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Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

From Aimee Eng, Board Member
Jessica Ramos, Student Board Member

Meeting Date April 14, 2021

Subject Resolution No. 2021-0046 - Prioritizing Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services In Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ask of the Board Adoption by the Board of Education of Resolution No. 2021-0046 - Prioritizing Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services In Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Background Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, national, state, and local data revealed a mental health crisis existed amongst children and youth, particularly youth of color. COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges and taken an emotional toll on students, particularly students of color.

Since March 13, 2020, Oakland Unified School District (“OUSD” or “District”) students have been learning predominantly in a virtual setting and experiencing school in an isolated physical environment with limited social and peer interactions due to public health guidelines and constraints. As of December 2020, more than 200 OUSD high school students are “slightly off track” to graduate, more than 100 OUSD high school students are “off track to graduate, and more than 100 OUSD high school students are “severely off track” to graduate.

Board Policy 5030 (Wellness) recognizes that good mental health is critical to a student's ability to learn and Resolution 1617-0228 (Resolution to Increase Graduation Rates and Strengthen Student Access to A-G Completion Through the Implementation of the Student Equity Credit Recovery & Prevention Program)—adopted June 28, 2017, and co-authored by the 2016-17 All City Council—created a Credit Recovery Implementation Committee to, among other things, develop quality and

cost-effective student-centered support strategies that meaningfully engage students so that they (i) have access to multiple opportunities and options to prevent loss of credits and recover missing credits, (ii) are well informed, motivated, and prepared with clear goals, academic plans, tools to monitor their academic progress, emotional support, (iii) receive opportunities to build lasting and strong relationships with caring adults for the betterment of their experience as students and (iv) are able to achieve academic excellence and to stay on track for their college, career, and life pathways by eliminating barriers. The District now has the opportunity to revisit the work of BP 5030 and Resolution 1617-0228.

Discussion

The Resolution directs the Superintendent to create a comprehensive plan that would prioritize student and staff mental wellness and social emotional wellbeing and support high school students to get back on track to graduate. The Resolution also commits the Board to creating safe and welcoming community schools that could include creating and supporting relational culture; supporting mental health and wellness; planning, training and capacity building. The Resolution further recognizes the need for targeted efforts to support students (and high school students in particular) by, among other things, prioritizing one-time dollars to support credit recovery activities that re-engage youth.

This version of the Resolution contains minor adjustments such as typos and clarifications as compared with the version introduced on March 24, 2021.

Fiscal Impact

Depending on the details of the plan and its implementation.

Attachment

- Resolution No. 2021-0046 - Prioritizing Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services In Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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

Resolution No. 2021-0046

Prioritizing Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services In Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

WHEREAS, even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, national, state, and local data revealed a mental health crisis existed amongst children and youth, particularly youth of color, as evidenced by the alarming increase in the number of emergency room visits and children and youth ages 8-18 reporting self-injury and self-harm over the past decade;

WHEREAS, it has been well documented at the national, state, and local levels that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges and taken an emotional toll on students resulting in increased anxiety, depression, and thoughts of suicide and self-harm;

WHEREAS, recent data from the Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) shows a 24% increase in mental-health related visits to emergency departments nationally for children and adolescents ages 5-11 and a 31% increase in mental-health related visits for children and adolescents ages 12-17 from April to October 2020;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on communities of color locally and nationally, including African American, Latinx, Indigenous, and Pacific Islander communities, including on their physical and mental health and wellbeing;

WHEREAS, since March 13, 2020, Oakland Unified School District (“OUSD” or “District”) students have been learning predominantly in a virtual setting and experiencing school in an isolated physical environment with limited social and peer interactions due to public health guidelines and constraints;

WHEREAS, the combined impact of COVID-19, structural racism, climate change, and wildfires as well as the reduced connection to peers and adult allies has led to students experiencing compounding, intersecting traumas and has had an impact on student engagement and attendance;

WHEREAS, research has proven that poor attendance, also known as “chronic absenteeism”, deepens racial equity gaps and directly impacts academic success (e.g., A-G completion rate, 4-year high school cohort graduation rates) as well as suspension rates and overall life outcomes;

WHEREAS, according to OUSD’s most recent data as of December 2020, more than 200 high school students are “slightly off track” to graduate, more than 100 high school students are “off track to graduate, and more than 100 high school students are “severely off track” to graduate;

WHEREAS, the longer distance learning continues, high school students become more at risk of falling further behind and dropping out of school;

WHEREAS, OUSD is intended to be a full service community school district committed to nurturing student social and emotional wellbeing in support of academic progress and success;

WHEREAS, a schools' culture of strong relationships, inclusion, and belonging creates the conditions for strong teaching and learning, social emotional wellbeing, and mental wellness that address racialized equity gaps and expands opportunities for all students;

WHEREAS, Board Policy 5030 (Wellness) recognizes that good mental health is critical to a student's ability to learn and calls for collaboration with "local and state health, mental health, and social service providers in order to offer integrated mental health services in district schools, including crisis response; and to provide equitable access to mental health and other health care services to all students within OUSD";

WHEREAS, Resolution 1617-0228 (Resolution to Increase Graduation Rates and Strengthen Student Access to A-G Completion Through the Implementation of the Student Equity Credit Recovery & Prevention Program)—adopted June 28, 2017, and co-authored by the 2016-17 All City Council—created a Credit Recovery Implementation Committee to, among other things, develop quality and cost-effective student-centered support strategies that meaningfully engage students so that they (i) have access to multiple opportunities and options to prevent loss of credits and recover missing credits, (ii) are well informed, motivated, and prepared with clear goals, academic plans, tools to monitor their academic progress, emotional support, (iii) receive opportunities to build lasting and strong relationships with caring adults for the betterment of their experience as students and (iv) are able to achieve academic excellence and to stay on track for their college, career, and life pathways by eliminating barriers;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 provides an opportunity to revisit the work of BP 5030 and Resolution 1617-0228 by identifying existing and prioritizing new, more relevant strategies to meet the needs of OUSD's current context and urgent student needs as student and staff return to in-person learning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education ("Board") formally acknowledges the immense and compounding challenges, impact, and toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the District's diverse student body, community, and staff, and the Board commits to establishing a Districtwide foundational culture of healing that prioritizes mental wellness and social emotional wellbeing of all students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board directs the Superintendent to create a comprehensive plan that includes structures to support the following Districtwide goals: (i) Prioritize student and staff mental wellness and social emotional wellbeing; and (ii) Support high school students to get back on track to graduate;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board commits to creating safe and welcoming community schools for all students and families that prioritizes a relational culture of belonging, racial equity, and student and staff mental wellness starting with a "Restorative Return to School" in the 2021-2022 school year by implementing proven models and promising practices locally and nationally that may include, but is not limited to:

- **Creating & Supporting Relational Culture**
 - For the 2021-22 school year, prioritize an initial outreach and "welcome check-in" with every OUSD student and family, as well as ongoing opportunities for relationship building (including the possibility of paid opportunities for educators, family members, and community members), beginning in the summer of 2021, but no later than the first month

- of school, to maximize student attendance across the District and support academic engagement,
- Build off of the proven model established by the Parent Teacher Home Visit currently practiced by many schools across the District and supported by the Office of Equity, educator unions, and community partners,
- Create structures that uplift Peer-to-Peer Mentoring opportunities and support high school students to build peer networks of support at and across secondary school sites, including the possibility of paid opportunities for recent alums and students,
- Leverage the “Advisory” structure as opportunities to create a space for collective trust building and support within secondary schools,
- Provide a community of practice that includes training and capacity building for adults who hold Advisories in middle and high schools, and
- Create a library of Advisory curricula organized by grade-level span that is accessible for schools across the District,
- Supporting mental health and wellness
 - Create intentional healing and restorative spaces for students and staff to process, cope, and dialogue before and during the transition of returning to school, starting with opportunities for staff and students retreats in the Summer of 2021 as deemed safe by County guidelines and aligned with the District’s strategic commitment to organizational wellness,
 - Support schools in creating a plan of action for identified students who need additional outreach, support, and follow-up referrals after their welcoming one-to one meetings by resourcing and strengthening their Coordination of Services Team (COST), and
 - Seek partnership with the City of Oakland and County of Alameda on cross-sector collaborations to support student mental wellness and to ensure, to the extent possible, that local public agencies are aligning and maximizing resources, and
- Planning, Training and Capacity building
 - Invest in providing planning, capacity building, and collaborative planning time in multi-stakeholder teams that include principals, educators, students, families, and community partners, and
 - Promote opportunities to share best practices across school communities in the District;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board recognizes the need for targeted efforts to support students (and high school students in particular), to re-engage them, and get back them on track to graduate and that such efforts may include the following:

- Identify staff to be responsible for managing the prevention and intervention strategies, and
- Consider prioritizing one-time dollars to support credit recovery activities that re-engage youth such as:
 - Piloting innovative and flexible programming in the 2021-22 school year for high school students (Saturday School, Evening School, Fifth School Year) that meets the diverse needs of students including those who are working,
 - Expanding opportunities for summer learning including work-based learning opportunities that can reinvigorate student academic motivation, and
 - Developing targeted strategies to outreach to and support the 240 students who are not on track to graduate as well as students who have been chronically absent during the 2020-21 school year and/or have dropped out of school to get back on track; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board recognizes that while the past year has been unprecedented and that students, families, and staff have been faced with unimaginable challenges, the Board commends its students, families, and staff for their commitment to the OUSD values and for their resilience, courage, and resourcefulness as the District pursues its commitment to community schools built on authentic relationships, grounded in equity, and focused on the mental wellness and academic needs.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District this ____ day of _____, 2021, by the following vote:

PREFERENTIAL AYE:

PREFERENTIAL NOE:

PREFERENTIAL ABSTENTION:

PREFERENTIAL RECUSE:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAINED:

RECUSED:

ABSENT:

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution passed at a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District held on _____, 2021.

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