

SCHOOL WATCH

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018 Edition

NEW RESIDENT ENROLLMENT FOR 2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR

New Resident Enrollment
2018-2019
Grades DK-12
January 24-26, 2018



Beginning January 24, 2018 school sites within the district will begin enrollment for all new resident students for the 2018-19 School Year. Parents living in the community with students who will be attending any Oak Park school for the first time next school year should make plans to enroll their child(ren) at their local area school between January 24 and January 26. Parents should be aware that each school site has specific dates and times for enrollment during this window. This information, as well as other important details and school contact information, can be accessed at www.opusd.org/ResidentEnrollment. Parents must complete an initial online pre-registration form at <https://oakparkusd.vcoe.org/preenrollment/> prior

to enrolling a new student in the district. Once completed, the pre-enrollment form should be printed out and brought to the school site during the January enrollment dates.

HELP FOR FIRE VICTIMS

Our schools all ran drives to collect gift cards for fire victims caught up in the Northern California fires and managed to gather over \$3000 worth of cards. We received numerous emails from recipients expressing their gratitude. These emails had a theme of appreciating knowing that others had a concern for them at this difficult time.

We conducted another gift card drive in December for the Ventura and Santa Barbara fire victims, which raised over \$4000. Many thanks to everyone for supporting these people and helping our students learn an important lesson about compassion for people's suffering, a core value of the Oak Park school system.



Educating Compassionate and Creative Global Citizens



SANTA COMES TO AGOURA

All Oak Park Schools participate in this community-wide event and collect food items for local people in need. The drive is held in November and was a huge success this year, with schools collecting many thousands of items. Each school was given a particular item to collect in order to ensure that there was plenty of what people need.

SUPER SATURDAY

OPUSD'S 7TH ANNUAL SUPER SATURDAY IS FEBRUARY 24TH!

Bring your kids and grandkids and enjoy (10 am - 2 pm, OPHS Campus):

- Hands-on activities (mini-solar boat building, sunflower seed planting, and other craft projects)
- Rescued, unreleasable wild animals
- Sustainable art showcase
- Electric car exhibit and test drives
- Industry speakers discussing illuminating sustainability topics
- OPUSD BBQ (for sale)

Bring us your RECYCLING (9 am - 2 pm, OPHS parking lot):

- Electronic waste, unwanted medicines, eyeglasses, bicycles, clothing, DVDs/CDs/VHS tapes and paper shredding on site

<http://www.opusd.org/SUPERSATURDAY> for more details

DOG WALK THANKS

The Community Walk for the Dogs on October 21 raised over \$300 to help The Humane Society of the United States with animal rescues from the fall hurricanes. Many thanks to the dogs and their guardians who participated! We had a truly wonderful time and the dogs had an even better time!



LIGHTING UP CALLE RIO VISTA

After installing the new LED light system at the Oak Park High School Stadium, it was pointed out to us by a community resident that there is no longer any 'spillover' light for the cul de sac leading up to the back entrance to school (Calle Rio Vista). We asked the county about this and they explained that it would be very costly for them to install street lighting in this area and that it was not likely to occur due to a tight budget. We then explored what it would cost to install them from our end and determined that it was a much more simple project than having the county do it. The work has now been completed and the cost was under \$25,000, a small fraction of what it would have cost Ventura County to complete. We hope this makes it safer for everyone. Lights will only be on from dusk until 11:00 PM nightly. These are also the latest generation LED lights that do not shed light on nearby homes.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS!



dollars a year. The State of California funds schools based on student attendance, not enrollment. With an annual attendance rate of 97%, that means we receive only 97% of our state allocation. Our expenses, however, are based on enrollment, or 100%. In other words, our expenses are fixed whether or not students come to school. The state has created this system in order to incentivize schools to monitor their attendance and encourage students to come to school every day unless they are ill.

So far, this year, our attendance has averaged well above 97%, ahead of last year. Cash awards go to each school based on the level of attendance for the month. The student organization decides on how the funds will be spent (with some restrictions) and as approved by the principal. Banners with the levels of Bronze (96%), Silver (97%), Gold (98%), and Platinum (99%) are displayed at each school for the month. All schools were Silver for November. In Oak Park, *WE COME TO SCHOOL!*

We launched a new program this year called *We Come to School*. The program tracks schools' daily attendance with the goal of increasing attendance to above 97% average for the year. Oak Park schools already have good attendance, averaging 96% but in the past, we used to see this number average above 98%. Student absences negatively affect student learning and achievement; create a great deal of extra work for teachers; and cost OPUSD hundreds of thousands of

SOLAR PANEL SAVINGS

Our new solar arrays are hard at work all day, every day. Here are the stats from July-November:

Value of the electricity saved = \$159,000. We are on track to save over \$360,000 this year as expected.

Just from July to November the solar arrays have avoided the creation of 600 tons of carbon dioxide. This is equivalent to:

- Removing 117 passenger vehicles from the road for an entire year
- Powering 82 homes for a year
- Planting 14,130 trees!



COFFEE AND CHAT WITH SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Join two OPUSD school Board members for an informal conversation about whatever is on your mind about our schools.

DATE: February 28, 2018

TIME: 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Oak Park Library Conference Room



CA SCHOOL DASHBOARD

This month, the CA Department of Education released data that allows the community to measure and compare the progress of local schools. The California School Dashboard is the website that goes well beyond test scores to show the progress schools and districts are making.

In addition to English and Math test scores, the Dashboard provides data on other indicators, such as graduation rate, suspension rate, English Learner progress, and career and college readiness. Newly added this year are indicators that include chronic absenteeism, parent engagement, school climate, and implementation of the New California Standards.

State Indicators	All Students Performance
<u>Chronic Absenteeism</u>	N/A
<u>Suspension Rate (K-12)</u>	★
<u>English Learner Progress (1-12)</u>	★
<u>Graduation Rate (9-12)</u>	★
<u>College/Career (9-12)</u>	N/A
<u>English Language Arts (3-8)</u>	★
<u>Mathematics (3-8)</u>	★



OPUSD has a lot to celebrate, as our schools have earned an “all blue” dashboard. This means that OPUSD performs at the highest level in all categories. Our students’ performance on state assessments, high graduation rate, and low suspension rate are all indicators of the top notch schools in our community. No local district has achieved an all blue dashboard. Competitive districts such as Palo Alto USD, La Cañada USD, Manhattan Beach USD, and Beverly Hills USD did not attain this level of success. The Oak Park teachers, students, parents, staff, and community members should take pride in these achievements.

We encourage interested community members to learn more by visiting the Dashboard site:
caschooldashboard.org

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Being ready for a natural disaster is a major undertaking for a school district. We take extra care to be sure we are prepared and can keep our children on campus overnight if necessary. Think about how easy it would be for the 101 to be closed in an earthquake or fire, not allowing parents to pick up their children. Staff members must remain on campus under state law to care for students until parents come. We have portable shelter in the form of yurts, the same ones used by the U.N. in natural disasters around the world, portable toilets, propane generators, outdoor lighting, heaters, food, and plenty of water. We recently conducted a training session for our maintenance staff on how to assemble these units. We can now assemble a yurt in about 16 minutes.



BUDGET 101

An overview of the OPUSD 2018 revenues and expenditures.

We are proud of our students and what they have achieved with the limited budget allocated to our district. Many parents and residents believe that a top performing school district, in an affluent area, in the state with the largest economy in the US, would receive all the necessary funding. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

Nationally, California ranks

46 of 50

in overall pupil spending*



*Education Week, 2017

In California, Oak Park USD Ranks

853 of 946

in per-pupil funding

Out of nearly 1000 California school districts, Oak Park USD ranks in the bottom decile of per student funding, and ranks last among Ventura County districts.

Districts that serve higher numbers of students on the Federal Free/Reduced Price Meal Program, English Learners, and Foster Youth, receive significantly greater funding, up to 50% more, which has created a tremendous funding disparity among California school districts. With few of these students, OPUSD receives the minimum funding amount per student.



Oak Park Unified School District



8 Schools



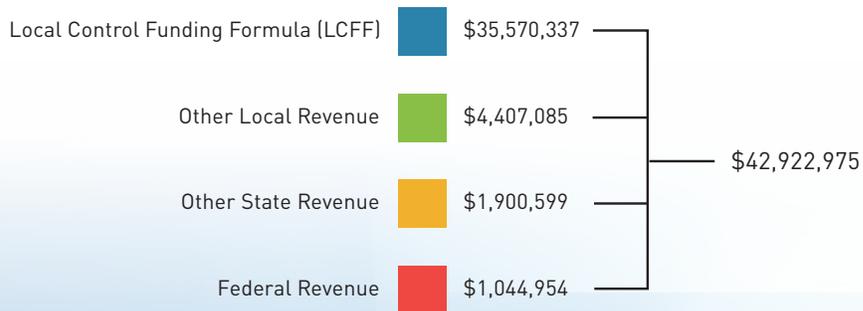
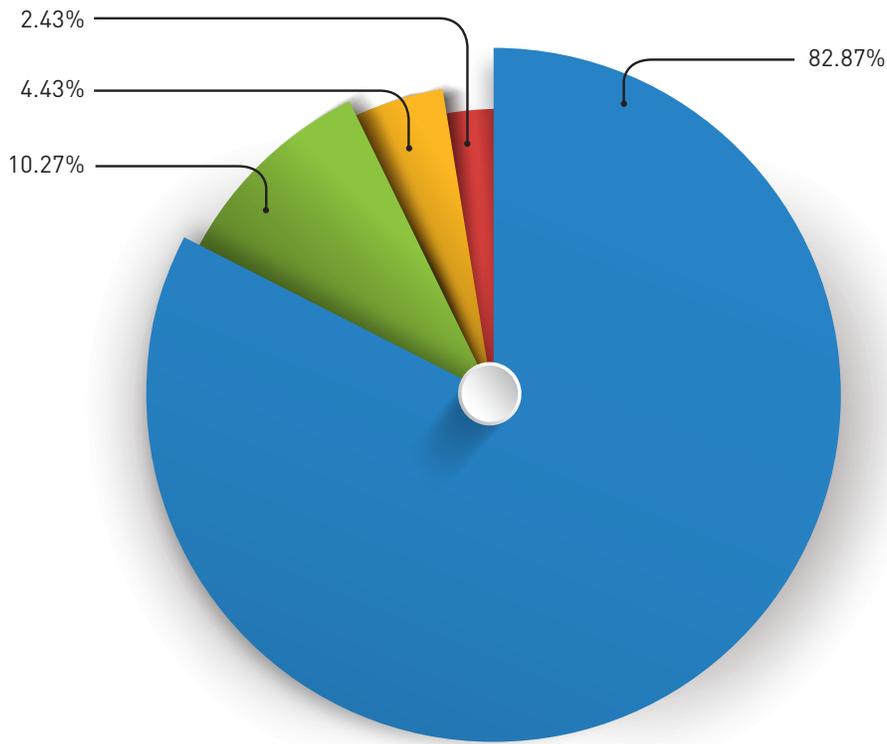
174 Classroom Teachers



4,529 Students

Thank you for taking a couple minutes to learn about the OPUSD Budget. In the following pages, we will illustrate where our funding comes from, how we spend it, and some of the challenges we face.

Where Our Funds Come From



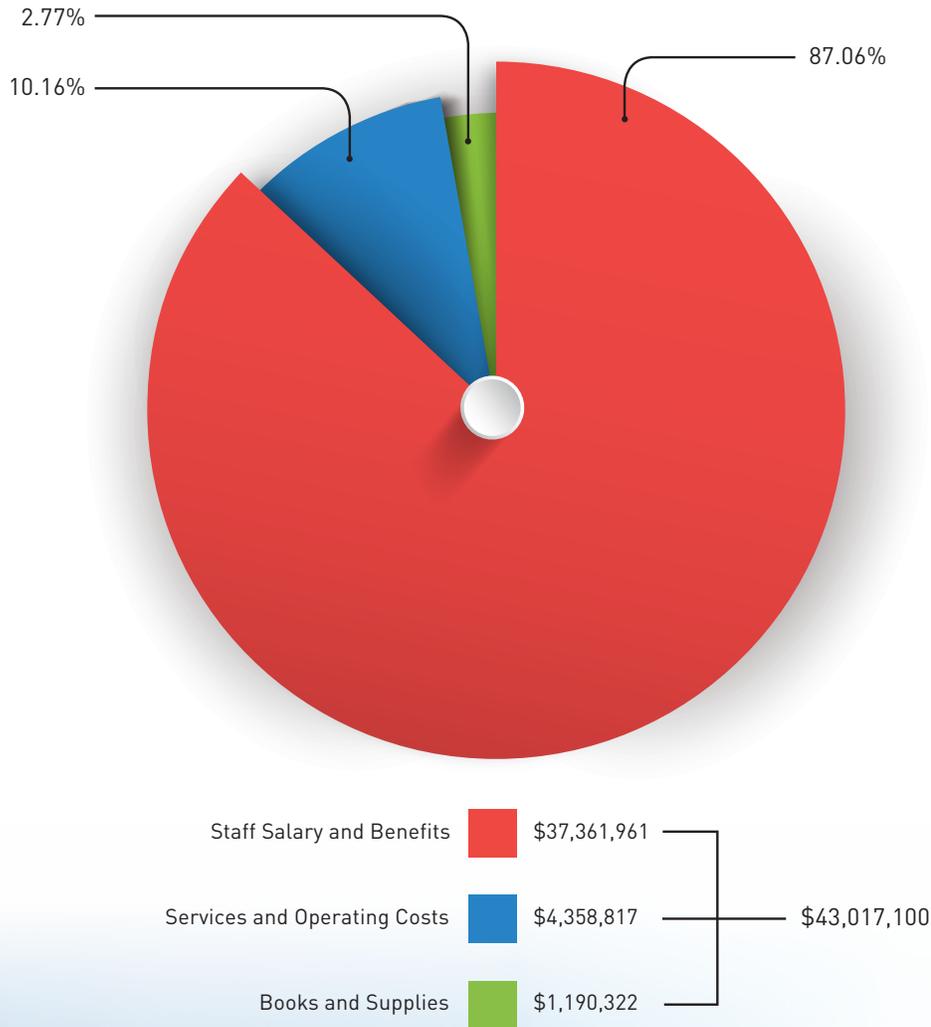
LCFF provides OPUSD 83% of its funding at \$8003 per student, with \$2561 coming from local property taxes and \$5442 from the state or a split of 32% local and 68% state. Other funding sources include Other Local Revenue (donations, special education funding); Other State Revenue (lottery and one-time funding); and Federal Revenue (Title I and II, and special education).



What is the LCFF?

Passed into law in 2013, LCFF is landmark legislation that fundamentally changed how all school districts in California are funded. All districts receive a base per pupil amount, but districts serving higher numbers of students on the Federal Free/Reduced Price Meal Program, English Learners, and Foster Youth, receive significantly greater funding, creating a funding disparity among California school districts.

How We Spend Our Funds



Several factors contribute to the 2018 budget deficit: a 65 student shortfall in projected 2018 enrollment; the failure to pass the Measure A parcel tax in May 2017, an \$870,000 loss of ongoing revenue; and the state-mandated increase in OPUSD's contributions to employee retirement systems continuing until 2023-24. This is offset in 2018 by \$650,000 in one-time monies received from the state, and use of reserve funds.

Rising Pension Costs are expected to triple over a 10 year period, reducing available LCFF dollars to be spent for students.

In 2013-14, the average cost for CalPERS/CalSTRS

\$497 per student



In 2023-24, the average cost for CalPERS/CalSTRS

\$1,608 per student



Our Challenges

In 2015-16, the top ten states spent \$20,909 per average daily attendance (ADA), while California spent \$11,357 per ADA, a deficit of nearly \$10,000. California is failing to fund education commensurate with its status among the nation's wealthiest and most economically stable states. Some districts in California are able to bolster their funding and come closer to the national average in per-pupil funding by passing large parcel taxes and/or due to major support from their foundations.

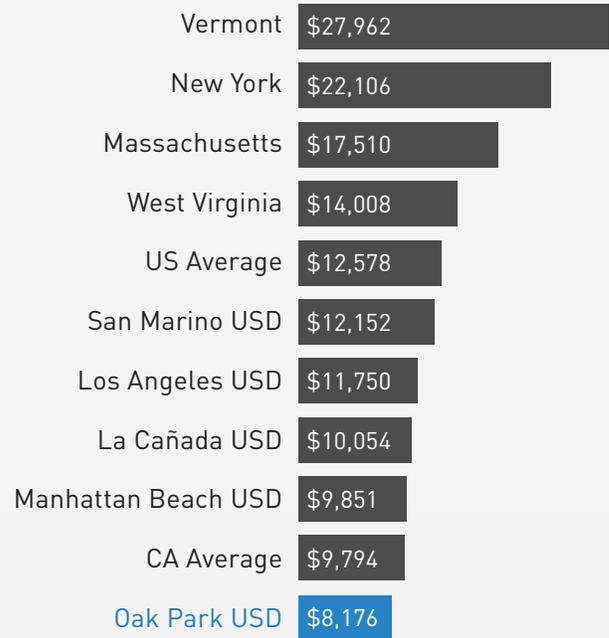
STRS/PERS Employer Contribution Increases

(Reported by Percentage)



Impact of pension cost increases on California's schools Pension contributions are set to nearly triple by 2024, significantly outpacing revenue growth. The cumulative cost of this increase to OPUSD is expected to be in excess of \$4.5 million. All district programs are negatively impacted, as new dollars received are first earmarked to cover pension contribution increases. Nearly 90 percent of the budget is salaries and benefits, and it is important to remain competitive to recruit and retain quality teachers. All districts are facing program cuts, which invariably result in larger class sizes. California already ranks 45th in pupil-teacher ratios.

Comparison of Per Pupil Funding - Governmental Sources (2014-15)



Sources
US National Education Association May 2016, Revenue Per Student in Fall Enrollment 2014-2015.
California Department of Education, School Financial Services Division, www.ed-data.org. Per student amount includes LCFF revenues, federal revenues, and other state revenues per student (based on reported student enrollment).

Parcel Tax Funding 2017-18

	Annual Parcel Tax Amount	Annual Parcel Tax Revenue	% of District Budget
La Cañada	\$450	\$2,600,000	6%
Oak Park	\$0	\$0	0%
Palo Alto	\$788	\$15,000,000	7%
Palos Verdes	\$374	\$8,400,000	7%
Piedmont	\$2,406	\$10,200,000	25%
San Marino	\$1,247	\$5,800,000	14%
Santa Monica-Malibu	\$346	\$12,000,000	8%

Our Commitment

In the face of these challenges, OPUSD will continue to pursue all available funding and financial resources, and provide the most cost-effective method of delivering its renowned quality educational programs. Thank you to the Oak Park community and parents for your continuing support and commitment to our schools.

LEARNING WITH VIRTUAL REALITY AT OAK PARK USD



Students at every Oak Park Unified School District school are experiencing new depths of immersive learning thanks to the recent deployment of a mobile Virtual Reality Lab at each school.

Using Apple iPod Touch handheld computers housed in VR goggles, students are taking virtual field trips around the world, into space, and under the ocean utilizing pre-made 360° scenes captured by special panoramic cameras. These headsets allow the viewer to be dropped into a fully immersive environment where students can turn their head in any direction and see the “world” all around them from that vantage point. Teachers have made use of Google published VR Expeditions which incorporate guided narrations explaining

points of interest while providing context to what the students are viewing.

Kindergarteners have visited Washington DC’s national monuments virtually and viewed the US Capitol’s dome from the inside. Third grade students went on a virtual tour of European architecture to see real life examples of geometric solids used in constructing historical buildings and then created their own designs using 3D modeling software (TynkerCAD). High school students explored the construction of aortic valves, atria and ventricles - from inside a virtual human heart.

The district has also begun to create its own virtual reality tours for use across the curriculum. Examples of these VR field trips (which can be viewed from any web browser, but are best viewed through VR headsets) include:

Washington DC, US Capitol and monuments - <http://bit.ly/WashingtonVR>

Mission La Purisima, the best restored California mission - bit.ly/MissionVR

Colonial Williamsburg (American Revolution) bit.ly/WilliamsburgVR

Jamestown (Pilgrims) bit.ly/JamestownVR

Virtual Reality Goggles have brought a new excitement and engagement to learning at Oak Park USD. Viewing something from within a 360 panoramic scene bridges the gap between one’s vague imagination and “real life” while transforming a theoretical exercise into a compelling experience.

MEASURE S COMMITTEE PLANNING BOND PROJECTS FOR SUMMER 2018 AND BEYOND

Working since September to develop a plan to identify and prioritize Measure S bond projects for 2018 and beyond, the Measure S Bond Committee is expected to provide its recommendation to the Oak Park Unified School District Board of Education in January.

The committee is comprised of parents, community members, teachers, school and district administrators, and assisted by HED Architects, and construction management firm Balfour Beatty Construction.

Although still in final development, the multi-year plan is expected to address key areas identified in the OPUSD Needs Assessment Plan:

- Safety and security at all school campuses
- School site construction and modernization, including replacement of “temporary” relocatable classrooms that are now 25-30 years old.
- Expanded instructional areas, including music and maker spaces, and outdoor learning environments
- Technology improvements and upgrades for classroom and network infrastructure
- Instructional equipment and furniture acquisition.
- The OPUSD Board of Education is expected to take action on the committee’s recommendation at a special board meeting to be scheduled in late January.

BROOKSIDE CELEBRATES LOCAL VETERANS

Brookside Elementary School has a long-standing annual Veterans Day tradition of celebrating and honoring local service men and women. This past November, the school's fifth-grade students and teachers prepared and performed a variety of songs, poems, and narratives to celebrate the countless individuals who have served and sacrificed on behalf of our freedom. We were thrilled to welcome family members, friends, and neighborhood residents to our school to communicate our sincere gratitude and appreciation and to learn from their stories and experiences. With us were representatives from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, whom we thank for joining us to make this event so very special.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

In OPUSD we aim to teach important social issues in deep and meaningful ways. While we often host assemblies and special speakers on topics of racism, anti-semitism, and other important issues, we know that students will become more empathetic towards others by reading, writing, and speaking about these topics. To that end, the Board recently approved the purchase of classroom materials directly aimed at building empathy and understanding of social justice issues. These materials are in direct support of Reading and Writing Workshop.

Below is a summary of the materials:

4th Grade Classroom Library additions (purchased for all 4th grade classrooms in OPUSD)- This collection contains texts on the broader topic of civil rights in the United States. This includes the women's suffrage movement, the civil rights movement of the 1960's and more. Although these topics are historical, they continue to be relevant today.

5th Grade Classroom Library additions (purchased for all 5th grade classrooms in OPUSD)- This collection contains sets of books on debatable issues about the environment, social issues, and more. For each topic, the selection of books offers different perspectives, encouraging students to remain open to multiple perspectives and to complexity.

Middle School Humanities: In middle school, many kinds of issues start to weigh more heavily on students: relationship issues, school issues, and a growing awareness of larger societal pressures. A recent Washington Post article titled "Does Reading Make You a Better Person?" concludes that the answer to the title question is "Yes!" Reading literature especially has proven to increase people's ability to empathize with others, and to be more socially aware. A driving force in this unit is the power of reading to transform how we see others and to show us new ways to be kind, to connect, and to stand up for what's right.

AWARENESS WEEK



Each year, the OPHS Advanced Peer Counselors plan and lead Awareness Week, which aims to build empathy and supportive skills for students. This year's theme was "GR(ATTITUDE)" and aimed to help students gain a wider perspective of gratitude toward teachers, peers, parents, friends, etc. Events from the week include art and writing contests, guest speakers, and daily activities led by campus groups including the Anti Defamation League, Gay-Straight Alliance, and Teacher Talks. A tradition of Awareness Week includes a student created mural (below) that celebrates the week's theme.

OAK PARK OPOLY GAMEBOARDS AVAILABLE FOR A SPECIAL SALE PRICE

*Game night will never be the same,
own a piece of Oak Park History,
makes a great gift*



on sale now

just in time for the Holidays

~~\$50~~ **\$25**

**Order online www.opusd.org/oakparkopolo
pick up at District office, bring your receipt
** Limited number available**



STUDENT'S AT OPUSD ENJOY HOLIDAY MEALS SERVED BY OUR TALENTED AND VERSATILE COOKS

The holiday lunch meal served at Brookside Elementary, Oak Hills Elementary, and Red Oak Elementary: turkey and veggie meatloaf; mashed potatoes, steamed peas and carrots, pumpkin brownies and lemon blueberry cake; buttery garlic toast; and fresh fruit.

Meet the Cooks:

Isabelle learned traditional French cooking from her grandmother, mother, and sisters. She was an accountant who served in the French military where she briefly parachuted from airplanes before joining a more grounded division. Her husband and three daughters are loyal taste testers for all her recipes. Our elementary students rave about her tacos and anyone lucky enough to try her cake aux champignons and cheesecake are smitten.

A former balloon artist whose mother-in-law taught her to cook Sicilian-style Italian food, **Robin** is a prolific organic gardener who regularly incorporates freshly harvested produce from her backyard into family meals. Robin is thrilled to cook for middle schoolers who love her healthy, hearty comfort food. Her BBQ chicken pizza and pesto grilled cheese sandwich are not to be missed.

Rogelia's cooking chops were borne out of her love for sharing food with her family and friends. She delights in working with Mediterranean and Italian flavors and is not afraid to add a little spice. Rogelia's skill really comes through in her ability to elevate any simple dish into a transforming experience. She has encouraged many a skeptical high school student to enjoy a wide array of foods, including her chilaquiles and chicken noodle soup.



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SAVE THE DATE! SUNDAY, MAY 6TH

The Community Engagement Committee is excited to announce Big Sunday is back again in 2018. Mark your calendars as we will be gathering to complete projects throughout our Oak Park Community. With a new chair, Sam Dudley at the helm, this year is going to bring more fun, excitement and lots of surprises. Registration will open in March. You won't want to miss this amazing day of "Giving Back" your whole family will enjoy. Keep an eye out for updates in our school eblasts or check our website at OakParkUSD.org

STAY CONNECTED WITH OAK PARK SCHOOLS

OPUSD wants to connect with you! Follow us as we highlight the great work taking place on our campuses. Be ready to be awed and inspired by our staff and students.

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