



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Growing a Diverse and Stable Staff



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Growing a Diverse and Stable Staff

In OUSD, we know that both recruiting and retaining quality educators is key to our long term success.

We don't just want teachers, principals and support staff to choose OUSD, but to keep choosing OUSD year after year because this is where they want to be.

This means that we work to ensure that our experienced educators - especially our Black and Brown long term educators - feel recognized for their experience, valued for their cultures, successful in their efforts, and respected in decision-making. We'll spotlight a few of these educators below.

At the same time, we are building the innovative systems and supports required to ensure that we are attracting and supporting early career educators. The national teacher shortage has profoundly impacted the educator pipeline, resulting in a significant decline in enrollment in teacher preparation programs. This has increased the number of teachers entering classrooms with less formal training or preparation, creating an urgent need for robust district-level support.

To address these challenges and opportunities, OUSD has undertaken the following three targeted strategies:



1.

Strengthening
Support Systems
for Early Career
Teachers



2.

Investing in Strong
Preparation Models
and Grow-Our-Own
Pathways



3.

Developing
Leadership Through
Early Educator
Support

What Sets OUSD Apart Through the Eyes of Our Educators

Educators at OUSD emphasize their deep ties to Oakland, their commitment to community, and the diverse cultures within the schools. They express a desire to give back to the place that nurtured them and highlight the rich mix of languages and backgrounds among students. Watch our Video on YouTube ↓



Growing a Diverse and Stable Staff



Strengthening Support Systems for Early Career Teachers

In the 2024-25 school year, we implemented year-long professional learning for new teachers, designed to address their most common areas of need. These sessions are intentionally scheduled during their contractual hours to ensure accessibility while avoiding additional stress or workload. This reflects the success of a robust, system-wide collaboration and has established a comprehensive system of supports for new teachers that includes:

- Weekly coaching to accelerate professional growth.
- Differentiated professional development tailored to address the unique challenges of early career educators.
- Credentialing support to ease the dual demands of teaching and certification requirements.
- A strong emphasis on wellness and community-building to mitigate stress and foster resilience.



Investing in Strong Preparation Models and Grow-Our-Own Pathways

OUSD's teacher residency programs and apprenticeship models are cornerstones of our approach, designed to provide rigorous, hands-on preparation for aspiring educators. These programs offer practical experience and mentorship that equip teachers to thrive in diverse and dynamic classroom environments.

By investing in pathways for community members and current non-certificated employees, OUSD is building a sustainable pipeline of educators deeply rooted in the Oakland community. These efforts foster a sense of belonging and shared purpose while addressing critical staffing needs.



Developing Leadership Through Early Educator Support

This work also prioritizes the leadership growth and development of our own staff at OUSD. These programs are staffed by former and current teachers and leaders who provide mentoring, coaching, and guidance to early educators. This approach ensures that our early career educators receive targeted support that is deeply rooted in OUSD's values and practices. Moreover, it creates opportunities for experienced staff to take on leadership roles, enhancing their professional growth and contributing to a culture of continuous learning and development. This dual focus on supporting early educators and cultivating leadership within our current workforce ensures that OUSD is building a strong, sustainable teaching community that adapts to and thrives within our unique context.



Growing a Diverse and Stable Staff

Why This Work Matters

These investments reflect OUSD's unwavering focus on ensuring all students receive a high-quality education, regardless of their zip code. By supporting early career educators, we are laying the foundation for a diverse and stable teaching workforce that aligns with the district's commitment to equity, excellence, and opportunity for all students.

Through these efforts, OUSD is not just addressing the immediate challenges of the teacher shortage but is also establishing a system for career-long support for educators at every stage, and advancing long-term, systemic change that will benefit generations of Oakland students.



Diverse and Stable Staff

Data Tells the Story



Investing in Our Early Career Educators

In OUSD, roughly one-third of our teaching staff is actively pursuing full credentials, reflecting the increasing reliance on alternative certification pathways. Key statistics further illustrate this landscape:

- Approximately 13% (~300) of OUSD teachers are in their first two years in the classroom.
- 17% (~414) of OUSD teachers are working on emergency permits.
- Early career educators in OUSD are more racially and ethnically diverse than their more experienced counterparts, with 63.5% of teachers in their first five years identifying as BIPOC (50% identifying as African American or Latinx), compared to 53.2% of teachers with six or more years of experience (40% identifying as African American or Latinx).

The intersection of these factors underscores the importance of prioritizing early career teachers as part of OUSD's commitment to creating a highly prepared, stable, and diverse workforce aligned with the district's vision of thriving students and equitable opportunities. This commitment to early career educators also reflects our broader mission to meet the needs of our diverse student population by investing in a teaching staff that mirrors the community it serves.



Diverse and Stable Staff

Data Tells the Story

New Teacher Support

New Teacher Professional Learning

To date, 272 teachers from across 69 schools have participated in the new teacher professional development offerings, and their feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers give the sessions an average rating of 8.8/10 and say they are 95% likely to apply their learnings to their practice.

Weekly Coaching

For years, OUSD has been strengthening and expanding access to our new teacher coaching programs. We consistently match 500-600 teachers with a coach each year to provide weekly individualized support. For multiple years in our annual new teacher survey, new teachers have overwhelmingly named their coach as the most helpful part of their overall support system in OUSD.

Credentialing Support

Our efforts have focused on supporting and monitoring the progress of ~400 emergency permit teachers as they work toward a credential. To increase our support for emergency permit teachers, we have created an easy to use tool to guide their progress, held orientation and professional development sessions, and provided free test prep support. To improve our monitoring of their progress, we are launching a new data dashboard that will show teacher-reported updates on their credentialing requirements so that teachers, coaches, school and central leaders can find the information in one single location. Overall, our annual survey data shows that teachers on emergency permits have more clarity about what they do to make progress on their credential path, who to go to for credentialing support, and feel more adequately supported by OUSD with their credentialing needs.



Diverse and Stable Staff

Data Tells the Story

Growing our Own Pathways

Our unique, targeted educational pathways for community members and current non-certificated employees are building a strong foundation for the future of OUSD. These efforts not only instill a greater sense of connection for participants, they help in our mission to make sure students see educators that look like them in the classroom, and all while addressing critical staffing needs.



Pathway	Total Participants	Total Graduates
After School-to-Teacher (2016-2023)	19	11
Classified-to-Teacher (2016-present)	89	40 earned Preliminary Credential 9 earned B.A.
Oakland Teacher Residency STEM / Special Education / Bilingual Multiple Subjects / Multiple Subjects / Single Subjects ELA and Social Science (2019-current)	102	48 earned Preliminary Credential
OakTown Leaders Pre-Apprenticeship (2023-present)	63	9
Early Educator Apprenticeship Program (2024-present)	7	Currently in first year of program
Early Educator Teacher Development Grant (2024-present)	38	Currently in first year of program
Reach University BA Partnership (2024-present)	20	Currently in first year of program



Diverse and Stable Staff

Data Tells the Story

Growing our Own Pathways

Classified to Teacher

The Classified to Teacher program currently consists of 43 staff members making immediate progress towards a degree or credential, with all participants having a long term goal of earning a credential in a hard to staff content area. 39 (91%) are enrolled in a college or university for the 24-25 school year and are receiving up to \$4,800 to cover tuition. 70% of the participants identify as Black or Latino/a/x/e, an important metric aligned with the District's goal of recruiting a diverse workforce that reflects our student population.



Pre-Apprenticeship

We are now in year two of the **Oaktown Leaders Pre-Apprenticeship** which has expanded to Skyline High School and Madison Park Academy in addition to the cohort at Oakland High. Overall, we have a total of 63 high school students registered as apprentices and enrolled in a college class that will lead to an Early Childhood Education permit. The demographics of the participants closely mirror the student demographics across the district: 66% identify as Latino, 16% as Black, 11% as Asian, 3% as White, 2% as Middle Eastern, and 2% as Mixed. Additionally, 71% of these students speak a second language, including Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Mam, and Trigriña. While last year there were no male-identified students, this year we have seen an increase, with 24% of participants identifying as male.



At the end of the 2023-24 school year, 19 students completed two courses and applied for their Early Childhood Education Instructional Assistant permits. During the summer, three students worked at OUSD CDCs and one student worked with East Oakland Youth Development Center to get hands-on experience supporting children in the community. Seven participants have returned and will continue to earn an Associate Teacher Permit at the end of the 2024-25 school year. One of the students graduated high school and is now participating in the Early Educator Apprenticeship Program.



Diverse and Stable Staff

Data Tells the Story

Growing our Own Pathways

Early Educator Apprenticeship Program

Through the Early Educator Apprenticeship, we aim to establish professional pathways of opportunity for youth aged 18-24 in our community, including OUSD alumni. In roles such as Early Childhood Education Instructional Assistants, Early Literacy Tutors, or Paraprofessionals, apprentices will engage in a comprehensive program leading to the attainment of 48 units and a Master Teacher Permit. This certification opens doors to career advancement within OUSD and beyond.

In the first year of the Early Educator Apprenticeship Program, we have 7 participants who are simultaneously taking college classes and working in classroom support roles across the district. Of these participants, 6 (86%) identify as Black or Latina, and 5 are OUSD alumni. Last semester, students successfully completed 6 units and are now beginning a new semester.



The group is currently enrolled in classes at both Merritt College and Berkeley City College, which are provided at no cost to participants, with funding secured through community partner support, philanthropy, and grants. This funding also allows us to offer critical wraparound supports, including transportation to classes, embedded tutoring for academic success, childcare during class time, and technology to assist with completing coursework.

Funded partially through the California Opportunity Youth Apprenticeship grant, the targeted demographic must be 18-24 and has allowed the district to strengthen its partnership with community organization East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC). Connecting with EOYDC allows more members of the community - including those who may have had to disengage from OUSD as students - to consider education as a career and connect with students who may experience or be experiencing situations similar to their own.

Oakland Teacher Residency

This year, 25 participants will complete their residency by being paired with experienced teachers across the district. Residents are taking coursework at UC Berkeley, CalStateTeach, Alder Graduate School of Education and Cal State East Bay, earning credentials in hard to staff areas such as Mild/Moderate Special Education, Single Subject Physics and Math, and Multiple Subjects with Bilingual Authorization. 7 participants (28%) were internal staff serving in classroom support roles, and 20 (80%) identify as Black or Latino. The residents come together once a month to learn from departments across the district including Multi Tiered Systems of Success, Special Education, and the Office of Equity. These partnerships ensure the residents are informed of district initiatives and values to better prepare them to holistically support students when they take on lead teaching positions in the Fall. Recruitment for the 2025-26 residency cohort is progressing with 13 applications submitted as of early December 2024.



Diverse and Stable Staff

Spotlight on Long-Term Leaders



Roma Groves-Waters

Principal at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary

Just before winter break, Principal Roma Groves-Waters of **Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School** (MLK Jr.) received a well-deserved award; the Urban League of Greater San Francisco Bay Area presented Ms. Groves-Waters with their Educator of the Year award.

Urban League President Ken Maxey presented the award to Ms. Groves-Waters and sang her praises, calling her out as the school's quarterback and coach who leads with tenacity and compassion. Elementary Network Superintendent Leroy Gaines also shared what makes her such a wonderful leader, including how well she manages the myriad challenges that come at principals.

Ms. Groves-Waters is emblematic of a successful long-term OUSD educator whose years of growth and experience in the district benefit not just students and their families, but school support staff and colleagues. She is in her 29th year in OUSD, having started her career as an academic mentor, then teaching at Roosevelt Middle School serving as a TSA for high schools, acting as the Assistant Principal at Garfield Elementary, and now in her 16th year as Principal at MLK, Jr.

She notes the outstanding support and development that educators receive when they are part of OUSD as a district benefit that really stands out. "OUSD has some of the best professional development (PD) for teachers! When I was a teacher we had district-wide meetings throughout the school year to support you to be an excellent teacher...They brought in excellent speakers to really talk to us about how to maintain and stay in our profession...And then the ongoing PD for principals and assistant principals...that really helps cultivate..because then you know you have support to make it as a principal!"

Groves-Waters is known for paying this level of support and mentorship forward by always being available to newer teachers and by facilitating leadership opportunities for teachers and even students and their parents.

"We have three new teachers that just graduated from college... and they just have that eagerness and willingness to learn and to help their community. ... It's easy to work with people who want to learn and be a part of the educational process," she says.

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Spotlight on Long-Term Leaders



Celia Bermeo

Principal at Fruitvale Elementary

Celia Bermeo is another long time OUSD educator with over 25 years in the district. She now serves as the Principal of Fruitvale Elementary - the very same elementary school she attended and graduated from as a child!

This kind of long-term connection to and deep understanding of a community is invaluable in a school leader. Returning to Fruitvale, "...is definitely bringing me back to my roots..", she says. "We're going to tap into the community. The Dimond District, this is a great neighborhood. Me growing up here, I know this is a great

neighborhood. I love the location... and families that walk to school each and every day. I walked to school each and every day."

Before coming to Fruitvale, Bermeo taught at Parker Elementary, Webster Elementary (now East Oakland Pride) and Chabot Elementary, then became a TSA and finally an assistant principal at Chabot. This breadth of experience at campuses across the city serves her well and informs her leadership today. "I feel like everything I've done for the last 25 years has brought me to this position."

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Spotlight on Teacher Pathways

In the first year of the OakTown Leaders Pre-apprenticeship being moved to specific school sites, **Madison Park Academy** has registered 29 students in 11th and 12th grade as pre-apprentices. This will result in 15% of the students in those grades receiving wrap-around support to take at least two college classes, graduate high school with a state permit in Early Childhood Education, and have the opportunity to begin work in the district right after graduation. Students will also receive the dual enrollment grade boost!



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Community Partner Impact

Alameda First Five

Through technical assistance providers Early Care Education Pathways to Success, the Recruitment & Retention team has been able to work with Alameda First Five to propose funding opportunities for further development of the Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs. This funding will be used to provide wrap around support for participants in the form of case management to ensure access to resources and check ins on social emotional wellbeing, embedded tutoring for success in individual courses, and academic and career counseling in partnership with Peralta colleges.



East Oakland Youth Development Center (EOYDC)/Alder Graduate School of Education (GSE)

For apprenticeship opportunities, the team is partnering with East Oakland Youth Development Center to reach community members identified as “opportunity youth” according to the **COYA grants** definition. EOYDC will be supporting these participants in partnership with OUSD, ensuring that they are able to be successful in the program and as employees of OUSD.



University of California, Berkeley, Research Practice Partnership

As part of the dynamic research practice partnership (RPP) between OUSD and UC Berkeley’s College & Career Alliance Support Network (CCASN), we completed a project in 2023-24 that is going to be featured in the National Network of Education Research Practice Partnerships (NNERPP) annual yearbook. OUSD’s New Teacher Support & Development Team worked closely with a UCB graduate student researcher, Emily Reich, to study the new teacher experience with professional learning in OUSD. We have since used those findings to inform our continuous efforts to develop a strong and coherent system of support for new teachers in OUSD. **Preview the NNERPP Yearbook feature.**



Diverse and Stable Staff

Key Insights

Strengthening Support Systems for Early Career Teachers

To combat the feelings of overwhelm experienced by new teachers due to intense workload and steep learning curves, we have incorporated professional development and support within the work day so they don't have to take on something "extra" in order to get the learning that is most relevant at this stage of their career. This effort has been largely successful, with 217 teachers participating from across 69 schools and overwhelmingly positive feedback from our participants.

Moving forward, our vision is for all first year teachers in OUSD to develop a shared understanding of the concepts, skills, and expectations for early career teachers in OUSD through participation in New Teacher Professional Learning, and for their coaches and school leaders to give aligned direction, feedback, and ongoing support.

When we invest in strong new teacher development from day one, everyone benefits.

Investing in Strong Preparation Models and Grow-Our-Own Pathways

In the first year of the Pre-Apprenticeship, the team recognized the need to provide holistic support for students by trusted adults at the students' site. This led to the program moving to Madison Park Academy to provide opportunity with our easternmost school with more than 80% Latino student population and Skyline High School as the district high school with an Education pathway.

In the first year of the Apprenticeship we are identifying the best practices for supporting our adult learners. Because of the cohort model and wrap around support, the hope was that asynchronous courses would be a viable option. We are seeing the importance of the team leading the development of the relationship with the professor.

As the Oakland Teacher Residency continues to grow and incorporate more current staff, case management of participants is becoming more important. Helping aspiring residents identify what to expect with their academic course load is a focus during this recruitment season.

Learning From and Lifting Up Our Long Term Educators

Through affinity groups and communities of practice, our long term educators are celebrated and valued by their peers, colleagues, and site coaches.

Personalized professional development plans support the ongoing growth of their practice, as well as opportunities for continued growth into greater leadership as experienced educators.



