



The Pink Panther

Henry J. Kaiser, Jr. Elementary School

25 South Hill Court | Oakland, CA 94618 | 510.549.4900

School & Community Newsletter

September 24, 2019

KAISER CALENDAR

MESSAGE FROM PRINCIPAL GUIKEMA

Wednesday, 09.25.19
5:30pm

OUSD School Board Meeting

Wednesday, 09.25.19
4:00pm – 6:00pm

SSC Meeting

Friday, 09.27.19

NO SCHOOL*

Saturday 10.5.19
10am – 2pm

43rd Annual Kaiser Walk-a-thon

Monday, 10.7.19 –
Friday, 10.11.19

**Early Dismissal @ 1:30pm
Conferences**

*Professional Development: All OUSD

“Only a new wave of vision, courage and hope can keep us sane - and preserve the decency and dignity requisite to revitalize our organizational energy for the work to be done. To live is to wrestle with despair, yet never to allow despair to have the last word.”

~Cornel West

Hello Kaiser Elementary Community:

2019 certainly has been an emotional and challenging year for all of us at Kaiser Elementary. This has come to a crescendo in the past two weeks. All of us are in some (or multiple) stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and/or acceptance.

Last week our PTA Board showed incredible leadership as they shared openly and honestly feelings and thoughts about what lies ahead. They created a safe space in which families expressed a variety of thoughts without judgement. It was a model of what our whole community needs.

In this meeting I fielded very direct questions about my role leading up to the OUSD Board vote and my thoughts about moving forward. You can find this at <https://tinyurl.com/GuikemaThoughts>.

As we heal, here are some things that I am committed to and hope to see from all in our community:

- We will continue to provide an academically rich and socio-emotionally supportive experience to all students.
- We will lead with empathy and honor the time needed to heal.
- We will honor every family and staff member’s choice and agency.
- We invite all to the table to plan for next year and beyond.

It is not ideal that we overlap healing and planning, however there is urgency around several pieces of the work ahead. The door is open to all who want to begin this work now and will remain open for others to join when ready.

We also need to find time to celebrate, have fun, and support our school community. This is exactly what will happen at our walk-a-thon on October 5th. I hope to see ALL families there. The funds raised go to support THIS year’s art, music, and computer classes, academic mentors, field trips, and much more. If you haven’t started fundraising already, the info you need is in this Pink Panther.

~ Dennis Guikema, Principal



School News

FROM KERRY LINETZKY : SEL LEAD AT KAISER

Dear Kaiser Families and Caregivers,

I wanted to reach out to all of you to share my heartfelt gratitude for how the community is holding their children and each other as we weather this time of transition. As the Social-Emotional Learning Lead (SEL lead) here at Kaiser, it is clear that families and caregivers are having rich and thoughtful conversations with their children - answering the questions as best we can, and tending to their feelings about change and uncertainty. It is always hard when decisions are made by others that directly impact our lives, particularly if the outcome is not what we desire. This becomes even more challenging to navigate with our children when we are managing our own feelings and thoughts about change and uncertainty.

There have been fruitful conversations in the classrooms and the teachers continue to hold space for process and feelings to be shared. The teachers are doing a wonderful job in shifting the focus to the here-and-now, and creating moments of empowerment for our students. Conversations are shifting to how we can make this year great, and fostering joy in the present moment. This is an important step in helping everyone start to heal.

It has been more difficult to manage the conversations on the yard during recess and free time. Generally, this has been a wonderful opportunity for students to have peer-to-peer conversations with their friends. However, there have been situations when a peers' comments have been misunderstood, or a more mature complex statement has been filtered through a much younger students' processing abilities. This has resulted in some confusion and misinformation to spread. For example, the statement "Sankofa is open to a merger" has been heard and repeated as "Sankofa wants our school to close". This creates tensions and feelings that are not supportive of the healing process for our students. We will continue to monitor, provide increased supervision when possible, and help process these moments with students. As was mentioned in the Staff and Faculty letter last week, we would ask that parents and caregivers be mindful of the conversations had around the students, and when at all possible, keep the conversations at their developmental level.

Any concrete questions that can be answered is very helpful in minimizing the anxiety around the unknown: When is this change happening? Where is the school? What is our family's plan? Where will I go? Where will my friends go?

We do not know the answers to some of these questions yet, and that's ok too. Just letting the students know that the adults will figure it out is a reassuring response.

Tending to feelings of uncertainty, anger, sadness, and making space for curiosity helps students at this age feel grounded and secure. This is what I hope for all of us.

Feel free to reach out with any questions or thoughts. I am on site Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Kerry Linetzky, SEL Lead



PTA News

PTA PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Greetings Kaiser Community,

Over the past two weeks since the School Board's vote, many of us have been experiencing a broad range of emotions--anger, grief, hope and uncertainty. This is made more challenging by the fact that our children are also experiencing their own range of emotions, and we are doing our best to support them in the midst of our own inner struggles.

At the PTA Board meeting last week, we all participated in a very candid discussion regarding our many mixed feelings. We gave each other space to share openly and honestly about our thoughts and concerns. We asked difficult questions and acknowledged the unknown. In doing this, we realized that although we may have different ideas about where to go from here, we are still a strong community, and have a strong desire to support one another. It was a relief to be able to talk freely about what is going on for us, and it felt like a very important step in beginning to heal and move forward--along whichever path we each decide to take.

To that end, we want to create a similar opportunity for Kaiser parents, caregivers, faculty and staff. We are currently in the process of reaching out to possible facilitators who can help support us in this process. Please keep an eye out on Konstella, the marquee for more details of date and time. We plan to offer childcare so that adults who want to participate will be able do so.

In the meantime, thank you all for continuing to show up in all the ways that you do.

Warmly,

Sarah Isaacs, PTA President



PTA News

KAISER WALK-A-THON 2019



Join us for Kaiser's 43rd Annual Walk-a-thon!

Saturday, October 5th
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

We are just TWO short weeks away from our 43rd Annual Walk-a-thon and we need your help to meet our ambitious \$40,000 goal!

Can you make your donation today? Please visit: <https://kaiser.walkstarter.org/>
With the size of our student body, *each child needs to raise just \$150.*

Does your company match donations? Be sure to see if your organization offers matching donations. <https://kaiser.walkstarter.org/match>

Can you volunteer? And finally, please sign up to volunteer at the Walk-a-thon on October 5th. There are lots of great slots still available, including some Shave Ice station times! Follow the Konstella announcement or go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0a4faaae22a1fa7-kaiser>

Thank you so much!
Walk-a-thon Committee

