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

FIRST READING

Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

From Shanthi Gonzales, Chair, Intergovernmental Relations Committee
Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent
Curtiss Sarikey, Chief of Staff

Meeting Date January 12, 2022

Subject ADOPTION of 2022 Legislative Platform

Ask of the Board The Board of Education will have a first reading and discussion of the DRAFT 2022 Legislative Platform of the Oakland Unified School District.

Background For the past several years, the Board of Education has adopted a legislative platform that guides the work of the District’s legislative advocacy in Sacramento. In previous years, the OUSD legislative platform supported positions that were adopted in state law and/or acknowledged as State priorities in several areas, including career technical education, early childhood education, school facilities, charter schools, and others.

The OUSD Intergovernmental Relations committee is bringing forward a draft legislative platform which addresses a range of topics beyond fiscal matters to support our local education efforts and students.

January and February are critical months for the development of the California state budget, so the adoption of this legislative platform is timely this month. Please take special note of Legislative Priority Area: School Finance.

The DRAFT 2022 Legislative Platform has been informed by review and suggestions from District staff.

Discussion We recommend the Board adopt the 2022 Legislative Platform.

Fiscal Impact There are a number of fiscal impacts that can accrue through adoption of the Legislative Platform. Some of the positions can lead to increased funds for the District. Other positions can help avoid costly new mandates.

Attachment(s)

- DRAFT Oakland Unified School District Legislative Platform 2022

DRAFT

Oakland Unified School District Legislative Platform 2022

Background



**OAKLAND UNIFIED
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DRAFT

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM 2022

BACKGROUND:

Recognizing we are in the process of coming back from the trauma and challenges of the pandemic, a time in our history like no other, is key in helping our students and our organization recover and grow stronger into the future. At the same time, during the pandemic, we were reminded in vivid terms how important our schools are in our community. OUSD schools are where Oakland comes together. They are places of joy and beauty, safety and rejuvenation, friendship and scholarship.

We aim to build on our foundation as a full service community school district, and a district focused on equity and college, career and community success.

We adopted a Strategic Plan 2021-2024 to guide us on this journey and to bring together the collective resilience, wisdom, ideas and know-how of our community to create the conditions for all of our students to thrive. Our legislative priorities are aligned and support our four key initiatives: Ensuring Strong Readers by Third Grade; Supporting Empowered Graduates; Creating Joyful Schools; and Growing a Diverse and Stable Staff. Moreover, our strategic plan is unapologetically about Black and Brown excellence - meaning that our planning, strategy, training, resources and programming is designed by centering our most marginalized students, our students furthest from success and opportunity. We are committed to the success of *all* students.

We also know that the pandemic has exacerbated ongoing challenges and created new ones that we must continue to problem solve, address and build new innovative solutions and partnerships to ensure the health of our district for current and future students. The myriad issues of declining enrollment, increased chronic absenteeism, increased demand for independent study, profound social emotional impacts on students and the need for continued commitment to COVID testing, safety and vaccinations call on us to lead with grace, intelligence and perseverance locally while also advocating and partnering with state entities for the best solutions - with student academic and social emotional success at the center.

Fulfilling our vision and mission, addressing challenges and innovating for student success requires resources and the strategic use of all of our assets. We are committed to pursuing adequate resources for our students, and transparently and responsibly managing our resources to ensure the success of current students and many generations of future students. Our plans and actions today must be with the mindset of building a healthy and exemplary school district for our children's children.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY AREAS:

School Finance: OUSD supports fiscal policies that provide stable, adequate, and equitable funding that reflect the costs of giving our students—regardless of their background—what they need to be successful in school and in the community. We support providing an additional year of hold harmless as the start of a multi-year soft landing approach to address the enrollment and attendance declines resulting from the pandemic era. We also support increasing base LCFF funding and ultimately to shift from ADA to an enrollment-based funding system, ensuring California is among the top ten in the nation in per-student spending. We also recognize that our state’s reliance on one-time and categorical funding mechanisms can present long term budgeting challenges. State and federal fiscal resources should recognize and accommodate regional cost differences and unique costs of serving vulnerable student groups who need additional instructional and non-instructional support to attain educational parity, such as unhoused and refugee students.

Accountability: OUSD supports a multiple-measures accountability system that aligns with our continual improvement model catalyzed by the Local Control and Accountability Plan and the California School Dashboard. We believe a continuous improvement approach to accountability will propel our District and schools toward increased performance targets through careful analysis of student performance data that includes the use of a student growth model when evaluating annual standardized assessment results. Additionally, OUSD will create new efficient and effective systems to monitor the requirements that accompany state and federal grants and the other laws that attribute responsibility to public schools for oversight.

Career Technical Education: We support the continued and increased investment in the Career Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant Program that augments our local parcel tax and supports our effort to expand CTE opportunities for all students. Our local initiative has shown great results in increasing graduation rates, which are a top priority for our district. We are active participants in the K-12 Strong Workforce Program, collaborating with other K-14 CTE providers in our region to meet the needs of our students and our community. We support predictable, multiyear grants that allow us to flexibly invest in promising, high-quality local pathways without unnecessary state bureaucracy and requirements that inhibit our ability to expand CTE to all students.

Charter Schools: OUSD supports student-focused charter school policies along the full policy continuum that promote a shared responsibility to educate all of Oakland’s youth, including our most vulnerable populations such as students with moderate/severe disabilities, English Learners, newcomers, homeless students, and foster youth. State charter policy must do more to ensure that charter schools serve all students, as they are legally obligated to do.

We believe that California should continue to evaluate charter school policies to ensure that charter schools beneficially augment educational programs offered in the district and in their communities in ways that reflect the needs and demographics of the district and community. Additionally, OUSD believes that the regulations governing Proposition 39 facilities requests need to recognize the unique facilities needs of specific student groups, such as English learners and students with disabilities, whose educational programs and services result in nontraditional facilities needs. Current Proposition 39 regulations do not explicitly allow districts or charter schools to consider the facility space needs for students with disabilities when determining available capacity or facilities needs for charter school requests.



Climate Resilience. California is confronting challenges associated with the changing climate: power shutoffs, wildfires, drought, and related disasters, in addition to the longstanding challenge of earthquakes. The State has worked to provide resources to cities and counties to ensure continuity of critical infrastructure; it must recognize schools as essential providers as well in these emergency situations. Schools need assistance to ensure their resilience and ability to continue serving their communities during these challenges. Schools are important partners for meeting California's climate goals. With appropriate resources, schools can invest in green infrastructure, shade structures, renewable energy, energy storage, and electric vehicles, and can address the health impacts of residual groundwater contamination from local industrialization. Ultimately, ADA is impacted when power and other public health and safety shutoffs occur and districts consequently lose funding.

Community Schools: OUSD believes that creating safe, caring and supportive schools is essential to ensuring students' academic and social success. We have created health and wellness goals that support social, emotional, mental, and physical health and employ a restorative justice model that works to lower our rate of suspension and expulsion and to foster positive school climate. We support increased resources that fund the district to address both the physical and mental health needs of our students and allows the district to respond to student misconduct in a constructive, locally determined manner. We also support a special provision that builds on the community schools model and provides incentives for districts to make vacant and/or underutilized facilities available to organizations providing essential services within our Community Schools model.

Early Education: OUSD supports policies that aim to achieve a coherent, high-quality pre-kindergarten system, with minimal application complexities and stable, meaningful funding. We know that high-quality early learning opportunities benefit all our children; particularly those who have not traditionally had access to high-quality programming. OUSD believes that providing a quality preschool experience sets a positive start for the child's educational career. By investing in preschool, children have short-term and long-term benefits, including improved academic and school readiness and higher graduation rates. We are committed to addressing the socio-economic challenges of our families that limit equitable access to the benefits of preschool.

Human Resources: OUSD supports policies that promote the recruitment and development of a diverse, talented workforce trained to meet the needs of California's increasingly diverse student body. Such policies should include investments along the full professional continuum, beginning with high-quality teacher preparation programs that provide in-the-classroom experience with master teachers, support for new teachers during the critically important first few years in the classroom, ongoing educator support to develop and refine skills in multicultural literacy as well as ethnic and language diversity, and tenure policies that promote continuous improvement in teaching practices. OUSD supports policies that create an accessible pathway into the teaching profession, including alternatives to high stakes licensure testing, and alleviate the hardship of high workforce attrition as well as the traditional hard-to-fill subject matters of science, mathematics, multilingual education, and special education. In addition, our community's high living costs make it difficult for promising young educators to afford teaching in the district; a high-cost community like Oakland warrants additional support to make the reward of teaching our students feasible. To this end, we support innovative policies to attract, retain and cultivate homegrown talent in communities like Oakland, such as affordable housing options to enable our educators to live in the city where they teach.



Newcomer Students: OUSD is a sanctuary for newcomer students, many of whom are unaccompanied minors. By 2022-23, we anticipate that 1 in every 5 of our high school students will be a newcomer. In addition to the challenges of adjusting to an unfamiliar country, newcomer students are often homeless, highly transient and often have untreated health and/or mental health issues and trauma. The state finance model should recognize that unlike more stable student populations, refugee and newcomer students enroll in districts throughout the school year and thus should be accounted for purposes of funding on an enrollment rather than attendance basis. Currently, migrant students with similar enrollment patterns are accounted for by enrollment and not by attendance.

Special Education: OUSD supports educational and fiscal policies that, when accompanied by adequate resources, serve students with disabilities in learning environments where they can thrive. We believe that students should be given the opportunity to learn among their peers in classrooms where they are supported by staff and resources designed to eradicate barriers to their academic success. We believe charter schools should be required to join the SELPA of the district in which they are located as a condition of granting or renewal of their charter. We believe in increases to the scope of the extraordinary cost pool so that districts are reimbursed for a larger portion of the costs for students requiring residential placements, individual aides, and other intensive services. We believe in requiring charter schools to have certificated staffing with credentials in extensive support needs (ESN) in alignment with AB 1505, and mandating the disclosure of student data between charter schools and their authorizers.

Student Safety: OUSD supports reform of Title IX regulations at the federal level, and both increased resources and responsibilities from the state for districts to prevent sexual harassment and assault, including enacting more robust, victim-centered sexual harassment policies and procedures for K-12 schools. OUSD will examine how the postsecondary reforms of SB 493 could be mirrored in the K-12 setting. In the interim, OUSD will continue to focus on improving its own Title IX implementation, including Title IX training for administrators, age appropriate sexual harassment and consent training for students, and more efficient and effective investigation procedures.