



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

July 25, 2012

Robert E. Doyle, General Manager
East Bay Regional Park District
2950 Peralta Oaks Court
Oakland, CA 94605

Dear Mr. Doyle:

I am pleased to have this opportunity to write to support the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD)'s Community Transformation Grant (CTG) application.

I believe making sure our students are healthy, eating well, and engaging in fitness activities is a key part to ensuring they are able to live, work, and thrive in our highly connected 21st century world. I also believe we must focus not just on the academic child, but on meeting the needs of the whole child, to help ensure successful educational and life outcomes.

The East San Francisco Bay Area is fortunate the EBRPD is able to serve as such a strong asset, helping ensure its residents can be more healthy and vibrant. The EBRPD's 112,000 acres of accessible parkland; 1,200 miles of trails; and thousands of education, recreation, and interpretive programs provide incredible health and fitness opportunities for area residents.

The EBRPD has supported the international *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* (HPHP) initiative, the only regional or local government to do so in the United States. In support of HPHP, the District proposes to lead a multi-sector collaborative—the Get Outdoors! (GO!) Network for Healthy Kids—to further strengthen the relationship between health, education, and outdoor activity providers.

The GO! Network brings together the West Contra Costa County Unified School District, Oakland Unified School District, the University of California Berkeley Center for Weight and Health, Children's Hospital in Oakland, Alameda County Office of Education, and EcoVillage (a Richmond-based, regional non-profit focusing on sustainable, healthy food and nutrition). This well-rounded collaborative will address the CTG's strategic directive number two, *Active Living and Healthy Eating*, in the impacted communities of Richmond and Oakland, California.

The GO! Network has several key components I am pleased to support. It embraces the Full Service Community School and District model, one which promotes schools as sites to holistically meet student, family, and community needs.

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The EBRPD's facilities are used by 14 million visitors a year. Expanding the District's reach into our education and health care communities will further enhance the wellness and health of the East Bay, particularly in the urban corridors of Richmond and Oakland where families have limited safe outdoor options.

The District's facilities and programs improve our region's economic competitiveness by providing low-cost, safe outdoor activity opportunities in an urban environment. Connecting the District's role in our community with schools and health care providers will help reduce health care costs for employers, address chronic diseases before they happen, enhance the quality of life for residents, and provide schools additional resources and promotional assets. All of these strategies will further bolster business and worker recruiting efforts for our region.

The EBRPD is financially sound and has significant local matching funds of its own, as well as existing partnership with schools and health care providers in our area. As an independent Special District with an elected Board, the District works with all 33 cities and towns in the region, as well as with businesses, non-profits, and other government agencies to ensure stakeholders are invested in their success.

If you have any questions about my support for this proposal, please contact Craig Cheslog, Principal Advisor to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, by phone at 916-319-0554 or by email at ccheslog@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson