

**METROPOLITAN-GREATER OAKLAND
DEMOCRATIC CLUB**

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February 21, 2007

BY FACSIMILE TO (916) 319-2116

Gene Mullin, Chair
Education Committee
California State Assembly

Dear Chairman Mullin and Members of the Education Committee:

I write on behalf of the members of the Metropolitan-Greater Oakland (MGO) Democratic Club to express the club's support for Assembly Bill 45, introduced by Assemblyman Sandré Swanson. If enacted, the bill will immediately return to the governing board of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) its powers in the areas of community relations and governance, facilities management, personnel management, and pupil achievement.

It has been three and one-half years since the OUSD was placed in receivership and its elected school board disempowered. Since that time, the OUSD has diligently complied with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) recovery plans and has submitted all required progress reports. FCMAT's latest report, issued on September 30, 2006, urged the restoration of specific administrative and managerial functions to the OUSD school board. State Superintendent O'Connell has not acted on FCMAT's recommendations.

Oakland parents in our city have consistently complained that the current state administrative process does not allow them an opportunity to have a governing body that they can hold directly accountable for its policies and decisions. They see this structure as arbitrary and unfairly opened-ended.

Oakland has elected a new school board majority that was not in place during the State's takeover of our District. Now the Board needs its operational powers restored. We urge you to act promptly and favorably on A.B. 45.

Sincerely,

Gary Sirbu
President, MGO Democratic Club