

## Great Oakland Public Schools Information Center

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### OAKLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION – THE BASICS

To keep up with the Board of Education's activities, make sure you [sign up](#) for GO Public Schools' Board Agenda Watch updates. Current agendas for the Board of Education can be found [here](#).

#### **Mission**

The OUSD Governing Board, commonly called the [Board of Education](#), is the elected policy-making body of the public education system within the City of Oakland, California. The Governing Board's primary responsibilities are to ensure that every student served by the District is well educated and demonstrates high academic achievement (from [OUSD web site](#)).

The Governing Board seeks to provide the public with information about the public school system's goals, objectives, and activities, including its weekly legislative agenda, strategic long-term goals, and other activities affecting education within the City.

#### **Members**

The current Board Directors are:

President Gary Yee (District 4) – first elected 2002

Vice President Christopher Dobbins (District 6) – elected 2006

Director Noel Gallo (District 5) – first elected 1998

Director David Kakishiba (District 2) – first elected 2002

Director Alice Spearman (District 7) – first elected 2004

Director Jumoke Hinton Hodge (District 3) – elected 2008

Director Jody London (District 1) – elected 2008

#### **Compensation and Benefits**

The current compensation for Directors is \$787.50 per month. Compensation is restricted by the State Education Code 35120, and can be increased by the board by 5% annually.

Board members are reimbursed for all expenses incurred in the performance of duties, or when making trips on official district business when authorized in advance by the Board. Board members may participate in the health and welfare benefits program provided for district employees. The District is to pay the cost of all premiums required for Board members electing to participate in the district health and welfare benefits program. Health and welfare benefits provided to Board members are to be extended at the same level to their spouses, dependent children under the age of 21, dependent children under the age of 25 who are full-time students at a college or university, and dependent children regardless of age who are physically or mentally incapacitated. Any member retiring from the Board after at least one term may continue the health and welfare benefits program at their own expense if coverage is in effect at the time of retirement.

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### **How the Board Functions**

Oakland School Board Directors do not have their own staff (like City Council members do). There is a Secretary of the Board who manages the Board's meetings and related documents, and two executive secretaries who serve the board members and their committees. Board members use OUSD email and phones to help fulfill their responsibilities.

Each January, the Board elects a Board President and Vice-President. The President is responsible for: ensuring that the Board follows its rules and policies; chairing and facilitating Board meetings; assigning Directors to committees; and ensuring continuous process improvement for the Board.

The Oakland School Board determines its meeting schedule each January. The board currently meets publicly the first and third Wednesday evening of each month. Meetings are televised on KDOL (Channel 26) and are streamed over the internet. Most board meetings take place at the OUSD offices at 1025 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Downtown Oakland. Often, board meetings are held in the community at school sites.

Items are brought to the Board of Directors for discussion or decision by the Superintendent or by Board members. Most legislative items are discussed and voted on in a committee before going to the full board for a decision.

### **Board of Directors Job Description / Coherent Governance Policies**

In 2007, the OUSD Board adopted [Coherent Governance Policies](#), a simplified set of goals and policies for the District, with regular monitoring and reporting systems built in. The Coherent Governance Policies include a detailed Board job description, as well as instructions on how the Board shall interact with the Superintendent. The following is the Board's job description, from the Coherent Governance Policies:

#### Board Job Description

*The board's job is to represent, lead and serve the owners and to govern the organization by establishing expectations for organizational results, expectations for quality operational performance, and monitoring actual performance against those expectations. The board will:*

- 1. Ensure that the Results are the dominant focus of organizational performance.*
- 2. Exercise appropriate oversight of district operations according to the values expressed in Operational Expectations policies.*
- 3. Advocate for the organization and the students it serves through an agreed to board strategy and approach to:
  - a. Policy Advocacy (Intergovernmental partnerships, legislation)*
  - b. Fundraising*
  - c. Communications**
- 4. Initiate and maintain constructive two-way dialogue with students, staff, parents, and the citizens as a means to engage all stakeholders in the work of the board and the district.*

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5. Develop written governing policies that address:

- a. *Results: The intended outcomes for the students served by the organization;*
- b. *Operational Expectations: Statements of the board's values about operational matters delegated to the Superintendent of Schools, including both actions and conditions to be accomplished and those prohibited;*
- c. *Governance Culture: Definition of the board's own work, the processes it will employ and conditions within which it will accomplish that work;*
- d. *Board/CEO Relationship: The role relationship of the Superintendent of Schools and the board, including the specified authority of the Superintendent of Schools and the process for monitoring district and Superintendent of Schools performance.*

6. Ensure acceptable Superintendent of Schools performance through effective monitoring of Results and Operational Expectations policies.

7. Ensure acceptable board performance through effective evaluation of board actions and processes as defined in Governance Culture and Board-SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS Relationship policies.

8. Appoint an independent auditor from a list of external CPA firms maintained by the California Controller's office to conduct an annual external review of the district's financial condition and report directly to the board.

9. Appoint and evaluate the Superintendent of Schools, legal counsel, and board secretary.

### **Committees**

Each School Board Director sits on [committees](#) of the Full Board; membership is assigned by the Board President each January.

#### *Facilities Committee*

The [Facilities Committee](#) “shall review and/or propose policies governing development and maintenance of the physical facilities and physical infrastructure of the District, the handling of all bids and contracts for facilities development, renovation, and construction, including but not limited to facilities technology and the sale or lease of surplus property.” The Facilities Committee meets the first and third Tuesday of each month beginning at 5:00 pm.

#### *Finance and Human Resources Committee*

The [Finance and Human Resources Committee](#) “shall review and/or propose the District’s annual budget, modifications thereto, policies governing the fiscal integrity of the District, and the handling of bids and contracts for non-instructional technology and services, except facilities and instructional services. The committee also shall be responsible for proposing and reviewing purchasing policies. The committee shall also review and/or propose policies for the hiring, promotion, retention, training, and evaluation of employees. The committee shall also be responsible for reviewing and proposing policies regarding collective bargaining issues including reviewing and making recommendations on collective bargaining contracts and other labor-management related issues.” The Finance and Human Resources Committee meets the first and third Monday of each month at 6:30 pm.

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### *Intergovernmental Relations Committee*

The [Intergovernmental Relations Committee](#) “shall review and/or propose policies fostering inter-agency collaboration with city, local, state, and federal agencies, as well as individuals, public, and private groups and corporations. Additionally, the committee will determine the District's position on federal, state, and local legislative matters. The committee also shall handle other matters assigned. The members of this committee, by virtue of their appointment, shall also serve as the District's representatives on the City-Schools Education Partnership or successor committee.” The Intergovernmental Relations Committee meets the first Wednesday of each month at 5:00 pm.

### *Rules and Ethics Committee*

The [Rules and Ethics Committee](#) “shall review and/or propose policy recommendations designed to promote, improve and expedite the business and procedures of the Board and of the committees thereof, and to offer to the Board any amendments to the Rules deemed necessary to accomplish such purposes. The committee shall also propose rules of ethics and amendments thereof for members of the Board and designated members of the administration.” The Rules and Ethics Committee meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 pm.

### *Safety Committee*

The [Safety Committee](#) “shall review all recommendations from the Pupil Disciplinary Hearing Panel (PDHP) to the Board, including but not limited to the proposed expulsion, suspended expulsion, reinstatement, readmission of a District pupil, or admission of an expelled pupil from another district, and make recommendations thereon to the Board. The committee shall also make policy recommendation to the Board on safety issues.” The Safety Committee meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 4:00 pm.

### *Teaching and Learning Committee*

The [Teaching and Learning Committee](#) “shall review and/or propose policies on curriculum, instructional programs and related support services as well as well as handle bids and contracts for instructional related services, including but not limited to supplementary academic programs and instructional technology for the District. The committee also shall review student services issues and programs, including but not limited to student truancy and related programs except pupil discipline and student safety issues assigned to the Safety Committee.” The Teaching and Learning Committee meets the first and third Mondays of each month at 5:00 pm.

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### **Effective and Ineffective School Board Members**

The following are traits of effective and ineffective school board members, as defined by [Great Schools](#):

#### *Signs of an Effective School Board Member*

*Here are signs of a school board member focused on moving the school district forward and educating all students to meet high standards:*

- \* Great school board members have a clear vision for the district. They set the vision and goals, and measure the success of the district and superintendent against the goals.*
- \* Great school board members communicate their actions to the community. Through public discourse and written reports, great school board members keep the public informed of the district's progress and challenges.*
- \* Great school board members work as a team. They collaborate well with others and are respectful of the other board members and superintendent.*
- \* Great school board members adopt a fiscally sound district budget. They pay attention to finances and regularly monitor the fiscal health of the district.*
- \* Great school board members focus on what is best for all students. They focus on student achievement and implementing policies that will ensure success for all students.*
- \* Great school board members advocate at the local, state and national level for public education. They take advantage of opportunities to communicate the needs of public schools to other levels of government and advocate for strong public schools.*

#### *Signs of an Ineffective School Board Member*

*If you notice any of the following signs, it's time to find some new candidates to run for your local board:*

- \* The school board member continually focuses on one issue or talks aimlessly at meetings.*
- \* The school board member doesn't conduct him or herself in a respectful, collaborative manner in public.*
- \* The school board member comes to meetings unprepared.*
- \* The school board member "rubber stamps" all the superintendent's proposals without asking hard questions.*
- \* The school board member micromanages rather than focusing attention on district-wide policies.*
- \* The school board member uses his position on the school board as an opportunity to put forth a political agenda with little relevance to student achievement.*