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# Memo

**To** Board of Education

**From** Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent  
Curtiss Sarikey, Chief of Staff  
Irene Reynolds, Executive Director, Nutrition Services

**Board Meeting Date** June 3, 2020

**Subject** No Cost Memorandum of Understanding  
Contractor: Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL)  
Services for: Implementing Rethinking School Lunch Oakland (RSLO)

## Action Requested and Recommendation

Approval by the Board of Education of a No Cost Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL). CEL, in collaboration with OUSD and the Nutrition Services Department, implement the next phase of RSLO plan that includes: (1) opening, operationalizing and scaling the new central kitchen and fresh food meal program; (2) design of the education and urban farm components of the new central kitchen complex; (3) convene key constituents around RSLO; (4) fundraising; and (5) strategic planning for the next 3-year phase of RSLO.

## Background

*(Why do we need these services? Why have you selected this vendor?)*

OUSD and CEL have partnered on RSLO and the central kitchen project since 2011. Inadequate access to healthy food and hunger are among the external stressors that interrupt learning for many OUSD students. Since 2009, more than 70% of the students within OUSD have qualified for free or reduced-priced meals, which means that these students live in low-income households that are at high risk for food insecurity. In 2009, OUSD parents approached OUSD Nutrition Services calling for improvements to the school meal program, later forming the Oakland School Food Alliance to advance and support improvements to the school meal program. The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL) has been at the forefront of school meal innovations for decades. In 2005, CEL created the “Rethinking School Lunch” planning framework, which offers a comprehensive approach to environmentally and fiscally sustainable school meal program improvements that is responsive to decades of research on best practices to improve student consumption of healthy school food. In 2011, CEL undertook the Rethinking School Lunch Oakland Feasibility Study to examine how OUSD could apply the RSL framework. This study created a roadmap for comprehensive district-wide school food program change to dramatically improve the quality of school meals and acknowledge the importance of nutrition in academic achievement and student well-being. The Feasibility Study made recommendations for significant changes in facilities, including the conversion of an existing site into a green central kitchen, education center, and instructional farm. These recommendations were incorporated into the OUSD Facilities Master Plan 2012, and unanimously adopted by the Board of Education. The Feasibility Study and subsequent adoption of the recommendations into the 2012 Master Plan are part of what has become a larger Rethinking School Lunch Oakland initiative. The RSLO initiative has involved a long-term partnership between CEL and OUSD that incorporates a suite of interrelated programs and policy action. At this phase of the RSLO initiative, it’s critical that the OUSD/CEL partnership continue to support the successful implementation of this next phase of the work.

**Fiscal Impact** No fiscal impact

**Attachments** • Memorandum of Understanding



# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## Implementation of the Rethinking School Lunch Oakland Initiative

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*Purpose:* The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to establish agreements and define our shared commitment to continuing to implement the Rethinking School Lunch Oakland (RSLO) Initiative over the next three years, 2020-2023, continuing the work on which we began partnering in 2011, and continuing to advance many of the activities undertaken in the 2018-19 school year outlined herein. RSLO entails comprehensive school food innovations and associated educational programs in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD).

*"Through the eyes of the cook  
or the gardener or the farmer who grew it,  
food reveals itself for what it is:  
no mere thing but a web of relationships  
among a great many living beings,  
but each of them dependent on the others,  
and all of them ultimately rooted in soil and nourished by sunlight."*

– Michael Pollan,  
*Big Ideas: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment*  
Center for Ecoliteracy

### *I. Background and context:*

Inadequate access to healthy food and hunger are among the external stressors that interrupt learning for many OUSD students. Since 2009, more than 70% of the students within OUSD have qualified for free or reduced-priced meals, which means that these students live in low-income households that are at high risk for food insecurity. Although a need to access healthy food persists as an issue within OUSD, adults and students within OUSD have questioned the quality of the school food within OUSD for many years. In fact, in 2009 OUSD parents approached OUSD Nutrition Services calling for improvements to the school meal program,



later forming the Oakland School Food Alliance to advance and support improvements to the school meal program.

The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL) has been at the forefront of school meal innovations for decades. In 2005, CEL created the “Rethinking School Lunch” planning framework, which offers a comprehensive approach to environmentally and fiscally sustainable school meal program improvements that is responsive to decades of research on best practices to improve student consumption of healthy school food.

In 2011, with support from the TomKat Charitable Trust and the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, CEL undertook the Rethinking School Lunch Oakland Feasibility Study to examine how OUSD could apply the RSL framework. This study created a roadmap for comprehensive district-wide school food program change to dramatically improve the quality of school meals and acknowledge the importance of nutrition in academic achievement and student well-being. The Feasibility Study made recommendations for significant changes in facilities—the conversion of an existing site into a green central kitchen, education center, and instructional farm, the installation of fourteen school-community kitchens, and the upgrade of additional satellite kitchens—to create a hub and network throughout the district. These recommendations were incorporated into the OUSD Facilities Master Plan 2012, and unanimously adopted by the Board of Education.

The Feasibility Study and subsequent adoption of the recommendations into the 2012 Master Plan are part of what has become a larger Rethinking School Lunch Oakland initiative. The RSLO initiative has involved a long-term partnership between CEL and OUSD that incorporates a suite of interrelated programs and policy action, including an educational program that provides a basis for addressing the health and environmental problems that arise



when we oversimplify nature's complexities in the growing and eating dimensions of our food system.

For the documents described herein and examples of prior work, please see *Appendix 1: Rethinking School Lunch Planning Documents Prepared by the Center for Ecoliteracy* and *Appendix 2: Rethinking School Lunch Planning Documents Prepared by Oakland Unified School District*.

*II. RSLO Shared Theory of Change:*

CEL and OUSD collectively recognize that our work together to improve the quality of the school meal program advances equitable opportunities for learning and contributes to OUSD's ability to offer a high-quality instructional program. RSLO supports each student's social, emotional, and physical health, which in turn impacts student learning, and addresses well-documented and serious health disparities and food justice issues that persist city-wide. We acknowledge that implementing comprehensive school food innovation requires the creation of intentional spaces to support OUSD in preparing and serving fresh food procured from regional sources, and create opportunities for students to develop an engaged relationship with food as part of their educational experience.

*III. RSLO Shared Theory of Action:*

CEL and OUSD agree to jointly dedicate resources to collectively accomplish the following milestones over the next three years:

- a) Convene an RSLO Advisory Committee, which will meet quarterly to raise the visibility of RSLO and generate support for implementation. The district-wide Advisory Committee also serves to provide additional perspectives and expertise to the RSLO



initiative around the public health and food security needs of the community, ecological education and resilience, and generating financial support.

- b) Support Nutrition Services in the implementation of RSLO, prioritizing freshly prepared and served food from the central kitchen and at satellite sites, and other opportunities identified in Rethinking School Lunch Oakland: Facilities Recommendations Report. Continue to revise and update the implementation plan and feasibility analysis, as needed.
- c) Collaborate in fundraising to support RSLO activities in a focused effort to identify and review opportunities to fund and implement RSLO in OUSD schools including the submission of grant applications intended to fund:
  - ❖ The OUSD Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center
  - ❖ Increased capacity for branding, marketing, promoting and serving fresh food across the school district
  - ❖ Implementation and/or expansion of serving fresh, unpackaged food at all OUSD school sites
  - ❖ Professional development activities for educators and nutrition services staff
  - ❖ Educational experiences for students K-12, including areas such as STEM, career pathways, health and nutrition education, etc.
- d) Collaborate in the design and implementation of educational programs at the Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center that will link food, culture, health, and the environment to prepare OUSD students to make informed decisions and to improve health, achievement, and equity for OUSD students.

#### *IV. RSLO Partner Commitments and Responsibilities:*

Whereas CEL secured funding from the TomKat Charitable Trust and the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation to launch and complete the Feasibility Study and for implementing RSLO, from



The San Francisco Foundation for design and planning for the education program at the OUSD Central Kitchen, Urban Farm, and Education Center, and from The Safeway Foundation/Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland for planning; assisted to facilitate the Nutrition Advisory Council; conducted research and authored concept papers for the OUSD Central Kitchen, Urban Farm, and Education Center, and for School-Community Kitchens; and brings a portfolio of foundations and funders and nonprofit status required by some funders and grant-makers, as well as credibility and long-standing experience with comprehensive school food reform,

CEL agrees to the following commitments and responsibilities:

- a) Participate in RSLO Advisory Committee meetings.
- b) Support OUSD in the launch of the new Central Kitchen and the development of curricula and engagement opportunities for the Instructional Farm and Education Center.
- c) Collaborate with and support the Executive Director of Nutrition Services with strategic planning and professional development to support the integration of fresh ingredients into school meals and the OUSD education program, responding to the district's needs in partnership with OUSD.
- d) Collaborate on the design and implementation of an education program to support hands-on, experiential, standards-aligned, and career pathways learning at the instructional farm and education center.
- e) Support the development of a Nutrition Services operational strategic plan to help successfully open and implement the central kitchen project.
- f) Support additional planning and development activities that may arise as part of RSLO.

Whereas OUSD has developed a Strategic Plan for Full-Service Community Schools, performed the RSLO Feasibility Study, sponsored the inclusion of the Central Commissary



Kitchen and Instructional Garden in the 2011 Facilities Master Plan, and is committed to ongoing school food reform,

OUSD agrees to the following commitments and responsibilities:

- a) Commit to the vision of RSLO and continue efforts to advance school food innovations, including the integration of nutrition education throughout OUSD's curriculum.
- b) Help identify representatives to serve on an Advisory Committee and participate in Advisory Committee meetings as described above under III (a).
- c) Partner with CEL in all matters regarding RSLO, including the coordination of resource development and grant writing efforts, communications, presentations and/or publications, and ensure direct lines of communication between CEL and key OUSD contacts including, but not limited to, the Superintendent, Chief of Staff, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Business Officer, Deputy Chief of Communications, Deputy Chief of Facilities Management and Planning, and Executive Director of Nutrition Services. To facilitate strong communication between CEL and OUSD, the Executive Director of Nutrition Services and central kitchen project manager will meet with CEL staff at least once a quarter. The OUSD Chief of Staff will be the primary contact for RSLO with CEL, meeting quarterly, or more frequently if needed.
- d) Collaborate with CEL to identify and apply for grant opportunities to fund RSLO activities and facilities, provide in-kind services in the form of staffing to support implementation through completion of grant activities, sign off on activities funded by awarded grants, and ensure the implementation and completion of all activities financed by grant funds obtained by CEL for the purpose of fulfilling the vision of Rethinking School Lunch Oakland.
- e) Additionally, OUSD commits to ensure timely implementation of all activities in the agreed upon work plan. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, OUSD commits to



communicate with CEL and support explanation of any delays or changes to RSLO funders.

In Agreement:

6/11/2020

Kyla Johnson-Trammell  
Secretary and Superintendent, Oakland Unified School District

Date

6/11/2020

Jody London, President  
Board of Education, Oakland Unified School District

Date

June 2, 2020

Adam Kesselman, Executive Director, Center for Ecoliteracy

Date

May 2, 2020

Joshua R. Daniels, OUSD General Counsel  
Approved as to form

Date