



**Public Schools
Oakland
Advocates**
Oakland Unified School District Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire, Policies and Issues

Section 1: For each of the following statements, please rank your level of agreement on the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

At the conclusion of this section, you will have a total of 250 words to expand upon any of your responses. This exercise will help our network better understand your positions on a wide range of issues.

Statement	Level of Agreement (Rank from 1-4)
Quality Public Schools	
I support the #SchoolAfterCOVID Family Demands . Family voices, especially those historically marginalized, should be centered and part of the decision-making process as they have become experts on what it takes to get distance learning right and they have the most at stake. We must follow their lead.	4
District and charter schools can both be part of a successful community of schools in Oakland , but there needs to be equity between systems and fairness in how we hold schools accountable to serving students. The Board of Education has responsibility for the success of all students attending Oakland public schools.	4
I support a system for evaluating the quality of our public schools, both district and charter, that is primarily based on their results for students based on qualitative and quantitative measures such as the School Performance Analysis (SPA) , and the School Quality Review Rubric .	4
Research shows that four key resources have a dramatic impact on student achievement (grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement in what they're learning, and teachers who hold high expectations). As a board member, it would be my primary focus to expand access to these four resources to students who have been historically denied access.	4
I support the articulated vision of our current superintendent, Kyla Johnson-Tramell.	3

Statement	Level of Agreement (Rank from 1-4)
Financial Sustainability	
I commit to governing and voting in accordance with nationally established best financial practices, including those in the Smarter School Spending Framework put forward by the Government Finance Officers Association, and adopted in Board Resolution 18-0127 .	4
I would give more funding to support students most likely to have suffered significant learning loss due to COVID school closures, in excess of Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) supplemental and concentration grants.	4
District leadership should be held accountable for presenting their budget in a clear, student-centered way at public board meetings that allows parents, community members, and board members alike to understand and engage. As a board member I will demand this level of transparency from district staff and use GO's Sunshine budget Presentation Rubric . You can find a sample rating here .	4
To increase state education funding, I support Proposition 15 on the November 2020 ballot, also known as Schools and Communities First, and believe that Proposition 13 should be modified to tax commercial and industrial property owners at their properties' current market rates.	4

Section 1 Response (OPTIONAL): In 250 words or fewer (in total, not 250 per statement), expand on any of your responses to the statements above. You might use this section to add nuance to one of your positions or to provide additional context on your opinions. You may address as many statements from the above section as you would like, so long as your response falls within the 250-word limit.

To briefly expand on question #2, re public school and charter school: supporters and representatives of both, have been “bumping heads” for far too long. Charter and non-charter school supporters and representatives must have a positive/constructive working relationship; and must not lose sight of the primary objective: providing top education to ALL students, regardless of the students' zip code. It does not matter what road one takes to arrive at their destination; as long as they arrive.

Section 2: Please answer each of the following questions in 250 words or fewer.

Quality of Public Schools

Review the [#SchoolAfterCOVID findings](#) about family and student experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and extended school closures. As a board member overseeing the district's recovery, what would your top 2-3 priorities in this area be?

I would maintain the mindset that this pandemic will be an ever present threat. This way of thinking, is important because it does not allow one, to let their guard down.; and to continue to look ahead and think creatively in the events of subsequent waves of this outbreak. My top priorities would be to ensure the health and emotional well being of the students, staffs and teachers. In addition, special attention must be particularly given to those most vulnerable. Students with special disabilities, students of color; who in general are more adversely impacted during this pandemic; as well as the vulnerability of teachers and staff 65 years or older.

As a board member, it would be crucial to meet with students and parents on an ongoing basis, to discuss ideas, possibilities on how to move forward. In the best of conditions, OUSD schools have not been equitable to serving the needs of all students, across the socio-economic spectrum. To ensure that students and staff return safely to the classroom; business as usual, could be highly dangerous. As a member of the school board I will meet with students, parents, volunteers, and former teachers to determine the most effective and safest way to turn this tragedy into an opportunity to greatly improve what we THOUGHT was working within our school system. As the SchoolAfterCovidv findings indicated, we need to keep track of the progress of students, we need to completely close the digital divide, we need to determine what type of modified school schedules to put into place; staggered or hybrid, and we need to determine at what rate, can we safely let student return to the classroom. We need to resolve problems of social distancing as far as school buses, common areas, and with extracurricular activities. This will all have to be a collective effort.

Review the [vision and goals](#) the district is currently using to determine the future of Oakland public schools in order to increase quality and be fiscally solvent. To what extent do you support this criteria? What would you change and/or prioritize?

I would only ensure that all students receive the tools and opportunity to learn and to thrive regardless of their socio-economic background. More resources need to be moved from administrative to instructional objectives. Additionally, closure of schools should be carefully considered. A numbers of schools were closed several years ago, in an attempt to close a budget gap- but I have not seen any tangible evidence that monies were saved. So, the issue to be reviewed closely

Financial Sustainability

In your view, what are the most significant drivers of OUSD's current financial crisis? As a board member, what would you do to mitigate these issues? (250-word limit)

OUSD have been on the brink of financial disaster, to various degrees, since the early 2000's. I think that there are various reasons behind this; and most have been a recurring. I think lack of vigorous oversight of unsustainable spending is a key problem. In actuality, there has been rising revenues, yet OUSD still remains in financial distress. As a board meeting, I would work with my fellow board members and the community to create a long term sustainable financial solvency plan. It seems to be, that this have been missing in past attempts. Past measures seemed piecemeal, and not comprehensive. There are several steps in which we must take to

bring such a plan to fruition. First, the Board of Education must restore trust within the community; and demonstrate through real action, that we are committed to real financial reform, and that we as board members will partner with members of the community. Teachers, students, former teachers, volunteers, must be involved in the reform process. In addition, complete transparency in how and where dollars are spent; is imperative. Also the proposals to close schools to save and redistribute resources, must be carefully considered, and no decisions should be made, under the full community have their say in this matter. Aside from the services of FCMAT; stronger and more frequent financial audits are needed.

What in your experience and background prepares you for overseeing the OUSD budget of over \$500M per year? What steps are you willing to take, if elected, to build your own capacity (and the Board's collective capacity) to provide good stewardship and oversight for OUSD's budget? (250-word limit)

I would form advisory subcommittees/ad hoc committees consisting of community leaders, staff, current/former teachers; to play an active advisory and oversight role. It is those who are most affected with budgetary decisions, who must have a voice in determining how district monies are spent, for what, and for whom. In addition, I would insist that the Superintendent retain a Chief Financial Officer, and a financial term of experts, with proven track records of success, to reform the budgetary process; and to develop a long term sustainable financial solvency plan for OUSD. These individuals must be committed, must have authority and must put OUSD financial solvency and stability as their top priority.

We know that millions in cuts need to be made in the coming school years to prevent OUSD from being taken over by the state of California. What criteria will you use to determine whether staff is recommending the right cuts, and how do you see the difference between the responsibility of district staff and the Board of Education? (250-word limit)

I think both have a responsibility to make the right cuts, and to use sound judgement and foresight. A criteria that would be quite useful, would be to look at the specific areas in which cuts are recommended. What impact would the specific cut have on the quality of the education opportunities, and tools that students need to thrive? How effective or ineffective have the programs been, in which cuts are recommended? Long term impact of such cuts?

Leadership and Candidacy

What are 1-2 barriers for positive impact of the current board and how would you plan to address those as a board member? (150-word limit)

I think that the top barrier is, that to many people, the Oakland School Board comes across as a "behind closed doors" type of governing body. There should be very few, if any, decisions and proposals made by the Board of Education; in which there is no community engagement. Certainly not on budgetary or policy issues. As a former union representative, I learned one IMPORTANT thing- people need to believe that there are a part of the process, and not outsiders looking in. As a board member, I will consistently advocate for transparency in the real sense.

As a school board member, how do you plan to engage your community and rebuild trust, especially when making high-stake decisions? (250-word limit)

Constant communication with the community, via social network, webinars. Students, volunteers, teachers/ex-teachers, parents; will not be in the outside looking in.

What have you done to lay a foundation for a successful candidacy? Speak specifically to fundraising, campaign staff, field preparation, campaign infrastructure, and key endorsements. (150-word limit, do not count key endorsements against your word limit)

I have enlisted several people I know, and have worked with in the legal community, the military and the union in which I was once a union rep; SEIU Local 1000. Because of the current circumstances, campaigning will have to be far more creative. In addition to those I know and have worked with in volunteering in local campaigns. I was recently elected as a delegate to the Democratic Convention (Bernie Sanders); and I have reached out to follow members of the California Delegation.

What will your ballot designation be, and why? (50-word limit)

Oakland Public Library Advisory Commission Commissioner.

I choose this designation, because the work that is done on this commission is primarily education related.