



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.	3
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.	2
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 .	2
Research shows that four key resources have a dramatic impact on student achievement (grade-appropriate assignments, strong	3



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.	
I support the articulated vision of our current superintendent, Kyla Johnson-Tramell.	1
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 .	2
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 .	3
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.

I don't agree with many of the assumptions that went into the framing of these questions.

I don't believe that charter schools are public schools for many reasons, the two biggest being that they don't take all students and that they receive public dollars with no public oversight. Charters have an unfair advantage as they "compete" with public schools. For there to be equity charters would have to take all students, help pay OUSD's debt, and pay a fair share of the costs OUSD incurs. Whether it's charters using prop 39, or getting PPP money, or overturning charter denials, charter schools benefit while public schools suffer. Where is the equity in that?

I believe that the school board and the superintendent that they hired have been taking OUSD in the wrong direction. They have mismanaged the district, mismanaged the finances, and made many of OUSD's long standing issues worse. The current school board is by far the least popular one we've had in over 20 years, maybe ever. I believe that Oakland wants and needs a change. We as a community can create the kinds of schools that best serve the needs of our students. With four new school board directors coming in we need to look to new policies moving forward, instead of looking backwards to the failed policies of the past.

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 will prioritize the health and safety of students, families, and staff by following all CDC and CDE guidelines for the reopening of schools. Once the guidelines have been met, I will ensure full testing and PPE be provided to all students and staff and that protocols are in place for if/when a student or staff member tests positive for Covid-19. The school board must ensure that every school has a plan for social distancing, hand washing, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, and a daily deep cleaning before they are reopened.

Equity has been a long standing issue in OUSD. We demand that the school board ensure an equitable plan for the reopening of OUSD. Whether it's distance learning, split schedules, or some hybrid, I will demand equity and a plan that will be accessible to 100% of our students and families.

I will work to create a deeper community conversation around how our schools will look during this crisis. Only through public, transparent, meaningful engagement can we ensure the equity that the community demands.

I will pause any plans for school closures, mergers, co-locations, and the sale of OUSD property. During this pandemic our schools will require social distancing which means we will have to limit class sizes. We need to maximize our facilities to safely accommodate as many students as possible. OUSD must develop a new "utilization formula" and the school board must work to ensure OUSD has enough classrooms and staffing for the changing conditions.

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?

OUSD is solvent, but the finances have been grossly mismanaged. I do not agree with the Blueprint. I believe that the way you increase quality is by creating more quality schools not by closing schools.

I have a four point plan to stabilize, envision, and build:

1. The school board is mismanaging OUSD. I will stop the current plans to close public schools and sell OUSD property. I will also launch a full audit of OUSD and reprioritize the budget to restore funding to our schools and increase the amount of resources we spend directly on students.

2. I will fully implement and enforce AB 1505, which will limit new charter schools in Oakland. I will also use AB 1505 to close low performing charter schools through a strengthened renewal process.

3. I will work to create an authentic community engagement process where the community is treated as partners and decision makers.

4. Oakland needs to re-envision public education. If elected I will begin to pilot Sustainable Community Schools. Sustainable Community Schools are an evidence-based school improvement model that offers the whole-child education strategies of a full service community school; and engages the school community in the process of designing and implementing six key pillars to school success:

1. Engaging, culturally relevant and challenging curriculum
2. High quality teaching
3. Wrap-around supports for every child

4. Student centered climate
5. Authentic parent and community engagement
6. Inclusive school leadership

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 does not have a financial crisis, they have a mismanagement crisis. In 2017-18 OUSD had a \$29M surplus and in 2018-19 OUSD had a \$21M surplus and ended the year with over \$70M in the ending fund balance, according to the official budget numbers. I will launch a full forensic audit, reprioritize the \$80M plus OUSD spends on police, consultants and outside contracts, have a community budget process, and prioritize spending greatly increasing per pupil spending.

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 have spent the last 8 years learning how to track and read the OUSD budget. I also attend every school board meeting and nearly every budget and finance committee meeting. I have also spent time sharing the OUSD budget information and teaching other people how to read the budget. In terms of understanding the OUSD budget as a school board director, I would be prepared from day one.

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)

Millions in cuts do not have to be made. OUSD is required to maintain 2% in the reserve to prevent state takeover. The school board's responsibility is to set policy and manage OUSDs finances, that includes the budget. In terms of "cuts", I would look to reprioritize funding from the \$80M spent on police, consultants, and outside contracts. For four years state funding to OUSD has gone up while per pupil spending has gone down. I would change the budget priorities to greatly increase school site and per pupil spending.

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 believe the current board IS the barrier to positive impact and that replacing them with a new school board will greatly improve OUSD. I have a good relationship with many of the school board candidates, and when elected, we plan to work collectively to lead OUSD in a new direction.

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)

The trust that was broken the state takeover in 2003 has never been rebuilt. I will work to take explicit actions to work to restore the community's trust. I will change the adversarial relationship that exists at school board meetings and push for a committee system to facilitate deeper collaboration and engagement. I will create a community engagement process that treats the community as partners. I will regularly visit and engage at District 5 schools and I will hold monthly office hours with the community. I will work to change the culture of OUSD so families feel valued and respected. Lastly I will work in an open and transparent way collaboratively with the community. I believe that only by working together and harnessing our collective, can we achieve the successes we all want to see for OUSD.

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 been working hard to put together a successful campaign. I have so far received early endorsements from SEIU 1021 and OEA.

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

I haven't decided yet, but I've been working as an advocate and community organizer around public and education justice ssuse for the last 8 years and before that I worked providing direct services to youth for 20 years.