

WE ARE



HONORING OUR OWN: OUSD AWARDS CEREMONY

AN EVENING DEDICATED
TO CELEBRATING OUTSTANDING STAFF

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

OAKLAND SCOTTISH RITE CENTER

Small Plates Reception – 4:30 pm

Recognition Ceremony – 6:00 pm

HOSTED BY THE TALENT DIVISION

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HONORING OUR OWN 2025 OUSD Employee Recognition Ceremony

SMALL PLATES RECEPTION: 4:30 pm



ENTERTAINMENT

Elmhurst United Middle School Cheer Team and the Skyline High School Jazz Band

RECOGNITION CEREMONY: 6:00 pm

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Tara Gard, Chief Talent Officer



OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent of Schools

Sam Davis, Board President



AWARD PRESENTERS

Rachel Latta

Board Director - District 1

Valarie Bachelor

Vice President & Board Director - District 6

Jennifer Brouhard

Board President & Director - District 2

Clifford Thompson

Board Director - District 7

VanCedric Williams

Board Director - District 3

Maximus Simmons

Oakland High Junior,
Student Board Director

Mike Hutchinson

Board Director - District 4

Michele Vasquez

MetWest Senior,
Student Board Director

Patrice Berry

Board Director - District 5



Greetings and Congratulations to Our Award Winners!

Welcome to our 2025 *Honoring Our Own* celebration. Tonight, we come together to shine a light on the extraordinary dedication, skill, and spirit of our Oakland Unified community. *Honoring Our Own* has always been one of my favorite traditions because it lifts up the heart of our district—our people.

This evening holds special meaning for me as it marks my final *Honoring Our Own* celebration as Superintendent. It is an opportunity to reflect with immense gratitude on the extraordinary work accomplished together—and to say, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Over the past year, our collective efforts have led to significant achievements:

- » **Academic Excellence:** We've increased our graduation rate by nearly 9 percentage points, improved early literacy outcomes across all early grades, and expanded access to rigorous curriculum and dual enrollment opportunities.
- » **Fiscal Stewardship:** After more than two decades, OUSD stands on the brink of exiting state receivership—a testament to the systems we've built and the trust we've worked to gain.

» **Diverse and Stable Staff:** We've strengthened pathways for educators and leaders to grow and stay in Oakland, centering the importance of workforce stability in every phase of our work.

» **Beautiful Schools and Facilities:** We passed a \$735 million facilities bond to complete long-delayed capital projects, and completed a number of renovations and new buildings.

These accomplishments are a direct result of your unwavering commitment to our students and community.

As I reflect on the journey we have traveled together, I am filled with pride and gratitude. Each honoree we celebrate tonight represents the very best of OUSD, and each of you—whether formally recognized tonight or not—contributes to our shared legacy of service, resilience, and student success.

There is no higher honor than being recognized by your peers, those who see your impact every day. Let us take this opportunity to celebrate one another and reaffirm our commitment to the work that matters most: supporting the dreams and potential of every student in Oakland.

Congratulations to our honorees, and thank you for being the heartbeat of our district.

With deep appreciation,

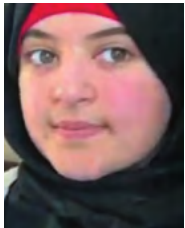
Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent
Oakland Unified School District

2025 AWARDEES



EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award is reserved for OUSD students who are members of Student Leadership in their school and/or at the district level. Student Leadership awardees lead other students toward success, a sense of community, belonging, and strong school culture and take on leadership roles in their classrooms and school environments.



Afrah Abdullah

11th Grade, Castlemont High School

"Afrah is a highly motivated student who embraces new challenges and supports her peers. She demonstrates exceptional commitment in aiding her community, ensuring Yemeni students have access to crucial information and resources, demonstrating her dedication to both personal growth and collective success."



Huang "Katie" Liang

12th Grade, Oakland High School

"Katie maintains a perfect GPA while also excelling in leadership roles. She manages her commitments with remarkable energy and dedication. Katie has served two terms on the Oakland Youth Commission for District 5 and has been a strong force within the Oakland Youth Vote Coalition."



Adelaida Pablo-Ramirez

12th Grade, Fremont High School

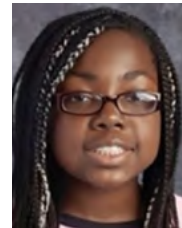
"Adelaida has demonstrated remarkable academic improvement and work ethic. As a student organizer, peer mentor, soccer player, and community advocate, she juggles multiple roles alongside a part-time job. This summer, she will further her goals by joining a Certified Nursing Assistant program."



Maximus Simmons

11th Grade, Oakland High School – Student Director,
Board of Education

"Max exemplifies true leadership. As a passionate advocate for his fellow students and his commitment to Restorative Justice, he has consistently championed the values he holds most dear. He utilizes his role as Student Director to stand up for what matters most, and he does so with integrity and compassion."



Ashley Tchanyoum

11th Grade, Oakland Tech

"Ashley is an exemplary student as well as eloquent speaker. She balances leadership roles in All City Council, Oakland Youth Commission, Lacrosse, Oakland Youth Vote Coalition, and beyond. She shows remarkable dedication and influence and is an individual who will not only serve her fellow OUSD students but will go on to greatly influence and impact others."



Michele Vasquez

12th Grade, MetWest High School – Student Director,
Board of Education

"Michele radiates positivity and genuine warmth, creating a welcoming presence among her peers. An exceptional student, she skillfully balances academic responsibilities, internship, and her leadership role as Student Director. She is watchful and responsive to community-related challenges that impact her fellow students and community and acts with integrity on their behalf."



CLASSIFIED EXCELLENCE AWARD

This award category recognizes exemplary classified school employees who symbolize the profession's contributions and commitment to quality education. These employees are essential to maintaining strong service to schools while making a huge difference in the lives of the students of OUSD.



Noel Benozza

Senior Computer Technician, Technology Services

"Noel's positive attitude and dedication consistently stand out. Always approachable and wearing a smile that instantly puts people at ease, Noel is incredibly responsive, often resolving issues on the spot. On the rare occasion when an immediate solution isn't possible, he offers clear updates on the timeline for resolution."



Karla Maldonado

Para Educator, Oakland International High School

"Karla is our most veteran para educator and is a trusted ally whose impact is felt far beyond the students with IEPs she supports. She can lead an entire class, respond appropriately to challenges as they arise. Former students routinely come back to visit her, demonstrating the strength of her relationships."



Karen Palafox-Gamez

Early Literacy Tutor, Grass Valley Elementary

"Ms. KP joined our community as a parent and became an Early Literacy Tutor. She has diligently learned everything she can about phonics and quickly became an expert for both students and teachers, alike. She has supported hundreds in reaching reading fluency, but more importantly, has built their pride and excitement for reading and learning."



Miguel Rodriguez

Administrative Assistant II, Bilingual, Castlemont High

"Mr. Miguel makes everyone feel cared for and cared about. Parents, teachers, and staff are warmly welcomed and often the front office is filled with laughter. He builds relationships with students, so they go to him for their needs. He is a major component for our increase in attendance data!"



Martha Ronquillo Garcia

Instructional Support Specialist, MetWest High

"Martha has developed trusting relationships with the students, which has increased her efficacy. She is highly reliable and can be trusted to complete her undertakings in a thorough and thoughtful manner; she pays great attention to detail. Her student rapport, work ethic and warm personality have brought great joy to MetWest High."



Margaret Thorp

Administrative Assistant III, Chabot Elementary

"Margaret truly is a remarkable person. I have never come across anyone more dedicated and helpful than she. With over nineteen years in our District, her unwavering support, kindness, and care have touched countless lives. As an incredible administrative assistant, she truly is the heart of our school."



CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR PART 1

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.



PARAPROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Elva Castillo

Paraeducator, Cleveland Elementary

"Ms. Castillo consistently and carefully listens within her environment and responds with incredible depth, patience, creativity, joy, and integrity to both the adults and children she works with. She is a special person in our life; she embodies pretty much the deepest level of empathy you can get and a high level of enlightenment."



SECURITY SERVICES

Alfredo "Mr. Freddy" De La Torre

Noon Supervisor, Manzanita Community School

"There's an intangible quality about Mr. Freddy's presence on the yard, and when he's not there, things feel different, not as solid. He not only keeps the students physically safe, but, equally as important, emotionally safe. Families really trust him as a genuine, fun-loving, respectful person. His attention is always 100% with the students."



TECHNICAL SERVICES

Peter Bugno

Student Information Specialist III, Technology Services

"Family contact ability has improved under Peter's influence. Aeries data touches so many things and directly impacts the student experience, and Peter is an excellent solution architect. His work with the clerical team allows school site front office staff to be better equipped to give families the right answers the first time."



HEALTH & STUDENT SERVICES

Jaliza Collins

College & Career Readiness Specialist, Fremont High

"Jaliza is the connection between a possible idea and an actuality. She works diligently to enlarge the pool of student internships, builds trust, and knows the broadest range of students exceptionally well. With her support, students are being accepted into their preferred colleges, have received financial awards and scholarships, and emotionally, so much more!"



PARENT, FAMILY, COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

This award is reserved for OUSD Community Members, Family Members and/or Parents who have been instrumental in creating the conditions for students to thrive in OUSD schools, and who have been instrumental in shaping District goals and culture and/or school culture and climate. They uphold OUSD values in service of students and families.



Dr. Miriam Hernandez Dimmler

"As PTA President, Dr. Hernandez Dimmler brings so much joy to our Crocker Highlands school community with her warm smile and generous volunteer spirit. She makes everyone feel valued and appreciated for their contributions. As a dedicated parent leader, she is a true partner to our school leadership, always advocating for students and guiding our conversations towards positive student outcomes."



Liliana Hernandez

"Liliana Hernández is a rising leader within the *District English Language Learners Subcommittee*. She has gained respect of both staff and fellow parents because, one by one, she helps others find their voice. She gathers families to join school committees at Manzanita SEED, Roosevelt, and at the district level, ensuring that all communities and experiences are represented."



RocQuel Johnson

"RocQuel Johnson was elected to the *Parent and Student Advisory Committee* in 2015-16; she then served in the *Blueprint Advisory Group*. A current member of the *Foster Youth Advisory Committee*, which she co-founded in 2016, she has laid a strong foundation for student and family leadership in OUSD. She is a public education champion who fully serves the students furthest from opportunity."



Patty Juergens

"Patty Juergens has served on or chaired the *Community Advisory Committee for Special Education* since 2016 and co-leads the *Foster Youth Advisory Committee*. Highlighting the needs of disabled, African American, and foster youth, she holds a steadfast laser focus on interrupting suspensions and exclusionary practices. Patty goes to where the needs are greatest, leading with immense compassion and love."



Caitlin Khurshid

"Caitlin is deeply committed to public education with a passion for inclusivity and vision of a unified Oakland and district. Since 2019, she has served as District 1 representative on the LCAP Parent and Student Advisory Committee, strengthening PSAC's collective leadership through an unwavering dedication to strong communication and shared decision-making. She is truly a leader among leaders."



Lance McGee

"As the Staff Wellness Consultant at Frick United Academy, Lance puts students first by supporting our staff to be our best selves so we can focus on students. He models equity and cultural responsiveness in his interactions with students, parents, and staff. He brings joy to us with his 1-on-1 staff check-ins and all-staff mindful moments."



Sloane Mosely-Young

"Sloane Mosley-Young has helped lift the Montclair Community and keep us all focused on student needs. Sloane helped to spearhead a process of student-centered collaborative budgeting, in which the programs and funding from the PTA went through the same process as the School Site Council. This led to not only smarter budgeting, but most importantly more holistic budgeting, thanks to her leadership."



STUDENT AND FAMILY CHOICE STAFF AWARD

Students from the OUSD community select a staff ally who has been instrumental in creating the conditions for students to be meaningfully engaged in learning, shaping school culture and climate. These adults demonstrate partnership in decisions that affect students for positive change and value the unique and diverse experiences of students in their school community with love, care, compassion, and respect. *This year family and community members also contributed to this category.*



Yaira Abdool

Teacher, Castlemont High

"Ms. Abdool really made me feel special when she sat down next to me and explained everything and really helped me understand. She encourages me to be on task, do my work, and participate during class because learning can help you become more than what you are right now. She is also someone who I can talk to about any situation because I feel welcomed and safe."



Cesar Ayon-Morales

Teacher, Fremont High

"Mr. Ayon makes sure every student gets a chance to speak and encourages people to get out of their comfort zone but would make sure they are okay to do so. He is the leader of a club I am in and will tell us how great of an individual we are for being able to sell stuff and talk to the customers since some of us are introverts."



Derrick Bell

Art Teacher, Montera Middle

"One time I turned in an art piece that I worked really hard on, and he made a very heartwarming video about it on his Instagram. He said I had grown so much. This meant the world to me and my family. He really cares a lot, and my art has improved so much from taking his class. One time, a student presented his art portfolio to the class and Mr. Bell teared up; he was so proud. He is an amazing teacher."



Andria Kemp

Teacher, Emerson Elementary

"Ms. Kemp makes every child feel like her best friend, every parent feel heard and respected. She teaches students the same grace, compassion, kindness, and curiosity that she naturally demonstrates every day. She is more than a teacher; she is a leader, a caregiver, a wise woman and has changed all our lives for the better. We as a family and a school are forever grateful for her."



Emily Macy

Teacher on Special Assignment, Oakland High

"Before having Ms. Macy as a teacher, I struggled with staying focused on my grades and fully applying myself in school. Through AVID, she taught me how to develop a growth mindset, showing me that improvement is always possible with effort. Her positivity, support, and belief in my abilities not only transformed my academic performance but also motivated my personal growth. Her impact has been big."



Xavier Shakur

English and Ethnic Studies Teacher, Oakland Tech

"Mr. Shakur's class has been a complete day maker these last few months. I come in this teacher's class for lunch pretty much every day and he always makes me feel accepted and welcomed. His teaching and work style is amazing, and his humor is even better. He is always keeping it real with the students and never fails to make one smile. He is understanding and empathetic when the time is right and reassuring and serious when needed."



Alicia Simba

T-K Teacher, Prescott Elementary

"Ms. Simba shows up with a deep level of care and rigor. When my son is being clingy in the morning, she is the only one he will go to. She'll give him a hug or a special assignment, like helping with the morning breakfast. On a home visit she gave us practical ways we could support Arthur's learning. She has an amazing way of asking kids to put their hands on their hearts and take a centering breath. She is an outstanding teacher."



Cherokee White

English Teacher, Edna Brewer Middle

"As a student, I dislike it when a teacher doesn't try hard to connect with their students. My English teacher, Miss Cherry, does the exact opposite. There is no way to describe how incredibly loving, funny, caring and joyous she is! No matter the time of day, or if she's having a bad day, she always stays positive and attentive. In 6th grade, we have a final Percy Jackson essay and she helped me and countless other students improve it."



Daniel Alejandro Zanipatin-Fonseca

Math Teacher, Oakland High

"When I was in middle school, I struggled a lot with math and didn't think I'd ever enjoy it. Mr. Zanipatin has completely changed that for me. His help and encouragement made math easier to understand, and his passion for it has actually made me excited about learning it. Now, I even want to take five years of math, which I never thought I'd want to do. I'm grateful for how much he's helped me, and I wouldn't have discovered this love for math without him."



OUSD TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Team Excellence Award honors outstanding teamwork and collaboration within OUSD. Recognizing teams that have demonstrated exceptional performance, innovation, and dedication in achieving shared goals and objectives. Recipients of the Team Excellence Award exemplify the spirit of collaboration, communication, and mutual support, driving positive outcomes and making a significant impact on our success. Through their collective efforts, these teams have achieved remarkable results, surpassed expectations, and contributed to a culture of excellence, inspiring others to strive for excellence in teamwork and innovation.



Francisco Alvarado, Jr.



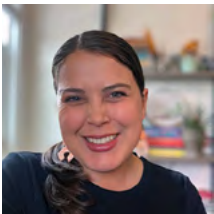
Heather Graham



Brian Gustman



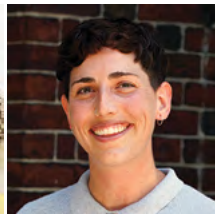
Layne Hamilton



Ashlee Narvaiz



Sandee Simmons



Emily Zanolli

"We deeply appreciate the incredible dedication and resilience of OUSD's Behavioral Health Team within the Community Schools and Student Services Department. The team's commitment to student safety and relationship-building is at the heart of everything they do. Whether responding to student or school crises, establishing partnerships and protocols for high-quality school based behavioral health services, or providing coaching on COST and systems at sites, they do so with a trauma-informed, healing-centered approach that supports both individuals and the broader community. Always available and deeply rooted in care, this team exemplifies what it means to prioritize supporting student well-being, equity, and connection."



CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR PART 2

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.



SKILLED TRADES SERVICES

Bobby Batom

Carpenter, Buildings & Grounds

"Bobby is a great guy. Everyone likes to work with him, and it's not only because he's as knowledgeable as he is. He is a true craftsman; cabinet making is his specialty. Everyone loves working with him because he brings so much joy and laughter to the workplace."



CUSTODIAL & MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Beverly Phillips

Lead Custodian, Burckhalter Elementary

"Beverly Phillips takes pride in our school; every nook and cranny shines, every day. Everything is ultra clean, whether with the sanitizing of the doors or cleaning of floors, classrooms, restrooms or common areas. She is always there, with very little direction needed, and there is nothing she wouldn't do for the children in our school."



FOOD & NUTRITIONAL SERVICES

Jenny Situ

Production Assistant 10, Central Kitchen

"Jenny is a key person on the production floor. If a machine has stopped in production, we're losing money; two minutes saved is like an eternity in a production kitchen. Jenny represents our eyes and ears, ensuring services keep running smoothly. Wherever she's needed, Jenny is there, almost without being asked. She is watchful and proactive."



CLERICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Amparo Ochoa

Program Assistant I, Oakland Adult & Career Education

"Many staff members are limited English speakers who occasionally call with paycheck issues. Amparo doesn't simply pass them on to Payroll; she follows up ensuring they receive support. She understands how important answers are the moment critical issues occur. She goes well beyond her job description to increase students accomplishing their goals."



TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

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.



Kaili Carr

Science Teacher, Coliseum College Prep Academy

"A young teacher meeting an exceptionally high bar, Kaili's ability to integrate writing supports into her class shows a level of instructional expertise far beyond her years. She has taken on most organizational management for both her grade level division and her content Professional Learning Community. She is already coaching peers and is our science PLC lead."



Maketa Daniels

Teacher on Special Assignment,
Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary

"Ms. Daniel's dedication and commitment is shown most especially when students thrive in reading, writing, and leadership. Ms. Daniels established a STEAM learning time for students to explore, invent, and create items supporting the sciences. An extraordinary teacher, Ms. Daniels ensures there is evidence of student learning, and teaching students how to read is her passion."



Teresa Del Real

2nd Grade Teacher, Greenleaf Elementary

"Ms. Del Real cares about each and every one of her students. She makes learning accessible and FUN! A strong advocate for her students, she demonstrates extraordinary commitment to meeting their needs. She is the true definition of a team player. Always willing to help others, whether it's her colleagues or parents, she is compassionate, reflective, supportive, and a leader."



Stephanie Edib

4th Grade Teacher, Acorn Woodland Elementary

"Ms. Edib implements structures that promote self-directed learning. She teaches high-level strategies like goal setting, time management, and problem-solving, enabling students to take ownership of their learning. Gradually releasing responsibility, she moves from guided practice to independent mastery. Whether with humor, celebrations, or enthusiasm she is known for creating a space where students enjoy learning."



Kyle Jackson

Facilitator, Manhood Development Program,
Office of Equity

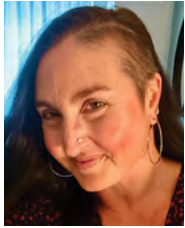
"Mr. Jackson came to our campus and dived right in, building relationships with our Black male youth and others on campus. His passion, dedication and joy have brought about positive change. He initiated *Business Tuesdays*, encouraging students to dress in a professional manner, fostering higher self-esteem and self-image. He also aided in bringing back Skyline's Spring Break HBCU tour."



Son Ah Kang

Self-Contained Pre-K Special Education Teacher,
Montclair Elementary

"Ms. Son Ah is a quiet force of good for every child. Her room is fun; plus she has a deep understanding of the specific student goals and is naturally able to weave individualized skill practice into activities that would be exciting for any pre-school student. Countless students are fundamentally more successful because of the strong foundation she has provided."



Lindsay Krumbein

CCRP Literacy ESL Instructor, Oakland Adult & Career Education

"Lindsay draws upon a theater and creative arts background to craft her literacy-level adult ESL lessons so they are active and accessible. Her students are fully engaged and readily learn the foundational skills necessary to move forward. As a weekly Professional Learning Community facilitator, she has demonstrated keen leadership skills and vision."



Camille LaVoie

Teacher, La Escuelita Elementary

"Ms. LaVoie started as an Early Literacy Tutor just four years ago, quickly transitioned to STIP teacher, and showed so much promise that we were excited for her to step into her own classroom. Now, in just her third year as a full-time classroom teacher, Ms. LaVoie is putting on a teaching master class. She constantly seeks out feedback and opportunities to push her practice and goes all out for her scholars."



Susanne Lynch

Teacher, Hoover Elementary

"Ms. Lynch builds a strong, inclusive classroom culture with high expectations for all students. She provides exceptional support to students with IEPs and shows up every day committed to student learning. Susanne partners effectively with families and is a thoughtful, generous mentor to fellow teachers across the school community."



Da Monica Robinson

CDC Teacher, Lockwood Child Development Center

"Ms. Robinson not only provides a high-quality, engaging, responsive, joyful classroom environment for students, but a structured, highly supportive, growth-oriented program for support staff. Like a highly skilled conductor, she is attentive to everyone's needs and functioning levels. Students are well-prepared for transition into kindergarten and TK. She has created a safe space for fathers to discuss parenting challenges, she is creating intergenerational change!"



Mary Schriener

Eco-Literacy Teacher, Cleveland Elementary

"Ms. Schriener started our eco literacy/garden program decades ago when she realized some of our special education students were not engaged with other students. She has incorporated the healing abilities of nature and gardening which has impacted the entire school. Her vision ensures every child gets to interact with nature, and each grade level gets a cross cultural food celebration with the food they grow."



Johanna Lee Taimanao

1st Grade Teacher, Garfield Elementary

"Ms. Taimanao is an exceptional educator who has consistently produced significant student learning gains, particularly in literacy. She has high expectations for students, fosters a positive, nurturing, engaging, and rigorous classroom environment where students feel valued and motivated to learn. Her collaborative spirit with fellow teachers and willingness to share best practices, support the professional learning spaces at Garfield and in the District!"



Rachel Thomas

Art Teacher, Skyline High

"Seeing Rachel Thomas conduct a class, interact with students, or simply talk in the middle of the classroom is like seeing a Master Class. Everything in her classroom—the screen, *Do Now* board, Class Goals, Agenda, Unit information—all puts the student at the center of all her effort! She is a master at class preparation and delivery. Her classes are "teach well jewels."



Patrick Tooley

3rd Grade Teacher, Manzanita Community School

"Mr. Tooley is an amazing teacher. His patience, delivery and overall presence in the classroom helps to create such a positive experience for his students. He has excellent classroom management and has created a warm culture in his classroom. His teaching style really sets the tone and his students have benefited greatly from how he operates."



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE 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 overall. 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.



Aryn Bowman
Principal, Life Academy

"In her 12 years as a school leader at Castlemont High and Life Academy, Principal Bowman has consistently demonstrated expertise in operations and instruction, contrasting areas of school leadership. A true superstar, she cares deeply, is passionate about her students' future, ensuring that each has what they need to develop the skills, knowledge, and character traits to thrive."



Denise Burroughs
Principal, Carl B. Munck Elementary

"Mrs. Burroughs has created an oasis of excellence at Carl B Munck, especially for students of all backgrounds. Her never-ending curiosity and intellectual engagement have resulted in a corps of dedicated teachers who continue to innovate and increase student learning. Denise has a special heart for students with disabilities. With nearly one third of her student body holding IEPs, she ensures all are welcomed and treated with dignity."



Alesia Eutsler
CDC Site Administrator, Kaiser Early Childhood Center

"Alesia has created a complex, vibrant, integrated school community, a welcoming place for TK, preschool, and preschool special education. Alesia leads the preschool diagnostic team and early learning coaches. Integrating all these different folk into a cohesive school community is not easy. She has tirelessly worked with all stakeholders, fostered growth of her leadership team, and has created a beautiful, multifaceted learning center rooted in equity, joy, and inclusion."



Natasha Flint Moore
Principal, Reach Academy

"Natasha is celebrated for her effective implementation of stewardship. Through masterfully distributed leadership, she empowers teachers in her own school community, cultivates future school and district leaders, and advances educational equity in underserved communities. Her intellectual curiosity, steadfast dedication, and transformative mentorship make her an inspiring and influential figure in OUSD."



Viet-Ly Gonzalez
Principal, Elmhurst United Middle

"Viet-Ly exemplifies hard work, high standards, and unwavering reliability. Her consistent dedication fosters a strong culture of excellence at Elmhurst United. Colleagues admire her wholehearted professionalism and commitment, which positively impact students and staff alike. Viet-Ly is a valued presence and a true asset to the entire school community."



James 'Jake' Hall
Assistant Principal, Young Adult Program

"Since joining OUSD, Jake has brought joy and laughter to his work and sought ways to bring creativity and fun into the classroom. His interpersonal strengths shine! He builds strong, meaningful student and family relationships, keeps student independence and community integration at the core of individual student and site-wide planning. Jake addresses students' emotional and behavioral needs with curiosity and unwavering support."



Raquel Rodríguez Jones
Principal, International Community School

"Raquel excites me in her leadership! Her clarity of vision and purpose as she leads her team makes me so inspired. She's building a team that keeps students at the center because she walks her talk. Raquel is committed to learning in a way that can only lead to better outcomes for our little learners! She embodies Kids First in the Flesh!"



Staci Ross-Morrison

Principal, Dewey Academy High

"Principal Ross-Morrison is a principal's principal. She takes great care to know all her students and staff. She continually demonstrates exceptional effort on behalf of the Dewey community and is always available and responsive. Her commitment to ensuring students receive the best services possible is evident as you walk onto her campus; you can feel and see the personal touch she puts into what she does every day!"



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 improvements to their work that visibly improve how we support Students, Teachers, Families, Schools, and fellow employees.



Marilu Boytes

Business Manager, English Language Learner and Multilingual Achievement

"Marilu is the magic that makes it possible for ELLMA to provide quality service to schools, educators, families, and students. Marilu holds tremendous institutional knowledge and knows how to get things done in our complex district. She is relentless in ensuring key work is moved forward to completion. And most importantly, she does her exemplary work with kindness and grace."



Roxanne De La Rocha

Staff Attorney, Legal

"In the face of significant legal staffing challenges, Roxanne has managed to stay responsive and helpful. While she has deep competency in education law, she also cares for our students. With empathy and poise, she balances the obligations and interests of the District with the rights of students. Roxanne collaborates well with others and seeks feedback to inform the best possible next steps in really challenging situations."



Rene Garcia

Program Manager, Attendance & Discipline, Community Schools & Student Services

"With professionalism, empathy and integrity, Rene oversees facilitation of expulsion hearings. His ability to navigate sensitive situations ensures fairness and clarity will prevail. Additionally, he remains present for families during challenging times, offering them support, understanding and a clear pathway forward. He balances compassion with firm decision making. Rene is a reliable resource for school sites, ensuring all parties feel heard and respected."



Cynthia Harding

Analyst, Custodial Services & Facilities, Custodial Service

"Cynthia's dedication, professionalism, and unwavering support have significantly impacted the OUSD community, showcasing excellence in both service and leadership. Cynthia ensures OUSD schools have proper custodial coverage each morning. Highly professional, she dispatches custodians during emergencies and responds to calls around the clock. Cynthia places student health, cleanliness, and safety at the forefront of everything she does."



Jennifer Koelling

Network Partner, Elementary Network 2

"Jen K exemplifies true partnership through her collaborative, self-starting spirit. Her talent for building effective systems and solving problems makes us a dynamic team. Jen consistently sees, honors, and supports principals with exceptional dedication and integrity. Her unwavering commitment, strategic thinking, and accountability elevate the work of everyone around her."



Theresa Lozac'h

Director, Early Childhood Special Education

"In any situation—macro or micro—Theresa immediately understands the full context, considers all angles, and, if needed, identifies a change. She encourages everyone, from new-to-school almost-toddlers to veteran educators, to bring their full selves to the table, leading by example as her full, authentic self. Under her leadership, I feel understood, appreciated, heard, and cared for; she gives clear guidance and directives in a context of support."



Ronald Morris, Jr.

Office Manager, Labor Relations

"Ron exemplifies what it means to be a multi-talented professional. A true jack-of-all-trades, he skillfully juggles his responsibilities with precision and professionalism. In his capacity as Labor Relations Office Manager, he plays a critical role in supporting labor operations across the District while efficiently supporting tracking systems, managing complex calendaring, assisting with *Requests for Information*, coordinating billing, and providing essential data to union partners, among countless other duties!"



Madeline Noonan

Program Manager, Special Projects, Talent Division

"In under two years, Madeline Noonan achieved something extraordinary: she designed, secured accreditation for, and launched the OUSD Clear Administrative Services Credential (CASC) Program. This initiative, now serving its first cohort, reflects her deep commitment to empowering OUSD leaders with meaningful, relevant, and accessible support, rooted in collaboration and learning with other districts and CASC programs, and within OUSD. Her ability to listen, adapt, and align diverse perspectives is key to the program's success."



Tien Truong

Financial Accountant III, Office of Senior Business Officer

"Tien's level of responsiveness is absolutely over the top. She has trained our team and given us tools and examples to help discern where our funds stand. Unbelievably, she oversees the Accounts Receivable for the entire District! She is a stickler for detail, an expert at follow through. When we first began working on our budgets, we were all pretty clueless. Tien has shepherded us all with grace, kindness, and humor."



Ana Villalobos

Program Manager Career and Technical Education, Linked Learning

"Ana exemplifies the core values of OUSD through her unwavering commitment to equity, excellence, and student success. At MetWest, she profoundly impacted students' lives as both an advisor and internship coordinator, fostering deep relationships and creating transformative, real-world opportunities for growth, empowerment, and lifelong learning among the young people she serves."



TEACHERS OF THE YEAR 2025-2026

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.



Maria De La Fuente-Moreno

3rd Grade Dual Immersion Teacher, Esperanza Elementary

"Maria's class is a model of effective systems and protocols that ensure equitable engagement and participation across multiple language levels, and she is known for having a deep commitment to understanding students' needs and creating an environment where they feel deeply seen, supported, and challenged. Students learn to practice empathy, show determination, and maintain a culture of caring for one another. Ultimately, she helps them understand and facilitate responsibility for their learning."



Aly Kronick

9th-12th Grade Reading and Literacy Teacher, Oakland International High

"Aly is known for exceptional competence, follow through, and the care she brings to her work. She is literally on a quest to find the most effective ways to teach high school-aged newcomers and has built much of her career appreciating the power of students to drive their own thinking and learning. She holds herself to high expectations, determined to provide each with a learning environment that honors and allows them to feel success as multilingual learners."



Krista Toumi

6th Grade Science Teacher, Roosevelt Middle School

"Krista makes real world connections for students, allowing them to experiment and fail in safe ways that encourage their love and curiosity for science. Whether trying out new instructional moves, learning new science content, or building diverse partnerships, she is tireless. She builds strong classroom culture and forms meaningful family relationships. Krista holds students to high expectations. She is magical in her ability to deeply connect with students and make them feel secure to learn."



LIFETIME EDUCATOR AWARD

The person receiving this award embodies and exemplifies the core values of the Oakland Unified School District. They reflect the values of Equity, Students' First, Excellence, Cultural Responsiveness, Integrity, and Joy in their commitment to the students, families, educators, and communities in Oakland Unified.



Patricia Bryant

Instructional Aide, Special Education, Markham Elementary

"For over forty-six years, Ms. Bryant has brought education and joy to literally thousands of children. She is an outstanding and dedicated educator who has a profound understanding of her subject matter. Ms. Bryant meets students where they are and manages to continually maintain high standards. She is kind, professional, and a pleasure to work with. Our students enjoy the time spent learning with her!"



Ann Rugtj

Instructional Aide CDC, Bella Vista Child Development Center

"Ann is one of the kindest, warmest people I've ever met. She genuinely gives her heart to our preschool children and her team at Bella Vista. It continues to be an honor working with such an amazing team member and wonderful human being. Words really cannot express the difference she has made in so many of our lives. We are so grateful that she has chosen our children and us!"



SUPERINTENDENT'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

As Superintendent, Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell selects her recognition award 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.



DeAnna Haley

Instructional Support Specialist, Oakland Tech

"DeAnna Haley is the heart of the Special Education classroom in which she works. Besides providing great academic and functional support, she cooks meals, arranges special events, attends celebrations with students and their families, and builds a relationship of trust and care with each student. Her consistency and support benefit students every day."



i am OUSD EXCELLENCE AWARD

The person receiving this award embodies and exemplifies the core values of the Oakland Unified School District. They reflect the values of Equity, Students' First, Excellence, Cultural Responsiveness, Integrity, and Joy in their commitment to the students, families, educators, and communities in Oakland Unified.



Melisha Linzie

Specialist, District Family Engagement –
Young Adult Program

"Melisha Linzie has dedicated 34 years of exceptional service to Oakland Unified School District, beginning her journey in 1991. Over the course of her career, she has supported students with disabilities in a variety of impactful roles, including Instructional Assistant, Paraeducator, and now as a Specialist, District Family Engagement in the Young Adult Program.

A proud graduate of Oakland public schools, Melisha's educational journey reflects her lifelong connection to the community she serves. She attended Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, Santa Fe Elementary, Verdese R. Carter Middle School (now International High School), and graduated from the historic Oakland Technical High School.

Melisha is deeply rooted in OUSD's mission to serve every student with equity and compassion. Her career is marked not only by her unwavering dedication to students and families, but also by her commitment to ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and respectfully across the District. In addition to her work with students, Melisha has been a strong and consistent advocate for workers' rights. She has been a powerful voice in labor leadership. During her time with AFSCME, she served on the Executive Board, Treasurer, First Vice President, and ultimately President. Upon her promotion to Specialist, Melisha transitioned to SEIU, where she continued her advocacy as Secretary and served as First Vice President during the 2023–24 school year. Her leadership has helped shape a more just and supportive workplace for countless OUSD employees. In addition to her professional impact,

Melisha's legacy reflects the best of OUSD – care, advocacy, and unwavering service to the community. Her years of dedication and leadership have left a lasting impact on our district, and we are proud to honor her as a true embodiment of what it means to be "i am OUSD."



LEGACY LEADERSHIP AWARD

With Deepest Gratitude: Honoring Superintendent Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell



On behalf of the entire Oakland Unified School District community, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to Superintendent Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell for her extraordinary leadership, unwavering commitment, and deep-rooted love for Oakland's students, families, and staff.

As a third-generation Oakland educator and former OUSD student, Superintendent Dr. Johnson-Trammell has dedicated her career to serving the community that shaped her. From starting as a classroom teacher to serving as a principal, Associate Superintendent, Network Superintendent, Interim Superintendent, and ultimately permanent Superintendent, her journey reflects a deep care and enduring connection to Oakland and OUSD. Her tenure as superintendent—spanning exactly eight years—represents one of the most consequential and stabilizing eras in the district's history.

Throughout her superintendency, Superintendent Dr. Johnson-Trammell guided OUSD through profound challenges and transformational change. Her steady hand and clear moral compass anchored the District through a global pandemic, labor actions, enrollment shifts, and complex financial realities—always with a student-centered focus.

Under her leadership, OUSD made historic strides in alignment with the District's strategic priorities:

Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade

- » Expanded early literacy programs to close opportunity gaps and uplift student outcomes across all grade levels.
- » Implemented dual language programs to support bilingualism and biliteracy among students.
- » Collaborated with community partners to provide targeted literacy interventions and resources.

Supporting Empowered Graduates

- » Increased graduation rates and A-G completion rates significantly, ensuring more students are college and career ready.
- » Developed career pathways and internship opportunities to provide real-world experiences for students.
- » Enhanced support systems for students transitioning to post-secondary education or the workforce.

Creating Joyful Schools

- » Invested in joyful, well-resourced campuses—adding vibrant playgrounds, wellness centers, and site-based supports that enrich the daily experience of learning.
- » Promoted inclusive school cultures that celebrate diversity and foster a sense of belonging for all students.
- » Implemented restorative practices to build positive relationships and reduce disciplinary disparities.

Growing a Diverse and Stable Staff

- » Advanced compensation agreements and recruitment strategies that honor the critical role of teachers and staff in student success.
- » Provided professional development and mentorship programs to support staff growth and retention.
- » Focused on hiring practices that reflect the rich diversity of the Oakland community.

Fiscal Solvency and Operational Excellence

- » Led the district through the successful payoff of its \$100 million state loan and the completion of the Fiscal Systems Audit—positioning OUSD to formally exit state receivership for the first time in more than 20 years.
- » Improved financial systems and accountability, ensuring responsible stewardship of resources.
- » Strengthened partnerships with community-based organizations and civic leaders to support district initiatives.

These milestones are not merely achievements on paper—they reflect Superintendent Dr. Johnson-Trammell's vision of an Oakland where every student has access to a joyful, rigorous, and equitable public education. Her legacy will live on through the students she's inspired, the educators she's uplifted, and the systems she's strengthened for generations to come.

We thank you, Superintendent Dr. Johnson-Trammell, for your servant leadership, your fierce belief in Oakland's potential, the concrete actions and results accomplished, and the compassion with which you've served every member of this community. You have left an indelible mark on this district and on all of us who had the honor of working alongside you.

With respect and admiration,
The Oakland Unified School District Community

ENTERTAINMENT

Tonight’s entertainment is provided by the Elmhurst United Middle School Cheer Team and the Skyline High School Jazz Band.

Skyline High School Jazz Band

The Skyline High School music program prides itself on using music as a tool to provide a rigorous education for all students and as a vehicle for creating and interacting with our community. Our award-winning jazz band is excited to be a part of this community centered event that Honors our Own.

Carson Proudfoot	Duc Duong Hoang Nguyen	Siris Bradshaw
Moss Rieben	Keith Barnes	August Balquist
Micah Ogden	Mario Gavidia	Casey Pineda

Elmhurst United Cheer team

The Elmhurst United Cheer team was started in 2018 and has been thriving ever since. Elmhurst United Cheerleaders display leadership, respect, and academic excellence every day. The team has been undefeated at OAL Cheer competitions including Battle of the Bay for four years in the hip hop and show cheer categories. After fundraising all year, the team also won third place at JAMZ 2025 Cheer and Dance Nationals in the hip hop category this year! Next year, they are pursuing first place under coaches Eryn Swarn, Shawn Hawkins, and Samara Atkins. Team members include:

Karen Pablo Perez	Kylie Stanley	Brooklyn Revis
Maliya Tottingham	London White	Kamani Thompson
Melissa Molina Romero	Alondra Galvan	Aujanæ White
Marley Stanley	Jayleen Ruiz	Ari Favorite



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

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