

Strike to Save Public Education! All Out to the Picket Lines! No More Charter Schools – No More School Closings – Defend Special Education Programs and Students – Smaller Class Sizes for All – Oakland Teachers Must Be Paid Comparably to Surrounding Districts

No More Second-Class Education for the Youth of Oakland

The Oakland teachers strike is the best opportunity we have now to fight for the equal quality integrated education that all Oakland students deserve. There's enormous public support for a strike in Oakland. Everyone knows Oakland does not get what it needs for teachers or its youth to succeed. Students, parents, and the community must join the teachers on their picket lines to have the best chance of winning.

Oakland can lead our state. We must use this strike to begin turning back all the attacks on our schools. Winning means charter schools must be stopped. School closings must stop. Special Education students and programs must be defended by any means necessary. Class sizes must significantly be reduced. Our teachers must be paid comparably to surrounding districts.

In some ways this strike is way overdue - we have endured separate and unequal, second-class education for too long. Students must use this opportunity to make this fight our own and win lasting gains for our schools. Teachers must ensure that no settlement is signed prior to realizing these gains This strike must be made into a civil rights struggle to save public education.

What is At Stake

For over a decade, politicians in our Democratic Party majority state have adopted, in fundamental ways, the Republican Party understanding that government funding of public education is too expensive and that schools must be run like businesses. The democratic principle of the right to a public school for every young person has been pushed aside. State funding for public schools in our state, which is over 70% Latina/o, black, other minority and immigrant has been depleted, despite the fact that today state politicians are sitting on a \$21 billion budget surplus. The various schemes and bad ideas pushed on us by our states' politicians have only deepened the segregation and inequality in our schools. This makes California a national home for a new Jim Crow racist segregated educational system. Our strike has to be made to save public education and to defeat the new Jim Crow in California.

This profound depletion of public school resources has been the backdrop to cynical local and state politicians pushing charter schools, masquerading as "engines for innovation",

particularly in majority Latina/o and black districts, like Oakland and Los Angeles as "alternatives" to the public school system, that they themselves have helped to underfund or stood aside and accepted.

Charter schools, through no fault of the students who attend them, have seriously undermined the public education system in our state, taking away more money from public schools and putting them in the hands of private charter school operators who do not have to admit special education students, immigrants, or follow state mandated guidelines to in reality provide a quality education. The same lack of public money for our schools is the excuse given for why schools have to be closed and handed over to charter school operators. The business model of running our public schools must be discarded.

The cold, calculating games of the politicians have harmed our most vulnerable students and the students with the most need. Latina/o, black, and in particular immigrant and special education students have endured the worst of our states de-prioritization of our public schools.

We Must Shut Our Schools Down to Win

Teachers have numerous competing pressures that they feel every day that will make them vulnerable to accepting less than they should. That's why students must join the picket lines in this strike. The independent force of students on the picket lines will give teachers the courage and accountability to fight to win. It will not be enough for teachers to walk picket lines and students to stay home. Sometimes we as students feel like other people are taking care of things so it's not necessary for us to get involved, this is not one of those times.

The student/teacher alliance on the picket lines is vital for the strike's victory. These pickets must become the gathering place for all those who are fighting for our schools to get what they need. They are the place to fight for our demands. Instead of our schools being the center of racist unequal degraded education for our communities, they must become the center of the fightback for our futures.

Our city must feel our determined effort to fight for ourselves and each other. Picket lines mean don't cross. We have

to leave no doubt that if the Latina/o, black, other minority, and immigrant communities of Oakland don't get what we should we can shut this city down. We don't have to wait for any authority to get what we want. We have power too.

Building a Leadership for the Strike and Fighting to Win - Expect a Key Turning Point

At some point OUSD and some members of the OEA (Oakland Educators Association) Executive Board will propose a joint Tentative Agreement (TA), to end the strike. There will be an inclination on the part of some teachers' union leaders to not include in some or a combination of our demands to stop charter schools, defend special education, substantially reduce class-size, stop school closings, or win greatly increased staffing levels for counselors, nurses, psychologists, newcomers, and other support services from the deal. This kind of inadequate TA is likely and must be rejected.

The District and some union leadership will argue for an inadequate TA to be accepted by arguing that students and our communities have suffered enough of closed schools and should return to school. They will say our sacrifices during this strike have been great and no longer tolerable. They will push for an end to the strike and a yes vote for less than what we deserve. In reality our communities have been looking for a real fight for our schools for a long time and if the teachers make clear that is what they want our communities will continue to sacrifice with them. We have had enough we will fight until we win! The teachers will have 24 hours to read any TA and a district wide mass meeting will be held where the teachers will vote together to approve or reject any TA. Vote no on any unacceptable TA.

Over a decade of sustained devaluation of our public schools has created, in some, an acceptance of separate and unequal education for Oakland students, almost as if they have forgotten what it was like to be a young person who yearns to break free of the limitations, hopelessness and despair that too many of us feel too much of the time.

Building a student-teacher-community alliance is the key to winning a strike. BAMN (the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action Integration Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary) is dedicated to doing this. EON/BAMN members Mark Airgood, Tania Kappner and Adarene Hoag are long time BAMN activists and part of the Equal Opportunity Now/By Any Means Necessary Caucus in the OEA, the Oakland teacher's union. Adarene is a site representative for the OEA at East Oakland Pride Elementary in East Oakland. Mark is a special education teacher at Edna Brewer Middle School, and Tania a teacher at Oakland Tech. Mark is Secretary of the OEA and Tania is a member of the OEA Executive Board. They will do everything in their power to lead the union in fighting the attacks on our schools. But they need a growing leadership of students and teachers developing their understanding of what is necessary to fight and win, to do it.

Join BAMN! Join the Equal Opportunity Now (EON/BAMN) OEA Caucus, to fight to win!

Fight for Ourselves and Our Futures

This is when the best of Oakland can shine, we can all put forward our best selves fighting to win and fighting for each other. We can do this, and we can make every minority and immigrant community across the country feel the same. Oakland has a very strong sense of sister and brotherhood and standing with the national struggles for the rights of immigrants, and against bigotry and racism - and we definitely know Trump needs to go now - by winning this strike we can send him a loud and clear message: GET OUT NOW! We will not be treated as second-class! This teachers' strike can be the vehicle to put Oakland on the map once again as the city to look to for leadership of a new powerful civil rights and immigrant rights movement.

Join BAMN and the Equal Opportunity/By Any Means Necessary Caucus!

- ❖ Stop the School Closings! No More Charter Schools!
- ❖ Defend Special Education programs and the rights of Special Education students, our most vulnerable students. Limit and reduce Special Education class sizes and special education teacher caseloads - No wholesale "full-inclusion."
- ❖ Smaller class-sizes for all.
- ❖ Hire more Teachers Counselors, Nurses, Psychologists, Social Workers, and other Support Staff.
- ❖ Adequate text books and supplies, up-to-date technology, more field trips and other hands on experiences, creative arts and music programs.
- ❖ Significantly raise Teacher Pay. Teachers deserve equal pay and benefits to surrounding districts.
- ❖ More resources for Newcomer immigrant student programs: smaller class-sizes, legal services, para-professionals, translators, and classroom materials.
- ❖ Cancel the State Debt! Fully Fund Public Education
- ❖ More AP, Honors, Art, Music, and Theater classes in all our schools. Increase Latina/o, black, Native American, and immigrant student enrollment at UC-Berkeley and all University of California campuses.
- ❖ Free meals for all students