacher, Edna Brewer Middle School  
“Morgan shows creativity and thoughtfulness in his lesson planning. He engages Students by integrating topics that resonate with them. Students are excited to be in his class. The joy of learning is constantly evident.”

Julissa Lambert-Yank  
Teacher on Special Assignment, Acorn Woodland Elementary School  
“Julissa has been the silent driver of learning results at Acorn Woodland. Her knowledge of reading and English language development and love of coaching new Teachers, on top of her relentless drive for equity and deep love of, and commitment to, the East Oakland community sets her apart.”

Genevieve Leslie  
9th/10th Grade Survival English Teacher, Oakland International High School  
“Genevieve’s classes are usually their first experience of school in our country, and are a critical juncture point for Students in the formation of their identities as learners and young adults. She seamlessly integrates them into her class structures, building language and socio-emotional skills.”
Lilia Martin
4th Grade Teacher, Fruitvale Elementary School
“As a product of Oakland Unified and a Fruitvale Alumni, Lilia understands where Students are coming from, the importance of building relationships, and on creating a nurturing, rigorous, conducive learning environment.”

Kimberly Nibblett
3rd Grade Teacher, Montclair Elementary School
“It is not often that you see someone like Ms. Nibblett, who was born with the gift to teach and the ‘magic’ it takes to be a talented, insightful, reflective Educator and Learner. She uses every minute available for learning.”

Charlotte Ritter
Dance Teacher, Oakland High School
“To so many Students she was a Mother, Friend, and Counselor. She never turned us away and was always willing to give us advice; even if it wasn’t what we wanted to hear, she was always honest. The natural love she shows her Students is priceless.”

Dayle Veasey
STIP Substitute Teacher, Kaiser Elementary
“Dayle goes above and beyond to support Students and school staff. She has become an integral part of our school community, taking on jobs from long-term paternity leave coverage to half-day, last minute needs. She ensures that learning is uninterrupted when a Teacher has to be out of the classroom.”
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

To fulfill our mission and vision of building a Full Service Community District, strong, talented and dedicated adults are needed to work together in support of schools. This award recognizes the exemplary work of individuals across the District, inside and outside of schools that contribute to creating the best possible educational environments and outcomes for our Students.

Kirk Lawson
Community Coordinator/Program Assistant, Community Schools and Student Services

“Kirk Lawson has exemplified many of OUSD’s Core Values. He demonstrates an extraordinary commitment to the Students, Families and staff and has facilitated support for thousands of our OUSD Families who are struggling to attend school on a consistent basis.”

Taslim Shaikh
Information Systems Specialist IV, Technology Services

“Aeries upgrades and rollovers, have been completed more quickly and reliably since Taz took them over, and she has been instrumental in getting new applications, such as SchoolMint and ABL, up and running. Staff throughout OUSD report that Taz is a pleasure to work with.”

Kenya Snell
Para-Educator, Emerson Elementary School

“In a classroom that has intense challenges, Kenya has shined for her motivation, dedication, and leadership. Her Teacher had been on maternity leave, and she took on the role of leading the class and helping support the multitude of substitutes and was a role model and instructor for the newly assigned Intervention Specialist.”
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

School leadership is difficult work, and those who excel at this work seamlessly and simultaneously support the success and growth of Teachers, Students, Colleagues, Schools and the District at-large. Awardees in this category are models of the values, skills, development, and practice of Oakland school leadership, and spans roles and departments across the District.

Alicia Arenas
Principal, Garfield Elementary School
“Alicia exemplifies OUSD Core Values. With her team, she sets a vision that focuses on Students First, articulates the vision, and is relentless in behalf of excellent outcomes for Students.”

Moyra Contreras
Principal, Melrose Leadership Academy
“Moyra has been a caring, effective, and inspiring school leader for 21 years and an Educator for 35 years. Her forward-thinking vision for equitable access to project-based, quality, language-enriched learning for all Students has permeated the District.”

Jonathan Mayer
Principal, Claremont Middle School
“During Jono Mayer’s time at Claremont, the school has cut suspensions in half, reduced chronic absence from 16% to 7%, increased the number of Students reading at grade level by 13%, and achieved double-digit growth on in both English Language Arts and Math!”

Rosemary McAtee-Rivera
Director, Comprehensive Community High School, Fremont High School
“Rosemary has worked hard with her Co-Principal and the Culture and Climate team to reduce the rate of suspended Students from 16.5% to 9% in two years. She is driven by her commitment to offering all Students a quality educational environment and brings that energy to her work.”
Thomas Skjervheim
Director, Comprehensive Community High School, Fremont High School
“A true Equity Warrior, Tom has leveraged his deep knowledge of linked learning pathways to help strategically redesign the school’s pathway programs. Students across Fremont, particularly those most vulnerable, have received increased access to pathway and A-G courses.”

Romy Trigg-Smith
Principal, Greenleaf Elementary School
“Under Romy’s leadership, Greenleaf TK-8 has consistently posted the highest performance for low-income Students across the District. She cares deeply for her Greenleaf “Ohana”—the word for “family” from her home state of Hawaii—and leads in service of the twin beliefs that “community is our foundation” and “academic excellence is our goal.”

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP AWARD

District leaders are individuals who step up and step in to play a critical role in support of OUSD’s mission and vision. They are high performers who have a strong record of quality service and professionalism. They have brought system and process reformations to their work that have visibly and irrevocably improved how we support Students, Teachers, Families, schools and fellow employees.

Camila Barbour
Program Manager, Community Schools, REACH Academy
“Camila advocates for equitable academic and social-emotional outcomes for Students who have been historically underserved, providing resources including mental health counseling, health care, case management, academic supports and trauma informed practices.”

Kathy Bennett
Program Manager, Behavioral Health
“Kathy is always ready to help whoever needs it. When she is needed to handle a school crisis or other complicated emotional situation, she makes herself immediately available and listens compassionately. Her work is thorough, thoughtful and compassionate.”
Jennifer Blake
Director of Schools, Special Education Team
“Jenn is the prime example of what leading by example is; she has been involved in every aspect of Special Education this year. Her commitment to serve our Oakland youth shows up every day, and she continuously works towards improving outcomes for our Students with disabilities.”

John Sasaki
Director of Communications
“As a District, we continue to benefit from John Sasaki’s public persona as a newsmen, but that is not his magic. John’s drive and determination to share our accomplishments and to support in times of crisis is nothing short of amazing. Bottom line, John is a solid rock on which students, colleagues and partners can rely every day.”

Shelia White
Coordinator, PreK-12 Systems & Operations & LCFF
“Shelia is collaborative, frequently finding new ways to partner with other departments to improve efficiency. She is always following-up when she says she will and making sure people get the answers they need, even if it’s not ‘her job’ to find those answers.”

STUDENTS’ CHOICE AWARD
Students say they selected Ms. Vasquez because “she supports Students’ needs, was the only Middle School Teacher to attend Latino Honor Roll, tells people’s stories through her Math Classes, and shows how much she cares about her Students.”

Janet Vasquez
6th Grade Math Teacher, Life Academy
“Janet puts her whole self into the work of shaping young people. She moves through the classroom with love, and somehow, makes every child she works with feel like they are the center of the universe. Her approach to the work is never that of a “job”— for her, teaching is calling. She leads the development of young people with spirit, joy, and passion.”
The Golden Service employees are those often unsung heroes who have served the Students of OUSD continuously for 40 years or more. This year’s roles range from dedicated Teachers across the spectrum to Para-Educators and Instructional Aides, to Health Services and a wide array of Central Office employees. It takes a myriad of high quality staff members to serve the Students, Families and fellow employees of OUSD.

Mildred Bellow
Para-Educator, Oakland Technical High School

Katie Bowie
Enrollment Specialist, Early Childhood Education

Nina Gardner-Meeks
Counselor, Roosevelt Middle School

Cheryl Gray-Newman
Instructional Aide, United Nation CDC

Jacquelyne Hall
Teacher, Lockwood CDC

Arvelia Hayden
Kindergarten Teacher, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School

Sherri Houchins
Benefit Specialist, Talent Division

Ofelisa Jimenez
Para-Educator, Charles B. Howard Elementary School

Lincoln Lee
Lead Duplicating Equipment Operator, Printing and Mail Services

Maria Lascon
Bilingual Clerk, Bridges Academy

Juanita Matthews
Teacher, Emerson CDC
Sandra Neal
Instructional Aide, Centro Infantil de la Raza CDC

Kenneth (KC) O’Keith
Coach, Oakland Technical High School

Rosenda Thomas
Teacher, PLACE at Prescott Elementary School

Cynthia Williams
Instructional Aide, Grass Valley Elementary School

Imelda Ojeda
Bilingual Teacher, Franklin Elementary School

Bettie Reed-Smith
Instructional Aide at Markham Elementary School and President of SEIU Local 1021 (pictured on page 8)

Charlotte Ritter
Dance Teacher, Oakland High School (pictured on page 16)

Award winners not pictured:

Ruth Quezada
STIP Substitute Teacher, Markham Elementary School

Rosemary Robinson
Teacher, Cleveland Elementary School

Renita Brooks-Pines
Teacher, Oakland Technical High School

Patricia Bryant
Instructional Aide, Markham Elementary School

Irene Chandler
Teacher, Emerson Elementary School

Ann Rugtiv
Instructional Aide CDC, Bella Vista Elementary School

Glenda Harris
Para-Educator, Burbank State Preschool

Cynthia McMillian
Instructional Support Specialist, Burckhalter Elementary School

Colleen Shepherd
Classroom TSA, Charles B. Howard Elementary School

Lupaulette Taylor
Teacher, McClymonds High School

Ashlee Sherman
Coach, Oakland Technical High School
CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

This award category recognizes exemplary classified school employees who symbolize the profession’s contributions and commitment to quality education. OUSD’s Classified School Employees of the Year are selected through careful consideration based on rigorous standards from the State of California. They take into consideration nominees’ work performance, school community involvement, leadership and commitment, and are considered at the county and state levels for further recognition. Three of OUSD’s Classified School Employees of the Year are also Alameda County Awardees.

Child Nutrition

Yolanda Cox

Food Service Assistant I, Burckhalter Elementary (Alameda County CSEY)

“A master at her job, she has trained new employees, and all have grown and exceeded in their positions. She doesn’t want any of the Students to go hungry or do without what they need. Yes, she maintains an organized, sanitary cafeteria, but she also contributes so much more to the school community!”

Office & Technical

Karen Bullocks

Administrative Assistant II, Glenview Elementary School

“For over 23 years Karen has functioned at a high level and has always mastered all aspects of her job duties. Plus, she has provided training and support to the Network Superintendents’ Office as well as the Operations Division. She is proactive in her work while anticipating requirements and deadlines that need to be met.”

Maintenance, Operations, & Facilities

Dana Wood

Custodian, Bridges Academy (Alameda County CSEY)

“We had had a lot of substitutes before we got Mr. Wood, and, yes, he’s an amazing custodian, but one thing we all love about him is the way he interacts with Students. Every day he greets every single Student one-by-one, and very endearingly. He wants every Student to know he’s there.”

Para-Educator & Instructional Assistance

Margaret Aiyegbusi

Para-Educator, Bella Vista Elementary School

“Margaret of one of those employees we tend to rely upon when conditions are challenging. She is gifted at highlighting what Students are able to do and how they’re using their strengths in the classroom to achieve their goals. You hear the expression that a person is a team player, but it really fits where she is concerned!”
Support Services & Security

Curtis Devereaux
School Security Officer I, MLK/Lafayette Elementary School

“We all count on the fact that Curtis is there every day doing what only he can do. Yes, his role is as a School Security Officer, but that does not tell the whole story about Curtis; his skills are incredible! He is someone Students feel safe to go to. I have asked Students if they have an adult they can trust to talk with, and his name always comes up.”

Transportation

Gregory Brumfield
Truck Driver I, Transportation and Logistics (Alameda County CSEY)

“On the daily, Greg delivers breakfast and lunch and after-school lunches. It can be anywhere from 15-18 schools per day, depending on our resources. During the Teacher strike, we had two guys out so we had three drivers trying to feed all the Students. He took on two routes in one day and finished in a timely way.”

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i am OUSD EXCELLENCE AWARD

The person receiving this award embodies and exemplifies the core values of the Oakland Unified School District.

Bettie Reed-Smith
Instructional Aide at Markham Elementary School and President of SEIU Local 1021

“When I think of what it means to BE OUSD I think of Bettie. First and foremost, Bettie is a graduate of Oakland Technical School! She has been an employee with OUSD for over 40 years, making her one of the Golden Service employees as well. For all of these years she has been in the same position supporting our special needs Students as an Instructional Aide. That same care she provided to Students she also has provided to countless employees, with 35 years as a leader with SEIU Local 1021. Bettie reminds us that the efforts of one person can make a mark on this world.”
OUSD Teachers of the Year are selected through a rigorous process that includes classroom observations, feedback regarding their teaching practice, and self-reflection on their teaching philosophy and pedagogical practice. OUSD Teachers of the Year are considered at the county and state levels for further recognition, and we are proud to celebrate these Teachers for their accomplishments and contributions to Oakland’s youth.

Precious James
4th/5th Grade Teacher, Mathematics, Madison Park Academy

“So much of my own growth as an educator is directly correlated to training and guidance that I have received from Ms. James, one of the most prolific, knowledgeable, and purpose-driven Teachers. I am a better Teacher and a better person for sitting beside her brilliance.”

Tontra Love
Transitional Kindergarten Teacher, Sequoia Elementary School

“Tontra has an amazing ability to uncover each Student’s individual learning style, and modify her lessons to accommodate each child’s needs. Her classroom management techniques allow the children to self-assess their behavior and internally motivate their choices.”

David Ramirez
Math Teacher, Urban Promise Academy

“David creates an extremely organized and rigorous learning environment where Students are motivated to learn no matter what their level of Math is. When he taught the 8th grade Algebra Compression Class in 2014-2015, 100% of his Students were ready for Geometry their 9th grade year.”
SUPERINTENDENT’S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

As Superintendent, Kyla selects her recognition awards based on individuals who exemplify the best in what we seek from our employees—that is, individuals willing to take risks, innovate and collaborate with fellow employees to further the District’s mission.

Jenine Lindsey
Executive Director of Labor Relations and ADR, Office of the General Counsel

“Jenine has shown courageous leadership and relentless spirit during a deeply challenging time for our District. She leads from a collaborative place and with integrity to find common ground between the school board, unions, district leadership and school sites. She brings astute judgement, insight, common sense and foresight to dialogue, decision making and problem solving.”

Kimberly Raney
Executive Director of Transportation and Logistics, Transportation Services

“Kim is the ultimate problem solver. She played the key leadership role in helping our District maintain transportation services from AC Transit so Students have access, while also finding ways to help school sites save money on transportation costs. She is incredibly resourceful, truly embodying quality customer service and is always about removing barriers for our Students and Families.”

“Our work is deeply rooted in our shared values and the belief that every child in Oakland deserves to be well-prepared for college, career and community success.”

— Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Skyline High School Jazz Band
Known for its long history of excellence, the Skyline Jazz Band has performed locally at venues such as Yoshi’s (jazz club) and the Dimond neighborhood’s Oktoberfest. The band also competes against other jazz ensembles at festivals near and far, such as the El Cerrito Jazz Festival and the Reno Jazz Festival. Led by band director and educator Adam Green, the brass-wind-percussion Student ensemble is dedicated to studying, rehearsing and performing the wide expanse of jazz music. Throughout their tenure with the band, Students musically explore the rich history of jazz traditions along with current and emerging styles, to produce a deep knowledge of the genre and a diverse repertoire.

Student performers tonight include: Andres Avila, Kayin J. Bryan, Siara Edmond, Benjamin Hamilton, Cody Karigaca, Owen Katz, Mazimillian Lande, Dominic Macmillan, Leo Mates-Muchin, Alexander Nyland, Daniel Rosenbluth, and Derrick Tu.

Montera Middle School Cheerleading Squad
OUSD got its first official middle school cheerleading team in 2017 started by Dunia Wilder, a parent at Montera Middle School. The team is currently comprised of 28 sixth-to-eighth grade girls. And it’s not just athletics, but academics, that form the center of the team. Since its start in September, 2017, the team has raised their collective GPA from a 2.2 to a 3.87. Junior Varsity includes Lauren McDaniels (Captain), Kayla Bowie, and Meleah Washington. Varsity includes Cianna Pederson, Paris Roberson, Brooke Stower, Gianna Townsend, and Rube Tu.
THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OUSD acknowledges the following individuals and companies whose energy, dedication, and tireless efforts made this event possible:

**Special Thanks**
Bay Cities Produce
Blueprint Studios
Vida Byrd
Mario Capitelli
Bill Crotinger
Lee’s Discount Florist
Zeydi Gutierrez
KDOL Studios
Amanda Lasik
Antoinette Mayer
Minute Man Press
Oakland
Sean Murphy
Deborah Napierski
Pinx Catering
Valerie Sepeda
SVA Architects
Angela Tsay
Daniel Ziegler Design

**Event Underwriters**
Nedir Bey
Jabari J. Hebert
Inner City Advisors/Fund Good Jobs
Tulum Innovative Engineering, Inc.
Rafael Zamora

**Awards**
AB & I Foundry

**Awardees’ Centerpieces**
Cahill-Focon JV

**Printing**
Eclipse Electric

**Gift Bags**
Gift items for honorees graciously donated by the Oakland-based companies below.

Back to the Roots
Blue Shield of California
The Clorox Company
Burt’s Bees Products
Home Depot
Numi Organic Tea
Oaklandish
OCHO Candy

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