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By	



OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of the Board of Education

To: Board of Education
From: Tony Smith, Superintendent

Subject: **District Submitting Grant Proposal**

ACTION REQUESTED:

Approval and support by the Board of Education of District applicant submitting grant proposal for OUSD schools for fiscal years 2013-2014 to accept same, if granted, in whole or in part, pursuant to the terms and conditions thereof and to submit amendments thereto, for the grant year, if any.

BACKGROUND:

Grant proposal for OUSD schools for the 2013-2014 fiscal years was submitted for funding as indicated in the chart below. The Grant Face Sheet and grant proposal packets are attached.

File I.D #	Backup Document Included	Type	Recipient	Grant's Purpose	Time Period	Funding Source	Grant Amount
13-1499	Yes	Grant	Oakland Unified School District	TO support a transitional leadership structure for the two elementary schools, New Highland Academy and Rise Community School, which share the Highland campus in East Oakland	July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014	S.H. Cowell Foundation	\$182,466.00

DISCUSSION:

The district created a Grant Face sheet process to:

- Review proposed grant projects at OUSD sites and assess their contribution to sustained student achievement
- Identify OUSD resources required for program success

OUSD received a Grant Face Sheet and a completed grant proposal for the program listed in the chart by the school.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total amount of grants will be provided to OUSD schools from the funders.

- Grants valued at: \$182,466.00

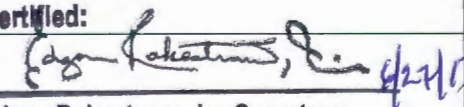
RECOMMENDATION:

Approval and support by the Board of Education of District applicant submitting a grant proposal for OUSD schools for fiscal years 2013-2014 to accept same, if granted, in whole or in part, pursuant to the terms and conditions thereof and to submit amendments thereto, for the grant year, if any.

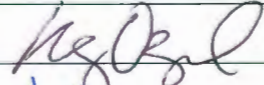
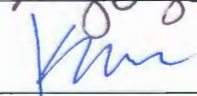
ATTACHMENTS: Grant Face Sheet, Proposal

OUSD Grants Management Face Sheet 2012-13

Title of Grant: Restructure Leadership at Highland Neighborhood Schools	Funding Cycle Dates: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014
Grant's Fiscal Agent:	Grant Amount for Full Funding Cycle: \$182,466
Funding Agency: S.H. Cowell Foundation	Grant Focus: Full Service Community Schools
List all School(s) or Department(s) to be Served: New Highland Academy and Rise Community School	

Information Needed	School or Department Response
How will this grant contribute to sustained student achievement or academic standards?	This grant will enable the Campus Director – a new position that the District is creating in response to the needs at this campus -- to effect a positive transformation of school culture by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restoring norms of safety and cooperation to classrooms, hallways and the school yard; • revitalizing and refocusing professional development and collaboration among teachers within and across the schools; • initiating partnerships to ease students' transitions to middle school The campus will be transformed into a Full Service Community School.
How will this grant be evaluated for impact upon student achievement? (Customized data design and technical support are provided at 1% of the grant award over and above the indirect rate.)	Schools will demonstrate improvements in discipline and climate, organizational performance and engagement, indicators of student academic achievement, and indicators of student and family engagement.
Does the grant require any resources from the school(s) or district? If so, describe.	No.
Have you included the required 4.57% for indirect costs i.e. administrative support, evaluation data, financial reporting, and indirect services?	Yes
Will the proposed program take students out of the classroom for any portion of the school day?	No
Who is the contact managing and assuring grant compliance? (Include contact's name, address, phone number, email address.)	Principal Liz Ozol 8521 A Street Oakland, CA 94621 (510) 729-7723 liz.ozol@ousd.k12.ca.us <div style="text-align: right;"> Certified:  Edgar Rakestraw, Jr., Secretary Board of Education </div>

Applicant Obtained Approval Signatures:

Entity	Name/s	Signature/s	Date
Principal	Liz Ozol		6/10/13
Department Head (e.g. for school day programs or for extended day and student support activities)	Kimi Kean		6/10/13

Grant Office Obtained Approval Signatures:

Entity	Name/s	Signature/s	Date
Fiscal Officer	Vernon Hal		
Superintendent	Maria Santos 6-17-2013	Tony Smith	

An Imperative for Change at the Highland Neighborhood Schools: A Proposal to Restructure Leadership and Build a Full-Service Community Campus

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) respectfully requests a \$182,466 grant to support a transitional leadership structure for the two elementary schools, New Highland Academy and Rise Community School, which share the Highland campus in East Oakland. Resources provided by the Cowell grant will enable the Campus Director – a new position that the District is creating in response to the needs at this campus – to affect a positive transformation of school culture by:

- restoring norms of safety and cooperation to classrooms, hallways and the school yard;
- revitalizing and refocusing professional development and collaboration among teachers within and across the schools;
- initiating partnerships to ease students' transitions to middle school;

We envision this transformation as at least a two-year process, and we regard it as *both* a vital intervention to improve outcomes for students in the East Oakland-Highland neighborhood *and* an opportunity to pioneer a new approach to leadership for our most challenging school environments. This request is for the first year of the initiative, in the 2013-14 school year.

The success of this initiative will be measured in three ways:

1. Indicators of increasing engagement in teaching and learning;
2. Indicators of improving organizational performance; for example, the clarity of the instructional program and the strength of systems for professional growth;
3. Indicators of improving student achievement.

The new district investment at the Highland campus centers on a transitional leadership model anchored by Liz Ozol, the successful, founding principal of New Highland. The new investment aims to accelerate improvements in the school culture and instructional program at Rise, while improving outcomes and leveraging resources for common needs across the campus. This pilot effort provides the district an opportunity to learn from an innovative restructuring model that builds on existing community assets and engages the community in the improvement process. This effort sustains the historical small schools reform which produced the two-school campus, while acknowledging that the strategy produced schools of varying quality and outcomes. If successful, the District will have much to learn from this effort in our on-going work to build a system of high quality schools across Oakland.

Our Current Realities

The two Highland campus schools together serve 640 students all of whom are eligible for the federal free school meals program. Demographics differ slightly by school:

At NHA: 84% are Latino, 15% are African American, and 79% are English learners.

At RISE: 62% are Latino, 30% are African American, and 62 % are English learners.

New Highland Academy (NHA)

- NHA is characterized by stability of staff and leadership, a focus on integrating arts across the curriculum and integration of reading and writing with hands-on science investigations. Since opening in 2006, NHA has posted significant gains in academic outcomes, although results ticked downward in 2012, the last year for which data are available. The founding principal, Liz Ozol, has continued with the school for the past seven years. Aija Simmons, 5th grade teacher at NHA, was recently recognized by the District with an Elementary Teacher Excellence Award. The 2012 Academic Performance Index (API) for NHA was 719.

Rise Community School (Rise)

- Rise, founded in 2005, has had four principals in eight years and is in a state of crisis. The daily life of the school is characterized by school climate challenges. There are frequent student fights, students leaving the classroom without permission, frequent defiance of adult authority and 5-10 office referrals per day. Currently Rise staff have a reactive approach to student behavior (100+ students per month sent to the office by their teachers), inconsistent implementation of classroom management strategies by teachers, declining enrollment and sharp rises and dips in achievement from one year to the next. The 2012 API for Rise was 654. Classroom observations indicate a lack of coherent instructional practice despite District investment in extended professional learning in the area of mathematics.

Cross-Campus

- Both schools operate with a full-time principal and teachers on special assignment (TSA's), who help with administrative issues and student discipline but do not hold administrative credentials that enable them to evaluate teachers or perform other leadership functions. However, there is severe disparity in program quality between the two schools, both in terms of instruction and in terms of behavioral norms, conflict management, social support for learning and other elements of what we refer to here as "school climate."
- Recently both schools collaborated in proposing a shared Family Resource Center, which has been funded by Cowell through the Lincoln Child Center for the 2012-13 school year. The FRC coordinator, hired in February, has been actively working to engage families from both schools. She reports that she sees a parallel disparity in the situations of families at the two schools. In general, NHA parents come for educational and growth activities (nutrition class, healing circle/emotional support) whereas Rise parents come more often seeking support with a crisis or emergency situation.
- There is limited collaboration between the schools, mostly related to schedules and shared space. However, a group of NHA teachers have participated for three years in a teacher inquiry group through the Mills (College) Teacher Scholars. Two New Highland teachers are now in leadership roles, planning and facilitating Mills Scholar meetings, and this year several Rise teachers are participating as well.

OUSD East Oakland Region 3

- NHA and Rise both sit within the Regional structure that includes 19 elementary schools and 5 middle schools in East Oakland. The regions were organized to facilitate greater collaboration and alignment between elementary and middle schools. Through the regional structure, there has been a significant investment in breaking down the barriers between schools and create opportunities for leaders to learn from one another, including multi-year efforts to engage principals in small teams to learn from one another and visit one another's schools.
- Regional Executive Officer Kimi Kean, who was formerly a teacher and principal in East Oakland, has been a key partner in conceptualizing the Highland transitional leadership model and building district support for this pilot effort. In addition to co-writing the grant proposal to Cowell, she has assisted in recruiting efforts for the new Assistant Principals and is fully committed to supporting the Highland effort.

Background History

- *New Small Schools*

Historically, many Oakland schools serving high poverty communities, such as the Highland community, were overcrowded, with 1,000 or even 1,500 students enrolled, and were organized around a year-round calendar and a system of "roving teachers." This depersonalized environment contributed to extraordinarily low educational outcomes for children at schools such as Highland. As a response, in the early 2000s OUSD undertook a radical effort to create smaller schools and a decentralized governance system that transferred many responsibilities from the District to the schools. OUSD sponsored a process of in-house "incubation" in partnership with New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS). Aspiring leaders were picked for their experience, disposition and commitment to high quality education for low income students of color, and given rigorous training to prepare them to lead without excuses under adverse conditions. These principals then engaged in a year-long new school planning process with a design team comprised of teachers, parents and community members.

A key feature of the OUSD plan was to sub-divide large, anonymous schools characterized by very low student achievement, chaotic school environments and high staff turnover. In the same year that NHA opened alongside Rise, 11 other new elementary and middle schools opened on six shared campuses, and that process was replicated on still more campuses over several years.

Products of this intensive planning process, Rise Community School opened in 2005 and New Highland Academy opened in 2006. The student body remained more or less the same, and included many children of parents and grandparents who had attended Highland Elementary and still lived in the part of East Oakland known as "Elmhurst." However, several key components were not the same, as each school designed a unique vision with an accompanying theory of action, i.e. the guiding principles to realize the vision.

Rise became an “expeditionary learning” school in which thematic units are designed with real-world experiences as an integral part of the learning process. The units start with an overarching question and students conduct research and field work as methods to build knowledge.

NHA became an arts-focused school. All students at New Highland receive instruction in visual arts and dance, and the general education teachers collaborate with the visual arts teacher to create arts-integrated units where, for example, kinder students studying plants and insects create a multi-media mural of a garden with anatomically correct depictions of flowers and insects.

Over time, other disparities have come into play, making the Highland campus “a tale of two schools.”

- *Disparities*

For one, on all the OUSD campuses that split into two schools, one school retained the original identifying code used by the California Department of Education. As a result, although both schools were equally qualified to receive State funding based on students’ needs, only NHA received the funds. These funds were linked to several conditions, one of which was limiting class size to 20 students; as a result, late-enrolling students could be assigned to Rise, but not to NHA. It can be challenging for teachers to integrate students assigned at midyear because expectations and relationships are formed at the beginning of the year. Moreover, students who change schools after the school year has started often are distressed by family instability and transition.

Importantly, while NHA has benefitted from stable leadership, Rise has experienced multiple leadership transitions, with the founding principal leaving after two years. In total, Rise has had four principals in eight years, making it difficult to maintain a coherent school culture and program or to sustain a focus on school improvement.

Nonetheless, the “tale” of Rise has included notable gains in achievement. In 2010, Rise was recognized for a gain of 60 points on the State Academic Performance Index (API), which included striking gains for African American students, in particular. Since then, however, two years of dips in achievement have erased the earlier gains. Rise is currently one of the two lowest performing elementary schools in East Oakland.

Families have also begun to demonstrate their discontent with Rise. Despite a newly constructed, multi-million dollar school building (another stark contrast to NHA, which still occupies the original midcentury school building), enrollment declined significantly in 2012, which contributed to several difficult consolidations of teaching positions that had negative ripple effects across Rise. Rise classes are large, with an average of 27 students per class.

Observations of classroom instruction and school culture further underscore the rationale for change at Rise. During morning line-up, adults provide conflicting directions to students on priorities and expectations. In multiple classrooms, there is a lack of clearly planned and delivered instruction including the first 40-50 minutes of the instructional day spent on “busy work” for students while teachers work at desks preparing materials. During the “busy work,” students were sent to the office on referrals with no interventions or effective redirection of behavior. The current reality in multiple classrooms at Rise is that neither effective socio-emotional nor academic learning routines are in place to support students.

On the other side of the campus, housed in the older buildings, a tale of a different school community provides a hopeful contrast to Rise. New Highland Academy has benefitted from the steady leadership of its founding principal, Liz Ozol. NHA, founded as an integrated arts school with a focus on family engagement and offering a Spanish bilingual program has been lauded as one of Oakland’s most improved elementary schools. Over the past seven years, the API for NHA has improved by an average of 27 points per year. Under Ms. Ozol’s leadership, New Highland teachers have grown into a stable, committed professional team who work toward deepening a common vision of instruction. The daily life of the school is characterized by strong and positive relationships between adults and students. At New Highland, significant investment has been made in building a healthy school culture including common agreements for behavioral norms, opportunities for student recognition and leadership, and high engagement in classrooms.

- *Challenges in Common*

Despite some successes at NHA, the students and families at the campus face significant obstacles in realizing our vision of community schools and thriving students who are prepared for college and career. One area of significant challenge is in the transition to middle school. Students from the Highland campus transition to six different middle schools in OUSD, with some -- mainly from NHA -- leaving for charter schools. As a result of recent State budget cuts, there are limited resources for supporting students and families in making informed choices about middle school. Family engagement also declines significantly in middle school, which presents another barrier to long-term educational success for students.

In addition, the campus is located in a particularly violent area of Oakland. Last spring, shooting during the school day resulted in a lockdown and a bullet passing through the window of a New Highland classroom. During the winter of 2012, a Rise grandmother and school volunteer was killed by a stray bullet during an exchange of shots at 85th Avenue and International Boulevard, two blocks from the campus. This January, a New Highland class on a walking field trip to the 81st Avenue library was caught in the middle of a gun-battle in which more than 50 shots were fired. We have had more lockdowns this spring, including when a task force descended on a neighboring home to apprehend a felon during school hours. The sense of insecurity and the effects of trauma stemming from the intense violence in the Highland community provide a glimpse into the depth of the social and educational challenges that we face in our commitment to changing conditions and outcomes for the Highland community.

At the campus, Cowell has made numerous investments that have helped us, NHA especially, to cope with these challenges.

- *Campus Partners*

Through their association with New Leaders for New Schools, NHA and Rise were able to engage the support of Partners in School Innovation (PSI) in 2008. PSI provided coaching and facilitation of teachers' grade level meetings. Their coaches also served as valuable thought partners to the principals. When the grant obtained through New Leaders for New Schools ended in 2010, a Cowell grant enabled the partnership to continue. PSI supported teachers to follow a "cycle of inquiry" in which they collectively agreed on lesson objectives, designed an assessment that would measure whether students met the objective, and then designed the lesson(s) to teach the material. In the following week(s), teachers would share results of the assessments to identify which students had mastered the objectives, learn from each others' successes and challenges, and plan to reteach those students who hadn't mastered the objectives.

In 2010, due to steady gains in test scores for all student groups, New Highland was exited from Federal "Program Improvement" sanctions. At this point, there was a mutual decision to terminate the relationship with PSI based on the premise that teachers had internalized the inquiry process as a driver for continuous improvement. Instead, NHA asked Cowell to fund "in-house" coaching by teacher-leaders, as well as release days (by paying for substitutes) for teacher's planning and an additional monthly professional development session. Although in-house coaching and professional development were well received, our test scores at the end of that year showed a plateau in student achievement. Our API rose only 3 points.

Cowell also funded Mills Teacher Scholars which offered an opportunity for interested teachers to work with colleagues from across-grade levels to collaboratively collect and analyze classroom data and systematically track focal student progress on their learning goals. Teachers met once a month to share their progress. As teachers deepened their understanding of how their students were thinking and gained clarity on the learning goals they changed their practice to better meet their students' needs. At the end of the year teachers shared their inquiry work with the entire staff.

The Mills Teacher Scholars program has had a tangible positive effect at New Highland. The teachers who self selected to participate in MTS are extremely reflective and generally have better student outcomes than the rest of staff. They are respected by the rest of staff and are listened to and trusted for their expertise. I have observed that MTS inquiry work has led to a deepening of teacher practice, understanding between the nexus of practice and authentic assessment. In addition, the early adopters of MTS are being supported to facilitate the inquiry work of the group. This is a positive step toward building ground-up sustainable teacher leadership at the campus. The research on explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies with gradual release to students done by these teachers several years ago was

adopted by the Instructional Leadership Team (principal + grade level representatives) and implemented school-wide. Our anecdotal data show that students are more capable of engaging independently and making meaning with a challenging text. This year's research on how strategic writing practices further greater scientific understanding will probably also lead to decisions to implement certain practices school wide.

A recent Cowell grant for family engagement through the Lincoln Child Center is strengthening a key community partner. Family engagement, previously an under-resourced programmatic area, has incredible potential to transform the long-term outcomes at the schools and in the surrounding community. In fall 2012, Lincoln hired Annie Flores as the Coordinator of the newly-established Family Resource Center (FRC) on the Highland campus. Ms. Flores is a prolific organizer, with significant experience in the East Oakland community.

- *Moving Forward, Together*

To address the disparities between NHA and Rise and lift achievement for all students, OUSD is committed to a significant multiyear investment with the goal of creating a full-service Highland community campus. The OUSD investment will focus on a transitional leadership model for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, to be anchored by Liz Ozol, the experienced and successful principal of NHA. Ms. Ozol will be assigned as the principal, or campus director, of both New Highland and Rise for the next two years. She will be selecting two Assistant Principals, one to focus on New Highland, and one to focus on Rise, enabling Liz herself to focus initially on the rebuilding of Rise and leveraging the campus assets in this improvement effort. In addition, OUSD will continue to invest significant resources for instructional efforts that align to the instructional transition to the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. The Highland campus will also benefit from resources aligned to transforming school culture and eliminating the disproportionate suspension of African American students.

Our Proposal

We propose an expansion of our partnership with the Cowell Foundation in 2013-14 to support the restructured campus leadership. In essence, we are asking Cowell to give Liz Ozol and her team, including the new Assistant Principals and returning teacher-leaders, the time and collaborative partners they need to succeed.

These resources include:

1) Professional Learning Release and Planning Time – NHA/RISE

For both schools:

- Quarterly release and planning time – each grade level spends day analyzing data, planning remediation, planning next unit with periodic formative assessments while class is covered by a sub.

- Mills Teacher Scholars (estimated 8 NHA teachers and 5 Rise participating), ten meetings per year, data collection by peers, monthly principal check-ins, quarterly teacher leadership network meetings.
- Deepen work with Instructional Rounds, an initiative that started at district level, modeled on the medical model of rounds. Teams of practitioners visit each other in the classroom using a student-focused lens and record observations related to a specific problem of practice. Later, in the debriefing protocol, teams identify patterns and trends, which leads the leadership to next steps in school's plan to improve outcomes related to problem of practice.

Differentiated for NHA:

- Principal and Assistant Principal will work with ILT and Science Coach to plan and facilitate monthly professional development.
- Grade level teams will deliver integrated common core units with specific student work products (science notebooks, short answer exit tickets, writing samples). 4 point rubrics will be used to score selected work with goal of increasing every student's score by 1 point from fall to spring scoring.

Differentiated for Rise:

- 1-2 day Rise staff retreat before start of school year to offer time to introduce new staff and build community and cohesion, generate enthusiasm, revisit the Rise vision and set goals – individual and school-wide.
- Extra quarterly PD session to refocus staff on positive classroom management strategies through in house coaching by TSA and Assistant Principal.
- Support from Partners in School Innovation: two School Improvement Partner consultants to work with faculty on implementing cycles of inquiry focused on common core standards, facilitate weekly grade level meetings and collaborate with teacher leaders to deliver monthly or periodic PD.

- 2) **Playworks coach to support school culture and student engagement – NHA/Rise** Playworks supports play at hundreds of schools across the country, helping to transform recess into a tool to support learning. Playworks coaches become part of the school family, getting to know the students and staff and helping to make the playground a virtual classroom where students learn teamwork, conflict resolution, creative problem solving and other life lessons that stretch beyond traditional classroom activities. The result is a stronger learning community and a more positive educational environment.

Playworks would provide a coach who would do the following:

- Teach and lead students from both schools in organized games at recess time (7 fifteen minute periods to serve entire population for morning recess; 90 minutes to serve all students at lunchtime)
- Offer PE time once per week to Rise students with classroom teacher assisting
- Identify, train and provide ongoing coaching to “Junior Coaches,” fourth and fifth grade students identified for their leadership potential to help lead games on the yard
- Provide an after school program to 15 students daily including homework help, sports and other enrichment activities

The Playworks coach becomes an integral part of the community, communicating with teachers about students of concern, helping engage families, attending staff meetings and SST’s, etc. With time would expect to see fewer conflicts happening on the yard, more upper grade students displaying positive behaviors as a result of their recruitment as Junior Coaches, and classroom teachers adopting positive strategies and games learned in training with Playworks coach.

- 3) **Mental Health consultant** - to coach teachers in positive behavioral intervention for students and provide some one-on-one support for students with extreme behavioral challenges and their families.

Our current plan for the mental health consultant’s first month of school is to support teachers’ implementation of Tier 1 “best practices” to support all students to be successful in school. This includes coaching teachers to reinforce school rules and expectations with students and families in effective ways, coaching new teachers (probably four) to sure that positive behavior management systems are in place in their classes. After the first month of school, the consultant will accept teacher referrals for Student Study Teams (SSTs) – the first step in adult team problem-solving to address Tier 2 students’ needs. That is, students who need a higher level of support than the Tier 1” base program. The consultant will chair those meetings, observe those students in classrooms and, where relevant, in other contexts such as yard and cafeteria.

The consultant will also aid teachers in implementing positive strategies to support these “Tier 2” students such as behavior contracts, mentors, therapeutic errands, etc. This consultant may work directly with students, providing one on one counseling and/or working with student in small group with focus on conflict resolution or self esteem. The consultant may also work with family members, convening support groups and coaching in parenting skills. Finally, the consultant will work with administration and behavioral health team to develop next steps to support students who still are not being successful due to behavioral issues. Our SST structure builds in a follow up meeting 4-6 weeks after interventions have been implemented. “Exit” of student from case load will be determined at 2nd SST. It is estimated that a minimum of 20 students will be served over the course of the year.

- 4) **Executive coaching for the Campus Leadership Team** (Liz and two Assistant Principals) to strategically plan and implement improvement efforts. Coach to be contracted before August 31 through a qualified organization such as National Equity Project. Support would include:
- Strategic planning, thought partnership and technical assistance
 - Designing and aligning functions, responsibilities, programs, and resources
 - Strengthening and supporting collaboration, cultural competence, and trust throughout our organization
 - Using systems thinking to identify and address inequities that reproduce undesired outcomes

5) **Coordination and support to effectively transition students and families from the Highland Elementary campus to middle school, with a focus on the Elmhurst middle school campus.**

The Elementary to Middle School Transition Project would provide goal setting workshops and college awareness activities to 4th and 5th grade students and families including college tours in conjunction with the East Oakland Youth Development Center. EOYDC will train and coordinate middle school student and parent leaders who will conduct monthly transition days at the Highland and Elmhurst campuses (where neighborhood middle schools are located) that include building connections with middle school students, families, staff and leaders, building awareness of middle school, workshops on study skills and organizational skills as well as understanding how to navigate middle school and access support.

We will use a lens of youth development and cultivate youth leaders at the Elmhurst campus to be lead facilitators of the workshops and campus tours. Key partners in this project would include a part time coordinator at the Highland Campus, part time coordinator at the Elmhurst Campus, teachers in grades 4 to 7 from the Highland and Elmhurst campuses, youth leaders from the Elmhurst campus and part time coordinator/trainer from the East Oakland Youth Development Agency and the Family Resource Center at Highland.

Currently, Highland families express a high level of anxiety about the middle school transition. No formal activities exist that support families and students to transition to middle school from the Highland campus. This lack of relationships, awareness and information contribute to a stressful transition, and to generally low academic outcomes at Oakland middle schools. We believe through building a long term vision of college and career with Highland students and families, by linking middle school success to longer term goals, and by providing on-going collaboration and capacity building activities for youth, teachers and families that we can create a more supportive and successful transition from elementary school to middle school.

We will use OUSD's newly created survey as a baseline to determine 5th grade students and families' degree of awareness of programs at their receiving middle schools, to gauge their excitement, hope and fears. We will administer this survey annually and track responses. We will also cultivate relationships with focal students who transition to the Elmhurst middle school campus and track their progress as well as encourage them to become the "ambassadors" who are trained to support future graduates with information and encouragement.