

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Office of the Board of Education
12/16/09

Student Director Report

ACC Middle School Update:

In November, we had 48 students from 7 schools participate in our second workshop on School Decision Making. We had two guest speakers Directors Hodge and Yee help make the workshop come alive for the students, and inspired them to take on an issue as Middle School ACC. They choose food and cafeteria service as the issue they want to address this year. Student delegates reported the following:

- At Roosevelt, students are happier about the restroom cleanliness, and the new mural painting, but have a long way to go. Leadership class is worked on campus beautification, including trying to get bathroom issue resolved.
- At Frick, students are celebrating cleaner bathrooms, and more sports. They received new sports equipment, and they noticed the graffiti was painted over. They are looking forward to their winterball dance and sports festival. Leadership class will continue to work on remaining concerns with lack of elective classes, the locks on bathrooms, having more food variety, getting a traffic light, and more fieldtrips.
- At Montera, leadership students are working with their principal and custodian to set up room 400 as student space for alternative learning, workshops, and other leadership activities. They are looking forward to hosting ACC in February, and doing conflict resolution training at elementary schools. They hope to keep conflict resolution as a permanent program at Montera and in the school district.
- Barack Obama's new leadership class has identified issues they would like to work on such as variety at lunch, uniforms, student lounge, basketball for females, and having a gym.
- Claremont students reported having a stricter principal that has set better consequences for breaking the rules. Their remaining concerns are with healthier lunches, and miscommunication between houses.
- Edna Brewer joined with art class to learn how to draw, and voted on the best idea for the mural, then painted the mural. Now they have a Barack Obama mural, but it still needs to be sealed, and requested our support with that. They have also been able to institute weekly meetings for the college and career club. One outstanding concern is the long lunch lines.
- At Melrose, students are celebrating their garden, and looking forward to their winter dance, movie event, and awards ceremony. They still have not installed lockers for the students.

ACC High School Update:

- At our high school general meeting last month, delegates from 9 schools (Street Academy, Bunche, Best, Excel, Skyline, Oakland High, YES, Sojourner Truth, and Oakland Tech) endorsed the ACC Focus Group Recommendations, which we will present today.
- Best and Excel are reporting cleaner school environment, better overall school coordination and organization, and a nicer gym. Leadership class is working on addressing the restroom issue, and looking forward to pep rally, bowling trip, Yosemite, and the health jam.

- Skyline reported better relationships with company for graduation materials, and better budget management. They are looking forward to their winter ball in January. Their remaining concerns are the budget cuts and how it will affect students at Skyline.
- Oakland High is still concerned with bathrooms being locked and availability of soap, the lack of computers available, overcrowding, lack of funding for supplies, and the nazi signs in the auditorium that are constantly asked to be removed. (The nazi signs in auditorium were removed the day of the ACC meeting). Leadership is looking forward to the teacher luncheon, winter ball, winter wonderland.
- Bunche organized their Thanksgiving event “The Spot”. They are working on getting more activities during lunch, and more food variety. They are very happy with the after school program.
- Street Academy students reported liking their school as a whole: the food, the teachers, school appearance, and school materials. No concerns were reported.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Our High School All City Council General Meeting, will be held at Fremont, December 17th from 1pm to 3pm.

ACC Focus Group Summary, Findings, Recommendations:

Data Collected: October 1st – November 3rd

12 Focus Groups; 253 total student participants

9 Target High Schools (with highest truancy rates):

- Fremont Federation: Paul Robeson, Architecture, Mandela
- Castlemont Community of Small Schools: CBIT
- Skyline
- Oakland Tech
- Oakland High
- McClymonds Educational Complex: BEST, EXCEL

Participant Demographic:

- Gender: 118 males, 135 females
- Class: 26 freshmen, 89 sophomores, 85 juniors, 53 seniors
- Ethnicity: 118 African American, 94 Latino, 34 Asian/Pacific Islander, 6 Southwest Asian North African (Yemen, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq)

Data Summary

Truancy Leading to Drop Out Discussion:

Question	Response	Why? Top 5 Responses	
Have you ever cut school?	70% said yes	<i>Home life/problems at home</i> (61 students)	<i>Mental health</i> (anger and/or depression specifically)

	(176 students out of 253)	<i>Use (or selling) of drugs or alcohol</i> (49 students) <i>Safety (inside and outside of school)</i> (30 students)	(44 students) <i>Family responsibility/need to help with family</i> (42 students)
Does safety prevent you from coming to school more?	138-no response 110-no 5-yes		
Do you think truant students drop out of school?	61% said yes (153 students)		
Have you thought about leaving school or dropping out?	32% said yes (82 students)	<i>I had/still have personal problems at home</i> (37 students) <i>Fell behind on school work and felt like I couldn't catch up</i> (36 students) <i>I didn't see/don't see how the work I was doing will help me in my life</i>	<i>I didn't feel like anyone cared if I stayed or left</i> (27 students) <i>I needed or still need to work and make money instead of spending most of my day in school</i> (25 students)

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Barriers to Graduation Discussion:

Themes Across Schools	Examples	Quotes
Gang Involvement	Leaving school to become more active or fulfill commitment within school hours	"I had more important things to do, like to a funeral or go look for someone"
Student-Teacher Relationship	Problem with specific teacher, relationship not positive	"I leave school to avoid seeing that teacher"
Classroom Standards & Expectations	Teacher not delivering instruction Teacher unaware or not concerned with student disengagement	"Teachers don't care if we're learning or not. As long as we come to class and not disrupt."
Curriculum not Challenging	Classwork and Homework are not challenging	"I was too smart for school." "We already know the work, so what is the point?"
Immigration Status	Undocumented students do not have the opportunity to go to college or work legally	"Why should they go to school if they can't work or go to college?"
Transitional Housing	Insufficient clothing and transportation	"I felt ashamed to go to school because people made fun of my clothes"
Lack of Information & Access to Student Support Services	Students are not made aware of various services available; health, mental health, and academic support services, or extra curricular activities	"Many students don't know how to access the clinic or how to get a pass to go talk to someone." "Teachers do not allow students to go to the center"

		during class."
Stress Management	Stress from multiple places: peers, home, streets, and school	"I have stress from everywhere, it's too much for me."
Lack of Support for Struggling Students	Students are attempting on their own, to improve grades but do not show any progress	"I'm trying to improve, but don't know what I'm doing wrong"
Transportation	Not enough bus service to specific schools resulting in crowded buses and increased bullying on the bus and at the bus stop Students missing the only bus to school, usually end up missing a whole day of school	"If I miss the bus, I end up cutting all day." "The buses are too crowded. People get robbed on the bus."
Tardy & Lunch Site Policies	Tardy policies linked to academic grades have the effect of contributing to more truancy Short lunches and no nutrition breaks cause students to leave school to get food Bathroom policies (where students have no access to restrooms during class) lead students to cut school to use restroom elsewhere	"Most students leave school to eat. We don't have enough time to get lunch and eat on campus." "We're late because we miss the bus or the bus is late. It is not fair to reduce our academic grades for being late. That makes students want to give up all the way."

Solutions to Help More Students Graduate:

Question	Top Two Answers	Definitions
What can your	62% said	<i>Have high</i>
		<i>Teach things that</i>

<p>school do to support students to come to school more?</p>	<p>Effective Quality Teaching</p> <p>(157 students out of 253)</p>	<p><i>expectations of me</i> (193 students)</p> <p><i>Make me want to do my best</i> (183 students)</p> <p><i>Keep me on track and focused</i> (179 students)</p>	<p><i>are interesting (or in a way that is interesting)</i> (171 students)</p> <p><i>Give me extra help</i> (171 students)</p> <p><i>Teach really well (so we can understand)</i> (161 students)</p>
	<p>30% said</p> <p>Improved Student Support/Counseling System</p> <p>(76 students)</p>	<p>More counselors that are in their office and are available</p> <p>Counselors that can address your problem</p> <p>More therapy (non-academic) counseling</p>	<p>Counselors that can relate to students</p> <p>More counselors that can speak to every student</p> <p>Schools need to publicize support services on campus and allow easier access</p>

Findings & Recommendations

Finding

Recommendation

<p>1. Most students have cut school due to personal issues at home, with friends, or at school. They also indicated that they need an outlet for the stress and anger that comes with these personal issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most high schools offer support services, we need to make these known, and facilitate the process for students to access services. • Make it easier for students to access services via teacher recommendations or self-referrals. • Print a "menu" of student services for each high school in youth friendly language. (example: "stress help workshop", or "stress therapy", "you got problems, we've got answers, stop stressing") • Each school must have a conflict resolution system of outreach and referrals so all students can solve their conflicts with other students or with staff • Leadership project or other student group can take on project of organizing Peer Pressure & Bullying Seminars for staff and students, how can students help change the culture of negative peer pressure to positive peer influence?
<p>2. Many students are turning to drugs or alcohol to deal with stress or to make money.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure each school has substance abuse program for students or have referral system tied to positive attendance AND make sure these students are also enrolled in a healthy living course or stress group, where they learn to deal with stress in a positive way.
<p>3. Many students have family responsibilities that have prevented them from attending school.</p>	<p>Each school must have a designated staff person to call each truant student and find out what is happening at home. Every high school must have this critical staff position to connect students to the services they need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a permanent

	<p>truancy/student support position at each school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage parents of absent students, offer support they may need
<p>4. The top two things schools can do to improve attendance is: improve teacher quality and effectiveness, and improve the student support-counseling system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit teachers to participate in ACC’s voluntary student-teacher evaluation project • Recruit students and teachers to participate in “Lesson Plan” feedback sessions for teachers who want to make their classes more engaging • Work with OEA on definition and values for Effective and Quality Teaching • Identify creative ways to meet college and career counseling needs of students • Improve existing counselor delivery of service until other counseling/support methods are identified
<p>5. When asked directly about safety being an issue that contributes to truancy only 5 students said yes, while 138 had no response. This means that safety is a deeper and more complicated issue to address in a few minutes.</p>	<p>Wait to address this issue more in depth at the February 18th ACC Summit on Safety and Drop Out</p>