



TONY SMITH, PH.D. Superintendent

December 14, 2011

Governor Jerry Brown
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for the implementation of transitional kindergarten in the Oakland Unified School District and other large school districts across California

Dear Governor Brown:

Transitional kindergarten, which will be implemented in more than 700 school districts throughout California next fall, is a historic opportunity to lay the foundation for proficiency in the early elementary years.

As the Superintendent of the Oakland Unified School District, I know that transitional kindergarten is a winning solution for California. Research shows that children who attend kindergarten readiness programs like transitional kindergarten are more likely to do well in school and attend college because these children are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Parents now have an additional option to ensure their children enter kindergarten with the maturity and skills they need to excel, and schools like ours will benefit because children will be better prepared for success in and less likely to be placed in special education and retained in later grades. Finally, California's economy will be strengthened by a well-educated, globally competitive workforce.

Large districts have a lot of work ahead of us, and the Oakland Unified School District is excited about this opportunity to focus on promising practices, strategies and resources so that large school districts can implement transitional kindergarten in a high-quality and efficient way.

Thank you for your continued support of transitional kindergarten implementation efforts in local school districts across the state.

Sincerely,

Tony Smith
Superintendent
Oakland Unified School District

cc: Sue Burr, Executive Director, State Board of Education
Julie Henderson, Senior Advisor for Policy, Office of the Governor
Dr. Michael Kirst, President, State Board of Education