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Date: 1.17.19

To: Members of City Council and Members of the Public
From: Council President Kaplan
Re: Resolution Expressing Support for Oakland Unified School District Teachers

Dear Colleagues on the City Council and Members of the Public,

This memorandum summarizes our rationale for introducing a resolution expressing support for our Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) teachers. There are 36,900 children in Oakland Unified School District run sites (41.8% Latinx, 25.4% African-American, 13.3% API, 11.4% White)¹. Our teachers and support service providers are the hearts and souls of our schools and directly impact student learning. Our students suffer when their teaching and support staff are over-worked, underpaid, and find themselves in over-crowded classroom settings.

Our school sites need more resources that adequately address the needs of Oakland children. According to the Oakland Education Association, some class room sizes now reach up to 36 students. Oakland Unified has also struggled to retain teachers, losing 300 annually many to surrounding districts that pay more competitive salaries.² At Oakland Tech, one nurse currently oversees 2,000 students³. Study after study has also shown that a smaller classroom size has positive educational outcomes for students.⁴ This is exactly why teachers in their contract negotiations are advocating for class size reductions, with a focus on school settings with high needs populations.

Oakland schools face constant funding challenges, with complex roots in local, state and federal revenue streams that only exacerbate issues around classroom size, teacher pay, and student to support staff ratios. Teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. Oakland teachers have been working without a contract for one and a half years.

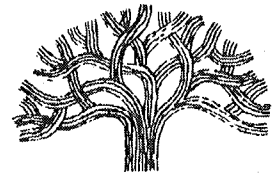
¹ *OUSD Fast Facts*. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/18vKVTDbTxKOTlnQGSZmITyiuNI-1Am_R/view

² Harrington, Theresa. (2019, January 13) *Oakland Unified looks to higher teacher pay to improve student learning as teachers threaten to strike*. Retrieved from <https://edsources.org/2019/as-teachers-threaten-to-strike-oakland-unified-looks-to-higher-teacher-pay-to-improve-student-learning/606381>

³ Rancano, Vanessa. (2018, November 30) *Facing School Nurse Shortage, Oakland Teachers Become Caregivers*. Retrieved from <https://www.kqed.org/news/11707533/facing-school-nurse-shortage-oakland-teachers-become-caregivers>

⁴ Finn, Jeremy, Pannozzo, Gina, and Achilles, Charles. (2003, September 1) *The "Why's" of Class Size: Student Behavior in Small Classes*. Review of Educational Research Journal. Retrieved from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/00346543073003321>

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This resolution before the Oakland City Council urges the OUSD School Board to respectfully meet with the teachers to ensure vital public needs are met including reasonable lowering of class sizes, hiring more student support professionals, and ensuring OUSD teachers have a dignified wage. The City council is also urging OUSD to avoid closing public schools. With reports of up to 24 schools slated for closure, it is a citywide concern as it potentially impacts thousands of Oakland children⁵. Studies also show that school closures are a “high-risk/low-gain strategy that fails to hold promise with respect to either student achievement or non-cognitive well-being.”⁶

Respectfully Submitted,

Council President Rebecca Kaplan

⁵ Oakland Post (2018, November 30) *Oakland Unified Moves Forward on Plan to Close up to 24 Schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.oaklandpost.org/2018/11/30/oakland-unified-moves-forward-plan-close-24-schools/>

⁶ Sunderman, Gail L, Coghlan, Erin, Mintrop, Rick (2017, May) *School Closure as a Strategy to Remedy Low Performance*. National Education Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED574706>