



**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:

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
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)
<b>Quality Public Schools</b>	
I support the <a href="#">#SchoolAfterCOVID Family Demands</a> . 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 <a href="#">School Performance Analysis (SPA)</a> , and the <a href="#">School Quality Review Rubric</a> .	4
<a href="#">Research shows</a> 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 <a href="#">articulated vision</a> of our current superintendent, Kyla Johnson-Tramell.	4
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Level of Agreement (Rank from 1-4)</b>
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	
I commit to governing and voting in accordance with nationally established best financial practices, including those in the <a href="#">Smarter School Spending Framework</a> put forward by the Government Finance Officers Association, and adopted in <a href="#">Board Resolution 18-0127</a> .	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 <a href="#">GO's Sunshine budget Presentation Rubric</a> . You can find a sample rating <a href="#">here</a> .	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.

-COVID 19 dealt a heavy blow to our schools. It only magnified the disparities between groups of students. As a result I am in favor of leveling the playing field by reallocating resources where they are needed most.

-I personally believe we have taken the argument of Charters vs. Traditional Public Schools out of context. Instead of looking at the quality of education being provided, we have relegated ourselves to

acrimonious bickering that steers us away from the crux of the matter and plunges us into the depths of despair. I believe we should look at what is working and duplicate it throughout the district for all of our students. Regardless of the school's name, if the program is not benefitting students, we should jettison what it has to offer and effectively work with it to adjust its path.

-Additionally, I would like to share my five proven pillars of education. The aforementioned pillars have influenced my work as a professional and contributed to the outstanding academic results I have achieved with my students (77%-80% of my students reaching or exceeding their goals in reading): (1) relationship, (2) communication, (3) culture, (4) structure, (5) consistency.

**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?**

There were several findings that I feel are priorities because they have a direct impact on other issues.

(1) I feel student and staff safety is a major concern. Maintaining the safety of our students and staff is primary to me because (a) if the student is not safe, learning cannot take place, (b) if the student contracts the virus it can be transmitted to other family members, other students, and community members, (c) financial continuity of the district will be affected. Likewise if the staff is not safe, it makes the delivery of education next to impossible. Compounded is the fact that parents have to work. Therefore, there will be a delicate balance between the number days students are in school affording parents the opportunity to go to work and provide for the family. Additionally, a major point of concern is the social/emotional well being of the students.

(2) Equity of Access: This pandemic highlighted the inherent inequity that exists in our district. It showed that certain students and families have the resources/accessibility to the necessary tools to continue the educative process. Conversely, the light was shined on those who lack the resources/accessibility. Unfortunately, the hardest hit subgroups are those who have traditionally been underserved.

(3) Student Learning, especially Special Ed Students: There are mandates that are stipulated relative to additional services for Special Ed students. A major concern is the delivery of services and how effective it will be if not delivered face-to-face, while meeting the specified hours set forth in the IEP. In other words, more effective instructional time using formative measurements to guide instruction.

**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?**

The vision of all students finding joy in their academic experience is compelling. It is heightened when the vision stresses that all students will be critical thinkers, and college and career ready. Further, all students have a fulfilling academic experience, while attending high quality schools with rigorous instruction in every class is admirable. The words sound good but the reality found in the results is less than encouraging. When I look at many of the schools in the district, I am immediately reminded of the work that is ahead of us. It is one thing to craft a statement about vision and goals, but it is entirely different to get results that are defined by your vision and goals. Toward that end, there needs to be a set quality standard that is mutually agreed upon. Administrators and teachers should be coached to seek and then achieve that standard. If such a mantra is implemented in the district, phenomenal change will take place. And every neighborhood would have a high functioning, inviting, academically sound, and comfortable school. In responding to this question one has to consider board policies 6005 and 6006.

### **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)**

I think the most significant drivers of the current crisis rest on three primary issues.

They are (1) approving too many outside contracts, (2) sustaining the operation of failing schools, and (3) losing sight of the state mandated reserves. Actually, all three circumstances position the district to operate from a deficit model instead of robust positive position.

As a board member it would be incumbent on me to establish policy that would refocus our attention on highly sustainable schools, sound academic programs, and prudent financial responsibility. Additionally, I would use my skill in building relationships and organizing community efforts to refocus stakeholder vision toward financial solvency. All of this would require the "tightening of the belt" until we have gotten a handle on things.

**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 held several positions where I have been in charge of budgets of several millions of dollars. I was also responsible for allocating dollars based on being restricted or non-restricted. Being a principal of several schools that used site decision making required that I work with a budget and ultimately ended with a balanced budget. As the coordinator of secondary schools for San Mateo County, I disseminated the budget for afterschool programs and homeless education for all county schools. Most recently, I served on the board of a local school and oversaw a budget of multiple millions of dollars. To be transparent, it was not \$500 million. However, I am willing to use all of the experience I have amassed from my other positions to help me deal with a larger budget than I have every dealt with before. Also, I am certainly willing to read on my own, attend budget workshops and trainings to learn how to work with such a large budget.

**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)**

The main thing that I will consider when making cuts is to ask myself the question, "How does the cut affect students and their learning?" When making a cut, it must be as far from the classroom as possible. Secondly, before making the cut, I would want to know the impact it would have on an established program that is rendering positive results. Thirdly, I would need to assess the impact that the cut would have on parents. That is, if parents are adversely affected to the point of not sending the

child to school, it would have an adverse or negative effect the “structure” as a whole. We do not want to be in a position that “cuts off our nose to spite our face.”

The responsibility of district staff is very different from the Board. The district staff has to make decisions predicated on their sphere of management. However, the Board has to look at the entire system/structure and make sure it remains viable. In other words, the district staff could be conceivably responsible for just a segment of the district, where the Board is responsible for the entire District.

## 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 the biggest barrier to positive impact is trust. I think there are many individuals of the community who have lost trust in the decision making of the Board. Another barrier is the ability to make cogent decisions. In other words, making decisions considering the various effects that it will have on the community.

As a board member, I would have to be very transparent, methodical, deliberate, while taking my time, weighing the issues, and being cognizant of their effects on all sectors of the community and learning process.

### **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)**

As a board member it would be very important that I establish a positive working relationship with the superintendent so that the community knows that she and I can and do work together for our students. I would (1) encourage the superintendent to establish a positive working relationship with one of our most influential community members (I would involved other high level district personnel.). I would (2) want both district and community persons to be seen working together. I would (3) have regular community meetings where both would take turns presenting findings so that voices from both sides are heard. If necessary, (4) I would establish working groups composed of district and community to offer solutions to a prevailing problem.

### **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 attended the fellowships offered by GO. I signed up to be part of the QuarantTeam sessions., I signed up to participate in narrative shapers.

I have filed my 501 and 410. I have an appointment on 7-17-20 to pick up my nomination papers. I have opened a bank account so that I can receive donations. Also, I have engaged several professional who will be assisting me with various aspects of the campaign. For example, I have contracted with a social media person, a communications person, and a professional photographer. My website is almost completed. The only difficulty I have is getting my donations tab to function properly. As such, I have connected with anedot so that I can receive donations. I am on facebook and have reached out to my contacts on several occasions and have received positive comment/reactions.

I have set a fundraising goal and am working toward meeting it. My campaign staff has been put in place; I have identified a phone bank coordinator, I have a campaign literature coordinator, kitchen cabinet, endorsers and supporter.

I have key endorsements including Bishop Bob, Bishop Wordlaw, Pastor Anthony Jenkins, Honorable Jamoke Hinton Hodge, Honorable Toni Cook, Honorable Carol Lee Tolbert, Elihu Harris, Cathy Cage, Cynthia Adams, Councilman Noel Gallo, Issac Kos Read, Kimi Kean, Honorable Lucella Harrison, Dirk Tillotson, Amber Childress, Rich Harrison. Dr. Allie Whitehurst, Ron Towns, George Holland, Sr, Esq, Ay'Anna Moody

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

Master Educator. I have been in the field of education for 40 years. I was a classroom teacher for 17 year, an administrator for 20 years, and have returned to the classroom for the last three years. Almost 80% of my students met or exceeded their goals in reading.