

Oakland Unified School District Press Advisory *For Immediate Release*

OUSD and Laney Partner to Launch Gateway to College Program *Oakland Unified and Laney College to provide joint enrollment for local dropouts*

Oakland - Nov. 13, 2007 - The Oakland Unified School District and Laney College announced today a historic partnership aimed at fighting the dropout rate and presenting a second chance at college to students who have veered off the traditional academic path. The project, part of the nationwide Early College High School Initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Foundation, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, links Laney to a group of 18 community colleges across the nation that have adopted an innovative program targeting urban high school dropouts.

As the latest recipient of a Gateway to College grant, which is administered by Portland (OR) Community College and supported by Jobs for the Future, Laney will partner with OUSD to offer dual enrollment to students who have dropped out of the K-12 system. Students will take college courses taught by college faculty, thereby meeting high school graduation requirements while gaining credit toward an Associates Degree.

National studies show that roughly one in three students drops out of high school. Most of these students are consigned to a future of low wages, little career advancement, no post-secondary education and diminished opportunities to provide for themselves or for their families.

"Laney College is a first-line emergency responder, striving to provide underserved members of the community with opportunity, training, education and hope," said Laney President Dr. Frank Chong. "The Gateway to College program is a positive partnership with the Oakland Unified School District that will help bridge the gap between high school and college for many at-risk students."

Beginning in the 2008-09 academic year, students aged 16 to 21 will be able to attend Laney under the Gateway to College project - with all enrollment fees waived. Guided by specialists trained in working with at-risk youth, Gateway to College students simultaneously accumulate high school and college credits in a small community of peers. In addition to reading, writing, and math, students also take a career development class to focus their academic goals and a college survival course designed to help them re-engage with the academic process. This experience develops learning and personal skills and helps students transition to taking college courses with the general student population.

"Frequently, urban educators must combat not only the standard challenges of the classroom, but also the social ills of poverty, unemployment, violence and despair," explained Vincent Matthews, Interim State Administrator of the Oakland Unified School District. "Despite valiant efforts to overcome these obstacles, some promising students fail to receive the full benefit of the educational system on their first try. These students deserve the second chance offered by Gateway to College, a program which moves us closer to our goal of ensuring that all students graduate prepared for success in college and the workplace."

For more information on the Laney Gateway to College project, please contact William Hanson at (510) 592-1476 or by emailing whanson@peralta.edu.