

# We Believe . . .



**OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
*Community Schools, Thriving Students*

That every student should learn in a positive and safe learning environment.

OUSD is committed to meeting the needs of Oakland’s diverse community. Our schools enhance the quality of life of our students and families by providing safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable places for students to learn and thrive.

In the ability of every student to thrive in school and reach their full potential—and are committed to ensuring that they achieve college, career, and community success in the 21st century.

OUSD invests in our children’s education from cradle to career, delivering high-quality early learning and academic experiences to every student in safe, healthy and equitable schools designed to help them thrive in college, career, and community.

In celebrating the diversity of our students with respect to race, culture, heritage, exceptional needs, gender, and sexual orientation; committing to giving each child what they need; teaching them with high expectations; and supporting them to find joy and success in their education.

OUSD is committed to growing our own talented staff every with diverse educators dedicated to supporting and working in service of Oakland’s youth, and to guaranteeing rigorous instruction in every classroom every day.

In full service community schools that—in addition to providing high quality education—act as an integral part of the health and wellness of our neighborhoods, offering lifelong learning opportunities and support for our students and community members.

OUSD’s mission is to focus on high-academic achievement while serving the whole child, developing the social, emotional and physical health of students, families, and staff. In addition to this mission, OUSD strives to be a resource for positive and continuous growth, enabling adult students to become contributing workers, lifelong learners, global citizens, and full participants in the community.

That students are most successful when all of us—students, families, educators, and community members from all backgrounds and neighborhoods—can meaningfully and equitably participate in making shared decisions and improving conditions at the district level, school site, or in the community.

OUSD continuously works to eliminate barriers to access, learning, and achievement for all students, and strives to create a culture that holds ourselves and our partners accountable for high quality, equitable outcomes because all students deserve equal opportunities to thrive.

In the fair and transparent management of our resources in order to ensure the success of all current and future students, and are committed to seeking additional resources.

OUSD is committed to providing the community and our families accessible and easy-to-understand information about our district, our schools, and our students to promote meaningful engagement about the delivery of high-quality education through the effective and efficient use of all resources.

# Our 2020 Priorities



**OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Community Schools, Thriving Students

**School Finance:** OUSD supports fiscal policies that provide stable, adequate, and equitable funding that align to the costs of giving our students—regardless of their background—what they need to be successful in school and in the community. We support increasing the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) base grants to ensure that California is among the top ten in the nation in per-student spending. State and federal fiscal resources should recognize and accommodate regional cost differences and unique costs of serving vulnerable student groups who need additional instructional and non-instructional support to attain educational parity, such as homeless and refugee students. Furthermore, OUSD is committed to eliminating our \$34 million outstanding state loan so that limited resources are unilaterally focused on serving our students and community.

**Newcomer Students:** OUSD is particularly unique with the influx of newcomer students, many of whom are unaccompanied minors, who have arrived in our district in the last three years. By 2020-21, we anticipate that 1 in every 5 of our high school students will be a newcomer. In addition to the challenges of adjusting to an unfamiliar country, newcomer students are often homeless and highly transient. The state finance model should recognize that unlike more stable student populations, refugee and newcomer students enroll in districts throughout the school year and thus should be accounted for purposes of funding on an enrollment rather than attendance basis. Currently, migrant students with similar enrollment patterns are accounted for by enrollment and not by attendance.

**Charter Schools:** OUSD supports student-focused charter school policies along the full policy continuum that promote a shared responsibility to educate all of Oakland's youth, including our most vulnerable populations such as students with moderate/severe disabilities, English Learners, newcomers, homeless students, and foster youth. We believe that California should continue to evaluate charter school policies to ensure that charter schools beneficially augment educational programs offered in the district and in their communities in ways that reflect the needs and demographics of the district and community. Additionally, OUSD believes that the regulations governing Proposition 39 facilities requests need to recognize the unique facilities needs of specific student groups, such as English learners and students with disabilities, whose educational programs and services result in nontraditional facilities' needs. Current Proposition 39 regulations do not explicitly allow districts or charter schools to consider the facility space needs for students with disabilities when determining available capacity or facilities needs for charter school requests.

**Early Education:** OUSD supports policies that aim to achieve a coherent, high-quality pre-kindergarten system, with minimal application complexities and stable, meaningful funding. We know that high-quality early learning opportunities benefit our community's neediest children. OUSD believes that providing a quality preschool experience sets a positive start for the child's educational career. By investing in preschool children have short-term and long-term benefits, including improved academic and school readiness and higher graduation rates. We are committed to addressing the socio economic challenges of our families that limit equitable access to the benefits of preschool.

**Special Education:** OUSD supports educational and fiscal policies that, accompanied by adequate resources, serve students with disabilities in learning environments where they can thrive. We believe that students should be given the opportunity to learn among their peers in classrooms where they are supported by staff and resources designed to eradicate barriers to their academic success. We believe that the State must recognize and address the unique costs associated with educating and serving students with severe disabilities who require multiple services and therapies as determined by their Individualized Education Program.



**Climate Resilience.** California is confronting challenges associated with the changing climate: power shutoffs, wildfires, drought, and related disasters, in addition to the longstanding challenge of earthquakes. The State has worked to provide resources to cities and counties to ensure continuity of critical infrastructure; it must recognize schools as essential providers as well in these emergency situations. Schools need assistance to ensure their resilience and ability to continue serving their communities during these challenges. Schools are important partners for meeting California's climate goals. With appropriate resources, schools can invest in green infrastructure, shade structures, renewable energy, energy storage, electric vehicles, and related strategies. Another key issue to address is average daily attendance, because districts lose ADA when electricity is shut off. In Oakland, some schools have been closed again and again during public safety power shutoffs while others remain open.

**Career Technical Education:** We support the continued investment in the Career Technical Education (CTE) Incentive Grant Program that augments our local parcel tax and supports our effort to expand CTE opportunities for all students. Our local initiative shows great promise to increase graduation rates, which is a top priority for our district. We are actively engaged in the startup of the new K-12 Strong Workforce Program to coordinate with other K-14 CTE providers in our region to meet the needs of our students and our community. We support predictable, multiyear grants that allow us to flexibly invest in promising, high-quality local pathways without unnecessary state bureaucracy and requirements that inhibit our ability to expand CTE to all students.

**Human Resources:** OUSD supports policies that promote the recruitment and development of a diverse, talented workforce trained to meet the needs of California's increasingly diverse student body. Such policies should include investments along the full professional continuum, beginning with high-quality teacher preparation programs that provide in-the-classroom experience with master teachers, support for new teachers during the critically important first few years in the classroom, ongoing educator support to develop and refine skills in multicultural literacy as well as ethnic and language diversity, and tenure policies that promote continuous improvement in teaching practices. OUSD supports policies that create an accessible pathway into the teaching profession, including alternatives to high stakes licensure testing, and alleviate the hardship of high workforce attrition as well as the traditional hard-to-fill subject matters of science, mathematics, multilingual education, and special education. In addition, our community's high living costs make it difficult for promising young educators to afford teaching in the district; a high-cost community like Oakland warrants additional support to make the reward of teaching our students feasible. To this end, we support innovative policies to attract and retain talent in communities like Oakland, such as affordable housing options to enable our educators to live in the city where they teach.

**Community Schools:** OUSD believes that creating safe and supportive schools is essential to ensuring students' academic and social success. We have created health and wellness goals that support social, emotional, and physical health and employ a restorative justice model that works to lower our rate of suspension and expulsion and to foster positive school climate. We support legislation and resources that fund the district to address both the physical and mental health needs of our students and allows the district to respond to student misconduct in a constructive, locally determined manner.

**Accountability:** OUSD supports a multiple-measures accountability system that aligns with our continual improvement model catalyzed by the Local Control and Accountability Plan and the California School Dashboard. We believe a continuous improvement approach to accountability will propel our District and schools toward increased performance targets through careful analysis of student performance data that includes the use of a student growth model when evaluating annual standardized assessment results. Additionally, OUSD will create new efficient and effective systems to monitor the requirements that accompany state and federal grants and the other laws that attribute responsibility to public schools for oversight.