“When adults achieve, students succeed”

Honoring Our Own

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION CEREMONY

May 2, 2013
Scottish Rite Center
Oakland

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students
Our Mission
All students will graduate. As a result, they are caring, competent and critical thinkers, fully-informed, engaged and contributing citizens and prepared to succeed in college and career.

Our Vision
To reestablish schools as centers of community by transforming OUSD into a full-service community school district. In addition to high-quality instruction, health, physical education, nutrition, medical, dental, recreation, housing, employment and language acquisition services are provided in this model, with the school acting as the hub of activity. The emphasis is on educating and caring for the whole child. Social and human services are not seen as extra or add-ons in these schools. Instead, collaboration in service of the well-being of children and families is how these schools consistently behave.

Our Priorities
Safe, Healthy and Supportive Schools
High Quality Effective Instruction
College and Career Readiness Literacy

Our Goal
To build a Full-Service Community School District that cares for the whole child, eliminates inequity and provides all students with an excellent teacher each and every day.
Dear OUSD Employee Award Winners,

It is my pleasure and my honor to acknowledge and thank all of you, the 41 remarkable and dedicated OUSD employees receiving recognition at the May 2013 Honoring Our Own Awards Ceremony. These awards are a celebration of you, the OUSD employees in all roles who continually produce results, inspire others, and stand as role models for students, coworkers and for the Oakland community, all in service of Oakland’s children and the Community Schools vision.

Since joining OUSD in 2009, I have been privileged to work with many remarkable individuals, and to celebrate their individual and joint successes as the Honoring Our Own awards tradition has flourished. These celebrations stand as evidence that even as we continue the work of transforming our schools, we are successfully transforming ourselves and our district culture as well.

In calling out our own colleagues’ successes for recognition, we celebrate the successes of our organization as a whole, and affirm the truth that in order to sustain commitment and optimism, and support continued improvement we must recognize and applaud examples of creativity, of dedication and of simply excellent practice as the standard which we continue to set for ourselves in all our work.

This award cycle also marks a significant milestone – for the first time, award criteria in some categories are taken from the Quality Standards which we developed as part of the OUSD Strategic Plan. I cannot overstate my pride in the intense, coordinated and successful effort we have undertaken in partnership with the Oakland community to develop, adopt and follow the plan that guides OUSD’s transformation to a full-service community school district. In this process, we have sought ways to define and operationalize “quality” for all participants in the educational process. Seeing these key aspects of the Strategic Plan incorporated into the Honoring Our Own event is an arrival indeed.

I am proud to have been entrusted with the leadership of OUSD. So much of our success must be attributed to the dedication and passion of the individuals who are called to education, and especially the amazing people who come to education in their community of Oakland. You are all indeed The Oakland Way.

On behalf of myself, the Board of Education and of OUSD, my heartiest congratulations and best wishes now and in the future.

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

5:30-6:30 PM ......... Social Hour & Dinner

6:30-6:40 PM ......... Welcoming Remarks

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

TEACHER QUALITY AWARDS

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

SCHOOL SITE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

CENTRAL OFFICE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

8:00 PM ............. Closing Remarks
TEACHER QUALITY AWARDS

Teacher Quality Awards recognize the combination of passion and craft, skill and dedication, analysis and intuition that go into a successful and engaging learning environment.

As benchmarks for assessing nominations for this recognition, we drew from the Quality Standards unanimously adopted as part of the OUSD 5-year Strategic Plan:

- “Quality Indicator 1: Quality Learning Experiences for All Students” and
- “Quality Indicator 2: Safe, Supportive, & Healthy Learning Environments”.

These standards articulate in part the role teachers play in creating welcoming and effective Full-Service Community Schools.

The teachers we honor have successfully communicated high academic expectations to their students while simultaneously promoting social and emotional health and growth. They are fully engaged in supporting all aspects of their students’ development and school experience. They are the Oakland Way!

CAROL PANCHO-ASH  Sequoia Elementary School

Ms. Pancho uses evidence-based methods with her first graders, frequently asking, “how do you know?” She structures engaging curriculum, such as the Valentine’s Day anatomy unit, that had students learning about the human heart and other body parts and systems. Her classroom library contains many books on different cultures and experiences, encouraging interest in and tolerance for diverse backgrounds and viewpoints. Ms. Pancho’s own communication style is calm, positive and respectful, and she listens non-judgmentally, but encourages discussion and inquiry. Her classroom culture supports each child to grow academically, emotionally and socially, to be “cool and smart”, as they grow and have more opportunities to excel in school.

CAROLYN CHIN  Adult Education - GED Program

Carolyn Chin’s is known as Oakland’s GED teacher extraordinaire. Since the early 1990’s she has assisted hundreds of Oakland students, often coping with severe life challenges, to obtain a GED. Two years ago, Carolyn was instrumental in revamping the OUSD GED program, contacting students, developing new curriculum, and starting a Professional Learning Community that focused on remediating deficit math skills. Today, her PLC still meets regularly to develop strategies for dealing with student “math phobia.” Carolyn epitomizes the Adult Education department’s focus on helping students get the skills they need to obtain their GED, reclaim their success, and transition to the next step in their lives as quickly as possible. Carolyn Chin is The Oakland Way!

ALISON STREICH  West Oakland Middle School (and others)

Ms. Streich has successfully built music programs in West Oakland schools including Martin Luther King, Lafayette, and West Oakland Middle School. Beginning in Kindergarten, she engages her students with creative songs that teach students to read and perform music at high levels. The older elementary students learn on band and orchestra instruments and she follows her students through West Oakland Middle School. A few years ago she formed the Oakland Spirit Orchestra (OSO) by forming a partnership with the Oakland East Bay Symphony. The students from MLK, Lafayette, and West Oakland Middle School have had the opportunity to perform exciting music from multiple genres all over the city. The pride and joy of performing is evident on each of her students’ faces.

DENNIS NELSON  Oakland Technical High School

Dennis Nelson brings high standards for student advocacy and service to his role as Resource Specialist. Always morally, ethically, and professionally attuned to parent, student, teachers, and support staff, he is an effective facilitator of IEP meetings, ensuring that standards are met, concerns are heard, and student needs are met in the least restrictive and most academically promising environment. His genuine respect for the potential of all students makes him a strong champion of his Special Education students; he challenges stereotypes on a daily basis and raises the level of consciousness in the entire school community. Thank you Dennis for what you bring and for what you accomplish. You are the Oakland Way.
STEPHANIE POOL  Bridges at Melrose Elementary School

Stephanie Pool is dedicated to ensuring that each and every student has access to the curriculum, meticulously crafting strategies and support plans to bring academic content and opportunity to students with special needs and behavior challenges. Her capacity for tolerance, compassion, and maintenance of firm boundaries allows her to fully include children who struggle with participation in regular classroom activities. Regardless of each student’s particular needs or challenges, she holds them to a high standard and as a result, they reach it. Students at all levels demonstrate the same real excitement and pride in their accomplishments in Stephanie’s class.

SARAH GLASBAND  Met West High School

Sarah Glasband’s curriculum and teaching is the hard-won product of many years of reflective practice and ongoing growth through collaboration and engagement with staff and students, and provides very clear and high expectations for learning. Her students love engaging in history simulations and internships that connect with and build on their own passions and experience, and their individual, deep learning is reflected in their quarterly presentations. Sarah has cultivated a powerful classroom culture that is open and safe enough that all her students step in to lead and learn, even with challenging social, emotional, and academic content. Her facilitation of circle process has been used as an exemplar by the district; she is able to meet each student’s needs by using the power of group learning, while differentiating to provide individual pathways to dramatic academic growth. Sarah knows and sees her students for the citizens they will become – she is the Oakland Way!

GABRIELA TAPIA  Bret Harte Middle School

Ms. Tapia has embraced the demands of the Common Core State Standards and is a leader among her peers in the work to align instruction and assessment to these new demands. Ms. Tapia additionally consistently models and reinforces behaviors tied to academic success. Every student at the school knows that she takes them seriously and teachers know that she is there to promote a culture of academic achievement and mathematical success. Ms. Tapia contributes to campus safety with extra supervision and engagement with struggling students. She means business and is a woman of her word; her focus and determination is infectious and brings out the best in many of her colleagues.

NOLAN HUTTON  Garfield Elementary School

Nolan holds firmly to the belief that he must match his teaching style to the needs of his students, targeting his instruction to skills that will bridge gaps and accelerate learning. His work often breaks through the stereotype that students with special needs are unable to perform at high levels. He recently initiated the challenging and exciting model of having his students lead their own IEP meetings, and is presently leading a tremendous effort at Garfield to impart Positive Behavior Intervention and Support theory and techniques to staff and families. He is an active member of the Garfield Parent Action Team – and a key support of the transformation happening at Garfield.

SANDRA SHAPIRO  Parker Elementary School

Ms. Shapiro has been dedicated to the children in OUSD for 42 years. In addition to being an exceptional teacher, Ms. Shapiro has also served the District as a Principal. She fosters academic growth, character development, and social/emotional learning with her students. She excels in providing the appropriate and needed additional instruction for those students who may be new to OUSD or performing below grade level. Oakland Children and OUSD are fortunate to have an effective educator like Ms. Shapiro – for many years, she has modeled The Oakland Way!
CLLAIRE SHORALL  Castlemont High School
Shorall uses various instructional strategies to make biology come alive for her students, from interpretive dances to show the process of meiosis to Socratic seminars exploring what part of a cell is Beyonce is most like and why. She is cares deeply about science education and has taken leadership in the Castlemont science department, facilitating inquiry cycles exploring how to increase accountable academic talk for students in the science classroom. Furthermore, Shorall has coordinated summer programming for students for the past two years, working to connect students to fully funded opportunities such as Smith College Science & Engineering Program and the prestigious Summer Science Program in astronomy, physics and calculus in New Mexico. Shorall is a vivacious, dedicated and enthusiastic member of the Castlemont team, in and outside of the classroom.

YESENIA MENDEZ  Frick Middle School
Yesenia Mendez is a quiet and powerful teaching force, managing her classroom with a straightforward, no nonsense attitude. She models a learning orientation and is continuously committed to growing in her craft, seeking out and contributing actively in numerous professional development opportunities. Not only is she an eager learner, but she takes new frameworks and plans and implements them without delay. At Frick, she was an early adopter of Reciprocal Teaching, and of shifting to a more student-centered approach to reading instruction. As a first year teacher implementing Springboard Pre-AP curriculum, she tried it out with enthusiasm and great results; the national Springboard Coach identified her as an exemplary Springboard teacher in her very first year of implementation. We have much to learn from capable, powerful and impactful teachers such as Ms. Mendez and are delighted to have her as a part of the Frick and the OUSD family.

JOHN GILLETTE  Skyline High School
John Gillette actively partners with everyone in his classroom to support learning. His students collaborate with him on the task of identifying strategies for reinforcing positive behaviors and extinguishing negative behaviors. John also contributes to the education of general education students by utilizing them as assistant teachers. Entering the classroom, one can easily mistake these students for paraprofessionals. They are given rigorous training and responsibility and mirror the professionalism (and the warmth) of the regular staff. Additionally, if any other staff member on campus is experiencing difficulty, John is the first to volunteer his assistance. He is a strong asset to Skyline’s Special Education students and community. He epitomizes the Oakland Way.

Quality Indicator 2 - Safe, Supportive, and Healthy Learning Environments
- Standard #4 - Adopts rituals, routines and practices that reinforce values and norms that promote achievement, create a culture that challenges stereotypes, and counter anti-intellectualism, so that students believe it is “cool to be smart”
- Standard #6 - Creates an inclusive, welcoming and caring community which: 1. Fosters respectful communication among students, families, staff, and community. 2. Values individual and cultural differences.
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Educational Leadership awards go to those individuals who are able to simultaneously hold and promote the success of their teachers, students and schools. As benchmarks for assessing nominations for this recognition, this year we drew from some of the Effective School Leadership & Resource Management Quality Standards that were unanimously adopted as part of the OUSD 5-Year Strategic Plan.

ELIZABETH RHINE  Principal | Crocker Highlands Elementary School

Elizabeth Rhine has created a culture at Crocker Highlands Elementary that is inviting and inclusive, fully engaging students, families and community in school life and academic success. Her combination of unwavering focus on furnishing all students with rigorous instruction, and deep knowledge of curriculum and teaching practice, allows her to thoughtfully engage with teachers about providing the best instruction to students. Her strong support of high academic expectations is complemented by her skill at developing and nurturing the local partnerships that have helped Crocker Highlands truly become a Full Service Community Schools. Elizabeth Rhine is an OUSD leader – she is the Oakland Way!

STACI ROSS-MORRISON  Acting Principal | Oakland Technical High School/Far West Campus

Ms. Staci Ross is a veteran Assistant Principal at Oakland Tech High School. She has long worked well with students, teachers and families, but this past year, she took over the responsibility of being Tech’s primary administrator at the Upper Campus (former Far West) in collaboration with the Oakland Tech Administrative team. She has done an excellent job establishing a culture of partnership between the new Upper Campus and the main Oakland Tech campus. Her leadership on the campus has meant that this first year has proceeded smoothly. Ms. Ross is articulate, kind, firm and is able to hold the focus on classroom instruction. She definitely deserves this award!

NATALIE TOVANI-WALCHUK  Principal | Glenview Elementary School

Principal Tovani-Walchuk received no less than 78 nominations from staff and involved parents at Glenview; this response speaks for itself. Among the many compliments on her management style and achievements at Glenview- the successful implementation of Restorative Justice; optimistic leadership and creative funding solutions in the face of shrinking resources to ensure continued enrichment programs; truly warm and caring personal involvement with teachers, classrooms, families and students. Natalie assumed leadership from a long-time and beloved principal, yet Glenview has had very little non-retirement staff turnover since. One parent comment: “I have been a classroom mother and regular volunteer at this school for 6 years, since kindergarten. NEVER have I heard teachers rave so about the gratitude they feel from their supervisor! She empowers them, directs them, teaches them and shows her appreciation to them!” Natalie Walchuk leads… The Oakland Way!

ELIA BUSTAMANTE  Principal | United for Success Middle School

Elia Bustamante is deeply committed to improving the outcomes for the students at United for Success Academy and is completing her 4th year as the leader of a school that dramatically reduced suspensions and expulsions by embracing Restorative Justice practices and creating a culture of growth and development. She has dedicated resources and intensive support to the teaching staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning by giving students access to rich curriculum content and engaging instructional practices. Elia is a reflective practitioner who has created structures for deep and lasting continuous improvement among the staff and community. The steady growth in reading and math are indicators of progress.
CAROLYN HOWARD Principal | Howard Elementary School

Under Carolyn Howard’s leadership, Howard Elementary is undergoing a renewal; she has put in place the information and support that have enabled the school’s successful participation in the Science/Literacy Cohort, an exciting exercise in hands-on learning and integrating science and literacy. She set the stage for success with coordinated professional development and targeted subject matter from LCI, has been continually present with clear expectations and ongoing feedback, and has facilitated visits to other sites by teacher-leaders, including increasing collaboration time through “Science Planning” sessions every two weeks.

Ms. Howard has led a culture shift in attendance resulting in significant reduction (-10%) in chronic absence; her practices and strategies have been adopted by other sites with success. Finally, she has been a strong advocate for the active partnership of Special Education students and families with the school and SPED department. Through Ms. Howard’s many years of service in Oakland, she has continued to model a learning stance. She is excellence in school leadership!

ARYN BOWMAN Assistant Principal | Castlemont High School

Ms. Aryn Bowman has been on the Castlemont campus for a number of years and is a hard-working Assistant Principal--first at East Oakland School of the Arts and now on the main Castlemont campus. She is well-versed in curriculum, knows high quality instruction and works tirelessly on behalf of the students at Castlemont High School. She is detailed oriented and pays close attention to supporting teachers to do their best to improve student learning. Ms. Bowman is passionate about working hard to do her part to make Castlemont High School a school that serves every student well.

Quality Indicator 5: Effective School Leadership & Resource Management

“Effective School Leadership & Resource Management” happens when school leaders work together to build a vision of quality that guides the efforts of all students and adults. The skilled leaders of a quality school strengthen the ability of adults and students to share in leading. These leaders ensure quality learning for all students, by developing partnerships focused on instruction, positive academic and social-emotional outcomes for students. The skilled leaders in a quality school involve all adults and youth in regularly looking at data, planning, monitoring, and evaluating school strategies and programs. These leaders manage people, funding, time, technology and other materials effectively, to promote thriving students and build community schools.”

- Standard #1 - Builds the capacity of adults and students to share responsibility for leadership and decision-making.
- Standard #3 - Provides student leaders access to and relationship with adult decision-makers and supports student leaders to be strong, authentic representatives of the student body.
- Standard #6 - Guides and supports the development of quality instruction across the school, to ensure student learning
- Standard #7 - develops and sustains relationships based on trust and respect
- Standard #8 - Perseveres through adverse situations, courageously makes decisions, and assumes personal responsibility for their actions
SCHOOL SITE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

A collaborative, service-oriented approach is important for all OUSD employees, but for School Support Staff, commitment to the role of supportive team member is the foundation upon which the school builds a seamless support structure for its students’ successful academic, social and emotional growth.

Full-Service Community Schools don’t just serve the community, they are a community – the support staff we honor are those who recognize and contribute within the full range of possibilities their roles offer. They are present to children, staff and parents alike, ready to step forward and ensure that students and families stay engaged in a welcoming atmosphere.

**BETTY DEAN**  **Special Education Instructional Assistant | Joaquin Miller Elementary School**

Betty Dean had been thinking of retiring in 1989, when the Special Education Department asked her to reconsider and work as an Instructional Assistant at Joaquin Miller’s brand new Special Day Class. Luckily, Betty said yes and has been a force for good in the class and at school ever since. Ms. Dean is the ideal Assistant in a Special Day class, always anticipating, and ready to gently intervene and encourage at exactly the right moment, to turn a potential problem into a successful endeavor for someone with extra challenges. Her work is always impeccable, and her heart is evident in too many examples over time to relate. She is beloved, and repeatedly visited by former students who visit to thank her for their start. She is, for the second time in her career, retiring this year. Betty is and has been The Oakland Way!

**COREEN WILLARD**  **School Nurse | Martin Luther King Elementary School**

In her two years as OUSD school nurse, Coreen Willard has earned the deep respect of coworkers and the plaudits of administrators. She has excelled at gaining the trust of students and families with her calm and empathetic approach, and demonstrates both astuteness and the true advocate’s perspective in caring for students and advocating for their health and wellness. In addition to her role as a school nurse, she serves as a Wellness Champion at one of her school sites where she promotes health and wellness activities. Her professionalism and enthusiasm promotes the most productive collaborations with families across the district. Coreen is an invaluable member of the Oakland Unified School District; she is The Oakland Way!

**HELENA WU-QUACH**  **Attendance Clerk | Westlake Middle School**

Mrs. Helena Wu is THE warm and friendly face of Westlake’s front office, consistently maintaining a positive upbeat tone for everyone in a sometimes hectic environment. She knows every student, and guides her IWEs into successful, trustworthy positions. Ms. Wu is organized and attentive to the critical details of timeliness and completeness in attendance submittals, and she helps teachers stay on track with gentle reminders. Students too speak highly of her; their trust means Ms. Wu is an added asset to the leadership team as another respected adult voice. Her trilingual skills have her in high demand for communications with families and students, and she never shies away from helping – this is The Oakland Way.

**JACQUELINE JOHNSON**  **Counselor | Oakland Technical High School**

Ms. Johnson has been a counselor at Tech for over five years. Dedicated to guiding students toward high school graduation, college and career, Ms. Johnson is relentless in her commitment to help students succeed, at all costs. She has led several workshops for parents and students focusing on academic interventions and achievement and on college and financial planning. As the scholarship coordinator, Ms. Johnson keeps students and families well informed with a monthly scholarship bulletin. An annual scholarship ceremony, coordinated by Ms. Johnson, is a terrific culminating event for seniors and their families. Helpful, resourceful, compassionate and always smiling . . . this is our Ms. Johnson!
SCHOOL SITE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

JONE HARRIS  School Security Officer  |  McClymonds High School

Jone Harris is a calm, humorous and stabilizing force on the McClymonds campus for staff, students and community alike. His communication style never uses a raised voice, and always models complete respect and high expectations for all with regard to courtesy and good citizenship. He handles emergencies with the same calm authority, and averts crises by skillfully guiding conversation and diverting students from escalation. His presence at games and other school events is always enthusiastic and supportive, lending moral as well as safety support to MACK events. Thanks, Mr. Harris!

BRENDA JEMISON  Food Service Assistant 1  |  Jefferson Child Development Center

Brenda Jemison is the woman you want in charge of feeding your preschooler! She is humorous, energetic, fastidious and loving. She treats her responsibilities with complete seriousness and is never idle when there are tasks unfinished. And when she's done with her work, she pitches in to help someone else. Her coworkers and her students trust and love Brenda - she's all about The Oakland Way!

BRIAN TANG  Case Manager  |  Bret Harte Middle School

Brian Tang is highly respected by the Bret Harte community of students' families and professionals, for his reliability, versatility, and genuine concern for students' success. Bret Harte’s representative to the Chinese community, he is constantly sought after throughout the school day by staff, students and families; he is a key part of the process of bringing critical information to students and families about academic opportunities and concerns, and available services. His friendly caring aspect helps immeasurably in making these important connections. Brian is so highly valued by coworkers as well for his positive energy and unfailing willingness to tackle anything that needs doing. Brian is the Bret Harte way - he is the Oakland Way!

MARVIN SKAGGS  School Security Officer  |  Dewey High School

What can we say about Marvin Skaggs? He brings a dynamic personality to the campus and beyond. He daily greets all Dewey students and lends an ear when needed, which is often. He is very detail oriented, knows each, child, service provider, parent and district staff member who enters the Dewey community. Mr. Skaggs is an integral part of our family. He is often called upon to give us added information on our community. He is like a walking AERIES. Along with this Marvin, with his Big Smile, is always helpful to the La Escuelita Educational Complex visitors, always giving directions and information.

NIDYA BAEZ  Community School Manager  |  Fremont High School

Nidya Baez, Community Schools Program Manager at Oakland International High, designed and now runs the school’s “ASAP” center. This center is the first stop for students who may be starting to venture outside of the sphere of success. Nidya is a supportive and professional member of school staff, maintaining a very high standard of professionalism in the content and timeliness of her submissions to leadership. Nydia's familiarity with each student and family creates a bond and important connection which serves students and school alike.
What is The Oakland Way?

The Oakland Way describes a special combination of qualities; it defines the work of the OUSD teachers, leaders, technical, and support staff who:

- Value and represent the diversity of the Oakland community
- Hold a strong commitment to social justice
- Never stop seeking equitable outcomes for all of Oakland’s children, and
- Believe that we share the responsibility to ensure the success of our children and community.

This is what we mean when we say,

“I work for Oakland’s children . . . I am The Oakland Way!”

WAN FOUIX CHAO  Custodian | Montera Middle School

Montera’s custodian Wan Fouix Chao is described as very dependable; teachers and staff have extreme confidence in him because of his consistency and thoroughness. His own work/storage area is extremely clean and organized, and reflects his organized and professional approach to his work. He is extremely responsive to teachers in emergencies requiring immediate special custodial help; he never hesitates to assist.

His continuous effort with learning the English language parallels his steady improvement as an employee; he is near the top of the list of “best employees.” Congratulations, Mr. Chao - your support of your school, classrooms and teachers is The Oakland Way!

CRAIG COLBERT  Noon Supervisor | Grass Valley Elementary School

Craig Colbert holds the title of Noon Supervisor at Grass Valley Elementary, but holds more roles than are easily counted. He is the adult who seems to be everywhere at once on campus to keep children on track and growing. He takes seriously his role and opportunity as an African American male role model, starting and co-leading a 5th grade boys group with fathers he recruited. He actively supports the PE program, providing the extra adult coverage that will ensure safe and productive time for all students, and leads co-ed basketball and dodge ball games to model and teach gender equity and fair play. He is a guardian and a guardian angel to Grass Valley’s students.

GRISELDA JIMENEZ  Attendance Clerk | Coliseum College Prep High School

Attendance Clerk Griselda Jimenez is described as the unofficial mother of CCPA. In her role, she sees incipient problems with students who may be losing their way or losing heart, and takes an active part in connecting them with the services, counseling, or hug they may need. She teaches families to access the online grade system Jupiter Grade so they may take an active role in monitoring and supporting their children’s progress.

Ms. Jimenez was quoted in our SQR report with the following description of her work, demonstrating just how broad and deep her involvement is. “I’m their Mother, Counselor, Nurse. I’ve become attached to these kids. I see them grow. If they’re hungry I feed them. If their stomach hurts, I give them tea. If they need to talk, I talk with them. I try to motivate them. A student is a seed that’s growing. I notice signs of trouble, frustration, or getting lost, and if they can’t find a way out I can relate to it from my own growing up. I went through it, and I tell them that. They are better here at school than out there. I tell them you can make your own choices.”

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SCHOOL SITE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

PHIL GRAY  Intervention Specialist  |  Howard Elementary School

Phil Gray’s support of the Howard School community and OUSD is typified by professionalism, a model of unwavering self-respect and integrity, and dependability. His work is performed with precision, grace and accuracy, but he offers so much to support the social-emotional health of students and families as well. He started a before-school Dads’ coffee hour to provide a safe place for fathers to talk about their needs, challenges, resources and concerns. This model has been so successful that other schools have asked him to share the format. Phil Gray is a role model for students and their fathers, and strong support to Howard school and Oakland community – he is the Oakland Way!

PHYLLIS ARMSTRONG-WIGGINS  Custodian  |  New Highland RISE Elementary School

Phyllis Armstrong has been with OUSD over 21 years. She takes her job seriously and cleans at her school as if it is her home. As a Head Custodian she is responsible for assuring that the students at the Highland complex have an opportunity to learn in a clean and safe environment. Whenever one visits the campus, they notice the pristine exterior, which regularly is absent of paper and trash. Her dedication and commitment to working with the contractors last summer, as the school was modernized, was simply outstanding!!

ROSLYNN DECUIR-GILDER  Food Service Manager  |  Skyline High School

Roslynn DeCuir-Gilder is one of the most cooperative and dependable employees in Nutrition Services! She brings to her work at Skyline High School a pleasant attitude and a welcoming manner that makes her very approachable; the students enjoy coming to the cafeteria and have a tremendous amount of respect for her. Her wonderful ability to communicate respect and caring is a tremendous asset in connecting with students, and ensuring appropriate behavior in the cafeteria. Coworkers and staff appreciate her for her reliability, sensitivity to students' tastes and creativity. She prioritizes serving the best food she can and is always willing to try something new for the benefit for her team and students. She is focussed on serving Oakland students; she is The Oakland Way!
CENTRAL OFFICE SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Central Office employees promote student success through organizational excellence; through the creation and effective delivery of systems, tools and services that directly or indirectly assist schools and teachers in the primary mission of education.

LARS JORGENSEN  Assessment Tools Manager  |  Research Assessment and Data

Lars Jorgensen is invaluable to the Research Assessment and Data department because he understands that tools cannot be useful if they are not fully accessible to users. His customers write, “Lars is my go-to person for any and all assessment questions. Whether it’s extra benchmarks or SRI assistance, he’s provided tremendous support to us”. “Lars asks for feedback about his department, and he is open to critiques. He strives to improve ineffective systems. He is steadfast in informing and assisting site leaders of upcoming requests of RAD or information disseminated to sites. He also clarifies and explains procedures directly when I am in need.” In his tireless support of the data-informed effort to improve student outcomes, Lars Jorgensen is The Oakland Way!

MONICA VAUGHAN  Director  |  Alternative Education Department

Alternative Education Director Monica Vaughan brings a perfect combination of hands-on skills and energy and big picture thinking to managing OUSD’s diverse Alternative Education programs. She is in close touch with teachers and leaders on the academic and safety challenges of sometimes highly-charged environments, and additionally closely monitors the extensive Home and Hospital education program, ensuring that individual studies are appropriately supported. Monica is well-versed in regulatory and financial laws and regulations regarding Independent Study attendance accounting, and is active in pursuing grant funding to augment services. She is collaborative, a self-starter and a tireless advocate on behalf of program and students. She is The Oakland Way!

TRACEY LOGAN  Program Manager for Information Technology Services  |  Information Technology Services

Tracey Logan, Program Manager for Information Technology Services, is widely recognized by colleagues and departments throughout the district for her cross-departmental collaboration skills. She is phenomenal at collaboration, implementation, and project management, and has played a pivotal role in planning and effective implementation of a number of OUSD initiatives. Her work on CSSSP, Safety Plan Upgrades, and Smarter Balanced Assessments, as well her participation on the Facilities Master Plan team, has contributed substantively to ensuring that the outcomes of equity and school health are addressed and prioritized in OUSD program improvements.

CENTRAL OFFICE LEADERS hold the responsibility for designing and implementing organizational systems and tools that will best serve the primary educational mission of OUSD, as indicated in the following Strategic Plan Central Office Quality Standards

“Quality Indicator 6: High Quality Central Office In Service of Quality Schools”.

• Standard #1 - Monitors each school, provides supports, and holds staff accountable, based on standards for school quality
• Standard #3 - Models the planning and action strategies that result in the greatest improvement in school and system-wide performance
• Standard #4 - Equitably allocates resources to achieve higher and more equal outcomes
• Standard #5 - Ensures that each school is a safe and healthy center of the community, with high quality facilities, open and integrated into community life;
• Standard #9 - Has a clear, collaborative system, involving all stakeholders, for evaluating the effectiveness of strategies and programs;
AMPARO OCHOA  Clerk Typist | Human Resources Services and Support

Amparo Ochoa is mature, responsible, accommodating, polite and unfailingly positive. She has provided rock steady file management and customer service in Human Resources for some time. Within the past two years, Amparo led the effort, with her counterpart Nicky Gillett, to reclaim, sort and archive literally thousands of old OUSD HR files that were jumbled in cardboard boxes in the basement. This giant effort was complete just last Fall, and all the records successfully alphabetized into metal file cabinets. The magnitude of this accomplishment was highlighted by the recent flood disaster at the main office. If the files hadn’t been reclaimed, the district HR archives would have been three basement rooms full of paper mache.

NICOLE GILLETT  Clerk Typist | Human Resources Services and Support

Nicole Gillett is the other half of the HR File Clerk Dynamic Duo! Along with Amparo Ochoa, Nicky participated in the successful reclamation of thousands of old OUSD personnel files, working steadily to create an organized archive where a jumble of cardboard boxes had existed. Nicky has shown steady personal and professional growth during her time in HR, actively seeking new skills and mentorship, and always displaying a helpful and generous attitude. Congratulations, Nicole Gillett – you are The Oakland Way!

JODY TALKINGTON  Literacy Specialist | Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction

Literacy Specialist Jody Talkington ensures success through connection; she is in close touch with each site and teacher with whom she works, staying current with particular issues and challenges in order to craft meaningful and focused support. She confers regularly with site coaches and teachers and observes often in the classroom to identify ways in which she can assist in the improvement of teacher practice and student outcomes. Jody has furnished critical support as schools have implemented SpringBoard and as they move toward Common Core Assessments, and is deeply appreciated for her respect of teachers as she helps them navigate this new territory. Described as skilled, resourceful, supportive and optimistic, Jody demonstrates belief in OUSD’s teachers and students – she is the Oakland Way!

MEKDES MERHATSIDK  Clerk Typist | Payroll Department

Payroll Clerk Mekdes Merhatsidk is very reliable, very conscientious and a pleasure to work with. She always completes her work in a timely and accurate manner, a critical consideration in the area of compensation. Not only knowledgeable in payroll issues and procedures, Mekdes communicates with respect and caring, so employees get substantive answers and are made to feel their concerns are heard. Mekdes has proven to be a valuable asset in the Customer Service Center at the Cole campus, selflessly helping staff the front reception area and help all visitors. For service to customers District and coworkers alike, thank you, Mekdes! You are The Oakland Way!

PHYLLIS COPES  Administrative Assistant II | Family, Schools, Community Partnerships

Phyllis Copes has been described as a hidden treasure of Oakland Unified. She combines comprehensive technical and institutional knowledge with incredible generosity and creativity in furnishing impeccable program support for the Family, Schools, Community Partnerships department. She has taken the lead in making events happen and meeting deadlines too many times to count. Her upbeat personality and genuine caring for coworkers makes her the favored “go-to” person in many situations – she doesn’t let anyone down, and never looks for acknowledgement for all of her hard work. Phyllis connects the quality of her work to the success of the program and never lowers her standards – she is The Oakland Way!
Our Grateful Acknowledgement to the Following Supporters

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