

# Make Parents' Voices Count in Collective Bargaining Agreement Process



## The Problem

*Every student should have the right to a quality public school education that gives them the reading and math skills they need to have good jobs and good lives. But Oakland schools are failing our kids: Fewer than 3 in 10 Black and Brown students in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) are reading at or above grade level, and only approximately 2 out of 10 are doing math at or above grade level.*

*In order for our kids to have better outcomes—which we all know is possible—parents must have the opportunity to influence the conditions in our schools. We have to ask hard questions and push for new as well as tried-and-true solutions related to improving the quality of how our kids are spending their time, what they are working on, and who is helping them learn.*

## Improving Outcomes

*Teachers' working conditions, which are students' learning conditions, are laid out in a critical document called the **Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)**. That's why the CBA is essential to improving student academic outcomes. Unfortunately, these conditions are not always set in ways that lead to good outcomes for our kids or in ways that are consistent with what parents want. **The agreement is negotiated behind closed doors with little or no input from parents. We want to put our babies at the center of every conversation around the CBA going forward.***

*This is urgent work: **The current CBA expired on 10/31, and the next one will set the conditions in our children's classroom for 3 years.** For students, those three years can lead to a pathway of opportunities, or a pathway to prison. We cannot take another 3 years of our kids failing! If the leaders who represent us want to make OUSD a destination district, they've got to start by listening to parents and delivering better outcomes for our kids.*

## 1. What can parents actually do about the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)?

In 1976, California passed the Educational Employment Relations Act. This law contains a "sunshine" clause that **guarantees the public an opportunity to voice their views on all bargaining proposals at a district board meeting before negotiations can begin.** We've never seen this happen—have you?!

That's why parents from The Oakland REACH and CA Parent Power, representing families in both the Hills and the heartland, have joined together to **introduce a parent power resolution to demand a commitment from the board to support parents in having a meaningful voice in the upcoming CBA process.**

## 2. Why a Parent Resolution?

We initially set out to fight for a legal right for parent input in bargaining proposals only to learn... we already have that right! In fact, we've had it for 40+ years! This resolution is how we secure a commitment from the Board to make parent input a real part of the process.

When our kids can't read and do math, we are saying loudly, **"who is negotiating for our babies?"** These are our children. Our voices should count.

### 3. Are CA Parent Power and The REACH trying to exclude other parents from the process?

No! Absolutely not! State law supports **all** parents providing input. Both of our organizations represent hundreds of Oakland parents who are clear that the reading and math outcomes of our children are abysmal. Over the past several years, REACH has provided deep leadership development opportunities for hundreds of primarily low-income Black and Brown OUSD families to have a real voice and push for systemic change in our school system. We plan to take the same approach with this partnership with CA Parent Power.

### 4. Are you trying to be at the negotiating table with OEA & OUSD?

Our priority is securing opportunities to provide meaningful input on what will help improve outcomes for our children, now.

Our organizations have spent months educating ourselves and our families on the CBA. We learned that State law currently does not support the public to be a part of actual negotiations between OEA and OUSD. Both parties can agree to invite the public to observe negotiations. We are only interested in options for real parent input, no political theater.

### 5. Would charter families be able to provide input?

Yes! Charter families are the "public." Plus, if OUSD is interested in charter families ever choosing district schools, district schools have got to get better.

The law does not define, nor exclude, any demographic of the public. Private and homeschooling parents are also supported by law to have a meaningful opportunity to provide input as well. **In a district with declining enrollment, and in a city with such a high cost of living, all Oakland families would benefit from having access to a high-quality district school in their neighborhood.**

### 6. What are the next steps?

We need to get to work, and the Board needs to approve the Parent Resolution! **Our resolution will be on the November 9th Board meeting agenda.** The contract between OUSD and OEA expired on 10/31 and negotiations will begin soon. We are ready to negotiate for our babies!

**Follow the campaign and our journey.**



@TheOaklandREACH @CAParentPower