



Dear Directors,

We are writing regarding the proposed board policy 6006. We commend the board for taking on the difficult and charged question of how, through its policies and practices, OUSD can work toward a unified plan that will prioritize quality, equity and sustainability across all public schools. Given the deep divides within our community, the current fiscal crisis within the district schools, and the policy landscape that currently exists we feel that it is important for any policy that is put forward to recognize certain facts:

- **The stresses faced by schools and school communities are not all the same.** We know, for example, that the cost of educating children with special needs often outpaces the funds received from state and federal sources considerably--especially for those children with severe or multiple special needs. Our plan for quality schools must include added resources for schools that serve student, families and communities under higher stress. A comprehensive student equity need index, as being used in Los Angeles Unified District, should be developed to identify these schools.
- **The current situation encourages the proliferation of schools.** There has been much talk about over-capacity within Oakland schools. It is difficult to see school closures as the solution for this problem when there have been known instances of charter schools opening in district school buildings that have closed. Our plan for quality schools must take into account which communities and areas are truly underserved within the current system and prioritize either changes in our district portfolio or approval of new charters to those communities or areas.
- **The current situation does not support the spread of innovation.** California's charter law states its intent to "encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods." Yet little in our current system supports the true partnering of district and public schools in support of innovations that will improve the whole. Our plan for quality schools should include a specific framework for innovation, including effective collaboration strategies with the district, that will be used to assess any proposal for a new school.
- **We have no unified definition of quality or agreed upon enforcement framework.** Although Collective Measurable Pupil Outcomes (MPOs) was created in 2016 for Charter Schools, no enforceable framework exists, and does not include important policy and practice (e.g. suspensions, expulsions) indicators or external factors influencing the school (e.g. neighborhood conditions, student poverty rate). Further, no comprehensive city-wide shared school performance framework exists. Our plan for quality schools should include a clear set of metrics that will assess both outcomes (e.g. graduation rates, test scores); policies and practices (e.g. suspensions, expulsions); and external factors influencing the school (e.g. student poverty rate). Additionally, we need to increase oversight and enforcement of district policies to ensure we adequately assess the quality in our schools.



The current policy landscape limits OUSD’s authority over charter schools. Given this limitation it is important for the Board and OUSD to articulate a framework for how it will use its existing levers as an authorizer, leaseholder and partner to encourage schools whose policies and practices demonstrate:

- Commitment to serving our highest need students
- Serving a community or area that is truly underserved within the current system
- Developing innovations with a formal written commitment to sharing them across the district for free
- Committed to demonstrating school effectiveness by collecting and acting upon a system wide-set of school quality metrics

Again, we appreciate that the board has taken on this difficult conversation and respectfully offer the following amendments to the proposed policy.

Equity Allies