

A city can help its schools without playing politics

Our schools are better than what they were, but they are in no way acceptable. The next budget cuts will be a disaster but the last decades of neglect have left our once proud California schools a national embarrassment. Oakland suffers even more because of how funds are allocated from Sacramento. Instead of serious help with our truancy problem we are victims of a kind of collective punishment.

The same can be said for high stakes standardized testing. If we do not go along with No Child Left Behind we will also suffer collective punishment. So we should comply, but we should also complain. It is bad educational policy and it is bad social policy. We should not confuse test scores in English, math and science with a well rounded, high quality education.

Our biggest problem with school teachers is that we do not have enough of them. The biggest problem with our schools is that they are understaffed.

We need to spend more money on schools. To do that we need to raise revenue and we need to make sure urban areas like ours get a better shake out of Sacramento.

We may need to reform our school board, but not take the schools away from local control.

For at the longest time there have been proposals to share facilities between the school district and other city agencies. It is overdue to move on this. The city could be moving a lot of services to the schools and to our kids after school.

We need our volunteers

All across the city volunteers work in Oakland Schools. The city could do more to help organize the volunteer effort. We can take the burden off the agencies and support the effort city wide with promotion, registration, and databases.

We need the Oakland Volunteer Corps.

Community policing should cost less not more, we need to do more not less

Measure Y is a good example of playing more politics than was ever needed to do some simple things that are long overdue. What has been done is a lot of good starts and not a lot of second steps. Consider:

We have about 1,300 parolees now with many more to come in early release programs. The current parole and reform system will fail almost all of them.

We have more than a thousand crimes a month that can not possibly be solved by our overworked police force.

We URGENTLY need to get the community into community policing and we need to get offenders into real reform programs starting with community sentencing.

Oakland Families need our full support

The first thing we should think of when talking Oakland families is daycare. Parents need to work and schools and daycare centers need to make that easier. We need more sensible work and afterschool care rules for working parents.

Half of our families are single parent and two thirds of those are women head of household. Many of these parents work for the City and many others work for public agencies here in Oakland. Daycare on the job and daycare in the neighborhood is lacking. The City owns a lot of real estate and rents are one of the biggest costs in daycare. There is lots of room for the city to help.

We also need much more in public facilities. That means our parks and other public places to take our children. We could be doing a much better job at making them usable, safe and comfortable from benches to bathrooms.

Oakland kids need more play places

Oakland parents need more work places

What Oakland needs!

We need our schools up and our crime down.

But how?

How bad is the budget crisis?

How bad is the crime?

What can we do for the schools?

What is on track and what is not?

Here I try to outline some of the important issues and share some of my views on what we should do.

I do not think any of our problems are simple to fix or described in a few words. Everything we discuss has important exceptions and there is too much going on in



Oakland City government to describe in a short political hand out.

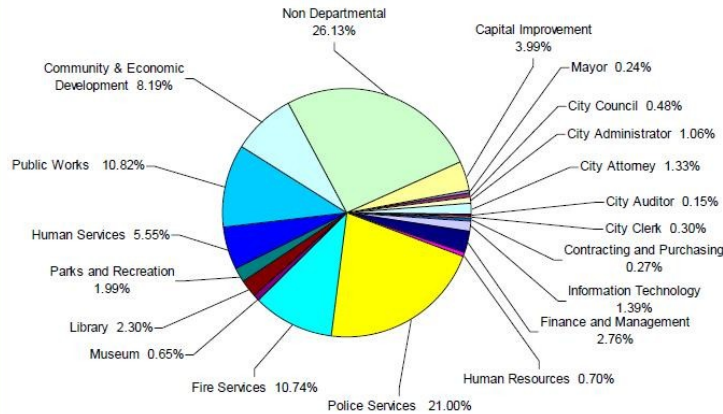
Please keep that in mind when other candidates talk about their easy answers, that it is hard to even ask the right questions. Here are some of my questions.

We need to ask ourselves better questions and work

DON MACLEAY
a mayor for *all* of oakland

Our Budget needs to work in good times and bad

**BREAKDOWN OF FY 2009-11 (2 YEAR TOTAL)
ALL FUNDS EXPENDITURE BY DEPARTMENT**



And the story needs to be told to the public in a more straightforward way.

This graphic is only a small part of the picture. We have a lot of budgets. The schools are not on this one because they are separately managed, but they are on our property taxes. The Port is also not there and this is a very big part of how we are governed. Also not shown here is CEDA, the “redevelopment agency”. Redevelopment means that a lot of our city is open to big projects that our council funds wearing their other hat of Redevelopment Committee. The real budget is something over a billion dollars most of which has strings attached to it. It was in crisis before the cutbacks and recession, Now it is close to being an emergency and is twice revised.

Common to the whole process:

1. Blurred lines of authority between council and mayor with poor checks and balances.
2. No real provision for the ups and downs of the business cycle.
3. Most city funds are earmarked and there is very little flexibility in the process.
4. Many large expenses are built in.

There are no simple answers here. This is a system that needs an overhaul involving all of us.

Our 500 page budget can be found at http://www.oaklandnet.com/budgetoffice/docs/FY_2009_11_Adopted_Policy_Budget.pdf

Our elections need to be for everyone

Does this look like healthy participation?

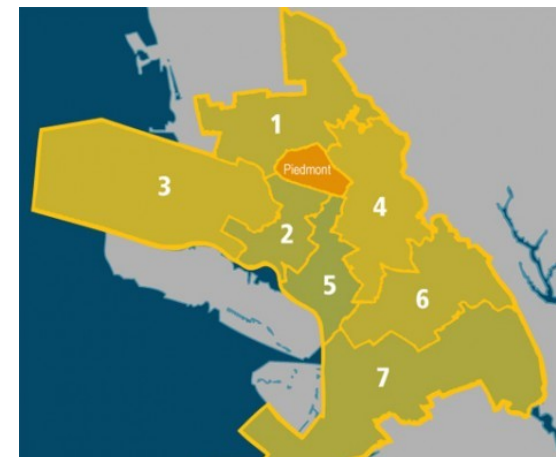
Total Population: 399,484
 Total Registration: 187,084
 47 % Registered to Vote
 2006 Oakland Mayor's race :
 Total Votes 83891
 DELLUMS 42,108
 Or only 50.19% of votes cast
 That is not even 25% of eligible voters who came to the polls.

Do these districts look like out neighborhoods?

There is no reason for our community leaders to be one group of people and our city council another. We need to make it easier for common citizens to run and serve.

I am going to propose districts lines that circle our traditional neighborhoods, not divide them up. We should consider proportional representation to have democratic diversity.

Our local neighborhoods committees should also be elected and given some control over their local budget and policies.



For good maps and lots of city information try http://www.infooakland.org/data_maps/popular.php