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September 17, 2015

### Briefing Note on The Center | Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center

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#### Background: The Problem

- **OUSD faces a severe crisis: The population groups most at risk for adverse health outcomes associated with poor nutrition nationally are also the dominant population groups within the District. Proper nutrition is critical to addressing this crisis.**
  - Hunger and obesity are both strongly associated with income and race, with rates of prevalence being substantially higher than the national average among Black and Latino households, single-parent families, and households with low educational attainment and incomes near, or below the Federal poverty line (Coleman-Jensen, Gregory & Singh, 2014; Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2014).
    - The largest enrollments by ethnicity and race are Latino (38.1%), African American (30.6%), Asian/Pacific Islander/Filipino (16.4%), and white (11.8%). The 2013-2014 OUSD Fast Facts are available [online](#).
- **Low-income households in Alameda County have a high risk of being food insecure.**
  - The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research estimates that in 2014, 47% of low-income households (defined as households earning no more than 200% of the poverty level, or \$48,500 for a family of four) were food-insecure. This statistic, reported by [California Food Policy Advocates](#), is from the California Health Interview Survey data.
- **The large majority of OUSD's students live in low-income households.**
  - In 2013-2014, 71.4% percent of the students attending OUSD schools qualified for Free and Reduced Lunch. The [income ceilings](#) for this program require a student to come from a low-income household.
    - Qualifications for Free lunch: children from families at or below 130% of the poverty level (below \$31,525 for a family of four). Qualifications for Reduced lunch: children from families between 130 and 185% of the poverty level (\$31,525 and 44,862.50 for a family of four). Federal poverty level for 2015 for a family of four: \$24,250. Note that housing assistance eligibility has higher thresholds: \$46,450 for Section 8 in Alameda County and \$71,600 for Public Housing, for a family of 4.



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- o The California Department of Education reports that in 2013-2014, 34% of OUSD schools had a student body comprised of 90-100% of the students being eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch programs.
- **Research across multiple disciplines has established that there is a critical link between nutrition and academic achievement.**
  - o Inadequate consumption of key food groups deprives children of essential vitamins, minerals, fats, and proteins that are necessary for optimal cognitive function (Drake, 2011).
  - o Undernourished children are more likely to be hyperactive, absent, or tardy; have more behavioral problems; repeat a grade; and require more special education and mental health services (Food Research & Action Center, 2011).
  - o Food insecure children learn at a slower rate than their peers, leaving them further and further behind as they progress through the educational system (Alaimo, et al, 2001).
  - o Obese children are more likely to have bone fractures that keep them away from school (Greer & Krebs, 2006), and more likely to develop hypertension, diabetes, sleep apnea, menstrual abnormalities, impaired balance, and orthopedic problems at an earlier age than their normal-weight peers (Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth, 2005).
- **School meals can play a significant role in improving health outcomes for youth.**
  - o Increases in participation in school breakfast programs are associated with increases in math and reading test scores, daily attendance, class participation, and reductions in tardiness and absenteeism (California School Boards Association, 2012; Frisvold, 2012).
  - o Participants in National School Breakfast and Lunch programs are less likely to have nutrient inadequacies; more likely to consume fruit, vegetables, and milk; and less likely to consume desserts and snack food than children who do not (Clark & Fox, 2009).
  - o Students who eat school meals provided through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program are more likely to be at a healthy weight (Jones, 2003). Students are less likely to gain weight during the school year when in school than during the summer when school is out (Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 2009).
  - o School-aged children have a higher daily intake of fruit, vegetables, milk, and key nutrients like calcium, vitamin A, and folate on days they eat federally funded supper at afterschool programs compared with days they do not (Plante & Bruening, 2004).
- **While nationally, students eat 35-40% of their calories at school (Briefel, et al, 2009), some OUSD students rely on school meals for breakfast, lunch, snack and supper.**



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- **OUSD has implemented changes to its school meal program for decades to increase its students' access to healthy food while becoming more environmentally sustainable.**
  - **Farm to School:** Since the 2009-2010 school year, OUSD partnered with Community Alliance of Family Farmers (CAFF) to improve school food for Oakland students. This includes bringing produce from Oakland Fresh School Produce Market farmers into cafeterias through produce distributors, incorporating school garden grown produce into the menu, featuring 100% local produce in the Harvest of the Month program and a substantial amount in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable snack program.
  - **Oakland Eats Garden Fresh Program:** In 2009, OUSD Nutrition Services and Alameda County Public Health Department, Nutrition Services, implemented this program connecting the classroom to the cafeteria, linking nutrition education with the produce served at school to maximize impact.
  - **[Oakland Produce Markets:](#)** In the 2009-2010 school year, OUSD partnered with the East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), to build a school-based local food system that increases access to fresh, healthy and affordable food for Oakland residents and promotes healthy school environments for our children and families.
  - **Supper Program:** Beginning in the 2012-2013 school year, Nutrition Services began providing free supper at 14 school sites located in East and West Oakland.
  - **[California Thursdays:](#)** Starting on Earth Day 2013, OUSD began offering healthy food prepared from California farmers.
  - **Food for Families:** In May 2013, OUSD partnered with Food Shift to recover and distribute excess edible food from cafeterias and distribute it to three community assistance programs and 69 parents from the schools themselves.
  
- **OUSD's ability to do more is drastically limited by its current facilities.**
  - Currently, fewer than 35% of OUSD's K-12 schools can serve freshly prepared meals and no Child Development Centers (preschools) serve freshly prepared meals. Districtwide, students are rejecting meals because they are packaged and reheated--even if the student needs the meal.
    - Watch students taste examples of the new menu offerings possible with The Center in [Health Happens Here](#).
    - Learn about the limitations of the current central kitchen facilities in this [Tour of the Prescott Central Kitchen](#).



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### Justification: Solving the Problem

- Rethinking School Lunch Oakland is a District-wide initiative that addresses health, environmental, and social issues by bringing OUSD students into a new relationship with food as part of their daily educational experience. RSLO implements a school meal program that addresses the quality of the meals served, the environmental impact of the school meal program, the integration of nutrition, agricultural sciences, and culinary arts into the school curriculum. It depends on a network of school kitchens and gardens District-wide, with a Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center (the Center) at the hub of this network, to allow the District to provide freshly-prepared nutrient rich meals at individual school sites.
  - The Center would allow OUSD to provide freshly prepared meals at **94% of its school sites and nearly all of the Child Development Centers.**
  - The Center would eliminate 80% of the prepackaged food from the school menu, while:
    - Increasing OUSD’s capacity to use locally grown produce and ingredients, shortening the distance that food travels and creating healthier environmental practices;
    - Offering a weekly produce market for the community;
    - Providing a kitchen space and education center accessible to community through the District’s Civic Center permit process;
    - Introducing community education, workforce development, and employment opportunities.
- As provided in the [December 2011 Feasibility Study](#), the Center will allow the District to both improve health outcomes by incorporating nutrition into the curriculum and integrate career pathways and linked learning into this project. To accomplish this, the Center must include both indoor and outdoor educational space and combine the garden space with the kitchen in order to capture the “farm-to-table” lifecycle that is essential to the educational component.
  - Specifically, an instructional farm (rather than a school garden) will supply fresh produce to allow for experiential opportunities for academic instruction and vocational education within both the outdoor classrooms and culinary classrooms that are connected to the kitchen.
  - The classroom space will serve dual roles: it will provide training and educational opportunities for students and host professional development training (cooking classes) and menu development. Critical to improving health outcomes is serving healthy food that is palatable to students in Child Development Centers and K-12 programs. Without appropriate culinary classroom space, this is difficult to achieve. A stand-alone central kitchen, without the education center, would not be able to accommodate this need.
- Improving school nutrition and connecting nutrition to the classroom is not just about education, it’s a factor in improving healthy eating habits.



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- Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins at the Center for Weight and Health at the University of California, Berkeley, conducted a [study](#) and found that in those schools that combined healthier food, classroom instruction, and cooking and gardening classes, the following occurred:
  - Sixty percent of families surveyed said that the school changed their child’s knowledge about healthy food choices (in contrast to thirty-six percent in schools that only changed the food).
  - Forty-two percent said that school changed their child’s attitudes about food (compared to nineteen percent in schools that only changed the food).
  - Thirty-five percent said that school improved their child’s eating habits (versus sixteen percent in schools that changed only the food).
- At present, the majority of our schools sites are not equipped with cooking kitchens and adjacent culinary classrooms to allow for this type of complete curriculum. Because of competing school facility priorities District-wide, Measure J funds cannot support building cooking kitchens and culinary classrooms at each school site to allow for this type of curriculum at each school site. Without a centralized location that integrates the instructional farm, central kitchen, and educational space, many students would not have access to, or benefit from, the curriculum aspect of this meal reform program--or the potential health outcomes that can flow from that curriculum and programming.
- The Center will also host education space for all grade levels including traditional classroom space, a culinary arts classroom, and outdoor instructional farm, all of which will contribute to substantial Linked Learning & Career Pathway opportunities.
- Children will benefit from hands-on instruction that links academic concepts to culinary, botanical and agricultural training and will learn about nutrition, the chemistry of cooking, hospitality and business management skills. Community education programs will also be developed.



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### Project Scope and Financing

- The Center is designed as a state-of-the-art, CHPS-certified green facility that will house:
  - approximately 30,000 square feet of space for a central kitchen
  - a teaching kitchen, culinary classroom, and instructional space housing Linked Learning programs supporting career pathways in agricultural, culinary, botany, and related fields
  - community meeting rooms and staff offices
  - a 1-acre instructional farm, greenhouse, and produce market
  - food storage space and transportation bays
- At The Center, students will observe professionally trained cooks at work. The farm and greenhouse will serve as a learning laboratory, where students will experience urban agriculture firsthand. The teaching kitchen will provide classes for students, nutrition service staff, and the community. The Center as a whole will help develop College and Career Pathways, allow for field trips and tours, contribute to the development of the West Oakland STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Corridor and support Expanded Learning, Adult Education and Professional Development.
- The Center will function as the hub of the new district-wide school food program network that allows for meals to be freshly prepared at school sites. The roadmap for OUSD's comprehensive food system reform is detailed in the Rethinking School Lunch Oakland Feasibility Study, with facilities recommendations incorporated in the OUSD Facilities Master Plan 2012.
- This project is funded by Measure J, a bond measure that 84% of Oakland voters approved in November 2012.
  - OUSD has received additional funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the National School Lunch Program. The money for additional staff will come from the National Lunch Program.
- Construction costs are expected to be \$32,000,000. \$2.5 million of current investment is regarded as "sunk costs" that could not be retrieved if the proposal (site or design) were changed at this point.
- Remodeling the current structure at the Marcus Foster site, as opposed to constructing a new building, would add approximately \$4 million in additional costs to address required seismic and structural issues, along with with the relocation of underground utilities.



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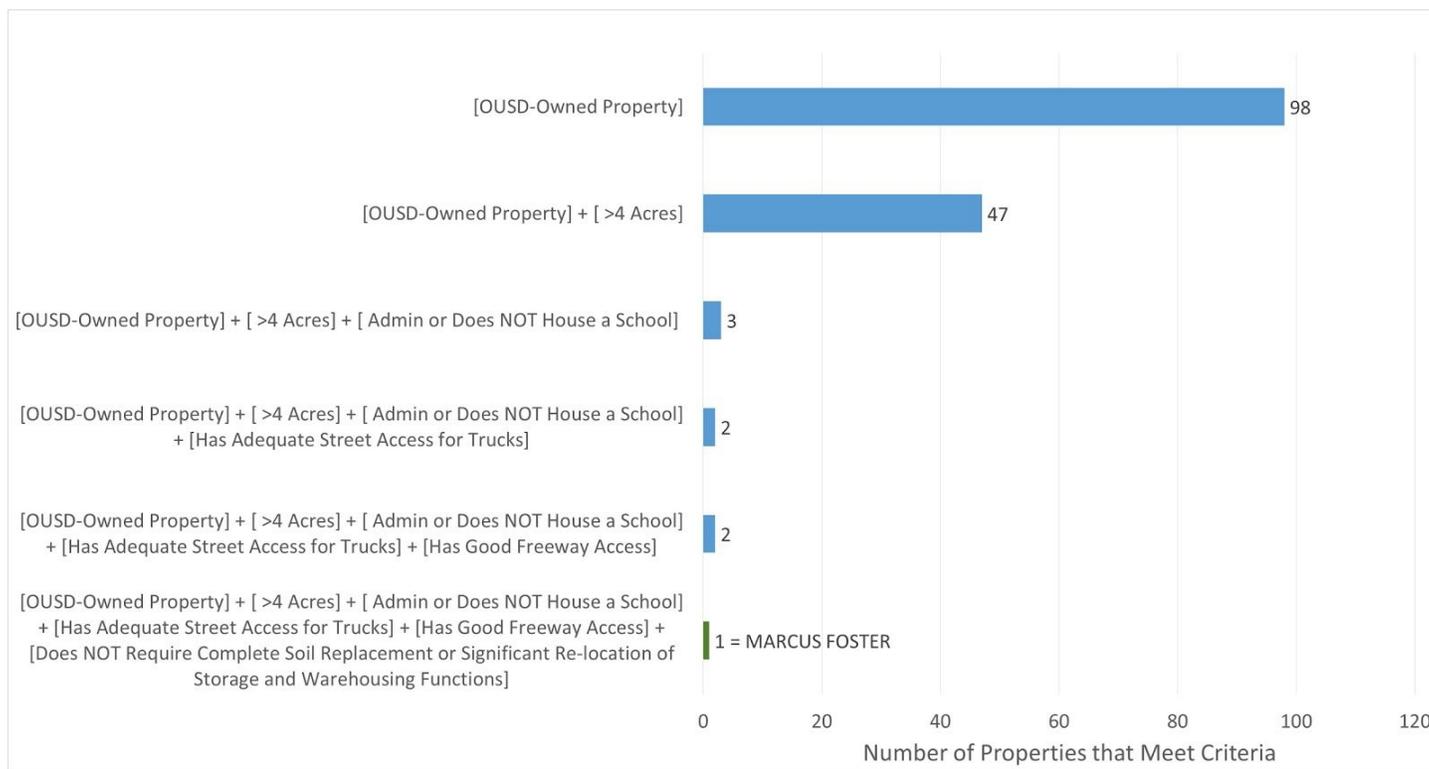
### Site Selection

- OUSD selected the site for this project based on six major considerations:
  - District ownership of parcel
  - Parcel size: a minimum of 4 acres, able to accommodate a 43,000 square foot building, a 32,000+ square foot central kitchen, and a near acre instructional farm
  - Good freeway access
  - Wide surface streets surrounding the site to facilitate access (requiring four lanes)
  - Currently vacant or used primarily for administrative purposes
  - Environmental factors (prospect of remediation)
  
- Of the 98 properties owned by the District that are not schools, only two meet the lot size requirements, the Marcus Foster site at 2850 West St. and a Facilities Department location at 900 High St.
  
- 900 High St. proved not to be an option for the Center project because:
  - The industrial nature of the operations at High St. have required the use of chemicals for decades, which eliminated this site as a possible site for an instructional farm. An instructional farm is **critical** to the programming component of the Center (as discussed in detail below).
  - 900 High Street is heavily utilized by the District. 900 High Street hosts **multiple** departments. The District owns no other site where it can relocate the employees, the massive storage space and amount of equipment related to the warehouse, custodial, science, building and grounds, paint shop and other facilities operations at this site, and related to the facilities and procurement operations housed across the street at 955 High Street.
    - Marcus Foster, despite being a 33,000 square foot building, hosted approximately 125 Program for Exceptional Children (PEC) administrative employees and provided services to 35 Young Adult Programs students (ages 18-22) and 5 Temporary Alternative Placement students.
  
- The selection of Marcus Foster as the proposed site of the Center was part of the roadshow (community meetings at six sites through their city, including Prescott in West Oakland) related to the development of the [OUSD Facilities Master Plan](#) in 2012 and is included in the Master Plan itself. The Master Plan was the basis for Measure J, approved by 84 percent of Oakland voters in 2012. [This San Francisco Chronicle story documents the public nature of the selection.](#)



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