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Memo

To Board of Education

From Shanthi Gonzales, OUSD Board President

Board Meeting Date January 13, 2020

Subject Background on Draft Enrollment Stabilization Policy

Action Introduction of New Legislation Item

Background Over the last twenty years, enrollment in OUSD has declined from approximately 52,000 to an estimated 35,000 in 2021-22. This decline has contributed to underfunding of the District, with OUSD having lower salaries than other districts in Alameda County and having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. OUSD also struggles to provide all the supports that students need, especially with regard to mental health, early intervention, and adequate support for new teachers.

The District urgently needs a cohesive, intentional strategy to reverse this long-term trend.

The Board has adopted policies that address the surplus real estate that has resulted from declining enrollment. One example is that Asset Management Policy, which calls for portable removal and identifies ways to monetize surplus properties. Another policy requires an Enrollment Impact Analysis, which examines the potential impact on enrollment of decisions before the Board.

The Community of Schools Policy details several steps to address improved school quality, which is clearly related to enrollment. However, none of these policies presents a comprehensive approach to reversing the decline in enrollment.

This policy calls for dedicating central staff positions to supporting schools to reach out to families; for schools, board members and central departments to identify ways to support enrollment growth and stabilization; and for the District to stop using resources to promote enrollment in competing schools.

If adopted by the Board, this policy would go into effect immediately. This is important because implementation will require changes to OUSD's enrollment system.

Discussion

After being introduced as a New Legislative Matter, there will be opportunities for community engagement, starting with members of the Enrollment Working Group. In late February the policy would come back for a first read and then a vote.

Fiscal Impact

The exact fiscal impact is to be determined. However, there will be a budgetary impact for 2021-22 due to the required positions and program budget to support schools with outreach work.

Attachment

Draft Enrollment Stabilization Policy

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Policy

Students

BP NTBD

Enrollment Stabilization

Rationale

Enrollment is chief driver of revenue for the School District. Declining enrollment has been a driver in OUSD's budget difficulties over the last twenty years, leading to budget cuts, layoffs and school closures. This policy affirms the expectation that enrollment stabilization and growth is a top priority for OUSD and that all OUSD employees and officials are expected to make every effort to stabilize and grow enrollment in OUSD-operated schools.

District Supports for Schools

OUSD is responsible for supporting schools in maintaining and growing their enrollment.

OUSD shall create and maintain an annual budget, starting in the 21-22 school year, to support schools with growing and maintaining enrollment, with both universal and targeted supports. This budget shall include dedicated staff whose job it is to support schools with marketing and community outreach, including but not limited to school websites, social media accounts, creating videos and other materials, creation of PTAs or booster organizations, outreach to prospective parents, holding community events, etc. Each August, all school principals shall be informed of supports available to assist them in their efforts to grow and maintain enrollment.

Responsibilities of Schools

Schools are critical partners in efforts to grow enrollment and bring additional resources for students into our district.

Each school's governance team shall create an annual enrollment stabilization plan as part of their Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), which will detail their plans to grow to a sustainable size, or to maintain their size if not applicable. The plan shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designee on a date determined by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall determine what supports and/or consequences, if any, are appropriate to ensure that timely submittal of such plans.

Each school will be expected to hold community outreach events that are publicized and intended to inform prospective parents and the broader community about the school's offerings and achievements. The plan should detail the school's planned outreach events as well as strategies to identify and recruit prospective parents (mailings, preschool visits, social media, tours, etc). If the school has a persistent challenge with declining enrollment, their plan should include a root cause analysis for the decline and strategies to reverse the decline.

Network Superintendents are responsible for supporting schools in the creation and implementation of their plans, and will be held accountable for how well they support schools with their enrollment stabilization work.

Shared Responsibility for Enrollment Stability

Board Members share responsibility for promoting the success of schools in their respective districts, and are expected to celebrate their schools publicly and share information regularly about school programs, academic growth and other achievements.

As enrollment stability affects all OUSD employees as the chief driver of revenue for the district, all central departments shall be required to specify in their annual work plans how they plan to support the stabilization and growth of OUSD's enrollment.

No Resources for Competing Systems

Acknowledging the fiscal and academic responsibilities of OUSD to its schools and the limited resources available, effective upon passage of this policy, no OUSD resources shall be used to support the enrollment or marketing of competing schools, whether charter or private.

This includes but is not limited to OUSD's enrollment system, school maps, parent guides and other enrollment materials, OUSD facilities, enrollment fairs, and teacher recruitment events. Competing schools shall not be invited to participate in or be included in OUSD-run recruitment fairs or OUSD-run enrollment events or to recruit students on OUSD-operated campuses. Questions about what constitutes the use of OUSD resources to support enrollment or marketing shall be referred to the Board of Education for resolution rather than through adoption of administrative regulations.

The Superintendent or her designee shall report on the work to stabilize enrollment in OUSD-operated schools at least once per quarter in writing and at least once per year through a presentation at a public board meeting.

The Superintendent or her designee shall produce administrative regulations to guide the implementation of this policy, which shall be shared with the board for their approval, within 120 days of the passage of this policy.