

Board Office Use: Legislative File Info.	
File ID Number	21-0853
Introduction Date	4/14/2021
Enactment Number	21-0567
Enactment Date	4/14/2021 er

Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

From Shanthi Gonzales, Board President
Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent
Curtiss Sarikey, Chief of Staff

Meeting Date April 14, 2021

Subject 2021-22 K-12 Education Budget

Ask of the Board Adopt annual 2021-22 K-12 Education Budget and authorize the Board President and the Superintendent to sign and send on behalf of the District

Background For the past several years, the Board of Education (“Board”) has adopted an annual budget letter to the State of California.

Discussion This year’s letter is informed by the District’s 2021 Fiscal Legislative Platform, staff and community input, and input from School Services of California. While it addresses general fiscal issues, it is primarily tailored to address specific budget proposals. Due to COVID, these specific budget proposals were developed on an accelerated timeline as compared to previous years.

Fiscal Impact N/A

Attachment(s)

- OUSD’s Annual 2021-22 K-12 Education Budget

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**OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

BOARD OF EDUCATION 2021

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April 15, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: 2021-22 K-12 Education Budget

Dear Senator Skinner and Assembly Member Ting:

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) greatly appreciates the early action taken by the Legislature and Governor to ensure that districts across California have the necessary resources to resume in-person instruction and expand learning opportunities and supports for our students. These investments are critical to our ability to plan, develop, and implement effective strategies and programs that will help all students, and particularly vulnerable students, recover from the learning impacts of the health pandemic.

While OUSD is in the throes of reopening schools for in-person instruction and planning supplemental instruction and supports for our students, we are simultaneously developing our regular annual budget, and your action in the next few months to approve a K-12 Education Budget package for the upcoming fiscal year is important. Below we highlight OUSD's highest budget priorities that will ensure the district's fiscal vitality, enabling us to best meet the needs of students in the Oakland community.

• **LCFF**

OUSD **SUPPORTS** the Governor's proposed cost-of-living-adjustments (COLA) to the Local Control Funding formula for the budget year (1.5%) and the restored current year COLA (2.31%). The LCFF is OUSD's primary resource that ensures we can attract and retain high quality teachers and staff to instruct and support Oakland students. Thus, making the LCFF whole for the 2020-21 suspended COLA is critical to this mission.

Further, OUSD requests the Legislature **provide a one-time appropriation** equal to the value of the current year COLA applied to the 2019-20 LCFF amount, which we should have received as part of the

2020 Budget Act. Though the Legislature and Governor acted prudently last year, the suspension of the current year COLA now appears to have been premature and unwarranted.

- **Deferrals**

OUSD **SUPPORTS** the Governor’s proposal to retire \$7.3 billion of the over \$11 billion in deferred payments to school districts. We believe this is a prudent measure that will protect education funding in the long-term in the event of a future economic downturn.

- **Special Education**

OUSD **SUPPORTS** the Governor’s proposal to increase Special Education funding for preschool-aged children by providing \$300 million in ongoing revenue. We know that early intervention for students with disabilities is critical to their development and academic success and is even more critical for preschool-aged children. The funds, along with the additional accountability features in the Governor’s proposal, will allow OUSD to strengthen and expand inclusive programs for our community’s youngest learners while preparing them for school.

In addition to this investment, OUSD believes that increasing the overall level of funding provided to meet the needs of students with disabilities should be increased. OUSD supports the State of California in advocating that the Federal government fully fund 40% of IDEA costs. Additionally, OUSD advocates for the State to update its statutory definition of ‘severity’ to reflect the educational needs of the student versus the category of disability in order to promote clarity. Relatedly, OUSD calls for increased allocations to address the unique costs associated with educating and serving students with severe disabilities who require multiple services and therapies as determined by their Individualized Education Program. Finally, given the budgetary impacts of charter schools on District budgets, we advocate for legislative reform requiring charter schools help support the costs of educating students with IEPs within Oakland by providing a range of options tailored to the city, which would include but not be limited to participation in the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) in which a charter school is geographically located.

- **Community Schools**

OUSD **SUPPORTS** the Governor’s \$265 million one-time investment for community schools. OUSD has been operating community schools in the Oakland area for many years to ensure that the academic, health, and mental health needs of our students are met. These schools and the supports they offer have been a high priority for the district; however, operating them is becoming increasingly difficult as pressures on our general fund mount. Oakland’s community schools are critical to our students now more than ever in the wake and aftermath of COVID-19. We appreciate the Governor’s approach to supporting the “whole child” as part of the educational program.

- **Mental Health**

Akin to the heightened academic and socio-emotional needs of our students as they emerge from this health pandemic, many OUSD students – like students across the nation – are experiencing declining mental health conditions as they struggle to stay engaged in their learning while they and their families face increased housing and food insecurity. We must address this mental health crisis now by resourcing our schools with properly trained, high quality staff and collaborating with community partners to leverage the full spectrum of expertise and available funding.

Consequently, OUSD requests that the Legislature and Governor **provide a sizable one-time state general fund investment** for mental health services.

- **Additional Funding for Newcomer and Refugee Students**

OUSD continues to be a major destination for unaccompanied minors and has a disproportionate level of newcomers and refugee students compared to statewide averages. Larger national and state immigration trends indicate that spikes in student enrollment among this vulnerable and high-risk student population will continue if not accelerate in the coming months and school years. Consequently, OUSD requests that **the state provide increased funding for the California Newcomer Education and Well-Being (CalNEW) program** that importantly augments federal refugee assistance. State and federal resources over the past few years have been essential in helping to meet the academic, social-emotional, mental health, and legal needs of Oakland community's unaccompanied minor, refugee, and asylee student population.

- **Additional Revenue**

Finally, given the unexpected nature of California's economic recovery and the tens of billions of dollars in unanticipated revenue above the Governor's January estimates, we anticipate a significant increase in education funding later this Spring as part of the May Revision. We urge the Legislature and the Governor to **prioritize additional ongoing funding through the LCFF**, which gives us the greatest autonomy to plan for the future.

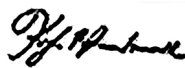
With respect to unanticipated **one-time funding**, we encourage the state to retire a greater share of deferrals and to buy down employer contribution rates for CalSTRS and CalPERS. Such investments will provide much-needed fiscal stability for all districts when the current ADA hold harmless provisions and previous pension buydowns expire.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Patti Herrera (pattih@sscal.com) and Leilani Aguinaldo (leilania@sscal.com).

Sincerely,



Shanthi Gonzales
President, Board of Education



Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent and Secretary, Board of Education

Cc: The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Senate pro Tempore Toni Atkins
Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Senator John Laird
Assembly Member Kevin McCarty
Ben Chida, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Brooks Allen, State Board of Education
Chris Ferguson, Department of Finance
Meagan Baier, Office of Senate pro Tempore Atkins
Misty Feusahrens, Office of Speaker Rendon
Elisa Wynne, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
Erin Gabel, Assembly Budget Committee

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District this 14th day of April, 2021, by the following vote:

PREFERENTIAL AYE: None

PREFERENTIAL NOE: None

PREFERENTIAL ABSTENTION: None

PREFERENTIAL RECUSED: None

AYES: Aime Eng, Gary Yee, Clifford Thompson, Vice President Benjamin "Sam" Davis, President Shanthi Gonzales

NOES: VanCedric Williams, Mike Hutchinson

ABSTAINED: None

RECUSED: None

ABSENT: Jessica Ramos (Student Director), Samantha Pal (Student Director)

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Letter adopt at a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District held on 14th April _____, 2021.

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