

# Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center Town Hall Questions and Answers

August 29, 2015  
Hoover Elementary School

## Key Topics:

- *Community Engagement in Project Planning Processes*
- *Site Selection*
- *Programming at the Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center*
- *Environmental Impact*
- *Project Financing*
- *Site History & Current Use*
- *Traffic & Noise Impacts*
- *Employment*
- *Project Impacts on Neighborhood*
- *Community Benefits & Access*
- *Nutrition & Food*

## Community Questions (Listed by Topic Area):

### *Community Engagement in Project Planning Processes*

**Q:** *When did the District meet with the planning commission? Why did the District not invite the public to take part in these meetings?*

**A:** The first phase of the project involves the development of a near-acre farm that will only involve the growing of food. This proposed limited agricultural use at the site is “permitted by right” under the City of Oakland’s ordinances, specifically section [17.10.610](#). and [17.17.030](#). Because Phase 1 of the project does not require a Condition Use Permit, there was no need for, or scheduling of, a public meeting. District staff and City staff did confirm by correspondence that the scope of the project includes the development of an agricultural space that is permitted by right.

**Q:** *Will OUSD incorporate community input and expert input into the curriculum at the Center?*

**A:** The Center for Ecoliteracy (the District’s community partner on this project), community organizations, and teachers from the District are currently in the process of developing the curriculum for the Center. This diverse curriculum development group incorporates the perspectives of content experts as well as those of the people who will be implementing and participating in the curriculum.

**Q:** *Is it too late for community to participate in final site design?*

**A:** OUSD’s facilities community engagement policy ([BP 7155](#)), available at <http://www.ousd.org/>,

welcomes community input on projects so that OUSD can incorporate that input whenever possible. OUSD has sought, and continues to welcome, input about how this project can best serve both the District's students and the local residents surrounding the site. Some aspects of the project, such as the kitchen design, are not available for community input because of the specific and technical needs of Nutrition Services. Nutrition Services does welcome input on how to improve community access to those spaces.

**Q:** *How can the community access information and updates about the project?*

**A:** Please go to [www.ousdthecenter.org](http://www.ousdthecenter.org) to access information and updates about the project, and to see images of the award-winning design. To provide feedback and ask questions, please email [thecenter@ousd.org](mailto:thecenter@ousd.org) or call 510-761-8360.

**Q:** *What percentage of the people surveyed in the neighborhood survey supported the idea of the Center and of locating the project at the Marcus Foster site?*

**A:** The neighborhood survey asked residents of Census Tract 4014, which surrounds the Marcus Foster site, to share their opinions about The Center project. Of the 284 households within this census tract that responded to the survey, 70% stated that they supported the idea of The Center and also supported this project coming into their neighborhood at the Marcus Foster site (2850 West Street).

### **Site Selection**

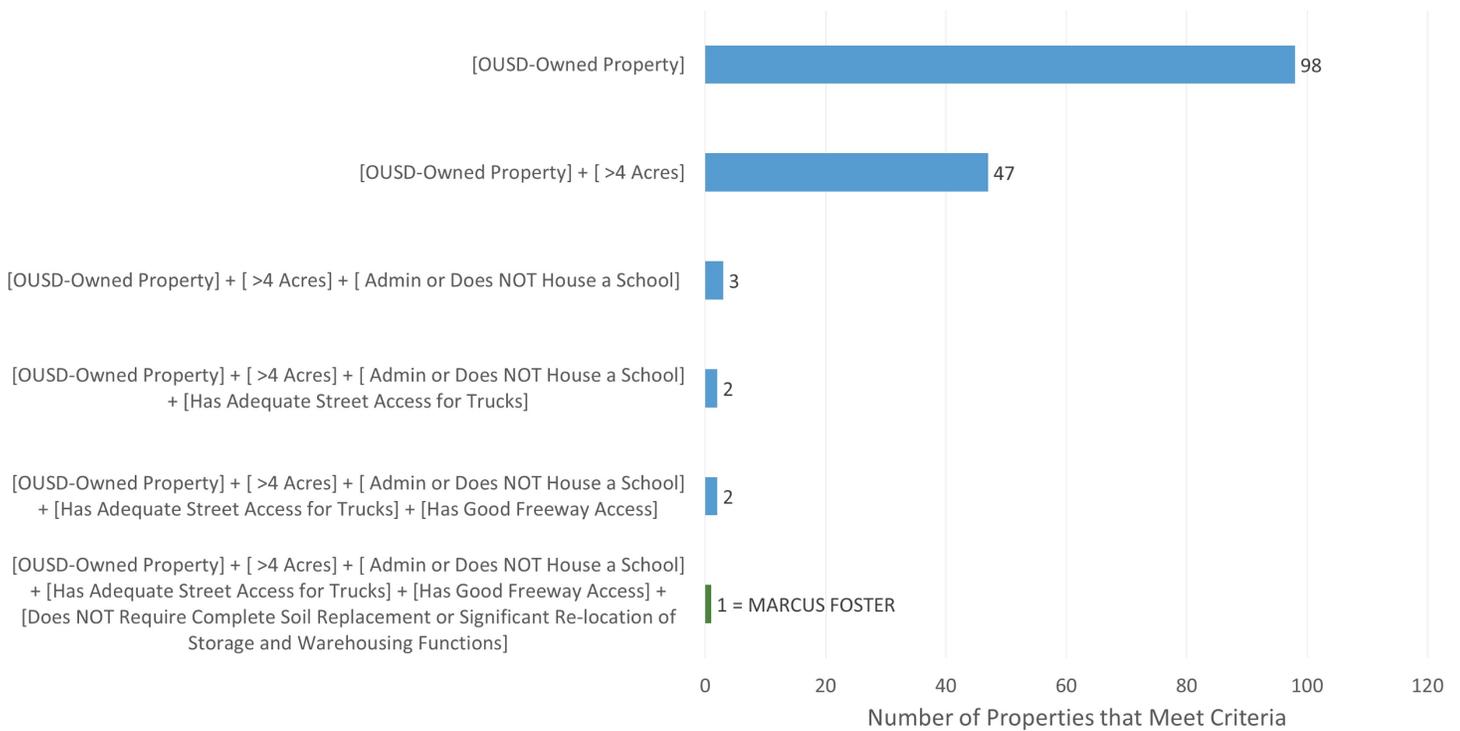
**Q:** *Why did OUSD select the Marcus Foster site for this project? Did the District consider other sites, particularly existing food distribution sites?*

**A:** During the 2010-2011 school year, Steve Marshall, (the president of an award-winning food services consulting and design firm in Oakland) assessed what the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) would need to do to implement Rethinking School Lunch Oakland. Mr. Marshall examined 50+ District-owned properties to determine the facilities upgrades needed to implement this initiative.

Finding a District-owned site that could host the Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center--the hub of Rethinking School Lunch Oakland--proved especially challenging because this required finding:

- a District-owned property that did not house a school;
- a property that provided enough acreage to accommodate a 43,000+ square foot building and a large Instructional Farm;
- a property adjacent to streets wide enough to accommodate a delivery truck, and close to transportation routes for distribution of ingredients to satellite kitchens district-wide.

Only the Marcus Foster campus at 2850 West Street met all of these technical requirements for the Center. Prescott and High Street were considered for the project, but full implementation of the program requires classrooms space as well as green space, which neither site allowed. For more information about this process, please see OUSD's [Rethinking School Lunch Oakland Feasibility Study](#), available at [www.ousd.org/thecenter](http://www.ousd.org/thecenter).



**Q:** *Is it possible for OUSD to re-locate the project to another site?*

**A:** No. OUSD does not have another District-owned property with the acreage needed to accommodate The Center, which is critical to Rethinking School Lunch Oakland.

**Q:** *Where is the site selection of this project in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process?*

**A:** To comply with CEQA, OUSD is preparing a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project because there is no evidence that this project or any of its aspects will have a significant adverse impact on the environment. A Mitigated Negative Declaration does not require analysis of alternative sites considered. In the case of the Center, OUSD did in fact consider other sites. OUSD released the draft [Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study](#) for this project on September 25, 2015.

**Q:** *Are site selection documents (specifically the site selection report and the contract for the consultant) publicly available?*

**A:** The [Rethinking School Lunch Oakland Feasibility Study](#) provides information on site selection for this project. The Feasibility Study is publicly available on the Project website, <http://www.ousdthecenter.org/project-information.html>. OUSD's Board Policy ([BP 7150](#)) and Administrative Regulation ([AR 7150](#)) around facilities site selection and development are also publicly available at <http://www.ousd.org/>. The District has also made site selection documents [publicly accessible on the Center website](#).

*Q: Does the measure to fund this project require that the Central Kitchen and the Instructional Farm be on the same site? It sounds like the majority of the objections are for the kitchen. If the District moved the Central Kitchen elsewhere and kept the Instructional Farm and Educational Center at the Marcus Foster site, would it be possible to preserve the existing building?*

**A:** The District is not able to split the project into two sites. Splitting the project across two-sites destroys the concept and integrity of the program, while greatly reducing the educational, linked learning, environmental, and community use benefits of The Center. An integrated program is an essential part of connecting kids to healthy food and educating them about the life cycle of food from farm-to-table in a way that offers academic, social, and personal growth opportunities, as well as hands-on training and instruction that prepares them for college, career, and community success.

As provided in the [December 2011 Feasibility Study](#), creating an integrated Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education 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” life cycle 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 (described above) 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.
  - 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). For more information: (

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.

Finally, the immediate fiscal impact of splitting the project across two sites would increase the overall project cost by at least \$2.5-3 million when sunk costs are taken into consideration. The District has already spent approximately \$2.5 million in work leading to the current project design. A new design, even a new design at the current Marcus Foster site, would require spending another \$1 million. Some additional costs are difficult to project, because they involve investigation into the site. Measure J funds are limited. Funds that are reallocated to this project must be taken from other school facility needs.

### ***Programming at the Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center***

***Q:*** *How will students engage/ participate with the Instructional Farm? Will the nutritional program use food from the Farm to feed students?*

**A:** OUSD and the Center for Ecoliteracy are in the process of developing programming around how students will engage with and participate on the Farm. Students will visit the Urban Farm to learn about daily and seasonal growth cycles, the effects of weather and agricultural strategies on the resiliency of plants and animals, and the web of relationships that support the health of a cultivated ecosystem. Specific activities will likely include field trips, farm maintenance (e.g. irrigation), classes, produce stands, and programming around seasonal produce. Although the farm will not produce sufficient quantities of food for the student food program, there will be a food stand where the community can purchase produce grown at the Farm and food grown will be available at the school based farmers' markets.

***Q:*** *How will OUSD integrate The Center's curriculum with internships, trainings, and other programming?*

**A:** The curriculum will include linked-learning, internships, community priorities around pathways, and field trips. The Center will provide on-the-job internship and youth entrepreneurship opportunities for OUSD high school students. The Center will enable the district—which employs more than 200 Nutrition Services Department staff members—to train students for jobs in school districts, hospitals, and other large service agencies, as well as providing guidance for students who seek entrepreneurial opportunities.

***Q:*** *What opportunities for young adults, especially young adults with disabilities, will exist?*

**A:** OUSD is strongly committed to developing plans that include opportunities for young adults with disabilities to participate in programs at the Center. These plans will be fully developed during the construction period and will be vetted with the community as well as our families with students with disabilities.

***Q:*** *Beyond culinary programs, what programs and classes will The Center offer for children?*

**A:** At the Central Kitchen, Instructional Farm, and Education Center, students and guests will learn about OUSD's relationships with farmers and community organizations, the historical significance of

Oakland and its place in California’s agricultural landscape, and the role that food production and access play in the resiliency of a community.

The Center’s educational programming will correspond to specific grade level understandings and skills for grades pre-K through 12, and will be compatible with the national Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and other curriculum guidelines used by the school district.

In addition to observing trained chefs and learning culinary skills at the Teaching Kitchen, students will visit the Instructional Farm to learn about daily and seasonal growth cycles, the effects of weather and agricultural strategies on the resiliency of plants and animals, and the web of relationships that support the health of a cultivated ecosystem. The Center will also become the home of an Academy for Culinary Arts and Sciences.

OUSD is engaging stakeholders now to develop after-school programs that will be open to everyone.

### ***Environmental Impact***

***Q:*** *When will the District hold future meetings about CEQA and environmental impact?*

***A:*** The School Board will vote on the CEQA resolution on November 4, 2015. This meeting will also serve as a public hearing where individuals can bring comments or concerns about the Mitigated Negative Declaration to the Board.

***Q:*** *What is the “Mitigated Negative Declaration” document?*

***A:*** A Mitigated Negative Declaration is an environmental review document prepared when the Initial Study identifies potential significant effects to the environment, but revisions to the project agreed to prior to public review of the Initial Study would avoid the significant effects or reduce them to a less-than-significant level. A Mitigated Negative Declaration describes the proposed project, presents findings related to environmental concerns, and includes a copy of the Initial Study which documents the reasons to support the findings, and includes the mitigation measures, if any, included in the project to avoid potentially significant effects. A Mitigated Negative Declaration does not require analysis of alternative sites considered. In the case of the Center, OUSD did in fact consider other sites.

***Q:*** *How will the design and construction of this project minimize environmental impact?*

***A:*** The [Mitigated Negative Declaration](http://www.ousdthecenter.org/) for the Project, available at <http://www.ousdthecenter.org/>, contains detailed information about how OUSD has modified the project to incorporate mitigation measures that will reduce any potential environmental impact to a less-than-significant level.

### ***Financing***

***Q:*** *How much will the construction of this project cost?*

**A:** Construction costs for the project will be approximately \$32,000,000.

**Q:** *What would be the cost of resetting the process, and re-starting the whole process with earlier community engagement?*

**A:** OUSD has already invested \$2,000,000 in the project. Re-starting the project would result in the loss of this investment.

**Q:** *What would the project cost if the District remodeled the current structure instead of demolishing it?*

**A:** Retrofitting the building would cost \$4 million more than demolishing it. Originally, OUSD planned to remodel the pair of buildings rather than build a new building to create the Central Kitchen. When OUSD set out to design and build the Central Kitchen at this site, key facilities staff along with the architects, spent nine months conducting a rigorous analysis of the current structure with the intent of remodeling the building. A complete analysis of the site and the existing structures revealed numerous challenges to remodeling the current structures, among them: (1) the need for an extensive seismic retrofit; (2) the need for extensive demolition of the existing slab to put in underground piping; (3) the need to relocate substantial underground utilities that run through the site to add a loading dock to the existing structure; and (4) the need for an addition even with a remodel. The team concluded that remodeling the current structures would increase the cost of the project by at least \$4 million. The District decided that because it would cost substantially more to remodel the existing structure, it would be a better to build a new building. California's Coalition for Adequate School Housing and the American Institute of Architects, California Council have awarded the design for the new Central Kitchen the Design Excellence Award.

**Q:** *Is there a fiscal and operational plan to put the project into effect?*

**A:** Yes. The USDA, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and the National School Lunch Program, among other sources, are providing funding for this project. OUSD will use this funding to train staff, to increase staff hours, and to hire more employees.

### ***Site History & Current Use***

**Q:** *When did the Marcus Foster School officially close?*

**A:** In 2003, in order to remain fiscally solvent, the District received a \$100 million dollar loan from the State of California. Among many loan conditions, as a result of accepting the State loan, the District Board of Education lost its authority, the District School Superintendent was terminated and the District was administered by the State, acting through a State Administrator between 2003 and 2009. The State Administrator, acting on behalf of the State closed the Marcus Foster School in June 2004 and the site has not operated as a school since 2004.

**Q:** *Is this project displacing a school? Were students displaced? If so, how many students?*

**A:** No, the project is not displacing a school. The State Administrator closed the Marcus Foster School in June 2004 and the site has not operated as a school since 2004. After the State Administrator closed

the school, OUSD's Programs for Exceptional Children, which provides special education services, occupied limited space at the site (32 students and 20 staff). The District used the site primarily for its administrative offices (105 staff worked at the site). PEC also hosted its Young Adults Program (offering classes to 18-22 year olds) and the Temporary Alternative Placement program. Some of the PEC Staff and the Young Adults Program relocated to Cole Elementary in August 2015. The 32 students in the Young Adults Program are provided transportation from their homes to the Program. Therefore, there has been no adverse impact on the students in the program.

The gymnasium and athletic field at the site were not used by the District but are used by some members of the community. Alternatives are available including McClymonds High School at 607 Myrtle St, Oakland, CA 94607, the M. ROBINSON BAKER YMCA at 3265 Market Street, Oakland, CA 9460, West Oakland Youth Center 3233 Market St, Emeryville, CA 94608 [on the border with Oakland], and **Durant Mini Park** at 29th Street & MLK Jr Way, Oakland, CA

**Q:** *If the District were to not build The Center at the Marcus Foster site, how would the site be used?*

**A:** Because this site is the only District-owned property that can accommodate the Center, and OUSD has selected it for that purpose, OUSD has not considered alternative uses for this site and no charter has requested the Marcus Foster School campus for use as a charter school. Alternative uses for this site would generally be limited to OUSD facility needs or a charter school.

**Q:** *How will the District honor the original Marcus Foster site?*

**A:** In 1973 Robert Kennard, a pioneering African-American architect, co-designed the Marcus Foster Middle School with the MacKinlay Winnaker McNeil & Associates firm. Mr. Kennard's architectural firm is the oldest African-American-owned architectural practice in the western United States. Mr. Kennard received numerous awards, including being inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1987; he also received the Institute of Architects prestigious Whitney Young Citation in 1991 for encouraging young people of color to enter the architectural profession. The Marcus Foster Middle School designed by Mr. Kennard in 1973 represented a departure from then contemporary design in many ways, including the open floor plan that gave teachers use of large spaces, unencumbered by classroom walls.

The Marcus Foster Middle School is not a historic resource under CEQA. However, in recognition of Mr. Kennard's important work, community contributions and the open floor plan concept he developed for the Marcus Foster School, the District has agreed to retain neighborhood photographers to create photographic documentation of the interior and exterior of the two existing buildings prior to their demolition. The photographs shall be on display in the Education Center wing of the new building.

OUSD will also name its new headquarters after Dr. Marcus Foster. The location of the new headquarters is the same site where Dr. Foster worked as Superintendent, and also where his assassination occurred.

**Q:** *Could the District re-open Marcus Foster as a new elementary school instead of as The Center?*

**A:** No. Oakland schools are currently under-enrolled; no public schools in West Oakland are currently at capacity. The high cost of operating an under-enrolled school has already forced the District to closed a number of its schools. For these reasons, the District cannot re-open Marcus Foster as a new elementary school instead of as The Center.

### ***Traffic & Noise Impacts***

**Q:** *Will kitchen impact traffic congestion in the neighborhood? What times will trucks enter and exit The Center?*

**A:** OUSD anticipates that during the weekdays, up to three delivery trucks would arrive at the facility between 7 a.m. and noon, and six box trucks will depart from the Center between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. to deliver bulk ingredients to satellite kitchens and return at 2 p.m. Truck access will be limited to the hours of 7 a.m. through 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Trucks will not be permitted to idle for more than five minutes.

**Q:** *Will construction of The Center change traffic patterns?*

**A:** The [Mitigated Negative Declaration](#) for the Project describes mitigations around traffic disruption. Information about temporary construction impacts to the surrounding streets during construction activities is available on pages 4-5 and pages 10-11 of the [Mitigated Negative Declaration](#).

**Q:** *Where will employees of The Center park?*

**A:** The Center will include a staff and visitor parking area containing 40 parking spaces and two handicap spaces. The location of this parking lot will be east of the new building. Staff and visitors will access the parking lot from 29th Street.

**Q:** *What are the specific mitigations around traffic and truck noise during construction? Will there be community involvement in that process?*

**A:** Pages 3-4 and page 9 of the [Mitigated Negative Declaration](#) for the Project describe mitigations around noise during construction.

The OUSD will propose a meeting to engage community members around noise mitigation during construction.

### ***Employment***

**Q:** *How many jobs will exist on-site? What kinds of jobs will exist?*

**A:** The central kitchen and administration office would house between 52 and 74 staff.

**Q:** *Will the project take jobs away from current cafeteria workers and food-delivery truck drivers?*

**A:** No, the project will not take jobs from current cafeteria workers and food-delivery truck drivers.

**Q:** *How many construction jobs will The Center provide to local residents?*

**A:** The Center will provide jobs for approximately 200-300 workers in a variety of trades.

Estimated Labors Breakdown by Trades (Big Trades Only):

Demo- 10	Epoxy Flooring- 8	Food Service- 6
Concrete- 12	Landscape- 10	Fire Sprinklers- 6
Drywall/studs- 15	Fencing- 6	Casework- 4
Electrical- 10	Rebar- 8	FRP-4
Mechanical- 10	Insulation- 5	Install D/F/H- 6
Plumbing- 5	Metal Deck- 6	Roofing- 10
Painter- 8	Carpentry- 6	Siding- 6
Earthwork/Paving-8	Windows- 4	Flashing- 6
Utilities- 8	Plaster- 6	Specialties-10
Site Concrete- 10	Tile- 4	
Steel/metals- 8	Acoustical- 4	

**Q:** *What will employment recruitment at Hoover look like, and what will the benefits be for community members?*

**A:** As a result of the neighborhood survey to assess community concerns and perspectives about the Project, the District heard from the community that the single most important issue was jobs and access to jobs. In response to the survey results, on Saturday, October 10, 2015 in West Oakland at Hoover Elementary School, the District sponsored a jobs fair. At the end of the three-hour job fair, 122 people had initial job offers from the District. The jobs included custodial, food service, and clerical opportunities as well as teachers and early childhood educators and instructional assistants.

**Q:** *How can people find out about hiring events?*

**A:** For the Job fair on October 10<sup>th</sup>, flyers were distributed, information was posted on social media, flyers were distributed to churches and organizations in West Oakland and to the families of all students in West Oakland Schools.

Hiring events will also posted on OUSD’s website, at <http://www.ousd.org/careers>. OUSD has a Project Labor Agreement that calls for hiring local residents. Local residents interested in

construction-related jobs or apprenticeships on this project should contact the West Oakland Job Resource Center (<http://oaklandcommunityjobscenter.org>) or Cypress Mandela Training Center (<http://www.cypressmandela.org>).

**Q:** *Is there specific language dedicating jobs from OUSD to adults with disabilities?*

**A:** OUSD is strongly committed to developing plans that include opportunities for young adults with disabilities to participate in programs at the Center. These plans will be fully developed during the construction period and will be vetted with the community as well as our families with students with disabilities.

### ***Project Impacts on Neighborhood***

**Q:** *What will happen on West Street and 27<sup>th</sup>?*

**A:** Trucks entering and leaving The Center will travel along 27th Street. Trucks will enter and exit the Center on West Street.

**Q:** *Will there be any impact on the new community park?*

**A:** No.

**Q:** *What steps will be taken to properly maintain the property?*

**A:** The District will install a fence around the site to protect it from vandalism. 24-hour surveillance and on-site security personnel will also help to secure the site during the pre and post construction periods.

### ***Community Benefits & Access***

**Q:** *How much access will the community have to the site?*

**A:** The District is working to ensure that the community will be able to use spaces on the site. Although the District has not yet designated specific community uses, possibilities may include classrooms that community can use after hours, and commercial kitchen space that local residents can be lease.

**Q:** *Will this project have a significant impact on the community, particularly in terms of community benefits?*

**A:** The District is engaging the community in discussions around potential community benefits. Specific community benefits could include on-site job opportunities, community access to space on the site, and educational opportunities. We do know that the Center will be available for a variety of community uses. The Center and its teaching kitchen can also be used for neighborhood meal preparation classes, and as a space for fundraisers in which local chefs offer workshops and demonstrations. OUSD also anticipates that the Center will host weekday evening classes between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., and occasional evening events during the same hours.

## ***Nutrition & Food***

***Q:*** *What impact would stopping the project now have on students? What percentage of students would have access to healthy food without the project?*

**A:** Right now, only 35% of OUSD's schools have the ability to provide freshly prepared meals to their students. None of the Child Development Centers (preschools) can offer freshly prepared food. Once the Center is built, 94% of the schools and nearly all of the Child Development Centers would be able to provide freshly prepared meals to its students.

***Q:*** *How will this project help to achieve better educational and nutritional outcomes?*

**A:** OUSD is in the process of redeveloping school menus to incorporate more locally-sourced, fresh fruits and vegetables. Around 85% of the produce used in the new food program will come from local farmers. Additionally, the 56 schools that currently receive pre-packaged food will be able to begin receiving the fresh, locally-sourced food options, which will increase OUSD's capacity to work with local food vendors.

***Q:*** *Will the instructional farm be able to provide enough to feed 38,000 students?*

**A:** The instructional farm does not have the capacity to supply the ingredients needed for the meal program. The primary purpose of the Farm is to provide students who visit the Center experiential learning opportunities. The Farm may also contribute produce for the weekly produce markets at school sites.

***Q:*** *Why has the quality of OUSD meals decreased over the last several decades?*

**A:** Around 25 years ago, many schools eliminated cooking kitchens to reduce costs.

***Q:*** *How much food will OUSD source locally?*

**A:** OUSD will source at least 50% and as much as 85% of the produce for the new food program from within 200 miles. Nutrition Services has obtained grants and funding to purchase more food from local vendors.

The End