

PSAC Statement to the Oakland Board of Education

As adopted by consensus at the 12/9/25 Special Meeting of the LCAP Parent & Student Advisory Committee

The Parent and Student Advisory Committee would like to preface our statement with an appreciation of the work that has been done by district staff, and the engagement of those in the Oakland community who have provided critical input as we face these systemic budgetary issues together. We want to acknowledge the long hours spent and difficult decisions at hand, and to emphasize our hope that this arduous process makes our district stronger and better, through leadership, transparency, and most of all, empathy for the students and families at the core of our efforts. We also thank the board for this opportunity to deliver our statement.

Our members speak in solidarity when we say the rapid pace and shortened timeline of these impactful decisions is frustrating and inexcusable. We are confused and dismayed that such a drastic state of change has been reduced to a few short months, and a handful of public meetings of deliberations. True reform must include a sober regard of how we got here, and real efforts to correct past mistakes and inequities.

However, at this moment, time is short; the committee must look forward in our assessments, and we provide the following statements as a consensus per our reading of the amended resolution and scenarios at hand:

- 1. We have had very limited time to review scenarios 3 and 4, and our review of specifics will continue.** Our initial reaction to these scenarios include a **deep concern at the depth of cuts being proposed to special education**, which will have an outsized effect on all students. Additionally, we are **very concerned with the potential of financing this restructuring**, which will delay tough decisions at additional expense.
- 2. The amended resolution's language to direct cuts that "do not directly impact students in schools" is well-meaning, but has contributed to the confusion of both the district and community.** PSAC believes that all of the school district's work is for the benefit of students and therefore our committee recommends the board clarify specific criteria, programs, and consolidations that can have the largest budget impact while minimizing the impact on students and families, as well as staff.
- 3. Investments in student safety must remain the highest priority, and should not be reduced.** We encourage robust scrutiny and accountability in our district's safety strategies, policies, and implementation. It is important to reiterate and uplift that students cannot learn if they do not feel safe, teachers cannot teach if they do not feel safe, and attendance and enrollment will suffer if families do not feel safe.
- 4. Focus on restoration of the base budget. There has been far too much reliance on reclassifying expenses outside the base to be able to pay for them.** Any positive change to our perennial budget woes will include honesty in these classifications and spending within our means.
- 5. We believe proposed cuts to enrollment stabilization and cuts to maintenance below state requirements would be counterproductive to fiscal goals.** Based upon guidance around recent gains in enrollment and the potential loss of state grants, it seems clear that enrollment services and maintenance need to be protected from significant cuts.

6. We would like to see a scenario that includes reductions in salary or furloughs for high-level administrators at the district. While a significant number of FTE positions are being eliminated in both scenarios, we do not see any austerity in the base compensation of the most highly-paid district staff, and would be encouraged to see this in the scenarios.

7. Network consolidations as proposed reduce support for schools directly without being worth the long-term reductions in expense. Network consolidations only work with school consolidations. Reducing staff at this level does not reduce the workload or number of schools supported within each network, which in many cases is the first line of support in critical situations.

8. Custodial services are essential and should not be reduced. While efforts should always be made to find more cost-efficiency at school sites, the cleanliness of our schools is an essential element of health, safety and happiness for students and teachers.

9. We are encouraged by the focus on reducing contracts through centralization and internal hires. Every effort should be made to pursue strategies to cut costs and negotiate with vendors which would be a greater benefit. Managing multiple, small contracts seems to be a large drain on central staff resources, so we recommend consolidation to preferred vendors to reap benefits and cost savings in these areas.

10. It is practically impossible to reach the stated target without cutting school-site and district programming. While we applaud all efforts to shift cuts away from school sites, the enormous portion of the budget devoted to programming must be scrutinized closely for opportunities to cut costs through creative and collaborative work. Where might the district look to combine programs that benefit similar populations?

Our community understands that this budget process will be challenging at every level. We urge the board and district to make hard decisions that prioritize the safety and joy of our students, and to protect and lift up those among us who rely on public education as both a human right and as the cornerstone of a strong and healthy Oakland both now and for generations to come.

The portion of the statement adopted on 12/9/25 ends here.

The statements that follow have not yet been discussed for possible adoption because time ran out at the 12/9/25 PSAC Special Meeting. Our plan is to discuss them at a Special Meeting next week.

11. There must be a serious consideration of a change to the current policy of school choice. *We would like to explore the fiscal and community impact of recentering communities around their local schools and narrowing school choice to students with the highest need.*

12. Cuts made to school sites directly should follow a needs-based assessment. *Identify support from outside district funds (PTA's, PTO, other grants) to make sure that fewer cuts are made at schools with the highest need.*

13. While school consolidations and closures are not off the table, we believe they should be considered only as a last resort. *The historical inequity of school closures in this district should be top of mind during this process.*