



Alameda County Office of Education

Alysse Castro, Superintendent

February 6, 2025

Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent
Members of the Board of Education
Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) via email
RE: ACOE Actions in response to Negative Certification per EDC 42127.6(e)

Dear Superintendent Johnson-Trammell and Members of the Board,

Due to OUSD's negative certification described in the January 21, 2025 First Interim Budget Report, the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools is implementing legally mandated interventions to ensure the district meets its financial obligations. This intervention plan meets the requirements of EDC 42127.6(e) by providing a final opportunity and intensive support for the OUSD Board to complete their 3R's re-envisioning process by June 2025. This approach addresses the root cause of fiscal instability - deferred revisioning and restructuring - by providing a final opportunity for the Board to make independent decisions supporting OUSD's vision for change and leveraging its current assets and opportunities.

The entrenched history of deferred decision making has multiple causes and requires a team approach to add layers of expertise, skill, capacity and communication. Thus the county superintendent has assembled an Advisory Team to meet the requirements of 42127.6(e)

<i>Ed Code 42127.6(e) excerpts...</i>	<i>Looks like...</i>
<i>If the school district has a negative certification...the county superintendent of schools...shall take at least one of the actions described in paragraphs (1) to (5), inclusive, and all actions that are necessary to ensure that the school district meets its financial obligations...</i>	
<i>(2) Stay or rescind any action that is determined to be inconsistent with the ability of the school district to meet its obligations....</i>	The Fiscal Oversight Trustee already holds this authority. In addition to review of board actions, the Trustee and County Superintendent will preview Board Agendas and to ensure that all actions are consistent with progress on the 3Rs.
<i>(3) Assist in developing, in consultation with the governing board of the school district, a multiyear financial recovery plan that will enable the school district to meet its future obligations.</i>	Completing the 3Rs is the strategy to drive the multiyear financial recovery plan that will enable the school district to meet its future obligations. An Advisor to the Board will support the board to complete the Re-envisioning process. An Advisory Team provides technical support, community engagement, and communications.
<i>(5) As necessary, appoint a fiscal adviser to perform any or all of the duties prescribed by this section on behalf of the county superintendent of schools.</i>	In lieu of a single fiscal adviser, the county superintendent of schools is appointing an Advisory Team to support the actions necessary to ensure that the school district meets its financial obligations



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The Advisory Team consists of Fiscal Oversight Trustee Luz Cázares, Advisor to the Board Richard Barrera, and County Superintendent of Schools Alysse Castro and draws on significant support from Partners in School Innovation, 510 Media and ACOE staff. The Advisory Team works in frequent consultation with OUSD Superintendent and staff.

Provide the Board with staff, structures, and technical support to:

1. Engage with each other and the community to identify and approve actionable priorities for OUSD schools responsive to AB1912 process. (Feb-Mar)
2. Refer approved priorities to staff for the development of footprint and change management plans. (April)
3. Lead community engagement to understand the footprint plan and implement change management plans. (May)
4. Approve footprint and change management plans, as well as adopt multi-year budget and accountability plans incorporating these proposals. (June)
5. Streamline and focus Board work to complete 3Rs efforts necessary to meet fiscal obligations. (Ongoing)

Advisory Team Role

The responsibilities of the Advisory Team include, but are not limited to:

- *Support the district board to finalize a Re-envisioning plan that enables the district to meet its future obligations, both for educational equity and economic viability by the end of 3Rs timeline of June 2025.*
- *Support OUSD Board to streamline and focus Board time and decision-making in service of the 3Rs process.*
- *Add capacity, process and expertise for the Board to engage in value's based conversations that identify actionable priorities.*
- *Add capacity, process and expertise to scale the Boards capacity to engage in value's based governance and community engagement.*

I deeply believe that this Board is ready, willing, and able, to re-envision and redefine how OUSD achieves equitable outcomes for its students. We are here to support you.

In partnership,

Alysse Castro
Alameda County Superintendent of Schools

cc: Lisa Grant-Dawson, Chief Business Official, Oakland USD
Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, California Department of Education
Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, State Board President, State Board of Education
Elizabeth Dearstyne, Director, California Department of Education
Michael H. Fine, Chief Executive Officer, Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team
Luz Cázares, Fiscal Oversight Trustee, Oakland USD
Allan Garde, Associate Superintendent of Business Services, ACOE
Shirene Moreira, Chief of District Business & Advisory Services, ACOE



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Advisory Team Contributors

Richard Barrera is an experienced urban school board member and board president since 2008, leading a community coalition of students, parents, teachers, classified staff, neighborhood, business and civic leaders around a long-term vision of excellence in public schools. As a community organizer and a labor organizer, he has worked with homecare workers, healthcare workers, nurses, teachers, construction and grocery store workers and thousands of others to fight for economic and social justice. He currently serves as a Senior Policy Advisor to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Luz Cázares of Lucid Partnerships is the Fiscal Oversight Trustee for OUSD. Luz founded Lucid Partnerships because she saw a gulf between the good intentions that schools, advocates, and community organizations have for educational equity, and the real-life disparities that still exist. She is an experienced school district CBO, Fiscal Oversight Trustee, and a graduate instructor in school finance at UC Berkeley. Having previously supported OUSD during a brief vacancy in the business office, she is well-versed in the district's finances and governance.

Alysse Castro is the Alameda County Superintendent of Schools, dedicated to equipping the most vulnerable students and those who serve them with the tools to thrive. An alternative education expert, Alysse brings deep expertise in school finance, governance, community school partnerships, and system change.

510media is an agency based in Oakland, California, founded in 2005. The agency specializes in advertising, branding, digital strategy, and design, leveraging behavioral science and neuroscience to connect brands with people through compelling storytelling and innovative creativity. Their approach focuses on understanding human behavior to build authentic brand experiences that foster lasting connections.

Partners in School Innovation is dedicated to transforming underperforming schools and districts across the United States. Their mission focuses on developing confident educators and implementing systemic changes to sustain equity-driven improvements. Over the years, Partners in School Innovation has collaborated with 21 school districts in seven states, benefiting more than one million students.

The full resources of the ACOE Staff are deployed to the Advisory Team, including but not limited to District Business, Accountability Partnerships, Community Engagement, and Project Management who engage regularly with OUSD leadership to add capacity and coordination as needed.