

Board Office Use: Legislative File Info.	
File ID Number	21-0012
Introduction Date	1/13/2021
Enactment Number	
Enactment Date	



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

From Shanthi Gonzales, Board President

Meeting Date March 24, 2021

Subject Proposed New Board Policy 5115 – Enrollment Stabilization

Ask of the Board Approve adoption of proposed new Board Policy 5115 – Enrollment Stabilization

Background Over the last twenty years, enrollment in OUSD has declined from approximately 52,000 to an estimated 35,000 in 2021-22. This decline has multiple negative consequences. First, it leads to lower revenue for the District, which has contributed to lower employee compensation as well as the need for budget reductions most years. Fewer students also lead to the need for fewer schools, either by closure or merger or both.

The District urgently needs a cohesive, intentional strategy to reverse this long-term trend.

The Board has adopted policies that address the surplus real estate that has resulted from declining enrollment. One example is Board Policy 7350 - Physical Assets Management, which calls for portable removal and identifies ways to monetize surplus properties. Another policy (BP 3650) requires an Enrollment Impact Analysis, which examines the potential impact on enrollment of decisions before the Board. Board Policy 6006 - Quality School Development: Community of Schools details several steps to address improved school quality, which is clearly related to enrollment. However, none of these policies presents a comprehensive approach to reversing the decline in enrollment.

This proposed policy calls for dedicating central staff positions to supporting schools to reach out to families; for schools, board members and central departments to identify ways to support enrollment growth and stabilization; for the identification and implementation of strategies to make enrollment more

accessible for OUSD families, and for the District to stop using resources to promote enrollment in competing schools.

If adopted by the Board, this policy would go into effect immediately. This is important because implementation will require changes to OUSD's enrollment system.

Discussion

The initial version of this policy was introduced as a new legislative matter on January 13, 2021. The policy has been revised based on feedback from a dozen community engagement meetings, including members of the Enrollment Working Group, multiple staff teams, (two) District 6 and District 1 constituent meetings, two meetings with charter school families, Educators for Democratic Schools, as well as meetings with individual constituents and stakeholders.

The Board held a first read of the revised policy on March 10, 2021. The policy has since been further revised: to have all schools (not just schools with declining enrollment) conduct a root cause analysis; to have the Superintendent or designee shall review the District's policies and practices regarding interdistrict transfers and make recommendations to the Board within 120 days regarding possible changes that would support District efforts to stabilize enrollment; and to correct minor typos.

Fiscal Impact

The annual costs are estimated to be \$1.5 million. Most of these annual costs (\$1.3 million) are from the marketing provisions of the proposed policy such as the new required staffing, stipends for sites to enlist staff or parents in their outreach to families, and the budget for marketing activities. The remainder of these annual costs (\$200,000) are due to the provisions of the proposed policy that prohibit the use of District resources to support the enrollment or marketing of competing schools as the District would likely need to bear certain costs that currently are born by competing schools.

In the first year, the expected increase in revenue from higher enrollment is estimated to be \$950,000, with this increasing to an estimated \$1.8 million in year two. These increases are based on the same enrollment growth seen by the Oakland in the Middle campaign, which saw an increase in enrollment of 4% for 6th grade enrollment over 3 years.

Attachment(s)

- Proposed New Board Policy 5115 – Enrollment Stabilization (Redline Compared with March 10, 2021 Version)
- Proposed New Board Policy 5115 – Enrollment Stabilization (Clean/Final Version for March 24, 2021)

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board Policy
Students

Board Policy 5115
Enrollment Stabilization

Rationale

Enrollment is chief driver of revenue for the District. Declining enrollment has been a lead driver of OUSD's budget difficulties over the last twenty years, leading to the need for budget cuts, layoffs, and school closures. This policy affirms that enrollment stabilization and growth is a top priority for OUSD and that all OUSD employees and officials are expected to make every effort to stabilize and grow enrollment in OUSD-operated schools.

District Office Supports for Schools

The Superintendent and her staff in the District Office are responsible for supporting schools in maintaining and growing their enrollment.

The Superintendent or designee shall include expenditures in the annual proposed budget, starting with the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal year, to help each school to stabilize and grow as appropriate, with both universal and targeted supports. These expenditures may include the cost of dedicated staff whose job duties are to support schools with:

- outreaching to families and non-OUSD feeder schools,
- marketing and community outreach,
- updating and maintaining school websites and social media accounts,
- creating videos and other marketing materials,
- creating, if needed, and supporting PTAs or booster organizations, and
- holding community events.

The expenditures may also include stipends for family members and/or staff to conduct outreach work at schools with predominantly low-income families.

Each August, all school principals shall be informed of supports available to assist them in their efforts to maintain and grow enrollment.

Responsibilities of Schools

Schools are critical partners in efforts to maintain and grow enrollment.

Each school's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) shall include an annual enrollment stabilization plan, which will detail the school's plans to maintain or grow its enrollment to a sustainable size, as applicable. These plans should include details regarding (i) the school's efforts to maintain and/or increase racial and ethnic diversity, (ii) the school's planned outreach events and efforts to share their programs and achievements, ~~and~~ (iii) the school's strategies to identify and recruit prospective families (e.g., mailings, preschool visits, social media, tours, etc.). ~~If a school has a persistent challenge~~

~~with declining enrollment, the plan shall include, and (iv)~~ a root cause analysis of ~~the decline~~their enrollment success or struggle, as appropriate. The purpose of this exercise is to understand what is driving enrollment trends in order to identify the strategies the school can use to grow (or maintain) their enrollment.

The Superintendent or designee shall create a template and a toolkit to share with schools to support the development of the plans. The process and timeline for development and submission of the plans shall be determined by the Superintendent or designee.

The Superintendent or designee(s) shall be responsible for supporting schools in the creation and implementation of their plans, and shall help schools learn from the successes of other schools when it comes to developing and implementing the plan.

Shared Responsibility for Enrollment Stability

Board Members share responsibility for promoting the success of schools in their respective districts, and are expected to celebrate their schools publicly and share information regularly about school programs, academic growth, and other achievements.

All central departments shall be required to specify in their annual work plans or evaluations how they will support the stabilization and growth of District enrollment.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement systemwide efforts to learn from student exits from the District, through means to be determined by the Superintendent, and shall report to the Board of Education at least once per year on the reasons families provided for departing OUSD.

The Superintendent or designee is encouraged to continue the practice of reaching out to those non-OUSD schools in Oakland, whether charter or private, that close with information regarding in-District school options.

The Superintendent or designee shall review the District's policies and practices regarding interdistrict transfers and make recommendations to the Board of Education within 120 days regarding possible changes that would support District efforts to stabilize enrollment.

Making Enrollment More Accessible for Families

The Superintendent or designee shall conduct a review of OUSD's enrollment process to evaluate the recent improvements to the enrollment process and to explore and identify further ways to make the enrollment process easier for families. This may include (but is not limited to) the following:

- sending outreach materials to all families of rising TK and Kindergartners, 6th and 9th graders, inviting them to school tours for their neighborhood schools,
- improving response time and reducing wait times at the Student Welcome Center (SWC),
- increasing customer service training for SWC staff,
- improving language access for families seeking to enroll in OUSD,
- expanding in-person enrollment to additional schools and/or returning to a site-based enrollment system,

- offering SWC service at large District events or food distribution sites,
- creating a master list of all OUSD school tours so that all families can easily learn when tours are taking place,
- providing enrollment information with home delivered meals,
- training site-based staff to support families in using the online enrollment system,
- providing enrollment information to families participating in OUSD's Adult School classes,
- educating preschool, 5th, and 8th grade classroom teachers about OUSD school options,
- conducting targeted outreach to families that are not admitted to their first-choice school, and
- providing information on enrollment to all TK/K families in Oakland.

No Resources for Competing Systems

Acknowledging the fiscal and academic responsibilities of the District to its schools as well as the students enrolled in those schools, no OUSD resources shall be used to support the enrollment or marketing of competing schools, whether charter or private, unless required by law.

This prohibition applies (but is not limited) to OUSD's enrollment system, school maps, family guides and other enrollment materials, any OUSD website, OUSD facilities, enrollment fairs, and teacher recruitment events. Competing schools shall not be invited to participate in or be included in OUSD- or site-run recruitment fairs or OUSD- or site-run enrollment events or to recruit students on OUSD-operated campuses. If there is uncertainty regarding whether the prohibition applies to a particular activity, the General Counsel shall make such a determination and shall, subsequently, inform the Board of the determination in case the Board then deems it necessary to amend this policy to clarify its application.

Students shall not be referred to competing schools by staff of the ~~Student Welcome Center~~SWC, or as a practice of any other OUSD staff member in the course of their responsibilities as ~~D~~District employees. This policy does not prohibit OUSD staff from attending and participating in events that also include staff from competing schools, such as events sponsored by community groups or colleges and universities, nor does this policy prohibit data sharing with competing schools for purposes of improving system efficiency; provided that such collaboration and sharing is not financed through public dollars.

Implementation

The Superintendent or designee shall report on the work to stabilize enrollment in OUSD-operated schools at least twice per year in writing and at least once per year through a presentation at a public board meeting.

The Superintendent or her designee shall produce administrative regulations to guide the implementation of this policy, which shall be presented to the Board for their approval, within 120 days of the passage of this policy. Subsequent changes to the administrative regulations, which must be provided to the Board at least 60 calendar days before they take effect, need not receive approval by the Board.

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Students

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