

10/4 Draft of Special Committee on Fiscal Vitality Key Learnings

Introduction:

The statements below were gleaned from the first six sessions of the Special Committee on Fiscal Vitality. In drafting these statements, the intent is to provide a starting point from which the Committee members and public can make meaning. The discussions have been rich and complex and reducing them to writing is challenging. The issues identified ranged from broad policy issues to specific actionable items. The order and numbering does not represent or comment on the relative importance of each item. Thus, the list below is offered as a starting point from which the committee, district, and public can discuss.

Preamble:

- Student learning outcomes are unacceptably low and equity gaps between student groups persist;
- Oakland is faced with a ~\$30 million structural deficit and improving student outcomes must be the guiding principle for any change to how the District achieves fiscal sustainability,
- To achieve excellence, equity and sustainability, OUSD will need to be a more coherent organization, tightly aligned around the Board's theory of action, with fewer initiatives, with a greater focus in direct services to students.
- There are three distinct issues with which Oakland is faced: (1) balancing the books and eliminating the structural deficit; (2) providing a raise to Oakland educators and staff; and (3) improving education by changing how we use our current resources [e.g., consolidations, improving efficiencies, improving services] .
- Oakland's challenges must be thought about in terms of a comprehensive three-year plan rather than a year-to-year piecemeal approach
- The intent of this committee is to provide guidance for the budget reductions and reallocations over the next three to five years in alignment with the Board's Theory of Action, core governance policies, and the requirements of AB 1840.

Overall:

1. The budget reductions and reallocations should reflect a three-five year vision for improving Oakland schools.
2. OUSD should **greatly and visibly reduce the number of initiatives** so as to narrow and focus OUSD's scope of activities;
3. In the coming three years, budget should reflect the **centrality and integration of teacher and leader retention**;
4. In the coming three years, budget should reflect the **centrality and integration of equity** in a way that is both intersectional and deeply integrated into all initiatives and practices.

5. In the coming three years, budget should use **one-time funds** consistent with Board policies 3100.2 (Structurally Balanced Budget) and 3100.1 (Fiscal Reserves).
6. In the coming three years, the budget should reflect--in addition to those required to address the current structural deficit-- adequate funding for **settling the current labor negotiations** with a focus on serving students furthest away from opportunity.
7. In the coming three years, budget should reflect a plan for **repaying depleted reserve funds** in order to improve the financial position of the district.
8. With regard to **surplus properties**, the board has a preference for leasing property over property sales.

Central Office

9. In the coming three years, budget should **redirects resources to the school site budgets**, absent a compelling justification in alignment with Board Policy 3150.
10. In the coming three years, budget should **move more restricted and supplemental and concentration funds into site budgets** in order to better target student need and increase financial flexibility in alignment with Board Policy 3150.
11. In the coming three years, budget should **eliminate duplication of services and silos** within central office
12. In the coming three years, budget should **increase transparency, accountability, measures of success**, and program duration for central office initiatives. Relatedly, the district should build the capacity of staff to engage assess the academic return on investment of initiatives.
13. In the coming three years, budget should reflect a plan to **increase the efficiency and quality of operational departments** within the central office, and decreases the district's dependence on consultants and contractors. (such as Great City Schools)
14. In the coming three years, the budget should Increase focus on **building the capacity of district** staff and as a result, decrease the district's dependence on consultants and contractors.

School Sites

15. Reductions proposals should be **vetted for equity impacts** on specific sites or student groups such as students with special needs, understanding that perfect parity is not possible.
16. In the coming three years, budget should **increase the site allocation formulas** to (1) ensure alignment with Board Policies (BP A-G and BP 3150), (2) support our goal to have students graduate high school on time [e.g., eight period day], and (3) our desire to provide adequate administrative support to sites with high numbers of students with special needs. (e.g., eight period day, Z-score allocations,
17. In the coming three years, budget should cause no **unintended or unavoidable impact on specific sites** due to the overlapping impact initiatives

18. In the coming three years, budget should reflect necessary supports for fully implementing a **defined autonomy structure** to govern school site autonomies. A defined autonomies means clarifying and maximizing site based decision making for schools who have the capacity to operate more independently.
19. In the coming three years, budget should reflect necessary supports for fully support school sites participating in the Blue Print process

Community Engagement

20. We recommend that the superintendent to create a public plan for vetting proposed reductions and reallocations over the course of the next three years and beyond, with the goal of **building community trust** via increased transparency into budgeting practices (alignment with GFOA)

Board Actions

21. The Board and District needs to commit to a process of continuous improvement with regard to its theory of action and core governance policies to ensure effective implementation. This process should reflect the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders.