

OAKLAND READS 2020



Grade-Level Reading Update 2013-14



A Project of Oakland Reads 2020
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INTRODUCTION

About Oakland Reads 2020

Oakland Reads 2020 (OR2020) is a citywide initiative working to ensure more Oakland children succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, career, and active citizenship. OR2020 focuses on one of the most important predictors of school success and high school graduation: grade-level reading by the end of third grade. OR2020 is a collaborative effort combining the strength of the Oakland Unified School District, the City of Oakland, City and County agencies, community-based organizations, and foundations, all committed to the progress and success of young learners.

Our Goal

OR2020 aims to dramatically increase third grade reading achievement, a critical milestone on the path to school success. Our goal is to double the percentage of Oakland third graders reading at or above grade level from 42% when we launched in 2012 to 85% by the year 2020.

Our Approach

Although schools must be accountable for helping all students achieve and providing effective teaching in every classroom every day, OR2020 is grounded in the belief that schools cannot succeed alone. Reaching our goal will also require an engaged community mobilized to remove barriers and expand opportunities to learning outside the classroom. Toward that end, OR2020 is focused on four community solution areas, or levers of change, critical to reading success: school readiness, school attendance, summer learning, and family engagement. We recognize that to reach our goal, we must identify challenges and provide support to meet student needs, with special attention to disparities in outcomes.

Purpose of this Report

In April 2014, OR2020 published its [Baseline Report](#), which looked at levels of reading proficiency and indicators for the four levers of change in 2010-11, as well as outcomes, conditions, and strategies during the first two years of OR2020 (2011-12 and 2012-13). In the first annual update, we examine and reflect on gains and challenges in the past year (2013-14) as we continue to lift up grade-level reading for Oakland students.

A Note on Methodology

All student and school level information in this report is the result of analyzing data from the Oakland Unified School District, and includes only schools administered solely by the District. Charter school outcomes were not analyzed because comparable data are not available from those schools for reading success, school readiness, attendance, summer learning, and family engagement. This report also utilizes data from the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Alameda County Childcare Planning Council and Applied Survey Research.

Reading Success

All Oakland third graders read at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

2020 Target: 85% of Oakland third graders will be reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

To reach our goal of 85%, third grade proficiency needs to increase by an average of seven percentage points per year. Recently, however, proficiency has decreased. Since the Baseline Year, OUSD has transitioned from using the California Standards Test (CST) to the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) as an assessment of reading skills, making it more challenging to compare progress between these years.

Reading Proficiency Indicators for OUSD Students	Baseline 2010-11 (CST)	2012-13 (SRI)	2013-14 (SRI)	Change in Last Two Years	Where Do We Need to be in 2020?
OUSD Third Grade	42%	39%	37.9%	-1.1% pts 	85% or above
English Language Reclassification Rate (K-12)	12.1%	12.1%	11.7%	-0.4% pts 	20% or above

Reclassification rates track how many students who begin the school year as English Learners meet standards for English proficiency by the end of the school year. Reclassification rates are particularly important in OUSD as they track progress in English fluency for the 36% of elementary students who are English Learners.

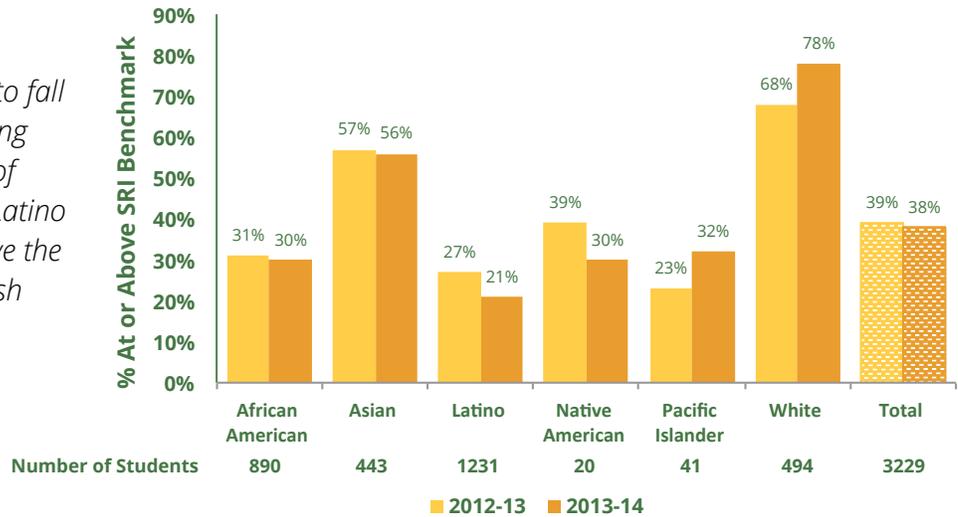
The percentage of third graders reading at grade level and the reclassification rate for K-12 students have fallen in the past two years. There is still a significant gap between grade level reading rates for White students and for students of color, with Latino students experiencing the largest decrease in proficiency.

English Language Reclassification in OUSD is based on assessment using the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) teacher evaluation, and parent consultation.

Why it Matters: Reading capably by the end of third grade opens the gateway for children to use reading skills to learn and digest new information, which becomes more critical beginning in fourth grade.¹ Because third grade marks the point when children transition from learning to read to reading to learn, reading proficiency is a strong indicator of later academic achievement, including on-time graduation from high school.²

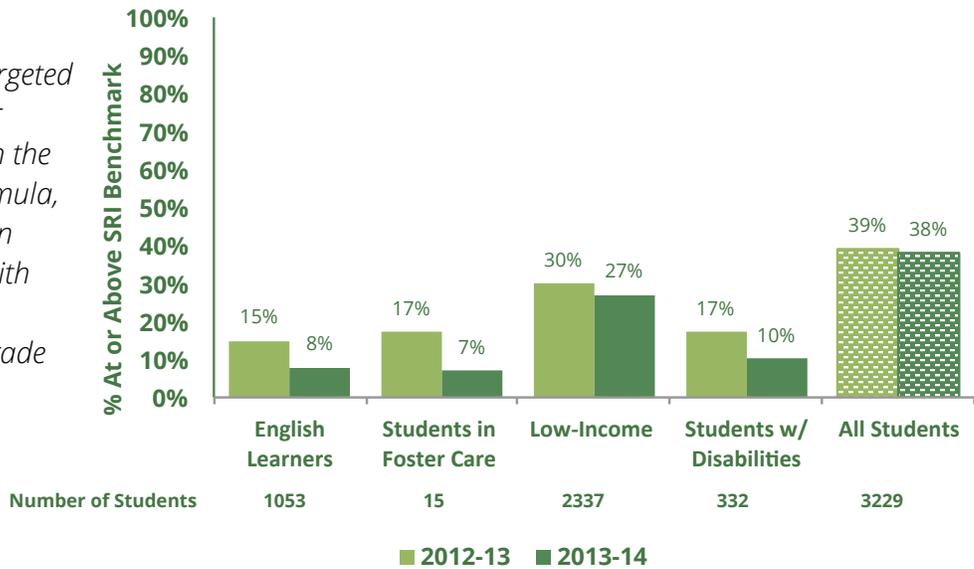
OUSD Third Graders At or Above SRI Benchmark by Race/Ethnicity

Students of color continue to fall behind in third grade reading outcomes. The lowest rate of proficiency occurs among Latino third graders, who also have the highest proportion of English Learners (66%).



OUSD Third Graders At or Above SRI Benchmark by Students Receiving Targeted Resources

For student populations targeted by the state and District for additional support through the Local Control Funding Formula, English Learners, children in foster care, and students with disabilities experienced the greatest declines in third grade reading.

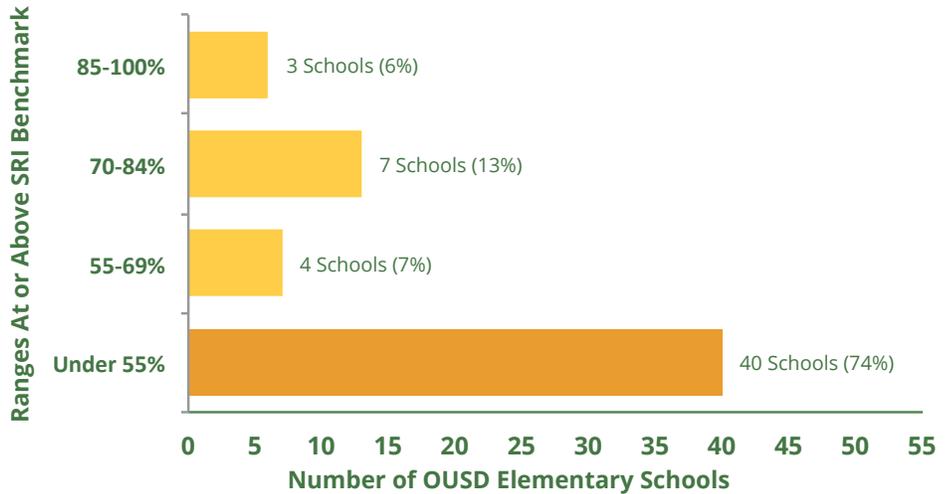


What are Targeted Resources?

California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) provides additional monies for the following target student populations: low income, English Learners, and those in foster care. OUSD has also identified Special Education, African American, and Latino students for additional support under LCFF. With LCFF funding coming into effect in the 2013-14 school year, it may be too early to realize impact.

OUSD Schools by Ranges of Third Graders At or Above SRI Benchmark 2013-14

School level results for third grade reading show that of the 54 elementary schools, three have 85% or more of their students reading at grade level or above. Seven schools are approaching 85% but nearly three quarters of all schools are still far behind.



Collaborative Action

Quality Improvement and Capacity Building: The Oakland Literacy Coalition continues to bring peer learning opportunities to organizations and providers by sharing information on promising practice and district priorities and providing volunteer trainings and workshops for community members. In 2012-13, several foundations collaborated with OUSD and charter schools to begin a Blended Learning pilot combining digital content, technology, and personalized learning. Preliminary outcomes for elementary schools showed strong impacts on student reading levels. Oakland Reads 2020 Literacy Labs have focused on refurbishing school computer labs for teacher instruction, and bridging home-to-school connections with take-home computers and parent computer classes. Other OR2020 Community Campaigns focus on supporting literacy-rich environments, providing books and resources to schools, children, and families, and promoting volunteers in schools.

Engaging Families for Student Success

Engaging families is critical to ensuring that all Oakland children are reading capably by third grade, beginning with their readiness for school and reinforced by strong school attendance and summer learning. Decades of research have established family engagement as a key ingredient for children's success, promoting improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation.³ Parents are a child's earliest and most important teachers and provide ongoing reinforcement of literacy skills. OR2020 recognizes that family engagement is the foundation for student success.

The OR2020 initiative has created opportunities for literacy providers and other school partners to build capacity for infusing family engagement strategies into their work. With its community partners, OR2020 has provided professional development, take-home materials, and tools to share with parents.

Several Community Campaigns have been designed to partner with parents and support parent involvement in their child's learning. Activities and campaigns supporting family engagement include small grants programs for school-based family literacy events and parent designed projects and volunteer workshops for parents and families supporting literacy at school and at home.

School Readiness

All Oakland children enter kindergarten ready to learn, with skills predictive of reading success.

2020 Target: 85% of Oakland children enter kindergarten ready to learn and demonstrate school readiness.

School Readiness Indicators for Entering Kindergarten Students	Baseline 2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	Change in Last Two Years	Where Do We Need to be in 2020?
Overall Readiness	N/A	N/A	40%	N/A	85%
First Sound Fluency ⁴	N/A	54%	51%	3% pts 	85%

Oakland students' overall readiness for kindergarten is less than 50%, and fewer than 55% of Oakland kindergartens display first sound fluency, a foundational skill for reading. The gap between need and availability of preschool slots may play a large role in the low percentage of children ready for school. Language and brain development occur from birth onward, and are strongly shaped by social and language rich interactions at home and in preschool. Still, 30% of preschool-age children and 59% of low-income preschool-age children don't have access to slots.⁵

When school readiness and language development increase every year, especially among low-income children, we will know they are moving toward better preparation for third grade reading success. According to experts, incremental improvements typically occur more slowly for overall readiness than for language and literacy due to the many behaviors and skills involved in being ready for school.

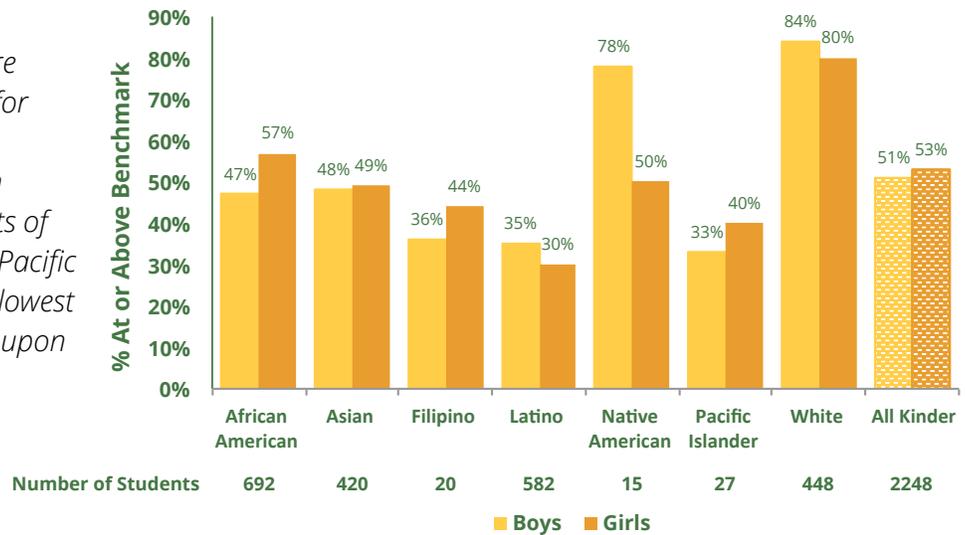
School Readiness in Oakland is measured by looking at 24 skills across four domains: academics, social expression, self-regulation, and self-care and motor skills.⁶

Why it Matters: Children entering elementary school need a specific set of social-emotional, cognitive, and physical skills in order to be ready to learn in school. As early as 18 months, low-income children may begin to fall behind in vocabulary development and other skills critical for later school success.⁷



OUSD Kindergartners At or Above Benchmark for First Sound Fluency 2013-14

Female kindergartners score slightly higher than males for first sound fluency, but the largest gaps occur between White students and students of color. Latino, Filipino, and Pacific Islander students have the lowest rates of first sound fluency upon kindergarten.



Collaborative Action

Through partnerships between systems (school district, county) and community-based and philanthropic organizations, Oakland continues to focus on increasing both quality of instruction and access to early education and resources, as exemplified by first time hiring of a Deputy Chief of Early Learning for OUSD. Oakland partners are working to improve instructional quality, support professional development, broaden outreach to families, align resources, and expand access to early learning programs.

Capacity Building and Quality Improvement: This school year (2014-15), foundations, literacy partners, and OUSD are collaborating to train and support OUSD Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teachers and several West Oakland preschool teachers to use SEEDS of Early Literacy, a curriculum designed to improve literacy outcomes and enhance social and emotional development. Alameda County, led by First 5 and the Child Care Planning Council, is participating in a five county Quality Rating and Improvement System for early learning, evaluating sites, and providing professional development and technical assistance to support continuous improvement.

Addressing the Preschool Gap

OUSD and First 5 Alameda County continue to offer a 4-week summer program that prepares children with little or no experience in preschool to be ready to learn in kindergarten.

Awareness and Outreach:

Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing, which kicked off in July 2014, is a citywide messaging campaign that urges families to talk, read, and sing to their young children to enhance vocabulary acquisition and encourage language-rich interactions.



School Attendance

Goal: All Oakland students from kindergarten to third grade attend school regularly and are not chronically absent so that learning in the early years is maximized.

2020 Target: Fewer than 8% of kindergarten through third grade students are chronically absent.

OUSD Chronic Absence and Attendance	Baseline 2010-11	2012-13	2013-14	Trend Since Baseline Year	Where Do We Need to be in 2020?
Chronically absent in K-3	12.1%	11.3%	11.4%	-0.7% pts	Below 8%
Satisfactory attendance in K-3	64.8%	65.9%	70.9%	+6.1% pts	at 95% of above

Experts suggest that to maximize children’s classroom engagement, we need to bring chronic absence levels below 8% and satisfactory attendance levels up to 95%.

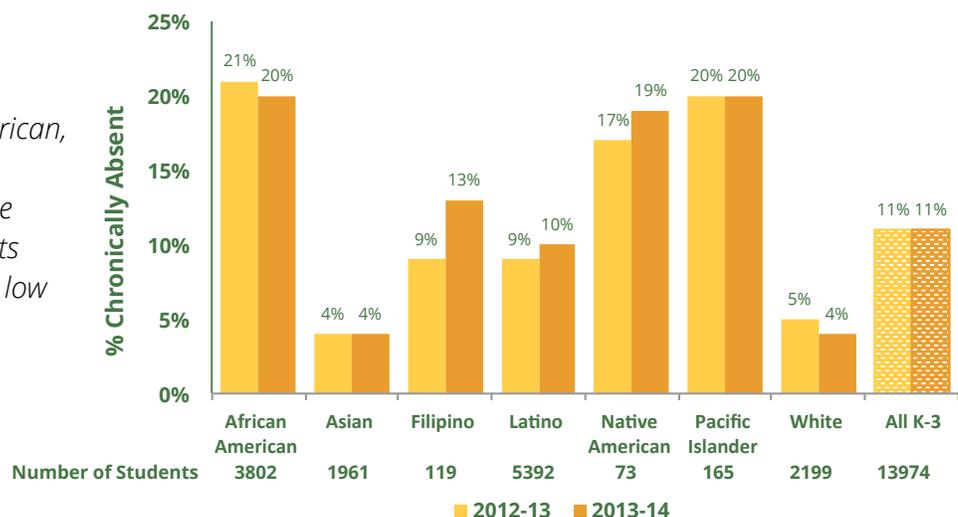
OUSD’s overall rate of chronic absence in elementary school is on the decline and satisfactory attendance continues to improve; however, there is still work to be done to reach the target and reduce disparities. Kindergarten students, for example, continue to represent the highest level of chronic absence in the elementary grades, currently at 15%. Although some student populations meet the 2020-21 goal for chronic absence rates, some of these groups have seen an increase from the previous years. We must carefully consider these trends and disparities in order to better understand student needs and how best to address them.

Chronic absence is defined as missing 10% or more of school days for any reason.

Satisfactory attendance is defined as attending school 95% or more of school days.

Why it Matters: Children who attend school regularly in kindergarten and first grade are nearly four times more likely to read at grade level in third grade than their peers who are chronically absent.⁸ Chronic absenteeism is also an early warning sign of later academic risk and school dropout.⁹

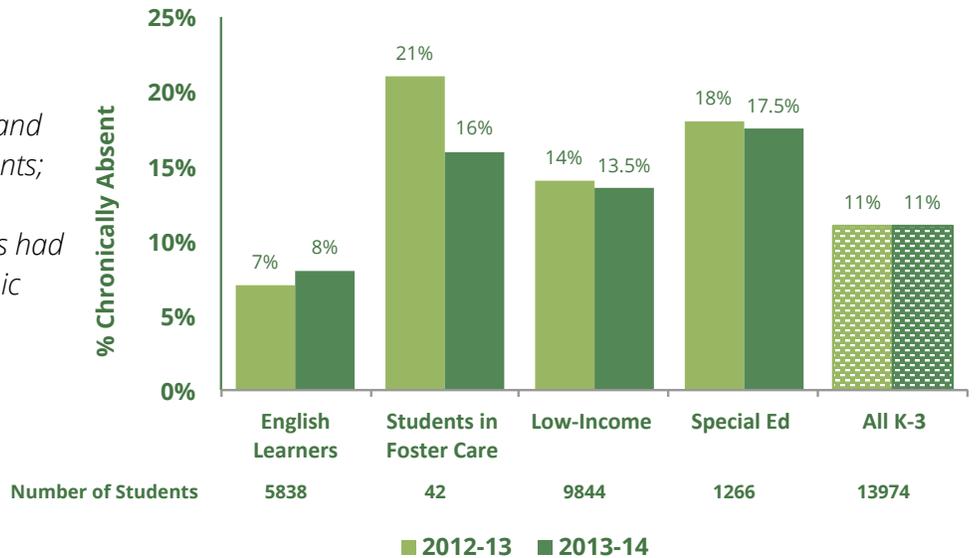
OUSD K-3 Chronic Absence Rates by Ethnicity/Race



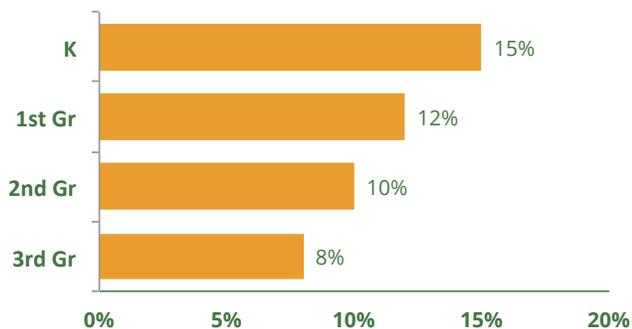
Chronic absence remained highest among African American, Pacific Islander, and Native American K-3 students, while Asian and White K-3 students continued to have relatively low levels of chronic absence.

OUSD K-3 Chronic Absence Rates by Students Receiving Targeted Resources

Chronic absence decreased among foster, low-income, and Special Education K-3 students; however, rates are still high. English Learner K-3 students had relatively low levels of chronic absence.



OUSD Chronic Absence Rate by Grade 2013-14



What are Targeted Resources?

California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) provides additional monies for the following target student populations: low income, English Learners, and those in foster care. OUSD has also identified Special Education, African American, and Latino students for additional support under LCFF. With LCFF funding coming into effect in the 2013-14 school year, it may be too early to realize impact.

Collaborative Action

Quality Improvement & Capacity Building: Community partners have worked together with the school district to improve intervention around chronic absence and to encourage, support, and reward good attendance habits. Actions have focused on supporting accurate attendance tracking and data, developing site-based attendance teams, and supporting outreach to families. With support from Attendance Works, OUSD has been providing ongoing district-wide professional development and training for school staff, while providing more schools with attendance clerks.

Data for Action: In September 2014, the Oakland Achieves Partnership – a collaborative of community based organizations, advocacy groups, funders, and the Chamber of Commerce – released the 2014 Oakland School Attendance Report: [Attending School Every Day: Making Progress, Taking Action in Oakland Schools](#). The widely circulated report analyzed attendance patterns, highlighted successful strategies, and made recommendations for improving school attendance.

Awareness and Outreach: Partners, including the school district, city and county agencies, and community organizations have concentrated on broadening and strengthening attendance messaging. The Oakland Attendance Collaborative has worked to emphasize the importance of improving attendance and supporting schools in reducing chronic absenteeism by developing toolkits for schools, messaging to local media, and celebrating improved attendance and outcomes.

Summer Learning

All Oakland children engage in summer learning that supports their continuous academic growth.

2020 Target: 85% or more of K-3 students, especially those who are low-income or reading below grade level, participate in a quality summer learning program.

Participants of OUSD Summer School	Baseline Summer 2011	Summer 2013	Summer 2014	Trend Since Baseline Year	Where Do We Need to be in 2020?
Number and Percent of K-3 Students Enrolled in Summer School	1,754 12%	1,385 10%	1,466 10%	-2% pts 	85% or more of K-3 students participate in a quality summer learning program

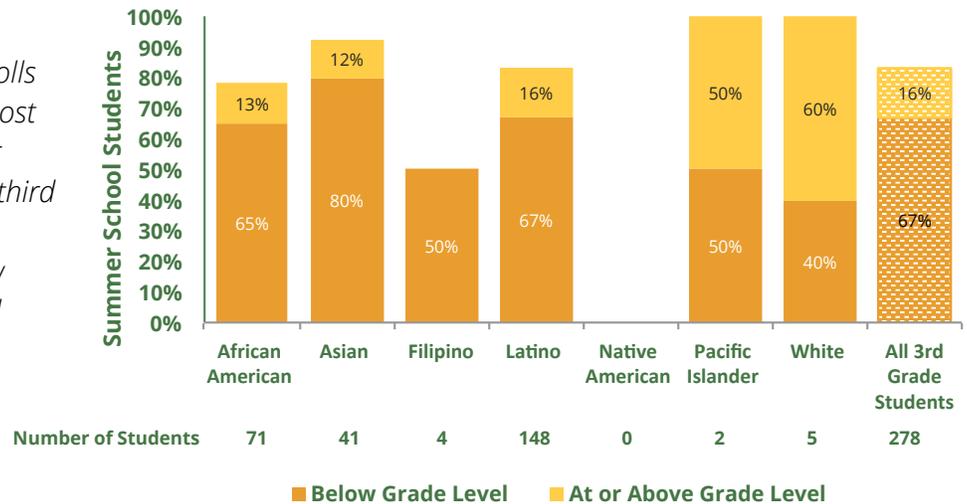
One of few city-wide measures of engagement in summer learning is enrollment in OUSD summer school, which serves primarily those students most at risk of summer slide: low-income students and students performing below grade level in reading or math. Summer school enrollment among K-3 students declined from summer 2011 to 2014, but has remained steady in the last two years. Many of the students at highest risk for summer slide are not enrolled in summer school. For instance, fewer than 15% of third graders reading below grade level and/or who are low-income participate in summer school.

Other free (or low-cost) summer programs include those funded by the City of Oakland;¹⁰ those programs enrolled approximately 1,153 PK-3 students in summer 2014. That means that roughly 2,600 children were enrolled in city-funded and OUSD-run summer programs out of a total of 13,974 children in grades K-3. However, we do not know how many others are engaged in fee-based quality summer learning programs and other daily learning activities.

Why it Matters: Many students who are not engaged in summer learning programs lose knowledge and skills; by the time school starts in the fall, they are, on average, one month behind where they left off in the spring.¹¹ Summer learning loss also contributes to the achievement gap because low-income students lose an average of more than two months in reading achievement in the summer while their middle-income peers tend to make gains.¹² Over time, this pattern can result in low-income students falling further and further behind their higher income peers.

Reading Levels of OUSD Third Grade Summer School Students by Ethnicity (2013)

OUSD summer school enrolls young children who are most at risk of learning loss. For example, in 2013, 67% of third graders in OUSD Summer School were reading below grade level as they entered summer school.

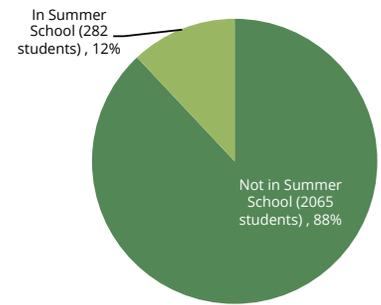


Note: Bars do not add to 100% because students who did not take the test were not counted.

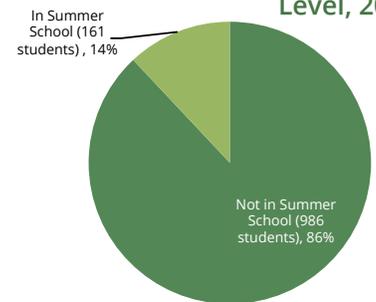
Although the majority of summer school students represent populations most at risk for losing ground over the summer months (English Learners, low-income, and those reading below grade level), summer school only reaches a small percent of students at risk for summer learning loss. In 2013, only 12% of OUSD third graders who were low-income¹³ and only 14% of all third graders reading below grade level participated in summer school.

Other summer programs, like those run through the city, serve many of the students at risk for falling behind during the summer months, but formal summer programs are not sufficient in scale to meet the needs of Oakland students. Summer literacy programs and projects like those through libraries, rec centers, and those promoting reading and literacy at home, are needed to help close the gap.

OUSD Summer School Participation of Low-Income Third Graders, 2013



OUSD Summer School Participation of Third Graders Reading Below Grade Level, 2013



Collaborative Action

Capacity Building

Several city-run and community-based programs have increased their focus on literacy during the summer months. For instance, Girls Inc. of Alameda County piloted a two-week Summer Literacy Camp in 2014 for second through fourth grade girls that included 30 minutes of reading every day, an array of art and literacy activities, and parent engagement activities. The Oakland Public Library intensified its summer reading program with a challenge for children to read 20 days or more during the summer 2014. This program had its highest participation rate ever (nearly 10,000 children), and more than half reached or surpassed the 20-day challenge. Of the finishers, roughly two-thirds were in third grade or younger.

Endnotes

- 1 The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, a KIDS COUNT Special Report, 2010.
- 2 The Annie E. Casey Foundation, *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, April 2011.
- 3 Dearing, McCartney et al, *Family Involvement Makes a Difference* series, Harvard Family Research Project, 2004.
- 4 First sound fluency is currently measured in OUSD using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS).
- 5 Kenneth Rainin Foundation and Alameda County Childcare Planning Council, *Preschool in Oakland*, Oakland 2012.
- 6 The *School Readiness Assessment* is administered biannually across Alameda County by Applied Survey Research on behalf of First 5 Alameda County.
- 7 Fernald, Anne, "SES Differences in Language Processing Skill and Vocabulary are Evident at 18 Months," *Developmental Science*, 2013.
- 8 Applied Survey Research, *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes*. May 2011.
- 9 Bruner, Charles, Discher, Anne, and Chang, Hedy. *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight*. Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center, November 2011.
- 10 The City funds summer programs through the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, which provides grants to community-based organizations to offer summer programs with enriching, high quality programming.
- 11 Sloan McCombs, J., Augustine, C. et al, *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*, RAND, 2011.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Because family income information is not available at the student level, this report uses as a proxy family qualification for the National School Lunch Program.





www.oaklandreads.org