

Ceremonial Presentation Honoring OUSD's Classified School Employees of the Year

Tara Gard, Chief Talent Officer

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**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.



Ask of the Board

- This item is presented for the purpose of the adoption of Resolution No. 2425-0076 - Recognition - District's 2024-2025 - Classified School Employees of the Year in eight categories:
 - Paraprofessional Services
 - Clerical & Administrative Services
 - Food & Nutrition Services
 - Custodial and Maintenance Services
 - Security Services
 - Health & Student Services
 - Technical Services
 - Skilled Trades Services

Outline

- We will recognize and pay special tribute to their tireless efforts and outstanding performance
- We will feature eight of our most experienced, excellent classified line employees
- The order of the awardees is aligned with the categories as they have been named by the California Department of Education

Paraprofessional Services

Elva Castillo has served as a Paraeducator at Cleveland Elementary for 28 years



- “If I think of a picture of her, I see her wearing her fanny pack. Every year it seems to get bigger: Band-aids, positive behavior tickets, sensory fidgets and toys, pencils, pencil sharpener, highlighters, small awards for good choices and a notebook for notes to share with the teacher. But, besides that, her main tool is love. She is just **so** compassionate.”
- “Our entire staff will attest that she is the most patient, kind, and joyful person on staff and is always there with a hug and a smile for every student and adult in the community. Her soft-spoken nature obscures her incredible strength. She is astoundingly passionate on behalf of our most vulnerable students.”
- “Just talking to her, it’s like, this person is at a different level in her understanding of the human life experience. She’s the kind of teacher you meet where you are reminded, I could be doing this better. She makes me want to be a better teacher.”

Clerical & Administrative Services

Amparo Ochoa serves as Program Assistant 1 at OACE (Adult & Career Education) – serving OUSD for 17 years



- “Amparo is one of the most supportive members of our team; she shines the most when we have the most demanding days, when we're registering hundreds of students within a week.”
- “She offers thought partnership - information relayed to her by our students which helps us get more insight into what our students need. She's never afraid to learn something new if it can help support our staff or students. She's always there to not only improve our own skills but also improve the environment around her.”
- “Many of our babysitters come to her directly because Amparo is known for her follow-through. Her primary language is Spanish, and we have multiple languages, but she manages workarounds. She figures things out to assist them in navigating the complicated systems of the District and beyond. Many of these staff members are limited English speakers, and she helps them apply for jobs online. . .”

Food & Nutritional Services

Jenny Situ serves as a Production Assistant 10 at the Central Kitchen and has been with OUSD for 24 years



- “Jenny’s excellence extends to efficiency on the entire production floor. English is her second language, and we have multiple staff members who speak limited English. She is our in-house interpreter interacting directly with employees in need as well as management who need language translation to support employee communications.”
- “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.”
- “Jenny represents the best and brightest of the production team staff; she is a leader for our line personnel and is the go-to person a good deal of the time. Her presence represents an improved morale which leads to more consistent quality of the meals in our schools.”

Custodial & Maintenance Services

Beverly Phillips serves as Lead Custodian at Burckhalter Elementary and has been with OUSD for 18 years



- “Principal Geathers is probably the luckiest principal in the District because all she needs to be concerned about is taking care of the students there. Beverly sees what needs to be done and she just takes care of it . . .”
- “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 holds to a high standard of cleanliness and oversees the quality of our site’s maintenance, keeping a watchful eye on conditions. She is always there, with very little direction needed, and there is nothing she wouldn't do for the children in our school.”
- “She has a station set up to guide students in determining what goes into compost, recycling, or landfill. She helps them learn about reducing waste and conserving their resources while delivering so much warmth to them at the same time. . .”

Security Services

Alfredo De La Torre has served as a Noon Supervisor at Manzanita Community School for 7 years



- “Mr. Freddy always comes to school with a smile and positive energy! At recess you will find him with our students - from playing and coaching soccer to helping solve problems to finding that one student who’s maybe feeling sad or is just shy and making them feel included, Mr. Freddy is someone whom the kids trust.”
- “Mr. Freddy is the person known for keeping students fully safe and cared for while they are in school. In the areas beyond the classroom, he is reliably present. His attention is 100% with the students. The kids know and love him. He not only keeps the kiddos physically safe, but, equally as important, emotionally safe.”
- “As a father, a parent of our school community, Mr. Freddy represents the community itself where over 50% of our student population is Latinx. Having people working at a school whose kids attend and who are from the neighborhood makes a huge difference in how they engage in the community and the community’s comfort engaging with them.”

Health & Student Services

Jaliza Collins has served as College and Career Readiness Specialist at Fremont High for 7 years



- “Jaliza’s influence with and for students is phenomenal. Youth-facing work is where she thrives. She supervises tech interns fixing Chromebooks for the District, the Oakland Athletic League media team, that is, the students who cover the games for the District, and is staff advisor for the 11th graders in Peer Forward, and more . . .”
- “Jaliza stays fully connected to student interests and is always considering how to make things happen for Fremont students that students at other schools have. Higher education week is coming; all the CSUs and the UCs will attend. She is the connection between a kind of –sort of idea and an idea becoming an actuality for students.”
- “Beyond the school walls, Jaliza was a co-presenter at the 2025 Educating for Careers CTE Conference *Transforming Academy Culture: Inspiring Educators, Honoring Students, and Creating Routes to Achievement*. She opens the school on Saturdays, stays late on weekdays. She meets students where they are to make sure that they get the support to succeed.”

Technical Services

Peter Bugno has served as Student Information Specialist III with Tech Services for 9 years

- “All I can say is Pete is a friend of clerical! He's professional, approachable, with a can-do spirit. Pete helps so our specialists can correct their work before it goes to the auditors. Without Pete there with the IT lens, we wouldn't be successful.”
- “In the summer of 2021, we were just coming back from COVID, and phone and email communication with home was especially important. It was an incredibly heavy lift, but right away Peter, along with Operations and clerical staff, cleaned up thousands and thousands of contacts, something like 55,000 users. As of this morning, we were 99.7% contact-ability across the District. That means we have a valid email or phone number for almost all 35,000 or 36,000 students!”
- “Peter is the key person working with the network team as we've sought to streamline student email accounts, which not only get them into the Aeries portal, but those accounts are used to log into Google, Chromebooks, state testing, and EdTech applications. His role is critical to the student learning experience, and his influence on the Aeries system is core to its proper functioning.”



Skilled Trades Services

Bobby Batom has served as a Carpenter in Buildings and Grounds for 34 years



- “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 in Buildings and Grounds and beyond also loves working with him because he brings so much joy and laughter to the workplace.”
- “Bobby is an avid boxer, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, he’s at the gym. Kids from our schools go down there too, so when they see Bobby in the ring, in his way, he’s teaching students out-of-the-box things like confidence, patience, and discipline. Then, when he sees them at school, they know him, and they want to emulate him. . . He’s been part of this community for over 40 years. Raised in Oakland, he went to Castlemont High School himself, so he’s part of them too.”
- “The first ten years I knew him, he was always back in the shop, and he didn’t get to go out like we did. Once we got Bobby out of the shop, it was like we had **our best** with us. Because we’re really good friends, I can yell across the yard in front of everybody, ‘Bobby, who loves you?’ He says, ‘You do.’ And I can count on him saying, and every time, ‘Who loves you, Tony?’” That’s friendship!

Thank You to Our OUSD Classified School Employees of the 2024-2025 School Year!

For more information, please reach out:

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