



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families and Community,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the latest developments on contract negotiations with our teachers union, the Oakland Education Association (OEA). We value our teachers and all that they do every day to help our students thrive. Below you will find information about the current state of bargaining, a potential “sick out,” and our financial challenges.

The success of Oakland Unified School District and our students is deeply personal to me because I was born and raised in Oakland and attended Montclair Elementary and Montera Middle schools. This is my home. Just like most of you, I’m raising my family in Oakland. My children attend Oakland Unified schools.

Likewise, I have spent most of my career here. I taught at Parker Elementary for five years and I was principal at Sequoia Elementary for five years. I have seen firsthand the strength of this community, the dedication of our educators and staff, and the brilliance and potential of our children.

Please know that **we do not want a strike**. We are working diligently to avoid the disruption to our students’ lives. Like you, we would much rather see our teachers fostering learning in the classroom than walking a picket line.

We firmly believe all teachers should be paid more. We believe in our students and the value of the people who support them every day. We understand that to improve student outcomes, our strategy must focus on our educators. They are the foundation upon which those improvements will be made. We know that increasing teacher retention will help to both stabilize our schools and improve the quality of education for students.

We remain in negotiations with the OEA and hope to reach a settlement soon on behalf of Oakland students.

What is happening right now? The District is in the fact-finding process with the OEA. We are working together in good faith to find a resolution to our contract negotiations. In this stage of negotiations, a three-member panel listens to the teachers and the District. The panel will then submit an advisory report which will include a recommendation for settlement. The non-binding report will be made public within 10 days of finalization.

The panel for the OEA/OUSD fact-finding hearing was officially appointed on January 7, 2019. The hearing has been scheduled for January 31 and February 1. For more information on the fact-finding process, click on this link to our [Tentative Fact-Finding Timeline](#).

Is there a strike/sick out happening right now? Given that we are still in the middle of the negotiation process, we were disappointed when a small number of staff members participated in an unauthorized labor action in December (e.g., sick out). Similarly, we are also disappointed to hear that some staff members are planning for another unauthorized labor action on Friday, January 18. Only the OEA leadership can authorize such a labor action. We remain in fact-finding right now and are working toward finding a solution. An



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

unauthorized action can be harmful to our students and is confusing to the community. We are taking active steps to help keep students safe and the educational process functioning during this time.

What is the latest on bargaining a salary increase for teachers? Any raise for our staff will mean we will have to make budget reductions, potentially including layoffs and reductions to programs or services elsewhere to pay for it. The union has asked for a 12% raise for its teachers over three years. The District has offered a 5% raise over three years. Each one percent raise that teachers receive, equals an additional \$1.9 million per year in costs to the District for their additional wages and benefits. When we add in all represented employees, such as support staff and others who will receive a corresponding raise, the costs rise to about \$3.5 million for each 1% in raise.

***Note: Non represented OUSD leadership will not receive raises.**

How does this relate to the district's budget issues and fiscal vitality? We are committed to providing our teachers with as much support as we can, given our resources. As I shared in my last update, through our staff's hard work, our financial situation has improved. Currently, our projected deficit for 2019/20 is ~\$17.5 million, which also includes the most recent offer on the bargaining table and other legal obligations. This means that the reductions we are making will reduce our structural deficit and provide salary increases for teachers and other represented employees. However, to pay for increases for employee salaries, additional reductions in other areas will be necessary. And, we must ensure that any raises are aligned with improving and stabilizing the District's finances. Otherwise, we risk falling back into state receivership.

As a community we need to stay laser focused on improving the education Oakland's students receive, especially as we face difficult trade offs. However, I know that if we can anchor our discussions on improving student achievement and ground ourselves in our values, I see an Oakland where we can fulfill the promise and moral obligation we have to ensure each and every one of our young people is prepared for college, career, and community success.

- To learn more about our work to improve our budget [click here](#).
- To learn more about our work to improve school quality [click here](#).

Was this letter helpful? Please share your [feedback](#).

Sincerely,

Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent