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Board Cover Memorandum

To Board of Education

From Sam Davis, Board Vice President
Aimee Eng, Board Member

Meeting Date September 22, 2021

Subject Resolution No. 2021-0128C - Postponing Blueprint Cohort 3 Decision to Fall 2022

Ask of the Board Approval by the Board of Education of Resolution No. 2021-0128C - Postponing Blueprint Cohort 3 Decision to Fall 2022

Background The Board of Education (“Board”) previously adopted Resolution No. 2021-0128 - Advancing District’s Citywide Plan Work (“Citywide Plan Resolution”), which name the goals of the Citywide Plan, including addressing issues of quality, equity, and sustainability in the District, in part by closing or consolidating schools so that the District operates fewer, better resourced schools, and supporting school improvement across the District. The Citywide Plan Resolution states, in relevant part, that:

By September 2021, the Board shall vote on each proposed expansion, redesign, merger, or closure. Should the Board vote against a proposed merger or closure, the Board must approve a resolution (by October 2021) identifying reductions in ongoing General Fund expenditures for 2022-23 that amount to at least the estimated ongoing net savings from that merger or closure; the Superintendent shall implement any mergers and/or closures as proposed unless and until the Board passes such a resolution.

The Board then amended the Citywide Plan Resolution by extending the date by which the Superintendent was to present the Board with a list of proposed schools to expand, redesign, merge, and/or close to September 2021.

The District is now confronted with the dual monumental tasks of (i) reestablishing relationships that were disrupted by the isolation and trauma of the past 17 months and (ii) ensuring that OUSD schools are as safe as possible, particularly in light of the latest surge in cases from the Delta variant. If OUSD does not focus all of its efforts this fall on the work of the restorative restart, student attendance, academic learning, and socioemotional well-being could be negatively affected as well as the work of the District’s Strategic Plan.

At the same time, the District has an unprecedented opportunity to invest significant resources through one-time state and federal relief funds to support a safe and restorative restart to in-person learning, more effectively reconnect with families, support students with socio-emotional and mental health challenges, offer additional academic intervention, and organize schools to reduce risks of COVID infection as much as possible. The influx of one-time funding also provides the District with the opportunity to engage with families, teachers, and school staff at under-enrolled schools to begin envisioning school transformation, including possible consolidations, that would lead to more sustainable community schools, and to properly resource the redesign and transition process that will support these transformations.

As the District has a large number of very small schools and faces serious financial pressures in the coming years due to the continued underfunding of education in California, there is a real need to continue the painful and difficult work of redesigning, closing, and consolidating schools - work that must resume in the spring once school communities have had time to readjust once more to full-time in-person learning.

This Resolution was introduced on August 25, 2021. At that time it was improperly labeled Resolution No. 2122-0128C. It is now correctly labeled as Resolution No. 2021-0128C.

Discussion

The Resolution would further delay release of and action on Cohort 3 from September 2021 to September 2022 and delay any merger and/or closure to Fall 2023 (as opposed to Fall 2022). Additionally, the Resolution states that, as between merger and closures, the Superintendent shall recommend mergers where possible and closures if necessary. The Resolution further requests additional analysis and directs that community engagement efforts should begin in January 2022.

Pursuant to the Citywide Plan Resolution, the Resolution directs the Superintendent to present proposed budget reductions for Board action by October and to present additional budget analysis.

Lastly, the Resolution commits the Board to finding and approving budget solutions for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years to ensure the long-term fiscal solvency of the District by adopting budget-balancing solutions by the adoption of the 2022-23 budget.

On September 15, 2021, the Alameda County Office of Education ("ACOE") sent its 2021-22 Local Control and Accountability Plan & Adopted Budget Review letter to the District. That letter requested that the Board "submit in writing the status of Resolution 2021-0128" by September 23, 2021, and address whether the following language of Resolution 2021-0128 will be "adhered to":

Should the Board vote against a proposed merger or closure, the Board must approve a resolution (by October 2021) identifying reductions in ongoing General Fund expenditures for 2022-23 that amount to at least the estimated ongoing net savings from that merger or closure; the Superintendent shall implement any mergers and/or closures as proposed unless and until the Board passes such a resolution.

The Resolution has now modified to acknowledge the request and to direct the Superintendent, General Counsel, or designee respond to ACOE.

Fiscal Impact The estimated ongoing savings from the mergers and closures from Cohort 3 is \$2 million. This is the amount of ongoing expenditures that the Board would need to reduce consistent with this Resolution (and the original Resolution 2021-0128). Additionally, this delay will likely result in the District being ineligible for the \$10 million that it has been conditionally allocated under AB 1840 for the 2021-22 school year as one of the conditions for this year ("Affirmative action by the governing board to continue planning for, and timely implementation of, a school and facility closure and consolidation plan that supports the sale or lease of surplus property") will not have been met.

Attachment ● Resolution No. 2021-0128C - Postponing Blueprint Cohort 3 Decision to Fall 2022

**RESOLUTION OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE
OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Resolution No. 2021-0128C

Postponing Blueprint Cohort 3 Decision to Fall 2022

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2020, the Oakland Unified School District (“OUSD” or “District”) Board of Education (“Board”) adopted Resolution No. 2021-0128 - Advancing District’s Citywide Plan Work (“Citywide Plan Resolution”), naming the goals of the Citywide Plan, including addressing issues of quality, equity, and sustainability in the District, in part by closing or consolidating schools so that the District operates fewer, better resourced schools, and supporting school improvement across the District;

WHEREAS, Resolution 2021-0128 states, in relevant part, that:

By September 2021, the Board shall vote on each proposed expansion, redesign, merger, or closure. Should the Board vote against a proposed merger or closure, the Board must approve a resolution (by October 2021) identifying reductions in ongoing General Fund expenditures for 2022-23 that amount to at least the estimated ongoing net savings from that merger or closure; the Superintendent shall implement any mergers and/or closures as proposed unless and until the Board passes such a resolution.

;

WHEREAS, this list is referred to as “Cohort 3” since there have been two previous groups of schools to undergo expansions, redesigns, mergers or closures under the Citywide Plan;

WHEREAS, the Citywide Plan Resolution, as amended by Resolution No. 2021-0128B Resolution No. 2021-0128B - Extending Date to Present List of Cohort 3 Schools, directed the Superintendent to present the Board, by September 2021, with a list of proposed schools to expand, redesign, merge, and/or close beginning Fall 2022 consistent with the dual purposes of the Citywide Plan to improve school quality and the District’s long-term financial sustainability;

WHEREAS, the District is now confronted with the dual monumental tasks of (i) reestablishing relationships that were disrupted by the isolation and trauma of the past 17 months and (ii) ensuring that OUSD schools are as safe as possible, particularly in light of the latest surge in cases from the Delta variant;

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2021, the Board of Education passed Resolution 2021-0046 - Prioritizing Social Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health, and Credit Recovery Support Services In Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, which prioritized student and staff mental wellness and social emotional wellbeing for all elementary, middle and high school students during the start of the 2021-22 school year by creating "safe and welcoming community schools" and "intentional healing and restorative spaces to address student, family, and staff trauma and allow small and large group

opportunities to process, cope, and dialogue before and during the transition of returning to school";

WHEREAS, to achieve a restorative restart for this school year, all OUSD staff need to maintain a single-minded focus on implementing COVID protocols for school safety and wellness, strengthening relationships with students, families and colleagues, re-engaging educators, families and students to the norms and structures of in-person instruction, addressing socio-emotional wellness, and making learning relevant and rigorous;

WHEREAS, the difficult and time consuming work of deeply engaging with school communities—families, students, teachers, and school staff—in decisions and planning around significant school changes as part of Cohort 3 is both challenging and necessary to ensure the overall success of these efforts;

WHEREAS, if OUSD does not focus all of its efforts this fall on the work of the restorative restart, student attendance, academic learning, and socioemotional well-being could be negatively affected as well as the work of the District's Strategic Plan;

WHEREAS, the District has an unprecedented opportunity to invest significant resources through one-time state and federal relief funds to support a safe and restorative restart to in-person learning, more effectively reconnect with families, support students with socio-emotional and mental health challenges, offer additional academic intervention, and organize schools to reduce risks of COVID infection as much as possible;

WHEREAS, the influx of one-time funding also provides the District with the opportunity to engage with families, teachers, and school staff at under-enrolled schools to begin envisioning school transformation, including possible consolidations, that would lead to more sustainable community schools, and to properly resource the redesign and transition process that will support these transformations;

WHEREAS, enrollment in the District declined by approximately 1,000 students in the four years prior to the pandemic, while enrollment in Oakland charter schools increased by approximately 1,500 students during the same period;

WHEREAS, Long Beach Unified School District operates 85 schools for approximately 71,000 students, San Jose Unified School District operates 41 schools for approximately 28,000 students, and Sacramento City Unified School District operations 70 schools for approximately 40,000 students;

WHEREAS, as the District has a large number of very small schools and faces serious financial pressures in the coming years due to the continued underfunding of education in California, there is a real need to continue the painful and difficult work of redesigning, closing, and consolidating schools - work that must resume in the spring once school communities have had time to readjust once more to full-time in-person learning;

WHEREAS, on March 24, 2021, the Board of Education passed Resolution No. 2021-0037 - Reparations for Black Students, directing the Superintendent to work with the Black Student and Families Thriving Task Force to “develop an equity impact analysis of any proposed closures, mergers or consolidations of OUSD schools, prior to any vote on school changes”;

WHEREAS, racial justice and equity must be taken into account when considering the impact of school closures and consolidations, and any plan to move forward with such school changes should begin with an engagement plan to collaborate with the students, families, and educators in affected school communities and should address those impacts to ensure that any decisions improve opportunities for historically disadvantaged students and families, especially African-American students;

WHEREAS, as a means to cushion the impact of addressing the District’s long-term structural financial imbalances, Assembly Bill No. 1840 (“AB 1840”) provides the District with unrestricted one-time funds for 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 as long the District meets certain conditions; and

WHEREAS, on September 15, 2021, the Alameda County Office of Education (“ACOE”) sent its 2021-22 Local Control and Accountability Plan & Adopted Budget Review letter to the District in which it requested that the Board, by September 23, 2021, “submit in writing the status of Resolution 2021-0128 and address” whether the following language of Resolution 2021-0128 will be “adhered to”:

Should the Board vote against a proposed merger or closure, the Board must approve a resolution (by October 2021) identifying reductions in ongoing General Fund expenditures for 2022-23 that amount to at least the estimated ongoing net savings from that merger or closure; the Superintendent shall implement any mergers and/or closures as proposed unless and until the Board passes such a resolution.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby amends the Citywide Plan Resolution, as amended by Resolution No. 2021-0128B, as follows:

- The month by which the Superintendent is directed to “present the Board with a list of proposed schools to . . . merge and/or close” and the associated information required by Resolution No. 2021-0128 is now September 2022 (as opposed to September 2021) – redesigns and expansions may continue at the Superintendent’s discretion,
- As between merger and closures, the Superintendent shall recommend mergers where possible and closures if necessary,
- The Superintendent shall begin community engagement efforts by January 2022 with all school communities on the need for strong measures to improve the fiscal sustainability of the District, including possible reductions in staff and school closures and mergers, and
- The implementation of any merger and/or closure is now Fall 2023 (as opposed to Fall 2022);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in addition to providing the list of Cohort 3 schools, the Board urges the Superintendent to bring forward analysis on or before June 2022 that will inform the broader community of the rationale for reducing the number of schools in the District, including:

- A comparison with similar-sized districts in California that have better academic outcomes, a similar student population, and a more sustainable student/school ratio,
- Selection analysis and criteria by which schools will be chosen to be part of Cohort 3,
- An equity impact analysis developed with the Black Student and Families Thriving Task Force as described in Resolution 2021-0037,
- A school-by-school financial analysis using the formula that allocates base staffing and additional resources to schools, showing what investments currently exist at schools that are not sustainable given funding levels,
- A financial analysis showing the additional resources that will be available to support students at a larger consolidated school with a similar percentage of unduplicated pupils to two smaller schools, due to economies of scale,
- Anticipated budget savings in Years 1-5 including investments in the redesign process, and
- A report on community engagement with school communities, including how the above analyses were shared with them to motivate the urgency of school changes and transformation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board directs the Superintendent to continue the work of engaging with families, teachers, school staff, and students at schools across the District to envision school transformation, including consolidation where necessary, as those school communities come back together over the coming school year, so they can begin the design work for sustainably-sized, racially just, relationship-centered community schools;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in alignment with Resolution 2021-0128, the Board directs the Superintendent to bring to the Board an estimate of what the ongoing net savings to the District would have been for 2022-23 from the proposed Cohort 3 school closures and mergers, as well as an alternative list of proposed reductions in ongoing General Fund expenditures for 2022-23 that total to at least that amount, no later than October 2021, so that the Board can fulfill its commitment to District fiscal sustainability and the provisions of Resolution 2021-0128 by approving such planned reductions in place of the Cohort 3 school changes and understanding its anticipated impacts on the budget for the 2022-23 fiscal year;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board directs the Superintendent to pursue the following in order to initiate the process to address the District's long-term structural financial issues:

- Present, by October 2021, separate targets for ongoing reductions to (i) the unrestricted General Fund and (ii) restricted funds, and
- Present, by December 2021, multi-year budgets with and without one-time funds include for both the unrestricted General Fund and restricted funds; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board is committed to finding and approving budget solutions for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 fiscal years to ensure the long-term fiscal solvency of the District by adopting budget-balancing solutions by the adoption of the 2022-23 budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board directs the Superintendent, General Counsel, or designee to respond to ACOE – on behalf of the Board and by September 23, 2021 – clarifying the status of Resolution 2021-0128 and explaining how this Resolution (No. 2021-0128C) does adhere to the aforementioned language of Resolution 2021-0128.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District this ____ day of _____, 2021, by the following vote:

PREFERENTIAL AYE:	None
PREFERENTIAL NOE:	None
PREFERENTIAL ABSTENTION:	None
PREFERENTIAL RECUSE:	None
AYES:	VanCedric Williams, Aimee Eng, Vice President Benjamin “Sam” Davis
NOES:	Gary Yee, Mike Hutchinson, Clifford Thompson, President Shanthi Gonzales
ABSTAINED:	None
RECUSED:	None
ABSENT:	Student Director Pal, Student Director Gallegos-Chavez

CERTIFICATION

We hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of a Resolution passed at a Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Oakland Unified School District held on _____
September 22, 2021.

Legislative File	
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OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Shanthi Gonzales
President, Board of Education

Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent and Secretary, Board of Education