



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

Connecting with Kyla



Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Reimagining How to Keep Our Schools Safe

Good Evening, Board of Directors and Community.

I do hope everyone is doing their very best to remain healthy and safe during this current global health pandemic.

These past few weeks have been a painful reminder of yet another pandemic that we must equally fight as a nation. The untimely and inhumane deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor have brought the racial pandemic that our country has suffered from, not for just a few weeks, but for over 400 years, into broad daylight for all to see and ultimately decide how to move forward in this unique moment, as individuals, as communities and as leaders of systems designed to perpetuate systemic oppression.

As an individual, I continue to process my own raw emotions of anger, hurt, frustration and grief for this current moment and all the other moments, just like right now, that have plagued my community for multiple generations, while also doing the necessary work as a parent of two black children to prepare them for a world that I fear will continue to view and treat them in ways that will try to strip away their human dignity. And at the same time, while I hold and work through my own personal grief, I recognize, as a leader of a system that often contributes to the unequal treatment of black and brown adults and children in this country, that I have a leadership responsibility to stand united, in community, and call for racial equity and justice in our national, state, and local institutions, our workplaces, and our schools.

It is long overdue.

Here at home in OUSD, on an issue many of you are closely watching, I am recommending that we move forward to create a district wide safety plan to ensure safe, healthy, and positive school environments for students and adults WITHOUT a school district police department.

Together, we can reimagine how to keep our schools safe, healthy and welcoming in a way that builds on our strong restorative justice roots, strong foundation of community schools,

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psychological safety.

While our District Chief of police and his team are working within a system and structure that clearly needs to be reformed, it is important to name that our Chief came to OUSD with intentions to provide safety and security services aligned to our district's mission, and that the Chief is in full support of my recommended path forward.

On March 4, 2020, the Board directed me to develop an alternative safety plan that could be put in place if the Board elected to reduce the Oakland Schools Police Department.

Over the past few months - since before the outbreak of the COVID pandemic - I've had conversations with our school district Chief of Police, community leaders, and others about the development of that safety plan. We also know that many student leaders, the Black Organizing Project (BOP), and community organizations have shared their voice and strong advocacy around an alternative safety approach.

Given these conversations, and the understandable and justified community advocacy in solidarity with the national call for racial justice and police reform, I intend for this plan to be completed, and ready for adoption and implementation by the end of December 2020, pending negotiations with labor.

As a community, we will create an alternative safety plan in a transparent and intentional way including staff, student, family, community and Board input. Our students, our schools, and our community deserve nothing less. Student and staff safety - physical, social and emotional - is the foundation for all learning and it is my first responsibility as Superintendent. The planning process will reflect the seriousness of this responsibility, the call for greater support and stronger partnership at the city level, and the seriousness of this movement, and will involve negotiating with labor partners as we move forward.

Please share your thoughts

In Unity,



Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent

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