

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE EDUCATION TASK FORCES
Initiated by Mayor Ron Dellums

The Education Task Forces met six times between September and December 2006 to make recommendations to the Mayor (and ultimately to the School Board as well)

The structure was designed to revitalize democracy and bring forth wisdom and brilliance from the community.

The process was uniquely successful. Every task force completed its mission: Developing, debating, and agreeing upon approximately 5 recommendations answering a question related to education such as “How can Oakland ensure that there are enough effective, permanent teachers for all Oakland youngsters?” and “How can the Middle and High Schools operate to insure effective, exciting education and to lessen the numbers of drop/push outs?”

As of October 2008, over half of these recommendations have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

1. The task force on effective teachers recommended that the City and school district hold a teacher recruitment summit. The Mayor’s office sponsored two such events at City Hall with a total attendance of over 400 people, most of them possessing bachelor’s degrees. Many have since become regular, full-time classroom teachers and a school district person says, “We now have substitutes for almost every classroom almost every day, largely because of the people we recruited at the City Hall Teachers recruitment summit
2. The task forces recommended profiling teachers on the City web site. This has happened and can be viewed on www.oaklandnet.com
3. “Bridge the ’digital divide’” was recommended by one of the task forces. The Mayor has supported OTX West and the city is well on its way to creating city wide internet access.
4. The task forces proposed remodeling the city’s entire web site to promote civic participation and transparency in government. This redesign is underway and will be completed in early 2009.
5. The task forces proposed the creation of “wrap-around” services for Oakland youngsters.
 - a. With the assistance of the Mayor \$18 million in grants have been obtained for the creation of school based health centers and family support centers.
 - b. They also proposed making the schools a center of community and after school activities. There has been a great expansion in after school

programs, and the school district itself, with support from the Mayor, has proposed a “community schoolyards initiative

6. The task forces recommended that the school district be returned to local governance. The Mayor supported this stance and the return of local control is well underway.
7. The education task forces proposed the continuation of head start services and the development of partnerships for early childhood education. These have occurred.
8. The task forces proposed greater use of the Peralta Community College System to benefit all the residents. This has occurred with the development of numerous new programs including a “green jobs” program, a “gateway to college” program and beginnings of a regional public safety training center.
9. The task force on middle and high school students proposed a “youth advocate” program. Implementation of this was begun by the school district with the “Inside-Outside” Advocate Program.
10. Both the Middle and High School task force proposed expansive projects which would create a culture of learning in the city and provide opportunities for higher education and job training for every Oakland graduate. These and many other proposals are now becoming possible with the expansion of resources through the America’s Promise anti-drop-out network.