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Classroom Struggle

***Community and School
Struggles Unite Issue***

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Unpacking and Expanding Sanctuary: Sanctuary Education Conference

"If ICE comes to the school, we expect you guys to put your bodies on the line," declared one San Francisco Muslim student as they looked out at the crowd of educators at the Islamic Cultural Center on Saturday, February 18. During the powerful opening panel, Arab and Muslim students from San Francisco expressed a collective desire for authentic and meaningful representation of their cultures and identities within their public education classrooms. A Palestinian-American student named Rania said, "You have to go out of your way to learn about your history," adding that while Israel is represented in history curriculum, Palestine is always left out. Students also discussed that San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) denied a memorandum of understanding between the district and the Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC) that has provided students with opportunities to explore their cultural identity. Many people in the community believe that this MOU is being blocked by a Zionist organization in San Francisco. Students outlined ideas about what sanctuary education means to them: going beyond the rhetoric, having true representation, supporting AROC and similar programs, providing healing spaces for students, and recognizing that the trauma of misrepresentation and underrepresentation goes beyond the impact of any individual administration or policy.

This Sanctuary Conference's main objective was to provide information "for K-12 teachers, staff and youth workers on meeting the needs of Arab and Muslim youth in the Trump era." The conference was organized by AROC, Middle East Children's Alliance, Alliance of South Asians Taking Action, SF Teachers 4 Social Justice, People's Education Movement, and Rethinking Schools.

"Being at the Sanctuary education conference was a great experience, especially as a Muslim who not only understands the struggles of our immigrant and Muslim youth but also as an educator who supports our youth," said Madenh Hassan, a US History teacher from Oakland International High School and afternoon presenter at the conference. The conference struck a deep chord for Hassan, especially in the current political climate, and she stated the importance of "giving our community the culturally relevant tools to help support one another, especially our youth."



The closing plenary addressed the topic "Making Sanctuary Real in Schools & Communities." Student speakers addressed the need to hold local school districts and governments accountable to sanctuary city and district policies. Politicians and officials need to do more than just state their non-compliance, they must work with the community to plan for action and rapid response. The panel encouraged creating tiers of resistance within our communities and having critical conversations about what people are willing and able to do when the time comes. Mohamed Shenk, from Critical Resistance, encouraged attendees to understand sanctuary movements within the context of prison abolition and to push for more noncompliance between local enforcement agencies and their national counterparts. Shenk said, "more than noncompliance, this moment calls for resistance!"

About Classroom Struggle

Classroom Struggle is a group of educators fighting to defend and transform Oakland public schools. We organize inside and outside our teacher's union and always strive to work with parents, students, and other OUSD staff. We stand against the austerity and privatization of our schools.

Come join us in this struggle.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Educationforthe99> | Email: classroomstruggle@gmail.com

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No Cuts To Schools!

What is happening

At the Jan. 25th school board meeting, the board approved the district's budget priorities policy that outlines where cuts will be made for next year to make-up for a \$30 million deficit. This included cuts to 44 teacher positions granted on appeal. Theoretically these positions would be consolidated and no one would be laid off, but there is no guarantee that it would work out that way. The cuts also affect central positions including some that directly serve students and others that are important to supporting school sites. For example, the District itself admitted that one reason they so incorrectly managed the declining enrollment this year was because they had cut their enrollment managers down to 1 person for the whole district. Clearly, losing 44 teachers and important central staff will deeply affect students & schools.

Breaking Down the Facts

Basically, there are 104 teachers every year that are granted to schools on appeal (these are positions not allocated in the original budget that schools "appeal" for). Most of these positions are elementary teachers, but a number of secondary schools also appeal for additional teachers. As we understand the numbers, of the total 104 appeals, 24 are for Newcomer programs, and the budget priorities passed by the school board were clear about not touching these. That leaves 80 positions granted on appeal this year. According to the chart included below, the approved budget priorities would only grant 36 positions on appeal (+ newcomer appeals), resulting in a cut of 44 teacher positions.

In addition there will be cuts of \$8.5 million to central staff. Those cuts will include cuts to management, support (e.g. attorneys, talent, executive/admin assistants), services (e.g. transportation and consultants), and supplies. Some of these cuts should happen. OUSD is a top-heavy district. As the graph to the right shows, from 2013 to 2015, the amount we pay our top administrators rose by up to 566% under Antwan Wilson.

Category	FTE
Newcomers (Post 20 Day)	13.99 FTE
Newcomers	8.00 FTE
Auto-Appeals (e.g. expansion, too many combos, SDC, PE)	25.78 FTE
Regular Appeals (e.g. bilingual classes, middle school electives, A-G classes)	<u>56.86 FTE</u>
Total	104.63 FTE
Non- consolidations	<u>36.12 FTE</u>
Grand Totals	140.75 FTE

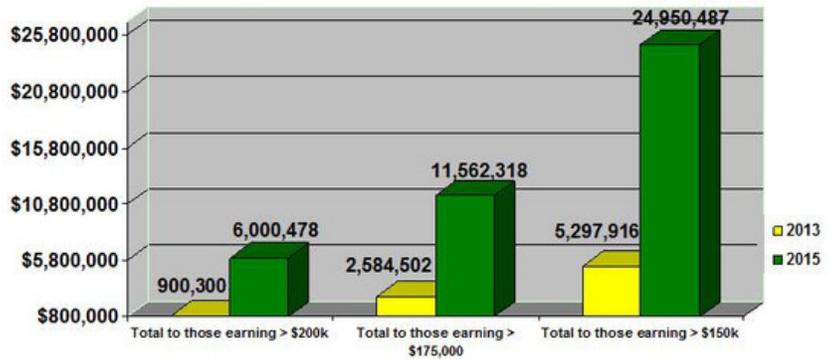
This crisis of management has partially led to our budget crisis and should be reversed. However, any cuts to central staff should be only to the bloated admin and stay away from services that really help students.

Why this matters more than just the cuts to schools

Clearly, these cuts matter to the schools, students, and teachers directly affected. Students will lose their teachers. Teachers will lose their current positions. Schools will lose their stability. But, the outcome of these cuts will also have deeper repercussions. OEA has started our contract campaign. There are some potentially transformative demands that our union is making, which if won will be huge wins for teachers AND community.

However, our power at the bargaining table is in relationship to our power at the school board. The district has been saying it wants to keep cuts away from schools. But this is not happening! It is critical that we fight against these cuts at the same time we are fighting for a proactive agenda.

The amount we pay our top administrators has risen up to 566% under Antwan Wilson!!!



All data from www.transparencialifornia.com
Compensation includes Salary and Benefits

What we can do

There are a few steps we can take:

First, we need to get connected. The affected sites and staff should gather and agree on a plan. From there we should look at a campaign of escalating tactics. This can include informational flyering at sites, building pressure on admin and board members, coordinated actions (both at school sites and board meetings), and more.

To start the fight back, please get in touch with us. Either talk to one of us in Classroom Struggle or email us at classroomstruggle@gmail.com. These cuts do not need to happen but we can only stop them if we get organized.

GET INVOLVED!

- Email us at classroomstruggle@gmail.com
- Like Classroom Struggle on Facebook
- Check out our blog at classroomstruggle.org
- Buy a t-shirt and wear it on Struggle Mondays