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Talk Given at the State of Public Education Symposium – March 12, 2010
Graduate School of Education
Event Organized by Berkeley Review of Education

Really what under girds this talk today, and what I am charged with leading in Oakland, is creating the conditions for success for every child in every school regardless of zip code, ethnicity, to whom they are born, and where they come from. We need to create the conditions for academic and social success inside of our schools. This has been called a full-service community school, and has been called different things over time. However, at this moment in Oakland, we have a situation with declining resources. For the Oakland Unified School District, that means we'll be cutting 85 million dollars from our budget. Next year's expenditures are reduced by 85 million, which is staggering. It's more that 20 percent of our operating budget. The challenge is how to actually serve every child regardless of where they come from, regardless of need. We need to figure out how to find the opportunities to meet those needs.

I think that the idea of the full-service community school is the right idea, and I think we have to transform that notion. Historically, the full-service community school was a needs-based response; kids had needs so they put services in the school. Then they grew over time, and realized some of these families had needs too, so they developed services for those families. The transition and transformation of this model has to be that it contributes to the well-being of the city, that it interrupts historical patterns of oppression, that it actually contributes to a healthy, just, and fundamentally different kind of society. That's the kind of education transformation we need, and I think it's possible when we begin to see children as full human beings, staff as full human beings, parents and families and care-givers as full human beings. Unfortunately, in an effort to respond to the inequity in the public education system, No Child Left Behind

- and people advocated strong to reauthorize elementary and secondary education, but they got too narrow. The ability to test, to find the right metric to name the gap, and we started over-testing, quite frankly. In fact, I think the tests themselves have become a mechanism for separating and diminishing our humanity, and not contributing to our ability to better educate. Now, it's a great diagnostic; it helps in a very narrow way.

And, again, I'm coming from the context of having not heard all the other talks, but I'm betting you had some picture of the national landscape, some of the California context.

I would say that the work in Oakland right now is about building the conditions inside of each of our schools where we are preparing young people to be citizens. Educating as if being a citizen mattered, and unfortunately, it felt like we got away from that for a while.

For me the work in Oakland is about caring for the whole child, the whole family, the whole community. If we create these cultures of calm and supported connections inside of schools, we can start to have material and social effect on the city.

Now, that takes some real details.

To actually do that takes some very thoughtful and logistical planning - to build up the skills and attributes of young people, to change the working conditions of staff, to change their preparation, to change the policies - at all these levels. I want to talk about some of the practical pieces and bring this home, as it were - I've been in this campus or Oakland since 1985. We have a structure called a caring-school community. The caring-school community we have at 11 elementary schools, and through the Developmental Studies Center - an Oakland-based company that has done work nationally.

There's actually a curriculum for creating care and concern in classrooms, building relationships, figuring out how to run community meetings inside a classroom.

It's a curriculum that helps teachers who are not always prepared to know or understand the history and experiences of the children they are in front of. It creates the conditions and the technical background to do the emotional connecting work. We have this program in 11 elementary schools, and actually in San Francisco as well.

But I really don't think we can get to these big ideas without doing the details, without changing practice and being in a relationship with kids, and the practitioners who have to learn different ways of being. Everything from the caring-school communities, you start to build cross-age mentors. Teaching kids how to be in a good and right relationship to each other, and how to coach that as adults in the building. Then you layer in the literacy piece - how do you not just have cross-age mentors, but cross-age reading buddies. You build inside of schools the kind of culture and respect that people - people in 2010 often say kids today, well in that community they don't have respect for this - all of the racist and classist code that we talk about, that you hear, that you can actually prepare kids across race, across class, across all kinds of difference, around ways of being in that relationship inside of our schools and connect that to content. That's critical - the more we work on creating conditions for kids to be their full selves, to be present, (the more) they can hear and understand and read themselves and bring their own attributes and funds of knowledge to the work inside of schools.

The work we have in front of us is technical work. It's political work in terms of having the political will to stand up and really serve children well - all of our children.

But, it's also personal, because there's still some staff members who feel like 'This is not-I'm not a social worker. I'm not a nurse.' The list of all what I am not actually trumps what I think - 'I'm not here to teach this' is different than 'I'm going to teach children and learn who these kids are so I can teach them what they need to know. 'But I think we are starting to get a handle on how to do that. Then you move into this other broader notion of policy level work. We've been fortunate that we have got extraordinary young people in Oakland Unified School District who have been advocating for restorative justice. They have taken on and built up the work through middle school - originally Cole Middle School, but then the also the council said this is how we need to be in relationship. We

need to change from a historic discipline policy to a more social justice oriented and relationship based discipline practice.

The restorative justice policy, or restorative justice in general, moves the offense from an offense against the state to the rupture of a human relationship. The first piece of work is to repair the relationship that we have as individuals, as human beings. Restorative Justice asks “What was the transgression? What work has to be done to repair that relationship?” Then connecting that work back into the community as two individuals we sit inside of a larger school community. Then you have to go to a restorative circle, and sit and talk about what the work was that you did together, what the offense was, what are the steps I took to make reparations, and the forgiveness part and then sharing that with the rest of the circle.

Middle schoolers are learning and using these practices. Staff are learning and using these practices. We also now have a pretty extraordinary and unfortunate gang infrastructure in the city of Oakland. We have one high school in particular that is more than 50% publicly gang identified. At this point, we've crossed over to where folks have hat signals, it's low key like colors tucked under the belt, folks are wearing tattoos - and 50% are publicly gang identified. That's scary and very dangerous.

However, the issue is that kids want to belong. They're craving belonging and structure, and these adults have failed to provide that in the city of Oakland.

There are incredible small efforts and community based organizations - we have some really wonderful schools that have made these kinds of connections, but as a system, we have not said fundamentally that the care and nurturing of young people is our first priority. So in terms of what we're educating for - education for citizenship is different than education for test scores - and then this rethinking and reimagining harkens back to Dewey and others. It is about the opportunity to create sense of belonging and purpose inside schools that effect life and well-being outside of school.

I can tell you the fortunate truth is at this moment that incidents of violence on that campus I told you was now more than 50% publicly gang identified are down. That school is perhaps the most calm of our high schools. That there is an infrastructure there, and we also have a full time police officer there who is not just a police officer but is also pretty extraordinary in his ability to have relationships and be present. Between a police presence and a very strong gang infrastructure, we have peace. Truancy data shows more kids are actually attending class. We do see that as a positive.

So, when we talk about caring school communities, you talk about restorative justice - we have to rethink secondary school. Period. Where I'm at at this point is this forward movement - this excitement that I have about Oakland.

We have so many folks with so much to give, and there's no way to really connect. Adults in our community - and the number of conversations that I've had in the eight months of being the superintendent of Oakland - the frustration, the disappointment, the fatigue about trying to give, trying to connect. I've been out here, I've been doing this,

I've got eighteen kids that I've worked with over the last nine years. Six of them are in college' - Individual stories, but do you know how hard it is? There's no infrastructure around the community well-being, and how to actually include the community and community based organizations to use the assets that already exist. And I will tell you that we're really fortunate, we just received yesterday a Cal-Grip grant to work specifically on gang issues at the Fremont Federation of schools – there are four schools on the campus, soon to be three – and the Casablanca campus so we're doing good work. But the problem is that people, for example, the Spanish Speaking Unity Council is not a formal partner with Fremont. That's criminal. That's unacceptable. How can that be true after all these years? Incredible community-based organization, lots of experience and practice, people who have exited the gang life, there's an asset right there that has not been integrated or used by the public school district. So, part of what my job is is to remind people why we're in this work and then to create the conditions, the structures, the infrastructure, the public institution that responds to that purpose. I think we got away from purpose and then we got new structures built that were attuned to that other purpose. So how is it that we repurpose the organization and then build the right infrastructure to accomplish that purpose? I was really fortunate to spend a couple years in San Francisco where I got to basically translate the brilliance and life experience of Carlos Garcia into a structure, into an infrastructure for an organization and you can go to beyondthetalk.org and you can look at the strategic plan and the balanced scorecard that we created. Again, it was around things like accountability we framed as keeping our promises to students and families, so moving away from accountability structure of “how can you punish” to “how can you keep the promise, the commitment?” We talked about achievement, joyful learning, we talked about his idea of having access and creating joyful learning. And the other biggest piece for me was our primary commitment around equity – and people talk a lot about equity – but what does that mean? Our purpose was to make social justice a reality.

But how do you do that? You have to get really, really specific. You have to talk about the historical patterns of achievement and right now, and San Francisco is no different than Oakland in this regard, is the predictability of performance is unfortunately tied directly to demographics. There are some exceptions, and meritocracy people will say “well it worked for...” an individual, but I'm telling you it's not working for whole groups of kids. So the predictability of performance by race, by zip code, by income...we have to end that and so we talked about diminishing this predictability of performance in San Francisco and that's what we've been moving to in Oakland, to a productivity model to how is it that when young people go into the schools, their experience when they get there, wherever they are in terms of their performance, that that place has been beneficial, it's been productive for them. So as I've begun now to look at schools and to use productivity analysis, this reveals the problem with the academic performance index because if you have certain subgroups that are really high performing, I mean you can look at the gap but you aren't able to see the individual kids. So I can tell you that, while it's not ready to be public yet, we have schools in the district where people are choosing, we have options in Oakland, we have an options process where people can select other schools and move anywhere across the city if they can get in. This, for me, is the fundamental tension of liberty, equality and equity. It's both an equity strategy to have

people have access to high quality schools and it's a liberty-based idea, like "I should be able to get it for me," but when the patterns play out like they play out and you are always pursuing this higher API, sometimes you don't see what's actually happening for your own children; you end up reproducing the pattern. So we have some high API schools where, for example, African American males go and their performance in those schools actually goes down over time as different than schools that are in their neighborhood, right where they live, where they're at a lower API school but that per-year performance of African American males is going up. It's totally counter-intuitive, right? And the research says you have to have access to high-quality instruction except that the culture inside many of our schools is so unwelcoming, so alienating and so un-affirming and negative for so many of our kids that it doesn't produce the kind of outcomes you'd think you'd see.

We need to be able to reveal that, not as a way to punish, but as a way to improve. And the outcome has to be that in a city where we have at the moment approximately four out of ten African American males graduating and, this is questionable these are round numbers, approximately five out of ten African American males being incarcerated in the city of Oakland we have a serious problem that's the result of the system...so folks are really quick to blame the individual however, when the system produces these outcomes district by district, city by city, state by state in the whole United States eventually you have to say there's a system problem, right? I have to say there's a system problem. Not everyone agrees with that. So, how do you go about interrupting those patterns? These historical patterns in inequity and the effects of that inequity have accumulated over generations and so, again, back to the structural stuff, policy, you know, when free and public education was being championed for everyone we're also not allowing African American children access to being literate, to being taught to read. We have moments when the GI bill was being applied differently to folks who were coming out of the military, who had access to it, and how much they got, played out by race and then redlining. So you have all these historical patterns and then inside of schools we, you know, the down side of *Brown v the board of education*.

As people integrated, there was a great retreat of white and affluent families out of "those integrated schools." The factors that were built into *Brown* – there's a whole set, people were smart then, they knew that this was going to cause some real problems -- there were factors built into *Brown v. the board of education*, equity factors that were never implemented. They were never resourced because people saw what was going to happen however they never put the resources necessary to mitigate the affect of integration.

So we sit here at this moment with these patterns and these outcomes that are predictable. So how is it that we interrupt the predictability? That's the reason that I believe deeply in full service community schools. I believe we have to integrate not only the program but change the facility, change access change the structure. How the built environment affects our ability to be in relationship – we have so much work to do to change the built environment in ways that foster community that welcome us, that are healthy for us. I mean, I love what's happening right now in terms of sustainability work but I think we should apply the principles of sustainability to school reform, to school redesign. How we actually do this for generations, and rethink relationships and built environment so that

people – and this is where I go to the diminishing resource requires greater purpose and greater clarity of purpose – and then you can collaborate and then you can share, you can be in that relationship around a common purpose.

And I don't think we can afford, quite frankly, to not do that because we jeopardize not only our local community but I think fundamentally we jeopardize democracy. And I'm not saying that the idea of the full service community school or as I'm now framing it, the full service community district, that we use all the assets of Oakland, the platform of our five hundred acres, our hundred plus school buildings as a facilitating place and more of an ebay type of activity where we say "here's what our need is, here's where our purpose is, who's out there, who can support it" – children and their families, well being, healthy Oakland. I'm not saying that the full service community school idea interrupts all that historical oppression. I am saying, though, that gives us the platform to work together in the relationship with children and each other that we can begin to examine our own stuff and then help young people learn the skills and abilities to be not just in a safe space inside a school, but when they are out in the community to be able to take responsibility for being different and to begin to change relationships in their community. And when we have parents and families inside of our schools who are having those same experiences in varied restorative circles, that they can heal. A lot of this is healing. It's kind of funky to talk about in terms of "education," where's the real detail to content. But if you read all the brain research, the functional MRI, the deeper relationship is with somebody, it changes the brain. It fundamentally alters the brain. The deeper the relationship is, it triggers other kinds of connections in branching as different than pruning. The relationship, the context, the whole human being that is possible in the context of a school environment that nurtures you...the learning is actually stickier. We have the context and the possibility by that being different and even thinking about education in some different ways and thinking about the public institution in different ways.

I think in order to realize the aspirations of social movements we have to transform public institutions. We need to start with the lead institution that affects children, which is public education. So how is it that we all rally, that we organize and we step forward in service of children and demand public institutions change? So for me, this is very hard and we're at this moment, of course, I get to navigate through some of the worst cuts to education since the depression, the first and deepest real dollar cuts since the depression, and kids are going to keep coming.

We must figure out how to care for, to educate in ways that transform our communities and not simply hold on and just beg for a little more resource. It's an opportunity to demand for a change in the funding structure, it's an opportunity for us to demand that we do different so we have better and different outcomes for children of Oakland and it's a time to demand more of ourselves in service of healthy Oakland and I would argue, much like I did fortunately when I was in Emeryville, that tiny little Emeryville could be a resource for the region. We got more grant dollars in Emeryville in the time I was there than in any other per kid – I mean, Oakland was doing great in terms of its funding there for awhile – but we got so many dollars per kid because what we had was a platform. We said we were going to create a full service community school but what we said was that it would turn into the Emeryville center of community life. That we would rethink the

entire public institution of public space. This is a time of doing that city-wide in Oakland and Oakland can be a resource for the region, it's Berkeley, it's Emeryville. Our kids move up and down San Pablo boulevard, folks. And we have to think about this coherent protected pathway for all of our children in the east bay and I think the time has come to call that, whether it's a full service community district or just doing the right thing for kids and take responsibility as adults to do that, that the time is now.