

*Vote in the OEA Elections at your site May 9-13:*

# Defend Public Education as a Right and Not A Privilege for Every Young Person!



## RE-ELECT Mark Airgood for OEA Treasurer

I am a special education teacher at Edna Brewer Middle School and a 13 year OEA Site-Rep. I am the current OEA Treasurer and have maintained fiscal stability for this organization throughout the last two years.

## RE-ELECT Tania Kappner for Executive Board, Seat #1

I am a current OEA Executive Board member. I have taught at Oakland Tech for the past 11 years and am a fifteen- year OEA Site Rep. I am a long-time civil rights organizer, a long-time fighter against the expansion of charter schools and state takeover of the Oakland schools.



## ELECT Vincent Tolliver for Executive Board Seat #5

I am the Instrumental Music Teacher (Orchestra, Marching/Concert Band, Guitar Class, and Jazz Bands) at Skyline High School. I'm proud of Oakland and of the struggles that won free breakfast programs for children across the city and one of the largest instrument libraries in the country for youth music programs. I believe that all of these gains were secured because of the readiness of the people of Oakland to stand-up and fight together with and for the young people. In my 18 years as an educator I have always been active in student and parent empowerment individually and through group organizations. I have been a founder and co-founder of several groups specifically targeted at increasing the academic success of African-American males and have been an advocate and mentor of educators throughout my teaching career.

## ***Elect Airgood and Kappner to CTA State Council***

***Vote for Mark Rendon for OEA Vice-President & Craig Gordon for OEA Executive Board***

- Preserve all Arts, Music, and Counseling Programs! No Increase in Class Sizes! Stop the Cuts in Early Childhood Education! Oakland Youth Won't Go to the Back of the Bus!
- No Teacher Layoffs, Program Cuts, and School Closings in Oakland! No Increase in Class Sizes!
- Restore Dr. Martin Luther King's Dream for America!
- Stop the Resegregation of Higher Education! Pass the DREAM Act Now!
- Unite with the New Youth Civil Rights Movement to Keep Public Education at All Levels a Right and Not a Privilege!

# We Stand on the Side of Young People and the Right of All to Public Education

This OEA election is critical for the defense of public education in Oakland. The election of an OEA leadership committed to building the independent power of our union allied with the youth and community of Oakland is key to determining if we are successful in saving public education in this city, or see it destroyed through school closings, layoffs and program cuts, charterization, and anti-teacher/anti-student attacks. A vote for the Mark Airgood, Tania Kappner, and Vincent Tolliver is a vote for independent leadership that makes the defense of public education for every young person the guiding principle of our actions. The EON/BAMN slate members stand-up for OEA members' rights, but understand that if schools are closed or charterized – that even if teachers' are able to transfer, even if they are unionized in the charters – the students have nowhere else to go.

There are already areas in West and East Oakland in which there is no public school within the neighborhood. And even more to the point, if we allow the right to every young person to public education to be taken-away, we will have suffered a historic setback to a central gain of the civil rights movement and in opportunity for the whole next generation of youth. Our union cannot let this be the outcome of the next period of struggle. We can win this fight. We must rely on the strength, boldness, and passion of the youth and their families as our true ally. There is no better place than Oakland to stop the attack on public education. The students and families of Oakland have proven time and time again that they will act in defense our public education and school programs. In the fights against school closings and program cuts, in defense of early childhood education centers, in defense of adult education – student and families – especially Latino and immigrant families, have mobilized hundreds to the OUSD Board meetings to demand the preservation of schools and programs. The OEA can be a powerful force in building these actions and the mass, independent civil rights movement that can save public education and defend the future of the young people of this nation. We will get the full support of our students if we act.

We must find the courage and dignity to act as an independent force in the society capable of defending our interests and the interests of our students. We do not believe that California, Oakland or this nation is “too poor” to support public education. The rich and powerful have viewed the economic crisis as an opportunity to lower the living standards and expectations of the vast majority of the population. From Arne Duncan to Jerry Brown, every Republican and Democratic politician says the opposite of what they mean on public education. The politicians who decry the achievement gap between Latina/o and black students and their white counterparts or America's declining capacity to provide a first-class education for our youth, are promoting policies that can only accelerate the problems they profess to solve. The politicians cannot speak the truth. They know that almost no American believes that public education should be a privilege and not a right.

Our opponents in this election rely on the Democratic Party politicians and the good graces of Superintendent Smith and the OUSD administration. They seek to narrow our struggle to strictly trade-unionist boundaries. But the \$14 billion of cuts to education and social services that the California Legislature just passed, were proposed by Jerry Brown and passed by a Democratic Party dominated legislature with barely a whisper of protest by the California Teachers Association (CTA), the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) or virtually any other union in California. Unless we build the strength of the independent civil rights movement and force the politicians to abandon their attacks, they are totally prepared to destroy public education and the future of Oakland's youth. Superintendent Smith and the Board are already discussing mass school closings for the upcoming year, commissioning a study that claims the District has up to “40 campuses” of excess space. We owe it to ourselves and the students we teach to fight for our shared interests and needs. We cannot have the OEA end-up as just another organization that says one thing but does another – that is in-bed with those who are closing public schools and converting them to charters. We must stand on principle.

We are proud to stand-up with our students and to build the power of the oppressed to hold onto public education and to advance progress and renew prosperity. In 2006, the massive immigrant rights demonstrations that repeatedly shut down Los Angeles and other major cities gave birth to a new movement that stands squarely for increased democracy and reviving the struggle to make America a more equal less segregated and divided society. EON/BAMN candidates were leaders in building the mass immigrants' rights marches in Oakland. It's clear that the Latina/o and immigrant communities that led the massive actions in 2006 are staunch supporters and defenders of public education. A call to action by our union to defend our early childhood, K-12 schools, adult education, and community colleges and universities would be met with enthusiasm and massive support in action. **We know that victory is possible. We call on anyone who refuses to condemn California's Latina/o, black, immigrant and poor youth to a future devoid of educational opportunity, hope and dignity to join us in building a movement with the political perspective and social power to win.**