



# The Pink Panther

## Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

25 South Hill Court |Oakland, CA 94618| 510.549.4900

School & Community Newsletter

September 10, 2019

### KAISER CALENDAR

### MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL GUIKEMA

Wednesday, 09.11.19  
5:30pm

**OUSD School Board Meeting**

The Great Room,  
LaEscuelita Education Center, 1050 2nd Avenue, Oakland, CA



Friday, 09.27.19

**NO SCHOOL\***



Saturday 10.05.19  
10am – 2pm

**43rd Annual Kaiser Walk-a-thon**



\*Professional Development: All OUSD

Hello Kaiser Elementary Families:

The proposed merger of Kaiser and Sankofa, which will be voted on by the OUSD Board of Education tomorrow, surfaces many heavy emotions. No topic evokes more emotion or is more complex than race.

Kaiser is a school that is rooted in a desegregation movement. It mirrors the diversity of Oakland, while most schools remain highly segregated. We are proud of the significant academic growth that students have shown for the past four years, growth that has been outpaced by African American students, narrowing a historic achievement gap. We are aware that race at Kaiser is not only black and white: it involves dozens of ethnicities and cultures and mixes of all-of-the-above. Some media portrayals and other conversations about our school have left these facts out and have simplified the matter as "hills vs. flatlands" or "white vs. black". For those of us proud of the accomplishments at Kaiser, a critique that lifts up race can be really hard to hear. At the same time, Kaiser exists within an historic framework and broader context. Public education was designed to

provide completely different outcomes to white children and children of color. It was designed to maintain structural inequality. The disproportionate failure of black and brown children remains painfully real in Oakland where we see lower graduation rates, higher incarceration rates, and even shorter life expectancy.

No matter the outcome of tomorrow's school board vote, our community is in deep need of healing. We would do well to double down on our celebration of diversity. We need to genuinely listen to one another, even if the message is uncomfortable. We need to take a stand against racism and study its roots in our society. I am calling upon all adults in our community to begin this healing and to model for our children what is possible when we do this. I have faith that the Kaiser community will come through difficult conversations stronger and more unified in our shared commitment to educate and nurture our children.

~ Dennis Guikema, Principal

# PTA News

**OUSD BOARD MEETING THIS WEDNESDAY, 9/11!**



**School Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 11, 2019**  
**5:30pm**

La Escuelita Education Center  
The Great Room  
1050 2nd Avenue, Oakland, CA

**KAISER WALK-A-THON 2019**



Join us for Kaiser's 42nd Annual Walk-a-thon!

**Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**  
**10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

The Walk-a-thon is fun for everyone!

Help raise money for Kaiser Elementary by collecting pledges from friends and family to walk as many laps around the school as you can! Last year, the Walk-a-thon raised more than \$40,000!

**\*\*\* Registration and information packets coming home soon! \*\*\***



# PTA News

## KAISER DIVERSITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Greetings Everyone! My name is Simone and I am honored to be the project lead for the Diversity and Community Engagement Committee here at Kaiser Elementary. It's difficult to begin an introductory note about this committee, without first acknowledging the current climate and status of Kaiser, and so many other OUSD schools. Regardless of the results, my hope is that our children remain optimistic, strong, adaptive, loving and curious. My hope is that they continue to deepen their understanding of community, and that us parents model these values and hold space for their collective joy and resilience.

The Diversity Committee is, in my opinion, needed NOW more than ever, especially as our kids are silently grappling with the implicit (and problematic) meanings behind a possible merge. Whether or not this merge happens, I am aware of the impact these conversations have on the self-esteem of POC children, specifically those who identify as Black or Latinx.

The Diversity Committee is designed as a space for children and families of the global majority aka POC (people of color), LGBTQ+, single parents, persons with disabilities, and those who are of any other marginalized community. It's a beautiful opportunity to affirm our values, lifestyles and provide the visibility oftentimes lacking within the classrooms! I am so committed to this work and the process of parenting as an act of liberation, and I can't wait to spend time with you and yours! Below, please find a few upcoming events and mixers. These events are for the whole family:

**Sunday, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:30 am** Hike Leona Canyon/meet and greet followed by lunch. If interested in joining, please email me at [Sthelemaque@gmail.com](mailto:Sthelemaque@gmail.com).

**Thursday, Oct 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm** Costume meet up for those who participate in "trick or treating". Location TBD!

There will be more events added to the calendar, so please stay tuned! I'm looking for parents/families who are willing and able to partner with me on this committee.

If you are interested, have any questions, reactions or feedback, please email me at [sthelemaque@gmail.com](mailto:sthelemaque@gmail.com).

Thank you all so much!

~ Simone Thelemaque

