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Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

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Meeting Date Dec. 3, 2025 Special Board Meeting

Subject Resolution 2526-0177 Budget Resolution

Ask of the Board Review the Attendance Plan and provide feedback to be incorporated into the Resolution 2526-0177 response scheduled for review on December 10, 2025 Board Meeting.

Background In Resolution 2526-0177, the Board of Directors directed staff to include a plan to improve average daily attendance across the District at every school as a means to generate revenue.

Discussion The Attendance Plan proposed weaves together best practices to form the strategy for improving the average daily attendance rate. The overall strategy depends on every school implementing the districtwide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework. All OUSD schools are expected to establish a strong system for identifying student needs and connecting them to essential services. Teams are a major component of the system and must be functioning well in order to implement the MTSS Framework.

If we build coherent MTSS-aligned attendance systems powered by data, strong teams, and relationship-centered supports, then attendance will improve because students and families will receive timely, connected, and culturally responsive



interventions that meet their needs. This is why we have invested in implementing MTSS across all schools, ensuring each site has functioning Attendance Teams, COST, attendance clerical support and tiered intervention structures.

Fiscal Impact

The attendance plan relies on key staffing to implement the best practices named in the plan. While these investments are largely for school and District staffing, there are investments associated with capacity building. It is important to signal that many of the staffing components are funded through multiple funds, including one-time funds (grants, Learning Recovery) and LCFF- Supplemental and Concentration. Below are specific positions associated with the attendance plan and their projected average salary and benefits cost. The staffing allocation is provided on a per pupil allocation to school sites and is described in the 2025-2026 Budget Handbook.

Position	Projected Average Salary and Benefits Cost, 2026-2027
Attendance Specialist	\$57,305
Community School Manager	\$172,852
Case Manager, 10 mos.	\$109,697
Professional Learning Extended Contracts for Capacity Development	Extended Hourly Rate by Labor Partner

Attachment(s)

- **OUSD Attendance Plan: Improving Average Daily Attendance**



OUSD Attendance Plan: Improving Average Daily Attendance

(Pursuant to Budget Resolution 2526-0177)

Background

OUSD has struggled to improve attendance over the years. Since the 2018-2019 school year, OUSD has had low rates of average daily attendance (ADA). Attendance understandably dipped during the pandemic and in the first year of returning to school after the pandemic. The current attendance rate for OUSD is 93%, which means that on average, students have been absent 7% so far this school year. The Chronic Absenteeism rate is 21.4%, meaning that 21.4% of OUSD students have missed more than 10% of the school year thus far. When reviewing these data, the leading reason for an absence is due to “illness”. Native American, Black, Pacific Islander, and Latino students are the student groups with the highest rate of absenteeism and when disaggregated further, students in Special Education programming also attend school at a lower rate than the district average.

Prior to the 2012-2013 school year, school sites were funded based on their individual average daily attendance rate, meaning if a school had an ADA rate of 93%, the school site would receive 93% of the funds being allocated to the school site. That era of resource allocation was seen as especially harsh toward the very school communities that could benefit the most from additional student services were the communities that struggled to achieve positive attendance rates which resulted in the eventual reduction in services. Attendance rates were better in previous years and have continued to decline after the removal of this funding approach. Raising this history is not a signal of recommending the return to this funding approach, however, heightened accountability did produce higher rates of attendance for some schools.

Currently, Attendance Plans are expected of every school site and key teams and systems are required for implementing these plans and monitoring student attendance. The District sets annual goals for improving the average daily attendance by 1% and decreasing chronic absenteeism by 3% for every school and districtwide. The possible increase in funding for OUSD if we achieve 1% is \$2.5 million. This means that every student in OUSD who attended less than 180 days would need to attend 2 more days of school than they attended in the previous year to reach an overall increase of 1% districtwide.

Attendance Plan

The Attendance Plan proposed weaves together best practices to form the strategy for improving the average daily attendance rate. The overall strategy depends on every school implementing the districtwide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework. All OUSD schools are



expected to establish a strong system for identifying student needs and connecting them to essential services. Teams are a major component of the system and must be functioning well in order to implement the MTSS Framework.

If we build coherent MTSS-aligned attendance systems powered by data, strong teams, and relationship-centered supports, then attendance will improve because students and families will receive timely, connected, and culturally responsive interventions that meet their needs. This is why we have invested in implementing MTSS across all schools, ensuring each site has functioning Attendance Teams, COST, attendance clerical support and tiered intervention structures.

Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a comprehensive framework that integrates academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health supports for all students. It is a proactive and data-driven approach that uses evidence-based practices to identify and address the needs of every student through different tiers of support.

MTSS is being implemented Districtwide to ensure students have access to resources that support them to achieve. Attendance is a major component of our approach to MTSS because we understand the connection between achievement and attendance.

MTSS depends on multiple staff and systems to be effective.

Attendance Specialists

Schools are staffed with Attendance Specialists who are responsible for collecting attendance everyday from classrooms. On a daily basis, data is collected to identify students that are absent. The role of the Attendance Specialist is to contact families when a student is absent and identify the reason for the absence. Additionally, Attendance Specialists are encouraged to build relationships with families so that families are more likely to reach out to school staff when they face attendance obstacles. The attendance data collected is incorporated into the Attendance Dashboard which allows for school staff to review attendance data in many ways (e.g. by teacher, individual student, grade level, etc.), allowing schools to better understand and monitor individual student attendance, chronic absenteeism and truancy.

Attendance Teams

Attendance Teams are an invaluable team that is established at every OUSD school. These teams include school staff that touch attendance, are often led by the Community School Manager (CSM), and are expected to meet on a weekly basis. The members of the team often include the



Attendance Specialist, Case Managers, School Based Clinicians (i.e. mental health staff, social workers, therapists, etc.), and Teachers on Special Assignment (TSA).

Attendance Teams are expected to maintain [weekly agendas](#) that track their work over the course of the school year. The agenda template is designed to shape the use of data and prominently display reminders of best practices aligned to the three tiers of support from the MTSS Framework. Attendance Teams often devise individual student attendance improvement plans and connect with students and families to identify root causes of low attendance. The main role of an Attendance Team is to identify potential interventions that connect families with resources to improve attendance.

Since 2023, the MTSS Team and the Community School Leadership Team have collaborated closely to ensure that all Attendance Teams receive the support, knowledge, and facilitation skills needed to run effective, functioning teams. Attendance Teams are responsible for creating Attendance Plans, which are monitored by an MTSS Partner and Community School Leadership Program Manager. If a school is struggling to implement its Attendance Plan or has made no improvement, the Network Team (MTSS & Community Schools) intervenes to assist the Attendance Team in addressing challenges and moving past barriers.

In response to requests from Attendance Teams, the MTSS team and the Community Schools Leadership Team proactively developed targeted resources, training and frameworks that strengthen school capacity and ensure teams are fully equipped to engage staff, students, and families in meaningful, equitable attendance improvement efforts. This collaborative leadership exemplifies de-siloing work, builds mutual awareness and leverages each other's expertise to create a centralized infrastructure at the District level. By providing hands-on support, guidance and tools, these two teams ensure that sites have what they need to implement and sustain effective attendance programs, fostering consistent practices and a coordinated, community-responsive approach to improving student attendance. [Attendance Plan Template](#)

Attendance Teams are expected to continuously improve. School teams utilize the Attendance Teams Rubric to self-assess their implementation of Attendance Team responsibilities, especially the ability to improve schoolwide attendance. The rubric is submitted to the MTSS Partner and includes updated goals to guide the team in the areas they need to improve and continually monitor. [OUSD Attendance Team Rubric](#)

Coordination of Services Team (COST)



A COST is a multidisciplinary team within a school that collaborates to support students' academic, behavioral, mental, and emotional needs by coordinating resources and interventions. These teams, composed of administrators, teachers, counselors, social workers, and mental health providers, use a centralized referral system to assess student needs and connect them with the appropriate support services. A COST helps streamline interventions and improve communication between the school, students, and families, ensuring students can overcome challenges that hinder their success.

A COST meeting is led by Community School Managers and is expected to be established at all OUSD school sites. Since the school year 2024-2025, all OUSD schools have established a functioning COST. COST is expected to continuously improve and is guided by a self assessment that describes effective team coordination. [COST Self Assessment](#)

Attendance Teams are often deeply connected to the school site COST. Students and families that struggle with attendance can need a higher level of support and are referred to COST. COST is the team that can support a family when the Attendance Team support has proven ineffective or if a family could benefit from more of a case management approach.

Community School Managers

Community School Managers play a critical role in strengthening attendance outcomes across OUSD by coordinating the systems, teams, and interventions that support students and families. As facilitators of Attendance Teams and COST, CSMs ensure that data is regularly monitored, root causes of absenteeism are identified, and interventions are aligned across academic, behavioral and social-emotional supports. Their relationship-centered approach helps build trust with families, increasing communication and problem-solving around attendance barriers. By bringing together Attendance Specialists, mental health staff, case managers, and teachers, CSMs create a coherent, responsive structure that has contributed to districtwide progress in reducing chronic absenteeism and improving daily average attendance.

Case Managers

Case Managers have been working in OUSD for many years and mostly at the high school level. In the 2025-2026 school year, Case Managers became part of the central allocation to school sites that have struggled with attendance and discipline rates. Schools that were orange and red in the CA School Dashboard in Attendance and Suspensions were selected to receive a partial to a full time Case Manager depending on the number of students enrolled at the school site.

Since the reopening of schools after the pandemic, OUSD has struggled to improve attendance. There has been increased funding to improve student support since the pandemic and various



positions have been selected across schools to help improve attendance. There has been some improvement in attendance, however, there was no indication of which role had the most positive impact on improving attendance.

In 2024-2025, the MTSS Partners and Director began inquiring with principals about the roles and responsibilities of OUSD Case Managers. The data collected showed that the role of the Case Manager varied and was in need of central support in order for this role to be effective. Principals explained that Case Managers needed more professional learning about case management best practices and routine check-in meetings to review progress. While many principals attempted to establish these routines, they were too stretched to create professional learning experiences for a small group of their staff and requested that the central office assist with this capacity development. In response, the central office provides twice a month professional learning sessions for Case Managers.

Student Attendance Review Team and Student Attendance Review Board ([SART](#) and [SARB](#))

As part of our school site Attendance Team work, students that fall within the “Severe”, “Moderate”, and “At-Risk Chronic Absenteeism” categories are identified and contacted. Primarily school sites are instructed to build relationships with families in order to find out more information about barriers to consistent attendance. One of the formal meetings that schools utilize, after a period of time of supporting informal efforts, is the SART process. This meeting is handled through relationships and positive intent to bring together families, older students, and Attendance Team members. The SART form includes the student’s attendance and discipline data; identifies barriers to consistent attendance; lists agreements that both school and family can make to each other, and includes a SMARTe Attendance Improvement Goal. Students, families, partners, and school/district staff sign the SART document in order to have transparency and accountability toward positive attendance changes. Progress towards the SARTs goals are tracked over the next four to eight weeks.

The SART reconvenes for a follow up at the end of the timeline in order to celebrate improvement, make changes to the goal to reflect changing circumstances, or move toward the SARB process. In most cases the movement toward SARB is due to a lack of progress toward the original goal established at the SART meeting, and the need for additional support outside of the school site’s purview. The SARB document is filled out by the Attendance Team, and coupled with all previous notated documents to show the school’s attempts to support the student and family with attending school regularly. All of these documents are reviewed by the district’s SARB Facilitator and a meeting is set between the family, student, and a representative member of the school site Attendance Team. This is where a student or family can be linked up with additional services through Alameda County Office of Education, like PACT, in order to support their



student's attendance. In addition, the SARB process is where a family that attends a school farther from their home address can be transferred to a school that they can better access closer to home. Both the SART and SARB process echo Oakland Unified's commitment to centering relationships and community at the center of our approach, not punitive and dehumanizing practices that widen the gaps of communication between our most at-risk families and school sites.

The document attached is a visualization of our SART and SARB [Flow](#).

Capacity Development

Attendance Specialists are focused on the technical aspects of recording reliable student attendance data. Attendance Specialists are supported by the Operations and School Services Team to correctly maintain attendance data and understand associated attendance activities like the process for independent study and proper coding of attendance in our student information system, Aeries. Attendance Specialists are also supported in how to properly contact families regarding attendance and how to build a supportive relationship with families to improve student attendance.

Case Managers have participated in twice monthly professional learning communities. These sessions are meant to establish standard roles and responsibilities for the team of Case Managers, communicate expectations for working directly with students and families, and connect Case Managers to best practices from the case management field. These sessions are especially focused on attendance improvement strategies and behavior management techniques for case managers to utilize with students, their families, and the staff that work with students.

School Leaders experience professional learning about improving attendance. School Leaders are expected to establish the teams noted above that are tasked with the routine monitoring of student attendance. They work with the Attendance Team especially to create the School Attendance Plan. Emphasis on professional learning regarding attendance is scheduled three times a year and individually when a school is struggling to implement their Attendance Plan or establish their Attendance Team.

Home Visits

Home visits have been a long-time strategy schools utilize to connect with families to bridge home and school. The COST and Attendance Teams often implement Home Visits with families to better understand why a student is struggling to attend school. Home Visits are meant to demonstrate that school staff care for students and their families and are not meant to be evaluative or intrusive. OUSD has provided Home Visit training annually to all schools so that



OUSD schools are prepared to use the home visit strategy with a student and their family, especially those that struggle in any given area.

Mental Health Services

Mental Health services are the hardest to consistently establish in our schools. Schools have access to social workers, behavior specialists, behavioral health program managers, therapists, and counselors that form a web of support for our school sites. We rely on this array of support to create services at school sites because it is not possible to outfit every school with the same resources. There are numerous partnerships that assist OUSD in providing mental health services. Referrals to COST for mental health support are reviewed by mental health staff and students are connected to available resources.

School Site Incentive Programing

Through Attendance Team development, school sites have created student, classroom, or family attendance incentive programs. Sites have monthly attendance challenges where the highest performing classrooms can earn pizza, popcorn, or movie parties. Parameters are discussed with teachers and staff, and Attendance Teams monitor progress and inform classrooms and parents of who is in the lead, who is close, and who needs to make some headway in order to access the fun incentive. This organization, communication, and time are a major investment; however, this investment is central to understanding what truly motivates students and families, as well as managing the technical aspects of data tracking and building equitable Tier 1 strategies that all students can access. This is also the heart of community-responsiveness, relationship-centered leadership across our sites. This work is grounded in knowing our communities well enough to design meaningful, inclusive engagement opportunities.

Recognizing that improving attendance takes a whole village, many sites design incentive programming that allows parents and families, not just students, to share in the celebration. There are even a few elementary sites that find ways to appreciate parents/guardians whose children have perfect or improved attendance with shout outs on ParentSquare, in newsletters, hallways, and even face-to-face in car drop off lines. At the Secondary level, schools have engaged families directly in recognizing their efforts to support their student's attendance, often incentivizing through raffles and other rewards. Lastly, sites are getting inventive with school dances, nacho parties, movie parties, and other communal (and most of all fun) events that can only be accessed through that student's attendance progress. Due to funding restrictions, many school employees pay for these events out of their own pockets, without reimbursement. This fact speaks to the lengths many of our teams will go in order to address absenteeism and student success, while also highlighting our need as a District to continue (and increase) to support sites (and individuals) that go the extra mile in order to sustain these popular and successful programs.



Communication Strategies

There is publicity of positive attendance efforts that our Communications Department leads. There are videos and campaigns that bring to life the positive promotion for why students should attend school every day. Show Up! has been a major endeavor to highlight the attendance work. Each year, there is also publicity around key school breaks like the Fall Break in November and during the Winter Holiday Break in December. The District website highlights these communication strategies that are aimed mostly at students, but also encourage families to support their child to have positive attendance and attend school everyday. <https://www.ousd.org/>

Related Programs Supporting Attendance

Positive attendance rates are often a sign of school and District culture. Students and families that report having strong connections to their schools also attend school at higher rates (CHKS, 2024). In addition to school and District culture, it is important to provide services and activities for students to utilize while at school. We aim to not only provide support services when a student is struggling, but also offer fun activities that appeal to student interests, attracting students to attend school in order to participate in activities they enjoy. Below is a compilation of programs OUSD offers to our students.

Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)

Students often connect with specific programs that draw them into the school. We offer VAPA programming across the District at every grade span. In Elementary, students have access to a VAPA period that the school designs in either music or visual and performing arts. In middle and high school, schools implement elective courses for students to access. We also implement a robust music program for our 4th-12th grade students. Students are drawn to our VAPA programming and are possible outlets for students that encourage attending school.

Expanded Learning: After-School Program

After-school programming is filled with fun activities students can participate in that appeal to student interests. After-school programs have often been lifted up by students as a program that encourages them to attend school daily in order to access the fun programming.

Oakland Athletic League (OAL)

Many students also love team and individual sports. Students can choose from an array of sports that they are interested in playing or perhaps have played outside of school. We offer middle school and high school organized sports throughout the District. Student Athletes must attend school regularly in order to participate in our Oakland Athletic League activities. OAL also



collaborates with the Expanded Learning Team to implement organized activities for elementary students that aim to expose students to various sports and begin skill building at the elementary level.

Partnerships

There are a number of partners that work with many schools to improve attendance. Some of these Partners are:

- Oakland Housing Authority
- East Bay Agency for Children
- Oakland Natives Give Back
- Alameda County Office of Education (and their community based partners)

Policy

There are policies that work together to support increasing attendance for students:

[BP 5113.1](#) - Truancy: Update to policy proposed by Director Latta.

Attending Schools Outside of Neighborhood: Enrollment Options

Many students that are in the moderate or severe chronic absenteeism do not attend their community school. While the data reflect there is not a significant difference between students that do and do not attend school in their attendance boundary, there is a slightly higher rate of absenteeism and chronic absenteeism for students that do not attend their neighborhood school. In some of these cases, families no longer live in Oakland due to economic and familial circumstances. Through SARTs and empathy interviews, we have learned that it is a frequent occurrence to have a student's parent or guardian work in Oakland, and they drop off their students at school on their way to work. Issues like traffic, lack of access to more transportation options, and families preference to continue their connections to the community they most identify with lead parents and guardians to continue that relationship even if it sometimes leads to missing enough school days to make a student chronically absent.

In other cases, because Oakland Unified is an Options District, many parents that understand how to navigate the choice system will choose schools with higher performance scores even if they are further away from their living situations in order for their children to access what they deem "better" programs. This can have a large impact on an attendance area that isn't as severe in absenteeism, but has shown to disrupt learning environments- tardies. Attendance Teams are also tasked to address tardy issues, as it can sometimes lead to lower student academic scores, behavior issues due to missing morning class meetings, and lack of access to morning food



options. Tardies are found to be a much harder issue to address due to the multitude of outside barriers that many families face in arriving at school on time.

Investments

As stated previously, the attendance plan relies on key staffing to implement the best practices named in the plan. While these investments are largely for school and District staffing, there are investments associated with capacity building. It is important to signal that many of the staffing components are funded through multiple funds, including one-time funds (grants, Learning Recovery) and LCFF- Supplemental and Concentration. Below are specific positions associated with the attendance plan and their projected average salary and benefits cost. The staffing allocation is provided on a per pupil allocation to school sites and is described in the 2025-2026 Budget Handbook.

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