

QUESTIONNAIRE

GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2016 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com

In the subject line, please include "Oakland School Board" and your district number.

If it is not possible for you to email, please mail your responses to:
Oakland School Board Questionnaire
c/o Green Party of Alameda County,
2022A Blake Street * Berkeley, CA 94704

Please respond by Saturday, August 27, 2016

Name: Jody London

Phone: 510-459-0667

Email: oaklandjody@gmail.com

Website: www.votejody.com

1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for School Board?

When I joined the Oakland School Board in 2009, the District was at the tail end of six years of State receivership. I am seeking re-election to the School Board to ensure that the changes that we began putting in place as we emerged from one of the darkest periods in our District's history can truly take hold. We have in my opinion instituted many good policies, practices, and programs over the past eight years. Oakland Unified today is beginning to see positive outcomes from our policies on community schools, restorative justice, and social emotional learning. The African American Male Achievement initiative is leading to higher graduation rates and better preparation for our African American boys, and I'm excited to see that program expand to serve other children of color. We are building the foundation for a transformation in our high schools with greater access to pathway programs, however that work is still in process. I have helped initiate work with the City of Oakland that is looking at how the School District and the City can help those who work for the School District live in our city.

I also am always mindful of my responsibility for the financial well-being of the School District. I am proud that in July 2016, the District regained its bond rating,

13 years after entering receivership. The major ratings agencies provided ratings of Aa3 (Moody's), AA- (S&P), and AAA (Fitch). This means the District will be able to sell and refinance bonds at lower interest rates, saving money for taxpayers. This is a huge milestone that would not have been possible without the steady leadership and focus on financial stability I have provided over the past eight years.

I am a respected leader on the School Board, and in the community. I believe this District, and this City, need consistent leadership in the Board and the Superintendent.

2. Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to proactively lead by placing new ideas on the agenda for consideration and development. What are some specific ideas you intend to pursue if elected? What do you believe are the main priorities for the School Board?

As a member of the governing board, I have established the priorities for OUSD since 2009. My top priority since I first ran for School Board has been that there are schools in every part of our city to which families are comfortable sending their children. This informed my support for the 2011 full service community school district Strategic Plan, and many other policies that stem from it, including serving students who have been historically underserved by the school system, school based health centers, rethinking school lunch, needs based budgets, and many more.

In the coming year, the Superintendent's work plan, which is approved by the School Board, includes continued implementation of the Board priority regarding professional culture, continued implementation of the Board policy on Quality School Development, and continued refinement of the budget process and tools. Fixing the system problems has been a huge priority for me since Day One, and I'm proud of the progress we've made in many areas, particularly with our audits and finances. However, our systems are antiquated and must be updated, unglamorous as that may be.

For the coming year, the Board's work plan includes leadership training for all Board members and officers; adopting core belief statements; aligning the many plans and policies that drive our work, including enrollment and student assignment, graduation requirements, credit recovery, grading, facilities use, and Quality School Development; evaluating the Superintendent and General Counsel, the two direct reports to the Board; and ratifying a new multiyear agreement with the OEA and other bargaining units. We also must communicate better about all these issues.

In my next term, my goals are to continue the work described above, and support emerging work with individual schools that allows them to re-design themselves in order to better meet the needs and desires of neighborhood families. I also want to help Oakland Unified build a new education leadership complex that includes community meeting and training space, a Board room, administrative offices, and an updated facility for Dewey High School. I also would like to identify how Oakland Unified can realize revenue from unused property in order to pay down debt owed to the State from being in receivership.

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of School Board member. If you are a current School Board member, what issues can you point to in your time as Board member that have had a positive impact? As a Board member what can you tell us about your service on the Board, and share with us the decisions you have made in this capacity that you believe made a difference in the functioning of the School Board?

I am the proud parent of two children who are in 10th and 12th grades at Oakland Technical High School, after attending our neighborhood elementary and middle schools. I started my work with OUSD in 2005, when my older daughter was in kindergarten, as a parent volunteer with something to offer in the way of school facilities and sustainability. After chairing the \$435 million Measure B bond campaign in 2006, serving on the District's bond oversight committee, and leading my neighborhood school community in working with the School District to design and build a new classroom building and multipurpose room (the first project in the State to receive matching funds for being green-verified), I was asked by the incumbent to run for the School Board in 2008. I'm proud that I've been able to provide leadership to Oakland Unified on sustainability issues, including green buildings, renewable energy (OUSD recently installed a 3.6 MW solar system across 16 sites), energy efficiency (I advocated at the State level on implementation of the 2012 Prop 39), and the recent creation of both a sustainability manager and an energy manager.

When I joined the Oakland School Board in January 2009, the District was at the tail end of six years of State receivership. I made very hard decisions during my first term, in the midst of a crippling recession that gutted education budgets. During that first term, we closed the structural deficit that had landed us in receivership, adopted the community school district framework, began our emphasis on social emotional learning, and initiated groundbreaking work to focus on student populations that have been historically underserved by the education system.

I'm a leader on the Board, having served as Vice President and President. I'm known for being consistent and reasonable. I do my homework. I've authored policies on asset management and involving the community. I've been an advocate for the Central Kitchen project and high school pathways. In my district, I brokered an agreement over a dispute regarding playing fields that has led to the creation of a practice soccer field next door to the baseball Field of Dreams, and a softball field on the way nearby.

I have always prioritized working with our labor partners. I'm proud to have been part of the management team that in 2015, was able to agree on the largest salary increase for our employees in many years.

In my day job, I have for many years worked in and with State and local government and non-profits on critical policy issues. In June 2016, I joined Contra Costa County as that County's Sustainability Coordinator, managing implementation of the County's Climate Action Plan to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. I bring my familiarity with how government operates to my work on the School Board.

4. School Ratings and Evaluations -- How do you rate the Oakland schools? Name the success and shortcomings?

Some Oakland schools are producing wonderful results for children, and others have room to grow. There also is a strong correlation between parents' socioeconomic status and student achievement on standardized tests, including the new Smarter Balanced Assessments now required by the State. As a School Board member I recognize this and am working every day to create better opportunities for students. During my time on the Board we've changed budget policies to direct more funds to school sites, and we are working to change organizational culture to one that is focused on students. In fact, we recently adopted core beliefs and values that emphasize that students and student success is our first priority. We also have a Quality School Development process by which schools can voluntarily re-design themselves. This year there are about a dozen schools in that network, and I am excited to support their work.

5. Budget -- What changes to the OUSD budget would you suggest? (include changes to revenue).

OUSD's budget is now available online at a high level of detail never seen before. The biggest challenge we face is inadequate funding from the State. California continues to underfund education; today, California is still in the bottom quartile nationally in terms of per pupil funding. While the Local Control Funding Formula is helping direct funds to the neediest students, it has not

increased overall per pupil expenditures. Our public schools today are being funded at about the same level as in 2008. In the eighth largest economy in the world, that is a travesty. We need changes at the State level that will direct more funds to public education.

6. LCFF & LCAP -- How do you see the impact of the new Local Control Funding Formula and the role of staff and parents/community in LCAP?

Oakland Unified has a public process for developing our budget, which occurs starting in the fall with study sessions about budget priorities, and continues throughout the year, culminating in budget adoption in June. In recent years, we have developed a robust community involvement process in developing our budget priorities, in accordance with the Local Control Funding Formula. Oakland Unified convenes a Local Control and Accountability Plan task force that includes representatives from schools across the City, as well as students, foster youth and their advocates, special education parents, and others. This task force meets regularly. Union members are encouraged to participate in this process.

7. School Properties: What are your thoughts on maintaining current OUSD sites/properties? Should any sites be shared with charter schools?

I think we need to look at how we can use our excess physical assets to realize revenue from rent and leases. In 2013, I was the lead on a Board policy on asset management. I have been a leader on the Board since that time on issues related to how we use our facilities. I've encouraged the Board and the staff to think creatively about how we develop and use the property we own.

State law is very specific about the requirement for districts to provide charter schools with space if there is vacant space. This is one of many reasons I am focused on making District-run school more attractive to parents.

8. Discipline: Do you believe the current OUSD policy on suspensions is effective? What role do you envision for restorative justice programs?

Our District, during my time on the School Board, has taken bold steps to interrupt the pattern by which students from certain backgrounds are not well-served by the education system. This includes changing our policy on suspensions so that students spend more time in the classroom, and using restorative justice across the district. There is always room for us to improve on these programs, and every year they get better.

Oakland's African American Male Achievement initiative is making a big difference for African American boys, and is being expanded to serve African

American girls and other historically underserved student populations. I support these programs because they can be successfully replicated across the District, and reach individual students. It is challenging when solving systemic problems to remember that we must reach individual students in order to be successful.

Recognizing this, I believe we need classrooms that engage students early. We also need to educate parents about the value of education and regular attendance from an early age. Additionally, I support Oakland Unified's work to develop and implement an equity policy. I also believe that our ethnic studies policy, which the Board approved last year, will help make school more relevant for students.

9. Truants and Drop-outs -- What do you suggest we do about the truants and those who have dropped out?

Oakland Unified is making progress in keeping students in school. The policies described in response to Question 8 are part of this. Refining how we offer credit recovery for students who are failing is a priority for our All City Student Council which is shared by the School Board and Superintendent.

Students who have dropped out may need to be directed to the community college system, which has assumed much of the responsibility for Adult Education as part of changes instituted by the State several years ago.

10. Charter Schools -- What should Oakland's policy be around charter schools? What would you propose, if anything, in lieu of Charter schools? Do you distinguish between the different types? Would you support putting charter schools under the union contract? What are your views on 'common enrollment' and the 'equity pledge'?

I have been outspoken in my opinion that we have too many schools in Oakland. Starting in 2013, I began voting "no" on applications for new charter schools, even though under State law a school board is required to approve a new charter school if it provides a "sound educational program." I have been focused on reducing demand for charter schools by improving District schools, supporting them in school-based redesign work.

My two children have attended neighborhood schools operated by the District since kindergarten, and are now both at Oakland Technical High School. My opponent cannot say the same; it is my understanding that his school-age child attends a charter school.

We must find a way for charter schools and district schools to co-exist. Charter schools are not going away, as is evidenced by what is happening beyond

Oakland. Charter schools, in my opinion, have a lot of flexibility in terms of how they operate, who they hire, and many other factors. In exchange for that flexibility, I believe charter schools should offer innovation, as was the original intent of charter law. District schools have the benefit of a large system that can provide central services, access to facilities, and other economies of scope and scale, and of course quality education.

If charter schools choose to unionize, I would support that.

I am interested in identifying how we can level this playing field. OUSD has initiated discussions with charter school operators about an Equity Pledge that would require charters to make voluntary adjustments to serve more special needs students, use common metrics as District schools, and other changes, including student expulsion processes. I have been consistent in discussing these opinions with anyone who will listen, and will continue to do so.

Over the past year, as charter schools have come in for renewal of their charters, many have agreed to conditions around enrollment, special education, and expulsion that support this direction. This has been important for me in terms of my support for renewing these charters.

11. Testing and Teacher Evaluations -- What should our policy be around Student Testing and Teacher Evaluation? Do you see alternatives to the use of mandated standardized tests in meeting local, state and national education goals? How much are we teaching to the test now, and what should we be doing different if you feel it should be different?

There will always be a need to assess students' progress. Common Core places a bigger emphasis on process than outcome, which I like and support. In my experience as a parent in OUSD, most teachers include metrics in addition to performance on tests in evaluating students, which is appropriate.

12. Common Core -- What are your views on the use of the proposed Common Core curriculum?

I like the emphasis in the Common Core in fostering creative thinking and focusing on process rather than outcome.

13. Small Schools -- What are your ideas on the experience in the OUSD with 'small schools' ad/or 'academies'?

I think every child should have an opportunity for a personalized learning experience. This does not mean that the child must attend a small school. It means that schools must create culture that allows adults and students to

interact in ways that allow each student to thrive. This is a key part of career academies – they allow teachers to work with students more intensely and collaborate in meeting each student's needs. I support the buildout of career pathway programs. I want to make sure that we are providing a humanities track at schools across the city, and that we are properly anticipating the economic sectors that will be prevalent in the Bay Area in the future.

14. Central Resources -- How do you think the allocations of central resources should work and how should that relate to local school funding? How can there be greater balance in different socio-economic communities in the city?

During my tenure on the School Board, and with the arrival of Superintendent Wilson, Oakland Unified has continued to make more funds available to school sites. This year, an additional \$24 million is going to school sites, and \$2 million has been cut from the Central Office. In my first term, we adopted site based budget policies that direct more funds to school sites and presaged the adoption at the State level of the Local Control Funding Formula.

When I joined the School Board in 2009, at the tail of six years of State receivership, the finances were worse than they had been when the District had accepted the State loan in 2003. I was part of the team that made hard decisions to close the \$40 million structural deficit, begin to fix outdated and inadequate financial and human resource systems, and complete years of audits. I'm pleased to tell you that Oakland Unified recently completed all outstanding audits, and negotiated down millions of dollars in penalties. We also regained our credit rating at a high rating level. This allowed Oakland Unified to sell bonds over the summer at lower interest rates. All of this means more money we can spend on school improvements, which benefit employees.

15. City/Government Relations -- How should the City of Oakland support the OUSD, and education in general?

The level of collaboration between the City and the School Board is the best I have seen in my eight years on the School Board. The Oakland Promise demonstrates how the City and the School District can join in support of children. I am pleased to serve on the City-School Education Partnership Committee, which has started meeting again after being dormant for many years.

I am very proud that I've sparked a discussion about how to create housing in Oakland for educators, who are finding it hard to live in Oakland in the current housing crisis. As a result of my advocacy and work with the City-Schools Education Partnership Committee last year, the School Board passed a resolution calling on the City to collaborate with us in finding ways to provide

housing in Oakland for educators – anyone who works at a school. There is now a staff-level group that is meeting regularly to identify how we can make this happen.

16. Police -- What is your position on Campus police? How would you create an environment where police are not needed?

Ideally we would have a world where police are not needed. The reality in our City is that schools across the City, in every neighborhood, are put on lockdown because of activity in the surrounding neighborhood. Sadly, even in the relatively “safe” neighborhood around Oakland Tech, it seems every year students are robbed at gunpoint when they are leaving school. Our school police, all 12 members of the force, are important to maintaining a safe environment at our schools and in the surrounding neighborhoods. The Oakland School Police are trained in alternative methods of policing and not using force. It is worth noting that there are some in our community who would like to see more police on our campuses.

17. Unions -- What do you think of the relationship between the OUSD and the unions? What would you propose it should be and how would you act on that?

I believe the role of the School Board is to set policy, and delegate to the Superintendent the day-to-day implementation and operation of the District. This is true in labor issues, as well. I am always available to learn about concerns. I then work with the Superintendent to ensure that he understands any concerns and is addressing them.

I meet regularly with my Oakland Education Association liaisons, and with other members of the leadership of OEA and the other unions. When there have been concerns from labor organizations, I have been responsive and have worked with the Superintendent and staff to ensure that issues are being addressed appropriately. In 2015, OUSD's bargaining units formed a Health Benefits Governance Board comprised of representatives from each union that has been a very positive development for our district, and I want to make sure it continues to work effectively.

I have been a strong supporter of the Project Labor Agreement that Oakland Unified has had in place for many years, which directs that a certain percentage of capital projects be performed by unions. Because Oakland Unified has both a project labor agreement and a local vendor policy, a significant amount of the bond money spent in Oakland is channeled back in to our community to union contractors. These policies are being expanded to other procurement areas, under direction from the School Board.

18. Adult Education -- What is your position on Adult Education?

I support Adult Education and think it's important for credit recovery and for vocational training. As indicated above, the State consolidated most of Adult Education with the community college system a few years ago.

OUSD works closely with the Peralta Community College District on Adult Education and other opportunities, including the Gateway to College program, that allows students to take classes at the Peralta Colleges and gain high school credit. We also are introducing more dual enrollment classes at our high schools, so students can get college credit for classes taken at high schools.

19. Vocational Education -- What is your position Vocational Education?

There will always be a need for work-based learning. And it is important for students to be prepared for higher education if that is their desire. That is why I have been an advocate for linked learning, housed in career pathway programs that allow students to study subjects in an applied way that relates to what they might do when they are older. I also see the need for more hands-on, vocational opportunities. I've been working with the Alameda County Building Trades to partner around apprenticeship opportunities. When the new Central Kitchen opens, we will have an opportunity to create a pathway focused on culinary arts, hopefully at McClymonds High School, which at one point before I joined the Board was slated for a culinary arts academy.

20. 'Academics vs. Electives' -- What is the proper balance between academics and sports, arts and other electives? Do you support using organizations such as Play Works to provide sports, arts and other electives formally provided by staff before the series of cutbacks?

As described above, California continues to underfund education. The inadequate funding in our State has direct impact on our ability to offer electives, maintain libraries, and have enough counselors, nurses, and other supports. This is true across our State. I have been outspoken about this problem, bringing it up frequently at School Board meetings and public appearances. I served last year on a committee of the California School Boards Association that was studying this problem. I was pleased to lead Oakland Unified in passing a resolution in support of Proposition 13 reform in October 2013, as the Evolve campaign was launching. Evolve has featured me in their campaign. We need a statewide conversation about why we are so far below the national average in per pupil funding, and a national conversation about educators' salaries.

I am proud that throughout the Great Recession, Oakland maintained its music program. Oakland Unified has offered music in the schools since 1868.

Specific to the last part of the question, I support PlayWorks. They provide a valuable service in terms of organizing games and sports in elementary school, and allow their coaches to explore career opportunities in education. PlayWorks does not provide other enrichment opportunities to my knowledge.

21. The School Day -- What is your opinion on the length of the school day and the role of before school and after school programs?

As a working parent with a working partner, I understand very well the challenges for working families. Working families need on-site or very nearby quality childcare, both before and after school for elementary and middle school students. While high school students can be more independent, in an ideally funded system schools will offer after school activities that include sports, drama, music, media, and other enrichment. All Oakland Unified schools offer after-school programming, partnership with community based organizations. There is room for OUSD to do more in terms of offering enough after-school spaces for all students; I think we need a model that blends fee-based and free programs, depending on family income.

I would love to offer a longer school day. This is something that must be negotiated with our labor partners. This is also related to the lack of adequate funding for public education, as explained above.

22. Accountability/ responsibility -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Oakland? How might this relate to policies advocated for by the superintendent?

As an elected official, I have an open-door policy and am available to meet with anyone who wishes to discuss issues relevant to the Oakland Unified School District.

I believe the role of the School Board is to set policy, and delegate to the Superintendent the day-to-day implementation and operation of the District. This is true in labor issues, as well. I am always available to learn about concerns. I then work with the Superintendent to ensure that he understands any concerns and is addressing them.

23. Money in Politics -- Do you support amending the Constitution to end corporate Constitutional rights and getting money out of politics? Have you [Taken the Pledge to Amend](https://movetoamend.org/take-pledge-amend)? (<https://movetoamend.org/take-pledge-amend>)

Yes, I support removing money from politics.

24. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? By whom do you expect to be endorsed? Who are you endorsing, from President all the way down ballot to local races?

I have received the following endorsements to date.

Individuals: Senator Loni Hancock, Assemblymember Tony Thurmond, Assemblymember Nancy Skinner, BART Director Rebecca Saltzman, Mayor Libby Schaaf, Alameda County Superintendent Karen Monroe, Oakland City Councilmember Dan Kalb, Oakland City Councilmember Annie Campbell Washington, current and former Oakland School Board members James Harris, Jumoke Hinton Hodge, David Kakishiba, Gary Yee, Chris Dobbins, Ken Rice, Bob Spencer.

Organizations: Sierra Club, Alameda County Building Trades, Northern California Carpenters, Teamsters, GO Public Schools.

Most important, I have been endorsed by nearly 300 individuals, many of whom are educators and parent leaders.

25. Campaign Funding -- How much money do you currently have for this race? How much money do you plan to raise? Where will the money come from? Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).

Our budget is \$25,000. We have raised nearly \$14,000, which has allowed us to invest in campaign collateral, yard signs, promotional items, supplies and postage, filing fees, fees associated with street fairs, and other expenses. At this point we are raising funds for direct mail. We need to raise an additional \$11,000 to cover those costs.

My main support is coming from individual parents and community members. To date, our campaign has received nearly \$14,000 from 115 donors, dozens of whom have supported me in the past, as well as new supporters. We have endorsements from nearly 300 people.

26. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

In addition to my long experience described above as a leader on the School Board and in our City, I've worked my entire career on energy, environment, and sustainability issues. I have brought that expertise to my work on the School

Board. I have for many years worked in and with State and local government on critical policy issues. I understand how individual constituents and community-based organizations can help the School District, and I understand the complex process for decisions by government entities.

I am committed to Oakland Unified and our students, and would appreciate your support.