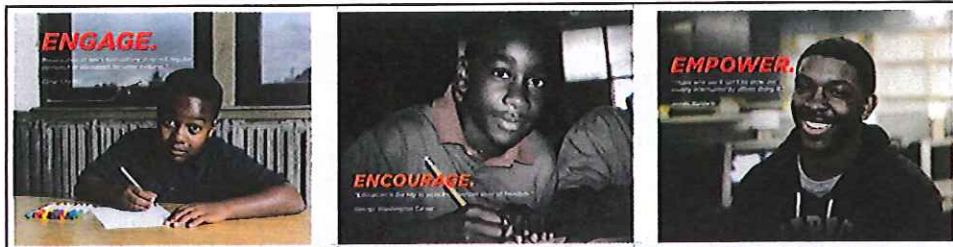


TOGETHER WE WILL:
ENGAGE. ENCOURAGE. EMPOWER.

IN 2010 THE OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT LAUNCHED THE OFFICE OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ACHIEVEMENT, A BOLD NEW INITIATIVE AIMED
AT IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH FROM PRESCHOOL
THROUGH 12TH GRADE IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA



African American Male Achievement Oakland Unified School District Students with Disabilities



Purpose of Special Education

- The purpose of special education is to provide free and appropriate education to all children regardless of any disabilities.
- It was not created as a place but rather a service delivery.
- This service delivery was meant to provide individual instruction to students identified with disabilities through an objective evaluation.

Special Education Continued

- Once the students “caught up” to their appropriate grade level they were to be exited from special education and placed back in the general curriculum.
- However when looking at the reality of special education for African American students it appears that many of the intended purposes of special education are not met.

Why does over identification in Special Education Exist for AAM

- There are many factors that contribute to this ongoing problem of over identification of African American Students in Special Education which include the following:
 - Poverty plays an important role in special education placement.
 - Low numbers of teachers and other school professionals from diverse back grounds.

Why Does Over Identification in Special Education Exist Cont.

- Institutional racism
- Biased standardized assessment measures
- Inequitable funding among schools
- Lack of access to early interventions
- Lack of teacher training in working with culturally different students
- School policies that lead to disparate treatment of students of color

Why Does Over Identification in Special Education Exist Cont.

- Lack of training of professionals regarding inappropriate referral and placement decisions.
- Failure by the school systems to collect and track data concerning over identification of African American children in special education.

Some Facts About African Americans in Special Education

- (Skiba et. al., 2006) African American students with disabilities are less often placed in a general setting, with access to general curriculum and high expectations.
- (Osher, Woodruff, & Sims, 2002) African American students with disabilities receive less counseling

Special Education in OUSD

- OUSD categorizes special education as Students With Disabilities (SWD)
- High incidence SWD- Mild Disabilities
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Emotional Disturbance
 - Speech and Language Disorders
 - Mild Mental Retardation
- What is Special Education in OUSD
 - For many students special education is
 - “Segregated setting with reduced instructional minutes”

Difficulty Identifying

- (Harry & Kingher, 2006) Extreme difficulty in attempting to diagnose with mild disabilities when dealing with complex issues of quality and culture

“We argue that the process of determining children’s eligibility for special education is anything but a science. Rather, it is the result of social forces that intertwine to construct an identity of “disability” for children whom the regular-education system finds too difficult to serve.” (p. 9)

Reasons for Overrepresentation and Mislabeled

- Teachers have difficulty constructing instructional lessons that address black students’ learning styles.
- There are ineffective referral processes for special education.
- Some teachers have biased perceptions of students with special needs.

More Reasons

- There is a disconnection in race, class, culture or gender between teachers and students.
- There is too much reliance on high-stakes testing, which is often culturally biased.
- The school's interpretation of the students' culture is distorted.

More Reasons

- There is a lack of early intervention for problems in African American students.
- There are power differentials in African American parents and school officials.
- Poverty is surprisingly not a factor. Learning disabilities are often associated with poverty, not mental retardation and emotional disturbance, which are the two disabilities in which African Americans are overrepresented.

OUSD African American Males

- In 2012-2013 school year
 - 20% of all k12 African American Male students were categorized as SWD
 - African American Males are disproportionately overrepresented in SWD
 - 30% of all SWD are African American male

African American Males as SWD

- 9% of the African American males that are SWD are categorized as Emotionally Disturbed
- 41% of African American males that are SWD are categorized as a learning disability

Environmental Effects on African American Students Academic Performance

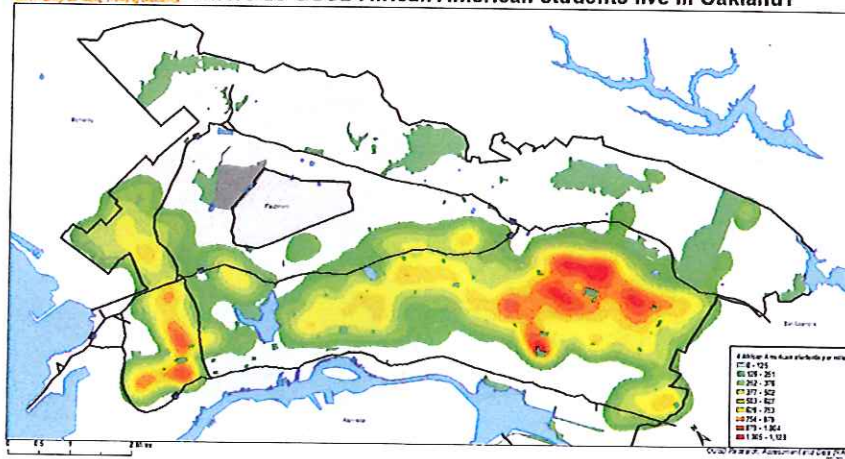
- (Sharkey, 2010) Students exposed to violence have a greater inability to recall information within one week of the occurrence of the happening
- (Bowen & Bowen, 1999) Exposure to neighborhood and school danger and violence has negative effects on students GPA, attendance and behavior

OUSD African American Students



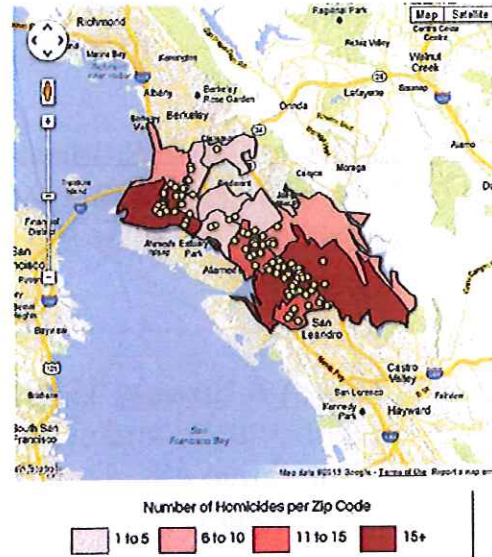
OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Where do OUSD African American students live in Oakland?

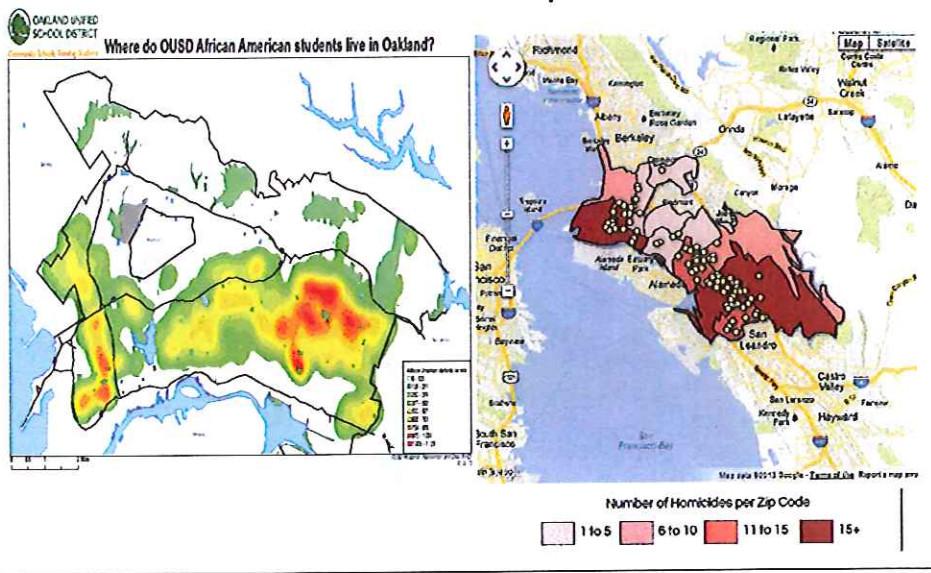


City of Oakland Crime Data

- In 2011 there were **110** homicides in the city of Oakland
- In 2012 there were **131** homicides in the city of Oakland



Oakland Homicide and AA Student Residents Comparison



Cultural Barriers for African American Students

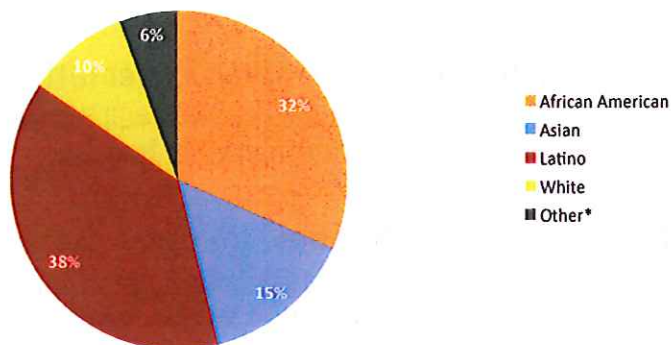
- (Warren, 2002) Differentiated expectations
 - Student from diverse backgrounds will not perform well based solely on demographic features
- (Neal, McCray, & Webber- Johnson, 2001)
 - Movement styles, e.g. students use of color and body language is miss understood by the dominate culture
- (Patton & Townsend, 1999) Power and privilege influences
 - Curriculum
 - Development
 - Implementation of school wide programs

Behavior Challenges for African American Students

- Discipline is a key factor related to African American male student with disability referrals
 - AAM students need
 - “Attention not Detention”**
- (Skiba et. al., 2005) School suspensions consistently relate to special education disproportionality
 - African American males are disproportionately referred for discipline

2011-12 OUSD Student Enrollment by Ethnicity

Total = 37,742

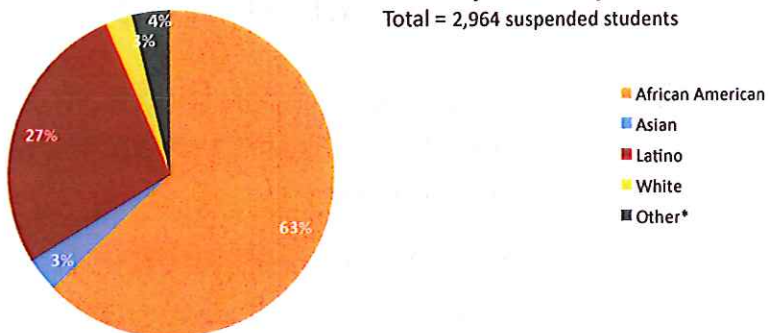


* Other Includes: Filipino, Native American, Pacific Islander, Multiple Ethnicities, and Not-Reported

- African American students made up 32% of all OUSD students.
- African American male students made up 16% of all OUSD students.

2011-12 OUSD Suspended Students by Ethnicity

Total = 2,964 suspended students



* Other Includes: Filipino, Native American, Pacific Islander, Multiple Ethnicities, and Not-Reported

- African American students made up 32% of all OUSD students, but were 63% of all OUSD students who were suspended.
- African American male students made up 16% of all OUSD students, but were 41% of all OUSD students who were suspended.

Problems Created Due to Over Identification

- When African American students are placed in special education for reasons other than having a disability many problems can occur.
- These students are placed in unequal educational tracts that denies them general education opportunities.
- Students encounter lower teacher expectations which leads to less effective instruction.

Problems Created Due to Over Identification Cont.

- The students are impacted negatively in terms of academic performance, self-esteem, class behavior, motivation, career goals and social interactions.

How Schools and Teachers Can Help Solve the Problem

- Deliver a culturally sensitive educational program that addresses the needs of students and their families.
- Support student learning and family involvement.
- Minimize the need for special education services.
- Ensure the IEP-teams are diverse and be sure to include the parents.

How Schools and Teachers Can Help Solve the Problem Cont.

- Provide empirically based interventions before referrals are made.
- Gather the appropriate information to ensure the student's problems are based on learning and not on other problems (e.g. Lack of breakfast, recent divorce etc.)
- Use curriculum based measures rather than standardized measures to link achievement with class room instruction.

How Schools and Teachers Can Help Solve The Problem Cont.

- Include diverse curriculum taking into account the culturally different aspects of students lives.
- Use teaching methods that address different types of learning styles.
- Use culturally appropriate behavior management methods in the classroom
- Create an environment in the classroom that fosters respect for cultural differences.

How Schools and Teachers Can Help Solve The Problem Cont.

- Encourage and welcome parental involvement from parents of all cultures.
- Obtain community support for local schools and extracurricular activities.
- Schools should provide in-services for school staff regarding over identification.
- Track the numbers of students in special education and be aware of any areas of over identification.
- Look at school policies that may contribute to the over identification problem.

What Parents can do to solve the Problem

- Learn about the special Education process
- Get involved, don't let the school make all of the decisions for your child.
- Ask questions and become involved with organizations that keep track of over identification.

AAMA recommendations as additional solutions

- It is recommended that the U.S. Education Department of Civil Rights
 - Enforce special education rules more
 - Urge OCR to intervene to fix the problem of overrepresentation of African American Males in special education.
 - Put high-stakes testing on hold until all students are able to learn tested material.

Possible Solutions

- OUSD report on unbiased data about race and gender statistics in special education.
- Improving early intervention programs for students with disabilities will allow them to be mainstreamed more easily and stay out of separate special education settings.

Possible Solutions

- Greater support should be provided to inclusive classrooms to increase learning in special education students.
- Administrators should ensure that disciplined students are educated in the least restrictive environment.
- Parents should be educated on the rights they have about their children's education.

Possible Solutions

- Assessment processes for determining mental retardation and emotional disturbances should be revamped.
- Aptitude tests should be made more culturally sensitive.
- Borderline mentally retarded students should be reevaluated using the new tests.

Possible Solutions

- Make sure schools are using special education as a support system and not an alternative one.
- Elementary school curriculum should be multicultural in nature.
- Teachers should seek “cultural brokers”- culturally competent people in their community to help them develop such curriculums.
- Parents often make highly effective cultural brokers.

Possible Solutions

- Develop mixed-age classrooms in which students can progress at their own rates.
- This also allows African American males to have older male role models.

Best Practices Implementation in OUSD

- Positive Behavior Interventions Supports (PBIS)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Manhood Development Program (MDP)
- Parent engagement
- Culturally responsive Professional Development (PD)

