



OAKLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

AN AFFILIATE OF THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

December 21, 2018

Via Email

Dr. Kyla Johnson-Trammell, Superintendent
Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)
1000 Broadway, Suite 680, Oakland, CA 94607

Re: *Demand to Bargain Over Decision to Close Neighborhood Schools*

Dear Dr. Johnson-Trammell:

During recent negotiations for a contract, the District has taken the position that it might shut down certain schools if the Association insists on bargaining for giving teachers the salaries they deserve.

Our Association firmly believes that every child deserves a quality public education. So we are dismayed by discussion of school closures and consolidations, particularly in Black and Brown neighborhoods. We should be building up our community schools, not shutting them down.

Research demonstrates that school closures cause enormous disruption for little to no financial savings. And in Oakland we can be guaranteed that a significant number of students at closed schools will end up in privately-run charter schools or parochial schools closer to their home rather than travel long distances to the next OUSD public school.

There will be tremendous pressure to hand over closed school buildings to privately managed, publicly funded charter schools. When these charters open up in the former OUSD schools, working parents will be even less inclined to have their child travel farther to attend a public school. This loss in enrollment will offset any savings.

Your own office has called to our attention the dramatic discrepancies in Special Education programs between charter schools and public schools. Undoubtedly the most vulnerable and costly to educate children from closed schools will remain within the OUSD system where their needs can be best met, while less-costly to educate general education students will more easily move to charters that heavily under-enroll students with autism, emotional disturbance or severe disabilities. Deepening these discrepancies will further stress OUSD finances.

In The Public Interest's groundbreaking report on the cost of charter schools determined that our schools already lose out on \$58 million in annual revenue.

This money would pay teachers a living wage, reduce class sizes and provide significantly more student supports.

Closing public schools in Black and Brown schools is morally wrong and financially irresponsible. Events of recent weeks demonstrate that our membership has become a tinderbox. Closing and consolidating schools will spark unrest.

Furthermore, the District has explicitly and undeniably linked the possible closure of schools to the issue of teacher salaries, which is clearly within the scope of bargaining. *See Anaheim Union High School District (1981) PERB No. 177.* As such, the Association demands to bargain over the District's intention to close and/or consolidate public schools and exacerbate OUSD's financial duress.

We look forward to scheduling a time when District and Association representatives can meet in January.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith D. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Keith" being the most prominent.

Keith D. Brown
Newcomer Teacher & OEA President