



## NEWS FROM DIRECTOR JODY LONDON

MARCH 2010

### Parents Across North Oakland Working Together

On Saturday, February 27, public school parents and community members from across North Oakland – indeed, across the City – gathered at Emerson Elementary School for a workshop on fostering family engagement at our public schools. You can find an article about the meeting at <http://oaklandlocal.com/article/oakland-unified-school-district-works-draw-community>

Coming out of the meeting, six sub-groups are working to develop various initiatives:

- **Organize parent leaders district-wide** – create a city-wide venue for parent leaders to come together to exchange ideas and information, and develop joint activities. Kind of like a district-wide PTA.
- **Centralize fundraising tips and wish lists** – establish a web site where parents can exchange information about what they are working on. For example, “our school is considering hosting a walk-a-thon, can you tell us how your school has done this and what has worked best?” This site also would be a place where schools could post wish lists for donations of time, money, and things (aka, supplies).
- **Breakfast Meetings for Parents** – develop a tip sheet for hosting successful breakfast gatherings for parents.
- **Sister Schools** – Find 4-5 pairs of interested schools and work on 2 projects: (1) Fundraising, and (2) Curricular, with teachers and students
- **Education Foundation** – Research what it would take to have a non-profit education foundation in Oakland that raises funds for all the schools in the City. Many other nearby cities and towns enjoy this type of support (e.g. Berkeley, Albany, Alameda, San Francisco, etc.).
- **Build connections between K-12 schools in OUSD** – Strengthen connections between elementary, middle, and high schools.

If you would like to get involved in any of these, please contact me ([jody.london@ousd.k12.ca.us](mailto:jody.london@ousd.k12.ca.us), 510/459-0667). We will meet next on Saturday, April 24, 9 – 11 a.m., at Peralta Elementary, 460 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, to report on progress and talk about next steps.

## **New Policy Will Help School Gardens**

On March 10, 2010, the School Board adopted a vegetation management policy that outlines what types of support school sites can expect from OUSD's Department of Buildings and Grounds for school gardens. The policy was developed jointly by OUSD's Garden Council and the Department of Buildings and Grounds. It was my pleasure to provide leadership for this effort. You can find the policy at:

<http://ousd.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=531115&GUID=AE9E83CE-A6B0-40B6-986D-FA961748CC35&Options=&Search=>

For more information about the OUSD Garden Council, which is a great resource for meeting others who are growing gardens in Oakland schools, contact Anne Tracy-Valva, OUSD's Garden Coordinator, at [Anne.Tracy-valva@ousd.k12.ca.us](mailto:Anne.Tracy-valva@ousd.k12.ca.us), (510) 879-8211.

## **Board and Superintendent Begin Strategic Planning on March 27**

On Saturday, March 27, from 1 – 4 p.m., Superintendent Tony Smith and the School Board will hold the first of several meetings to discuss a Strategic Plan for Oakland Unified. As you know, funding for public education is dropping precipitously; for 2010-2011, Oakland Unified needs to cut \$40 million from our unrestricted fund and \$45 million from our restricted fund. There is general agreement that we need to restructure to accommodate our current enrollment of 38,000 students in neighborhood schools, down from a high of 55,000 students in 1999. Better aligning our resources, both personnel and facilities, will allow us to continue to improve educational opportunities for children, have the right number of staff, and pay them better. The meeting will be held at the OUSD Administration Building, 1025 Second Avenue.

## **Support the Oakland Marathon With a Twilight 5K Run/Walk on March 27**

On Saturday, March 27, 6:30 p.m., I and Director Jumoke Hinton Hodge will be running the 5K precursor to the Oakland Marathon. The course goes around Lake Merritt which, if you haven't been there lately, is looking really lovely these days. This is a great opportunity to welcome the marathon back to Oakland, build community, and model for our children the fun and value of physical activity. Even though running is not my favorite form of exercise, I think it will be fun to be part of the excitement, and to participate with some of my fellow School Board members, staff, and my family. Director Hodge and I actually have issued a challenge to everyone in the OUSD family to join us. If you don't want to run, you can walk. For more information and to register, go to [www.oaklandmarathon.com](http://www.oaklandmarathon.com).