

NO SCHOOL CLOSURES!

OAKLAND NOT FOR SALE

Organizing Packet

This packet and other materials available at:
oaklandnotforsale.com

We want to hear from you! Please email
oaklandnot4sale@gmail.com
with questions and suggestions.

OUR DEMANDS

1. STOP SCHOOL CLOSURES

Scrap the Blueprint for “Quality Schools” and declare a moratorium on school closures and consolidations until the summer of 2022, giving time for us to assess the impact of the Schools and Communities First Act, if it passes in November of 2020.

2. END THE SCHOOLS TO PRISON PIPELINE

Dismantle the school to prison pipeline. Don't fund the Alameda County probation camp while starving public schools. Eliminate OUSD Police in accordance with the **Black Organizing Project's People's Plan**. Redirect the OUSD police budget to restorative practices at high-need schools.

3. STOP THE CHARTER SCHOOL TAKEOVER

Reverse the Community of Schools board policy BP6006, that will help turn the rest of our public schools over to Charter School Management Companies.

4. LET THE PEOPLE SEE THE MONEY

Involve the People of Oakland in reforming and making decisions around OUSD finances.

Are we against charter schools?

We are not against any particular charter school. Like public schools, some charter schools perform well and others poorly. We understand that families have to make difficult decisions when their only choices are a low-performing public school or a charter school.

We are against the charter industry. Although there are some charter schools that offer high-quality programs, the corporate charter organizations are increasingly dominating the education system. This not only diverts money from our classrooms, but hands our schools to direct corporate control, leaving parents, teachers and students out of the picture. The charter industry has become a vehicle for privatization, which goes hand in hand with gentrification and segregation.

Privatizers and their false “choices”

Charter advocates say that many public schools have failed our kids - especially in Black and Brown communities. That is true. But this is not because they are public - it is because they are starved for resources. Class sizes are too large, and schools lack the support staff needed to properly serve our kids.

Since the '90s, charter investors have been taking advantage of our public education crisis and offering a false “solution” that is making things much worse. They shine a light on the few high-performing charter schools to hide the fact that charters do not outperform public schools in general, even though charter schools systematically avoid high-needs students - especially students with disabilities. **Everyone should be able to choose to send their kids to a quality neighborhood school.** The charter industry is making that choice even less available to most people than it was before.

Since the charter industry took over OUSD, our district has been wasting over \$95 million a year on non-classroom costs. The waste due to charters in Oakland adds up to another \$57 million! This is harming all families, whatever school they choose.

Facts about the charter industry:

- Overall, charters do not outperform public schools.
- Charter schools are more racially segregated than public schools.
- Students of color in charter schools are disciplined and punished at higher rates than public school students. Black students are targeted the most.
- The charter school industry is full of fraud and corruption: fraud and waste in California’s charter schools has reached over \$149 million.
- Many charter operators and their affiliates have used public funds to obtain and privately own urban real estate.

Sources linked at: oaklandnotforsale.com/more-info

WE ARE ALL ORGANIZERS

We can only win this fight if we involve school staff, families, students, and community members!

- Maintain a contact list, noting which school each person is connected to, and how they want to get involved, so it is easier to stay in touch and keep track your organizing work.
- Don't limit your organizing efforts to coworkers within your union. Although we may be in different unions, teachers, classified staff, students and families are all in this fight together. And when we organize together, we are many times stronger!
- Hold meetings about school closures. Invite other parents, co-workers, friends, and family. Share resources and information, and plan a follow-up meeting or action.
- Wear conversation starters: No School Closures t-shirt or a button.
- Take your organizing tools wherever you go: Flyers, signs and info about upcoming events.
- Make and distribute signs, t-shirts, buttons, and posters with co-workers, friends, and family.
- Host a merchant walk: Organize a group to ask small businesses to post "No School Closures!" signs in their shop windows.
- Post pics and videos to social media of T-shirt days, parent meetings, and other actions (#OUSD, #OaklandNotForSale, #SaveOurSchools).

WHAT DO I SAY?

When talking to someone you don't know at an action/event, start with questions, not a lecture on privatization...

- What brought you out here today?
- What do you think about school closures/privatization?
- Who should get to decide whether a school is to be closed?
- What problems do you see in our schools?

When flyering, here are quick things to say as you're trying to get people's attention in large crowds:

- Stop school closures!
- Schools not prisons!
- Save public education in Oakland!

Have a few key points memorized that you can share with anyone you talk to¹.

- The School Board plans to close up to 24 of the 87 remaining public schools in Oakland. We're already 30% charter. These closures will destroy public education in our city.
- Most of the closures in Oakland target Black and Brown communities. They are part of the larger takeover of our city by the super-rich, resulting in increased gentrification and segregation. **The fight against closures and privatization is a fight for racial justice!**

¹ Sources for all these facts are linked at:
<https://oaklandnotforsale.com/more-info/>

- This is not about one school being closed - this is about stopping all school closures in Oakland. We won't stop the closures if we fight school by school - we can only win if we make this a citywide fight.
- The School Board says it's broke and these closures are the answer. But they ended last year with a \$21 million surplus! And their own history shows that closures don't save money. The real reason for the closures is to hand these facilities to charters or real estate developers.
- Alameda County plans to spend \$75 million to fund a new probation camp for young people. We want to fund our schools, not build more prisons!
- Why is our School Board handing our schools to corporations? Because privatizer groups like GO Public Schools gave \$1.2 million to School Board candidates since 2012. The billionaires behind these groups think they have the right to control our schools. We think that schools belong to the people!
- OUSD says that some of these planned closures are "just mergers". This is a weak attempt to hide the plain fact that when two schools get "merged", one of them gets closed.
- For merchant walks:
 "We're _____ (parents/teachers) at _____ (Oakland schools). We're out talking to people because the Oakland School Board is closing our public schools and privatizing them. Most of the planned closures are in East Oakland. We're asking local businesses to put up a "No Closures" sign as a show of support."

BUILDING A NETWORK

Who can you talk to and connect with about what's going on?

OUSD Parents

Name	Reached out?

Teachers

Name	Reached out?

School Staff

Name	Reached out?

Friends and family

Name	Reached out?

Local places of worship, businesses, non-profits, or community organizations

Name	Reached out?

SITE ORGANIZING FOR TEACHERS

Are you exhausted from planning site meetings, making signs, and leafleting parents all by yourself? If so, you're suffering from "solo-itis." It's a debilitating disease that afflicts many unions and social movements. There's only one solution: organize!

Being a site rep doesn't mean we do everything ourselves – we must activate and empower others. At the most organized schools, everyone has a role to play. But it didn't start out this way. At most sites, we hear things like "I agree, but I'll let the union take care of it." **We are the union!**

Our job as organizers is to find a role for everyone, no matter how small. Only the organization and mobilization of the majority of teachers, counselors, nurses, attendance clerks, custodians, parents, students, and community members can win.

First steps to get the ball rolling:

- Make an updated contact list using phone numbers and personal emails of everyone at your site. Don't use OUSD emails, as they are easily accessed by the district.
- Find at least one other person who is ready to be active, and begin forming a Site Organizing Squad with them.
- Create a WhatsApp/Telegram chat group – it's much faster and easier than using email for everyday communication.
- Schedule regular site meetings and invite all staff. Classified staff should also be part of our site meetings, not just teachers. We're all in this together!

- **Support everyone in finding a role** – let people choose what they're interested in doing.
- Schedule Wednesdays **as OEA T-Shirt Days** – they are a great way to build unity.
- **Site socials:** schedule one day a week where teachers and staff can eat lunch together and have someone send out reminders. Find another staff member who can organize social get togethers, like Friday happy hours. It's really important to stay connected even when people aren't ready to be active just yet.
- **Parent Meetings:** have at least one staff member attend the next OEA EFO training. Then host a parent meeting at your school.



Oakland teachers and staff march and protest against (privatizer group) GO Public Schools during the 2019 strike.

SITE ORGANIZING ROLES

Expand the group of active members on site by supporting everyone in finding a role. Some responsibilities require multiple people, especially at larger sites.

Role	Description	Who?
S ite O rganizing S quad	<p>Build a team! Hold regular site meetings (send out calendar invites and WhatsApp reminders in advance). Write timed agenda on board, and ask for a timekeeper, note-taker, and facilitator to ensure equitable participation.</p> <p>If we plan ahead, meetings can be spaces for collective discussions and decision making so that we build the habit of reflecting and acting together.</p>	
E ducator F amily O rganizer	<p>Attend the OEA EFO training and organize family-teacher meetings.</p>	

Role	Description	Who?
Sign and banner maker(s)	Make signs for upcoming events and actions – this can involve many teachers and students working on signs and art together. It can even be a monthly activity with a different theme each month (climate change demos, Schools and Communities First Initiative, no school closures, etc.)	
T-Shirt and Lunch Days Coordinator	Send WhatsApp reminders for site staff lunches and for OEA T-shirt Wednesdays.	
Social Butterfly	Organize an after-school social, lunch potluck, Happy Hour, or movie night. Organizing doesn't always start with a meeting – doing something fun is a great way to bring people together.	
Social Media Mavens	Take pics and videos of T-shirt days, events and actions; post them on social media. Create a school Instagram and Facebook account for pics and videos. Get families and community members to follow the account, and use it to update them on any upcoming actions.	

FAMILY-TEACHER MEETINGS

Choose a date, time, and location based on availability of staff members and parents who could get involved. Divide up tasks such as:

- **Facilitation**
 - Create an agenda and slideshow; assign presenter/MC
 - Make room for parent voices – our job is to listen to what families want and need in our schools.
- **Logistics**
 - Projector and materials: chart paper, sign in sheets, flyers, signs, etc.
 - Childcare
 - Food
 - Translation
- **Outreach**
 - Make and copy flyers in relevant languages.
 - Coordinate flyering before and after school.
 - Call, text and email parents.
 - Ask staff to invite at least 3 parents they know.
 - Reach out to parent coordinator, PTA, parents on SSC, other parent groups to spread the word.
 - Stay in touch with the people who attended. Thank them for coming and let them know about future events and actions. Families can plan and lead future meetings and events.



Parent-teacher meeting in District 5...



...And in District 7