

Oakland Youth Services Charter School Petition

Lifting As We Climb

Description of the Diverse Student

This petition is about the poor underachieving diverse students of color. They are to be described as:

- being negatively stereotyped, provoked openly in class, disrespectful or defiant and misunderstood
- Looked upon as being intellectually inferior
- High functioning social language; very weak academic language
- Lacks the knowledge of basic math facts
- Distinct language issues
- Struggles academically
- Deficits in reading and writing skills
- Stuck in intermediate or below level of academic performance
- Unable to read or write in cursive
- Developed habits of non-engagement, learned passivity, invisibility, or class disrupter
- Wants to go to college; but not prepared
- Boisterous in public places
- 46% of foster youth fail to complete high school
- 3% actually make it to college

Where do the underachieving Culturally Diverse Students live?

- These children live in a run-down low-income community
- Living in this kind of neighborhood, their households are usually over crowded and noisy
- Financial limitations often exclude these students from healthy afterschool activities
- They have fewer or smaller play areas in the home
- There is a local public park, which could be used as a good play area, but it is bombarded by home-less encampments
- Illegal dumping overflows from the sidewalks into the streets, meeting garbage filled abandon cars, stranded on the curbs
- The unemployment rate for residents in the area is 17% for Blacks, 14% for Hispanics and 15% for Native American and Alaskan Natives

How they are viewed by society

- Diverse students are openly provoked in class by teachers who feel that they are a threat to the academic atmosphere
- 49% of teachers surveyed consider higher- order thinking was inappropriate for poor or low-achieving students
- Black, Brown, and poor students soon learn to detect two things: Society is preconditioned to see the worst in them and that many educators, whether consciously or unconsciously, believed that children of color and poor children cannot achieve at the same academic levels of children of the dominate white culture

Schools in the Community

Test scores of community schools as of 2019

The average percentage of students that met standards in the Smarter Balanced Assessments in Language Art was 16% in elementary school, 20% in middle school, and 20% in high school.

	English/Language	Mathematics
Elementary Schools:		
Brookfield	16.7%	26.2%
Parker	13.9%	13.9%
New Highland	13.3%	12.7%
Rise	10.8%	10.8%
Reach	20.3%	20.0%
Aspire College Academy	17.4%	NR
Madison	7.7%	15.4%
Encompass	10.2%	14.0%
Korematsu	7.1%	17.4%
East Oakland Pride	20.0%	20.8%
Cox	18.2%	17.8%
Aspire Monarch	37.9%	69.7%
Average	16.1%	21.7%
Middle Schools:		
Alliance Eight Graders	14.3%	9.4%
Elmhurst Eighth Graders	14.3%	8.8%
Parker Eighth Graders	30.3%	6.1%
Average	19.6%	8.1%
High Schools:		
Castlemont Eleventh Graders	9.4%	0%
Freemont Eleventh Graders	17.6%	2.5%
Skyline Eleventh Graders	33.3%	14.9%
Average	20.1%	5.8%

The average percentage of students that met standards in the Smarter Balanced Assessments math was 21% in elementary school, 8% in middle school, and 6% in high school.

A Solution to Educating the Diverse Student

- Americanization- approach to Acculturation
- The merging of ethnic and linguistically diverse communities into a simple dominant national institutional structure and culture
- The solution to educating low-achieving diverse students is changing their values and language
- The educational concept is that these children are flawed and need to be fixed
- This notion causes a disruption in their learning
- It means elimination of linguistic and culture differences and an undesirable culture
- To the student it means a discontinuous experience
- Disconnectedness and discontinuities cause psychological distress and upheaval in the student's life
- Requires the use of language and verbal skills that are alien
- Students are called to alienate themselves abruptly from their culture
- Student must maintain a psychological balance between their culture and the culture of the dominate class

Culture and Second-Language Acquisition

- One student complained bitterly, saying:
 - “Mrs. _____ always be interrupting to make you ‘talk correct’ and stuff. She be butting into your conversations when you not even talking to her! She needs to mind her own business.”

- “Another example is from a Mississippi preschool teacher. A teacher had been drilling her three-and four-year-old charges on responding to the greetings, “Good morning, how are you?” with “I’m fine, thank you.” Posting herself near the door one morning, she greeted a four-year-old black boy in an interchange that went like this:
 - Teacher: Good morning, Tony, how are you?
 - Tony: I be’s *fine*
 - Teacher: Tony, I said, How *are* you?
 - Tony: (with raised voice) I be’s *fine*.
 - Teacher: No, Tony, I said *how are you*?
 - Tony: (angrily) I done told you *I be’s fine* and I ain’t telling you no more!

- Tony must have questioned his teacher’s intelligence, if not sanity. In any event, neither of the students illustrated would be predisposed to identify with their teachers and thereby increase the Affective Filter

Affective Filters that cause Mental Blocks

- Dr. Stephen Krashen, a language professor, in his work on second-language acquisition, distinguishes the processes of conscious learning from unconscious learning
- There are three Affective Filters that cause mental blocks

1. The filter of non-identification With the Speaker

Insulted by speaker
Student feels alienated
What is not relevant, can make the student angry and is not encouraging,
Does not create a positive effect for language acquisition to take place.
Impedes learning

2. Non-Affirmation from the Speaker

Does not make students feel special. Does not encourage high motivation, self-confidence and a good self-image.

3. Emotional Trigger Words from the Speaker

Krashen discovers that words trigger emotions. The society in which these students live is an oppressed community
An oppressed culture that has been historically traumatized by terrorism
A culture that even today is constantly under attack
For many in this oppressed culture language acquisition not only causes a mental block for identification with the speaker but a rebellion toward the embodiment of generations of exploitation

Language Acquisition is Key

- Language acquisition and development of language comprehension with diverse students is an important factor in academic underachievement
- Lack of English proficiency and academic deficiency has been said to be caused by a devaluation of student's language and cultural heritage
- Language and culture are intimately connected
- Both bilingual and multicultural approaches seek to involve and empower the most vulnerable student
- It is essential that their natural links be fostered
- **Diverse students are second language learners**

The Constructive Approach for education the diverse student is based on the following:

- Knowledge comes by constructing it, comparing it, and organizing it with old and new information that affect the final form that knowledge will take
- Children come to school knowing many things
- Children's development and learning are best understood as: an interaction of past and present linguistic, socioculture, and cognitive construction
- Learning is enhanced when the interaction of past, present linguistic, and cognitive constructions are meaningful to the student
- Children come to school motivated to enlarge their culture
- Enlarging the culture is the place to start
- Students come as organisms to be molded and regulated
- Teachers must first determine how they seek to know themselves and how their expertise and experience can be used as the fuel to fire their interest, knowledge, and skills
- First, not looking at their deficits but at what they need to know
- Teacher's role is to build bridges between two cultures
- Cultural elements that are relevant to the children must be allowed in the classroom
- Constructive approach utilizes the culturally diverse student's constructive knowledge as a foundation for appropriating new knowledge
- It also incorporates the student's native language or bilingual abilities

Educational Goals of the OYS

- Develop language and literacy skills.
- Increase the academic performance in class and on standardized tests.
- Affirm personhood, build character, build self-confidence.
- To celebrate the ethnic identity of all students seen in artifacts in the classroom and around the campus.
- Help diverse students like school and enjoy learning.

The Academics of OYS

Build Language and literacy

Language facilitation. Build language and literacy using three strategies. Comment and wait, ask questions and wait and Respond by adding more. Student chooses. Make activities fun.

Teach the tools of Basic Skills

Teach basic academic skills and student behavior.



Affirmation of Personhood

Connection with the family and the community of the student

A closer look at subjects taught

Phonetic Approach to Reading

Learn and identify the letters of the alphabet. Learn the sounds of the alphabet. Learn pronunciation and spelling of words.

Math

Identify patterns, count, adds, subtracts, and compares numbers and up to five

Science

Hands-on Activities, Do experiments Learn about Healthy foods

Social Studies

Learn about the people in their family, the people at school, people in the community

Physical Education

Activities focusing on developing and strengthening body movement, body management, and locomotor movement skills

Manuscript

Introduce by telling students what writing does? Show students how to hold writing instruments Participate in hand coordination activities

The Academics of OYS continued

Positive Behavior

Will learn expectations, routines, school behavior.
Know the difference between inside and outside voice.
Follow directions and ask permission from adults.
Respect the space of others
Keep your hands, feet to yourself
Be polite to classmates, teachers, and adults

Personal Responsibility

Keep track of all personal belonging.
Pick up trash after yourself
Students will practice buttoning clothes, using the zipper, tying shoes, and putting on coats/sweaters.
Reminded of good bathroom etiquette and the importance of washing hands.

School, Teachers & Services

School Design

- Dual language year-round school, TK to Kindergarten
- Maximum class size 14 students with one teacher and one assistant
- Same teacher the entire enrollment
- The teacher or assistant will be Spanish speaking

Teachers

- The first year's topic for professional development will focus on "Knowing Who Sits Before Us." As a group we will read and discuss books that explain the history, culture and the present issues that affect the families of the diverse children we teach. All materials used will be for the purpose of getting insight into the role and the lifestyle of the poor diverse person in American history; and how that information helps teachers to better understand historical problems that still may affect the people's present lifestyle.

Services

Extended day Program is from 2:30 to 6:00 every school day.

- Group Parent Meeting – Once a month a gathering of interested parents will meet with their child's teachers to discuss concerns about what is going on in the classroom; and how the parent can assist the student at home. This meeting will occur the first Tuesday of each month.
- The school buildings can be used in the evenings, after school, for various community group meetings.
- There will be English Learner' Class offered at the facility one night a week for parents or interested members of the community.
- There will also be a Marriage, Family and Child Therapist on campus at a scheduled time to conduct circles with young mothers.

To Conclude

- The development of language/literacy through practice, and competence in reading and basic math skills, with the encouraged-support given by the instructor, students will become academic achievers.
- Participation in planned thought provoking activities prepare students for higher levels of academic performance.
- Interdependence of subject context taught; will re-teach prior lessons.
- Group discussions motivate students to think and listen.
- In group discussions, students are driven to make sense of the problem and persevere in solving it.
- Each diverse student will be appreciated, nurtured and cared for as the unique gift of providence.
- Instructors must know their students in order to genuinely give those precious gifts.