

**Message from the  
JENNER/OGDEN COMMUNITY STEERING COMMITTEE**

**Jenner/Ogden Steering  
Committee**

Rev. Randall K. Blakey  
*LaSalle Street Church*

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*Chicago Sinai  
Congregation*

Aaron Balsam  
*Jenner Neighborhood  
Community Member*

Deidre Brewster  
*Near North Community  
Member*

Cira Conley  
*Ogden School  
Community Member*

Michele Dreczynski  
*Near North Unity  
Program*

Hattie Dennis  
*Jenner School Caregiver/  
Community Member*

Betsy Olesker Tomas  
*Ogden School  
Community Member*

Muna Walker  
*Ogden School  
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Sharon Wheeler  
*Near North Unity  
Program*

**CASE AND VISION FOR COMBINED SCHOOL**

1. **Inclusive, equitable, high quality education for all kids is our goal.** The blending of these two schools expands access to high-quality International Baccalaureate and arts programming for students living within the Ogden and Jenner boundaries. The disparities that exist between these two schools in achievement, resources and demand, reflect the enduring effects of racial discrimination and segregation in our city.
2. **Racially and economically integrated schools enhance the educational achievement of all kids attending.** Research shows a diverse a learning environment increases critical thinking and problem-solving skills for all kids. Research also shows that children who grow up in racially and economically integrated schools, particularly African American children, are more likely to be successful in adulthood.
3. **It is a win-win for both schools.** Jenner has long been in danger of closing due to under-enrollment. Ogden East, originally built for pre-k-8, has moved middle-school-aged kids into a second campus with high school students that is more than 2 miles away to accommodate high demand. It is possible that all K-8 students would be at the Ogden East or Jenner campuses that are only one mile apart. This may also create space for a pre-k option to again be made available at both schools.
4. **A combined Jenner-Ogden will be an essential component of a vibrant, broader Near North community.** Having a high-quality neighborhood public school option for all those residing in the Near North community will make it more likely that families with young children will be attracted to and remain in the neighborhood.
5. **It is fiscally responsible.** It maximizes the investment in the recently built school facilities without asking taxpayers to take on more debt to build additional annexes or structures. Furthermore, the Ogden International High School may be able to thrive in its own building and continue to serve as a much-needed high-quality public IB high school.