

March 5, 2021

Dear Oakland USD Partners,

My team at the Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE) and the Oakland USD (OUSD) staff continue to make significant progress in implementing the recommendations of the OUSD Fiscal Vitality Plan. I am encouraged by your recent adoption of a Fiscal Sustainability Plan that, among other things, commits to continuing the critical work that began in the Fiscal Vitality Plan. I am glad that some members of my team and I had an opportunity to provide a brief introduction of ACOE's Intensive Support & Technical Assistance (ISTA) work to you all at the January 22 Board Member Orientation. To assist you in further understanding the valuable collaborative work that has occurred under the ISTA partnership, you may view the past ISTA OUSD Board Updates [here](#).

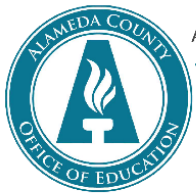
Listed below are the current critical areas in which ACOE is providing intensive support along with an update on their status. Additionally, we are encouraged by the hiring of OUSD's new Director of Payroll and Director of Budget and Finance. These positions are critical to implementing and sustaining industry standards and best practices in key areas.

POSITION CONTROL

Standard Operating Procedures - ACOE and OUSD finalized the revised work plan for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, which includes the outstanding tasks from the previous fiscal year and new tasks to strengthen the work previously completed. The position control standard operating procedures have been finalized and distributed to the OUSD leadership team and will be implemented in March. Training materials are currently under development as well as the position control desk manual. The next steps include training OUSD leadership and support staff.

Reorganization of Job Categories/Classes – ACOE and OUSD reviewed the proposed changes to simplify job categories/classes and have opted to start with certificated positions with an implementation target date of July 1, 2021 followed by classified positions with an implementation target date of July 1, 2022. The next steps include:

1. finalizing changes for certificated job categories/classes,
2. developing a step-by-step process for review, and
3. testing the process in Escape.



User Friendly Table of Authorized FTE - Samples from multiple school districts were compiled and considered. A sample template was created and is under review by the OUSD. Once approved, we will begin confirming and/or editing the sample template (e.g., job classes, identify funding categories).

PAYROLL

Payroll Tax Deposits – OUSD created a written process for tax deposits and trained three employees in Payroll and Fiscal Services to ensure fidelity as it relates to the timely processing of payroll tax deposits. An additional employee in Fiscal Services has been identified and will be trained to guarantee sufficient coverage.

STRS Audit – ACOE and OUSD are close to resolving the findings in the CalSTRS audit that were issued in January 2016. The team standardized a methodology for the 2013-2014 through 2018-19 fiscal years. Corrections for all findings and fiscal years have been submitted to CalSTRS. The final steps consist of creating reference sheets that will be included in the position control desk manual.

HEALTH BENEFITS RECONCILIATION

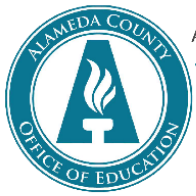
Data and Process - ACOE and OUSD have been working collaboratively and directly with Escape representatives to resolve outstanding data and processing issues. Multiple groups meet regularly to resolve agreed-upon priorities. All outstanding health and welfare issues have been resolved and were implemented with the February payroll for final testing. Next, ACOE and OUSD staff will identify Phase 2 priorities.

STIPENDS

Update Salary Schedules – OUSD updated all salary schedules to reflect contractual stipends on the salary schedule per bargaining unit and confidential staff. The updated salary schedules have been approved by the Board. We will move forward with finalizing the review and approval process for stipends.

BUDGET POLICIES & DEVELOPMENT/ADOPTION PROCESS

Define budget development process and calendar – OUSD created a calendar with key tasks (information and action), including enrollment projections, stakeholder engagement, and spending reductions, which was presented to the Board for discussion in January 2021.



Board Review and Approval of Staffing Adjustments - OUSD and ACOE developed a summary chart of positions that have been added to the budget since the adoption of the original budget. The summary chart includes the position title, FTE, funding source and description, position end date, and cost. The summary was presented to and approved by the Board in December 2020. The next steps include presenting a summary chart to the Board for approval in March 2021 as part of Second Interim.

ESCAPE USER PERMISSIONS

Reset and Standardize User Access - OUSD and ACOE removed and disabled duplicate and unused accounts and created User Access Templates based on positions. OUSD created and implemented the Escape Security Access Form to create new and revise existing user accounts.

PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTS

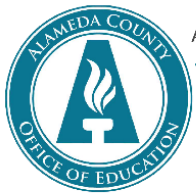
Piggyback Bids – OUSD researched and joined five national educational cooperatives for piggybacking for several key purchases including office supplies, custodial supplies, copiers, and furniture. OUSD is also beginning to research a sixth option for a piggyback contract for office/classroom supplies. This strategy is a standard practice amongst school districts. Cooperative purchasing allows organizations to aggregate purchasing demands for lower prices and reduced overhead.

Contracting Procedures – OUSD and ACOE are collaborating in transitioning purchasing functions to the Procurement, Warehouse, and Transportation Department. OUSD created a form for staff to request the issuance of RFPs. The next steps include formalizing the monitoring of the contract approval/ratification process to ensure compliance with the timeliness stipulated in Board Policies.

Updated Procurement Webpage – OUSD updated the procurement webpage with current, accurate, and necessary resources that include: purchasing protocols and guidelines, annual bid threshold for contracts, and training materials. OUSD also standardized the procurement, transportation, and warehouse webpages to improve ease of use for staff, vendors, and other visitors to those webpages.

Procurement Manual – OUSD and ACOE reviewed sample procurement manuals from other school districts and selected a template. The procurement manual template has been updated with OUSD specific policies, procedures, and expectations. OUSD is working to finalize and release the manual.

CUPCAA and PreQualification Vendor Processing – OUSD and ACOE compiled samples for automated California Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act (CUPCAA) vendor registration from multiple school districts and created a new registration form. The next steps include finalizing the new registration form and posting it on the Procurement and Facilities webpages and identifying automated options for PreQualification vendor processing.



While much progress has been made since we initiated the ISTA partnership, there is still much work to be done to improve the fiscal operations of the district. We will continue to keep you updated with quarterly ACOE ISTA updates going forward. We are committed to the students of Oakland and understand the critical importance of high functioning fiscal, operational, and instructional systems in serving them well.

Standing in Partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L.K. Monroe'.

L.K. Monroe
Alameda County Superintendent of Schools