

Superintendent Report

Interim Superintendent, Dr. Denise Saddler
February 11, 2026



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

Our Vision

All OUSD students will find joy in their academic experience while graduating with the skills to ensure they are caring, competent, fully-informed, critical thinkers who are prepared for college, career, and community success.

Our Mission

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) will build a Full Service Community District focused on high academic achievement while serving the whole child, eliminating inequity, and providing each child with excellent teachers, every day.





School Highlights

Emerson Elementary Holds Ribbon-Cutting for New Eat. Learn. Play. Playground

Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation has now completed two dozen new playgrounds across the District. The most recent celebration on January 30 was for the playground at Emerson Elementary.

Director Latta and I were there to help celebrate the new kid-designed play structure, nature areas including a garden, sport courts, soccer goals, murals, and Little Town Library.

There was a big crowd of families, staff, and partners on hand to celebrate with the students. City Councilmember Zac Unger also joined us and shared his excitement for this beautiful new playground in his district.



Initiative: Joyful Schools

www.ousd.org/strategicplan

Burckhalter Elementary Reaps Big Benefits from Superbowl

On February 3, Burckhalter Elementary unveiled a game-changing transformation: a **brand-new soccer field** adorned with vibrant murals and a fully stocked food pantry—thanks to the Super Bowl and our partnership with NFL Executive and Legend Troy Vincent and author-chef Tommi Vincent, co-founders of Vincent Country Safe Zone Activity Day.

Every year, this powerhouse organization invests in a school near the big game. This year, **Oakland won big**. Together with partners Cigna, Playing for Keeps, Zebra Technologies, and others, Vincent Country brought the theme Dreams Grow Here to life—emblazoned in a stunning new mural. 200+ Burckhalter students experienced an unforgettable day of wellness activities, sports engagement, and NFL Flag football, proving that when major partners invest in Oakland, our students thrive.



Initiative: Joyful Schools

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Piedmont Avenue Elementary Celebrates Black History Month with Play

On February 3, the school population at Piedmont Avenue Elementary gathered in the multipurpose room for a special celebration of Black History Month. They enjoyed a play that showed key historical events and figures. The play was written by TSA Shamika Pratt and Early Lit Tutor Loretta Thomas, and featured history from Africa, to more recent moments such as when Ruby Bridges went to her all-white school for the first time.

It was the first part in a series of student-centered activities the school community is engaging in to honor Black History Month and learn from it. All of it is highlighting the history, contributions, and cultural legacy of African Americans.

The school community is working to ensure that Black history is taught, honored, and experienced in meaningful ways.



Initiative: Strong Readers

www.ousd.org/strategicplan

Oakland High Students Receive Financial Advice from 49ers Star

Five lucky Oakland High students got a trip to San Francisco on February 3 in another benefit brought on by the Superbowl. Intuit for Education and the NFL partnered to hold a Superbowl Financial Literacy Forum at San Francisco's Marriott Marquis Hotel.

The students joined hundreds of their peers from around the Bay Area for the day of learning. Perhaps the highlight of the day was when the entire group heard financial advice from 49ers superstar running back Christian McCaffrey.

The students also took part in workshops, including one put on by Mailchimp called the Marketing Campaign Showdown. Each student received three words - one a food product, and two words to describe the product. They were tasked with designing a food truck marketing post using the words.



Initiative: Empowered Graduates

www.ousd.org/strategicplan

Central Kitchen Hosts No Kid Hungry Cooking Challenge

On Tuesday, February 3, No Kid Hungry came to the Central Kitchen for a special day with visitors including a group of students from Skyline High. The day started with a tour of the modern school district kitchen for a group of celebrated chefs from across the country to see how it feeds thousands of students across the District throughout the year. They also toured the adjacent urban farm and education center.

The tour was followed by the main attraction. The Skyline students, who were on site for a field trip, got to meet and work with the chefs. They all took part in a Cooking Challenge, in which they got to make several different dishes featuring the February Harvest of the Month Item, broccoli.



Initiative: Empowered Graduates

www.ousd.org/strategicplan

OUSD Staff Takes Part in Positive Coaching Alliance Event

The 49ers Foundation and the Positive Coaching Alliance came together at the Oakland Marriott on February 3 for what was called the Sports Done Right Summit, another Superbowl-related event.

It brought together educators and coaches, including staff from the Oakland Athletic League, YES! Sports, several schools, and partners such as Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation, and Oakland Lacrosse Club. The summit was aimed at helping advance a sustainable, inclusive play equity movement with information and best practices from across the country.

The highlight of the event was the speech given by three 4th graders from Garfield Elementary. The trio are all student-athletes who spoke about how important access to sports including flag football, soccer, and basketball is to them. They inspired the audience to keep working toward sports equity and accessibility. All of them had previous public speaking experience from the MLK Oratorical Fest.



Initiative: Diverse and Stable Staff

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Oakland Tech Students Receive NFL-Related Instruction on Success

The Student Program for Academic & Athletic Transitioning (SPAAT) hosted an NFL-related series of workshops for students at Oakland Tech on February 3. About 100 student-athletes took part in the workshops which covered topics including Sports Analytics, College Access and Readiness, Artificial Intelligence, and Graphics.

After the workshops, students enjoyed a Superbowl Edition Afternoon Sports Panel focused on the New Athlete Economy, examining NIL, athlete entrepreneurship, and how athletes and families navigate their platform from high school and beyond. Current and former NFL players stopped by, and took part in the discussions.

The school also hosted an NFL-related Cybersecurity panel discussion led by officials from the NFL with computer science students.



Initiative: Empowered Graduates

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OUSD Honors David Sakurai by Supporting Students in Skilled Trades

Last Thursday, February 5, OUSD and The Oakland Promise hosted an intimate, online gathering celebrating the life and legacy of **David Sakurai**. Mr. Sakurai was a carpenter who served in our Buildings & Grounds Department for 18 years. He passed away in 2022, after he was injured during the King Estates tragedy on September 28 of that year.

In his honor, the David Sakurai Memorial Scholarship Fund has been established to give scholarships to OUSD students who pursue careers in the skilled trades.

Mr. Sakurai was more than a skilled craftsman—he was joyful, generous, and funny on every jobsite. Known for his quick wit and unforgettable pranks, he also embodied deep dedication to uplifting others. May his memory continue to inspire us to carry forward the principles he lived by.

Contributions to the David Sakurai Memorial Scholarship are encouraged at: give.classy.org/davidsakuraimemorialfund. Donations are tax-deductible.





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