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**OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Community Schools, Thriving Students*

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February 28, 2018

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2196  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**AB 1951 (O'DONNELL)  
SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

The Oakland Unified School District is pleased to **SUPPORT** AB 1951 (O'Donnell), the Pathways to College Act, that addresses the college diploma gap by opening doors to higher education for students and parents through the offering of college entrance tests like the SAT or ACT during the school day at no cost to students. Specifically, AB 1951 gives school districts the choice to administer a college admissions test to their 11<sup>th</sup> graders in lieu of the state assessment.

A growing body of evidence shows that offering a college entrance exam, like the SAT or ACT, at no cost to students during the school day propels more students into college. Oakland USD recognized the benefit of administering a college entrance exam *at our schools during the school day* as a way to cultivate a college culture and eliminate historic barriers to higher education for the students we serve; consequently, we began participating in the SAT School Day Program as a way of meeting our students where they are.

AB 1951 is consistent with one of the primary tenets of the Local Control Funding Formula in that it gives local school districts like Oakland USD discretion over how students are tested in grade 11 by allowing us to choose the test that provides the most benefits to our students. The value of this choice has been recognized by the federal government, which now gives states the opportunity to help address the diploma gap by giving all students easier access to college admissions tests.

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The local flexibility provided by the Pathways to College Act makes sense for school districts like ours by creating choices that are more meaningful to students and their higher education goals. AB 1951 will help Oakland USD meet its mission to prepare every student for post-secondary success irrespective of their backgrounds.

For these reasons, Oakland USD strongly **SUPPORTS** AB 1951.

Sincerely,

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**



Aimee Eng  
President

AE:lf

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