OAKLAND READS 2020 BASELINE REPORT

An Examination of the Pathway to Third Grade Reading in Oakland from 2010 to 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oakland Reads 2020 is a citywide initiative focused on one of the most important predictors of school success and high school graduation: grade level reading by the end of third grade.[1] Oakland Reads 2020 (OR2020) is working to ensure that more children in our community succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, career and active community engagement. The initiative's aim is to increase the percentage of Oakland students reading at grade level by third grade from 42% (2010–11) to 85% by 2020.

The Oakland Reads 2020 Baseline Report is an in-depth look at the state of third grade reading proficiency in Oakland, analyzing student outcomes from kindergarten to fifth grade for literacy skills and for four levers of change that we know contribute to reading at grade level by third grade: school readiness, attendance, summer learning and family engagement. The report covers a period of three school years from 2010–11 to 2012–13. Because the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) enrolls the majority of students attending school in the City (64%), and because data for many of the indicators listed is not available from charter or private schools, OR2020 has focused in this report on student outcomes, strategies and programs for OUSD public schools only. Though we are looking at outcomes over time, we consider these data a "baseline," or a starting place from which to compare future outcomes. OR2020 activities so far have been laying the groundwork for a larger, multi-sector effort toward increasing grade level reading among Oakland children. This report is designed as a planning tool for that work and a community call to action.

To understand the challenges that we as a community need to address and where we need to focus, this report takes a hard look at data on reading proficiency and identifies where there are disparities in outcomes by race/ethnicity, gender, English fluency, and Special Education status. The report highlights the work already being done by OR2020, its partners, and others in the community; as well as potential strategies to support all students reading below grade level and those student populations needing particular resources and attention.

The Baseline Report is not a "report card" but rather a map to identify where we have begun working together and where we need to further integrate and direct our collective efforts and resources toward the common goal of building third grade reading proficiency.

> Oakland Reads 2020's goal is to increase the percentage of Oakland's 3rd graders reading at grade level from 42% to 85% by 2020.

> The Baseline Report is intended as a planning tool to inform how we direct our collective efforts and resources toward our common goal of building 3rd grade reading proficiency.

Major disparities are evident in rates of 3rd grade reading proficiency*
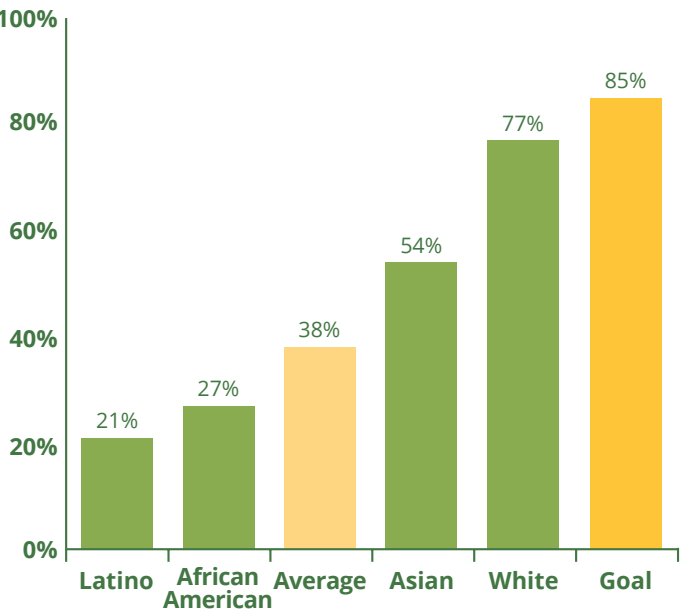
*All data charts in the Executive Summary (except for summer programs) are based on data from Oakland Unified School District, 2012–13.

1 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters, A KIDS COUNT Special Report*. 2010

What Do We Know about Reading Success in Oakland?

Reading capably by the end of third grade opens the gateway for children to use reading skills to learn and digest new knowledge, which becomes more critical in fourth grade. Because third grade marks the point when children transition from learning to read to reading to learn, it is a strong predictor of later academic achievement, including on-time graduation from high school. Analysis of literacy data revealed that:

- Nearly two-thirds of OUSD third graders are reading below grade level.

- None of the student populations—by race/ethnicity, gender, English fluency or Special Education status— have reached the OR2020 goal of 85% reading proficiently by third grade.

- There are major disparities in third grade proficiency levels for Latino and African American students compared to their White and Asian counterparts. On average over the past three years, 25% of Latino third graders and 30% of African American third graders were proficient, compared to the average proficiency rate in English of 59% for Asian third graders and 78% for White third graders.

- Latino students have the lowest proficiency rates in third grade (21% in 2012–13) of any of the largest ethnic/racial groups in OUSD, possibly due to a high number of English Learners in that population. In 2012–13, 69% of K–5 Latino students were English Learners, and English Learners' average proficiency rate for third grade was 8%.

- Males have lower outcomes in third grade reading than females among African American, Latino and Asian student groups, though Latina and African American third grade girls also have particularly low proficiency rates (24% and 31%, respectively).

- Only 15% of third grade Special Education students were reading at grade level in 2012–13.

Nearly two thirds of 3rd graders are reading below grade level

1,181 38% — Proficient or Above

2,017 62% — Below Proficient
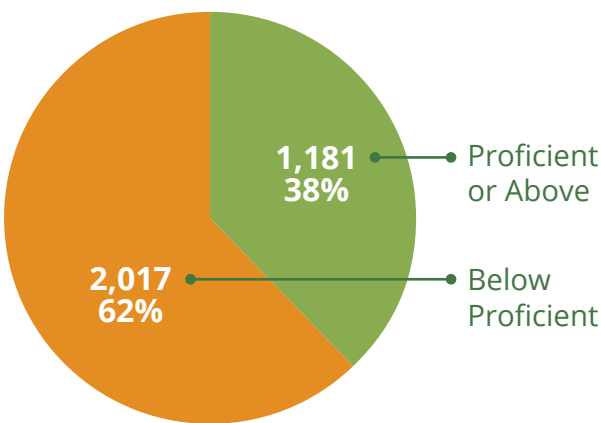
What's Being Done Already to Promote Reading Success?

- OUSD has developed a Literacy Framework to protect and bolster learning pathways from preschool to twelfth grade. The Literacy Framework includes early intervention strategies, a focus on the early grades as well as supports for those reading two or more grades below grade level after third grade; increased coordination of regular student assessments across the District, extensive professional development, and parent engagement.

- OUSD and the Oakland Public Education Fund together developed a leveled literacy intervention, which began in 2012–13 at 14 elementary schools where there was a high proportion of African American students with low achievement levels in literacy.

- OUSD is in the process of revising master plans for English Learners and Special Education students to provide additional targeted supports for these student populations.

- OR2020 has helped OUSD fund leveled classroom libraries at more than half its elementary schools and has deployed volunteers to "level" and label existing classroom books for use in leveled libraries. Leveled libraries allow children to select books that match their reading level and support their ability to incrementally master new literacy skills. The District has committed additional funds to establishing leveled classroom libraries in all 54 elementary schools.

- The Oakland Literacy Coalition supported three Literacy Zone elementary schools by matching multiple literacy providers to serve a site's identified literacy needs over a three-year period.

What Do We Know about School Readiness in Oakland?

School readiness is generally understood as children entering kindergarten with the social, emotional and academic skills necessary to learn in an elementary school environment. Language and brain development happens from birth onward, beginning with parent-child and caregiver-child social interactions such as talking, singing and reading. Readiness skills including language and literacy are also reinforced and strengthened through strong adult-child relationships and cognitive skill development occurring in early learning environments.

Analysis of language and literacy data revealed that:

- Nearly half of the children entering kindergarten in OUSD scored below benchmark for first sound fluency (initial sounds), a key predictor of reading success.

- Disparities in student outcomes were also evident at this age: 49% of African Americans, 47% of Asians, 44% of Latino students, and 75% of White students reached or exceeded the benchmark for this literacy skill. Forty-one percent (41%) of English Learners scored at or above the benchmark.

Children of color were less likely to reach benchmarks on early literacy assessments

	African American	Asian	Latino	White
	49%	47%	44%	75%
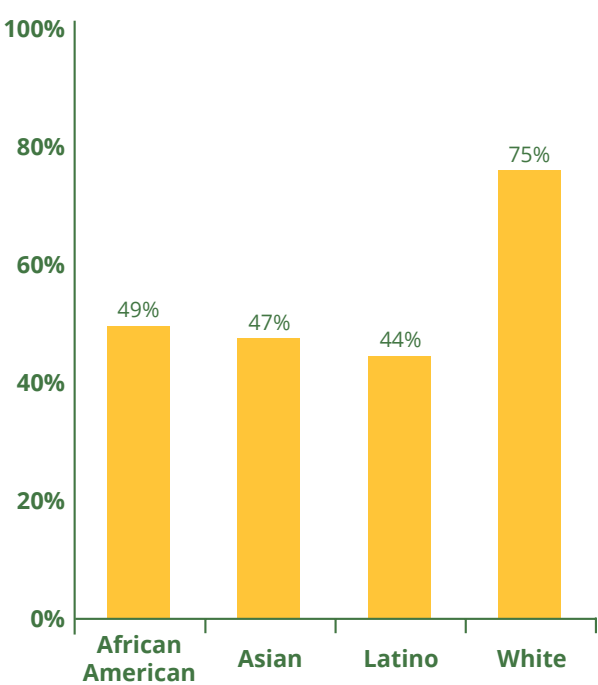
What's Being Done Already to Promote School Readiness?

- OUSD's Balanced Literacy Professional Learning Community brings together preschool, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade teachers to focus on the Balanced Literacy curriculum, which supports reading, listening, speaking and writing, the foundation skills of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. Adoption of the Balanced Literacy curriculum also includes the use of benchmark assessments for grades K–2 designed to aid early intervention.

- OUSD is also working on a 0–8 Realignment of the early years curriculum, professional development, student assessments, data collection, and other areas supporting instructional and classroom quality to provide a strong, consistent pathway from preschool to third grade and beyond.

## What Do We Know about School Attendance in Oakland?

Chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of school days) is an established early warning sign of academic risk and school dropout. Missing school in the earliest years is especially damaging: chronic absence and "at risk" attendance (missing 5% to 9% of school days) in kindergarten and first grade have both been linked to lower levels of third grade reading proficiency.

Analysis of attendance data found:

- 34% of OUSD kindergarten to third grade students are chronically absent or "at risk."

- Kindergartners and first graders have the highest rates of chronic absence (13% and 10% respectively)

- African American students have the highest rates of chronic absence in kindergarten (26%) and early elementary (K–3, 21%) among all ethnic populations.

- Latino and African American kindergarten to third grade students have the same high rates of "at risk" attendance (26%).

- Special Education students in kindergarten to third grade have high rates of both chronic absence (18%) and "at risk" attendance (28%).

- English Learners in kindergarten to third grade have a high rate of "at risk" attendance (22%) but a relatively low rate of chronic absence (7%).

Student with high rates of chronic absence and "at risk" attendance tend to have lower rates of reading proficiency.

4,658 students in K–3 were chronically absent or "at risk"

- 1,543 11% — Chronically Absent
- 3,115 23% — At Risk
- 9,014 66% — Satisfactory
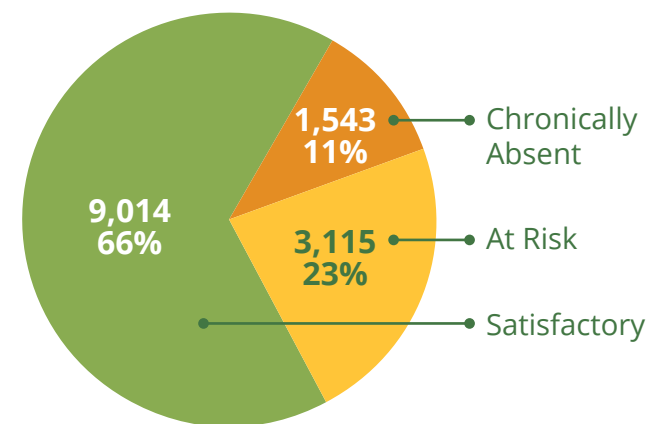
What's Being Done Already to Promote Good Attendance?

- OUSD has adopted a goal of reducing the overall chronic absence rate by 10% annually or maintaining at 5% or below if a site is already at that level.

- OUSD developed more detailed tools for tracking student attendance, re-wrote its Attendance Policy Manual to focus on chronic absence as an early intervention point, and provided extensive professional development on working with attendance data and engaging parents and caregivers in improving their child's attendance.

- The Oakland Education Cabinet and OUSD Attendance Campaign (the Oakland Attendance Collaborative) launched a District-wide campaign in fall 2012 accompanied by attendance toolkits for every school site on how to engage student and families around attendance.

## What Do We Know about Summer Learning in Oakland?

During summer vacations, many students lose knowledge and skills, and by the end of summer, students are, on average, one month behind where they left off in the spring.[2] Summer learning loss 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.[3] One explanation is that children from low-income families often lack the resources to access opportunities like summer programs and summer camps that encourage and support reading.

Although OUSD offers free summer school and the City of Oakland supports half and full-day low-cost (or no cost) summer enrichment programs, these forms of summer learning reached only 6,567 students in 2013. However, summer school enrollment does reflect high proportions of student populations with the most disparate reading outcomes, as principals select students and recommend summer school participation based on academic need. Latino students (54%) and English Learners (41%) were overrepresented in summer school compared to their Asian and White counterparts, which may present an opportunity to address reading achievement gaps. Twenty-eight percent of participants were in kindergarten to third grades.

Latino and English Learner students were overrepresented in OUSD summer school, providing a potential opportunity for narrowing the achievement gap.

Low-cost or no-cost summer learning programs through OUSD and the City of Oakland reached 6,567 students in 2013. The Oakland Public Library encouraged reading in another 9,372 children with their Summer Reading Game.

The City of Oakland and OUSD served thousands of youth in Summer 2013

Number of Students Served

- The Oakland Public Library: 9,372
- OUSD Summer School: 5,023
- Oakland Fund for Children & Youth: 1,544
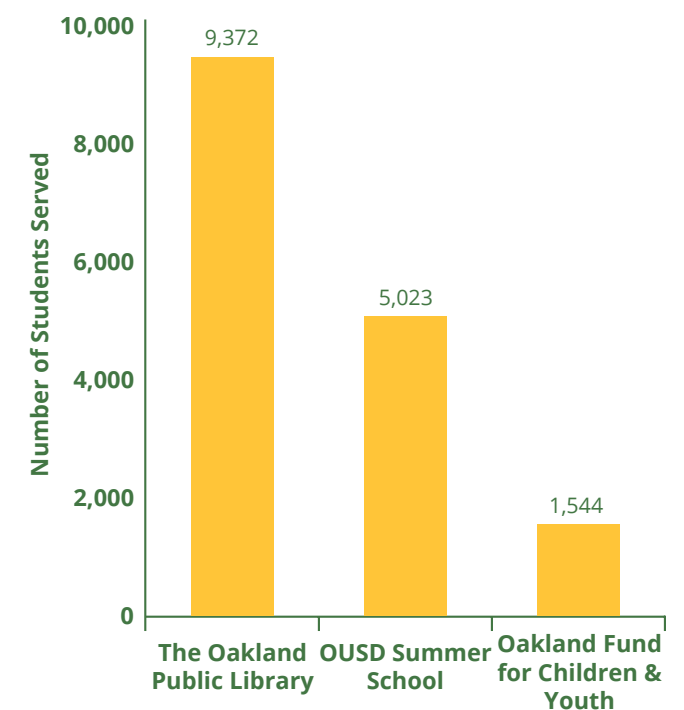
What's Being Done Already to Increase Summer Learning?

- The City of Oakland offers summer programming through :
  - The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth in 2013 provided half or full day programs for 1,544 children, including literacy-related programming for 539 children.
  - The Oakland Public Library in 2013 ran a Summer Reading Game that reached 9,372 children.

- OR2020 supported a 2013 literacy intervention program for second to fifth graders at one of its Literacy Zone elementary schools.

2 McCombs Sloan, Jennifer, Catherine Augustine, Heather Schwartz, Susan Bodilly, Brian McInnis, Dahlia Lichter, and Amanda Brown Cross. *Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning*. RAND, 2011.
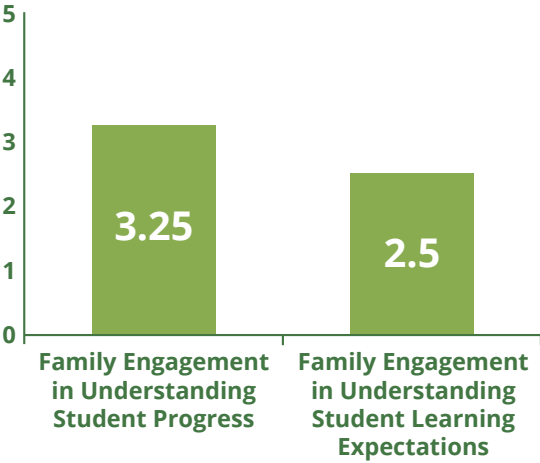3 McCombs Sloan et al, 2011.

What Do We Know about Family Engagement in Oakland?

Family engagement happens when educators and community partners involve families in meaningful ways in their child's learning and social-emotional development, and actively partnering with them to support their child's development. Family engagement is a critical ingredient for our children's success, promoting a range of benefits, including improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation.[4] Family engagement from birth onward can influence parents' role in the development of pre-reading skills from a very young age, whether initiated through a formal or informal early learning environment.

The School Quality Review process rated family engagement on two dimensions

3.25	**2.5**
Family Engagement in Understanding Student Progress	Family Engagement in Understanding Student Learning Expectations

OUSD has identified and supported family engagement as an integral element in improving student achievement. One of the five main indicators of the District's extensive, metrics-based School Quality Review standards, initiated in 2011–12, has been "meaningful student, family and community engagement." Of the 20 elementary schools assessed, the average score for engagement on student progress was 3.25 out of 5, which corresponds to a "developing" rating. The average score for engagement on student learning (understanding learning expectations) was 2.5 out of 5, which corresponds to a "beginning/developing" rating. While this is a partial measure of the full range of family engagement standards related to learning, and has been completed at fewer than half of OUSD elementary schools, it is nonetheless a starting point to understand to what degree families are so far being engaged by schools around their children's academic achievement beginning in kindergarten.

What's Being Done Already to Increase Family Engagement?

- OUSD has incorporated some measures of family engagement into its School Quality Review Standards.

- The District's Office of Family, Student and Community Engagement offers an eight-week leadership course for parents/caregivers focused on understanding and supporting the development of good school attendance, grade-level reading, and appropriate school culture and behavior. So far, 13 elementary schools have participated in the training.

- OUSD Family Engagement also runs an active Parent Ambassador program that trains parents to support outreach, stakeholder engagement, and parent-teacher partnership for learning at home.

- OR2020 has supported several family engagement strategies at its three Literacy Zone elementary schools, including Family Literacy Nights, Reading Challenges and the provision of take-home family reading and writing materials.

4 Dearing, E., K. McCartney, H. B. Weiss, H. Kreider and S. Simpkins. *Family Involvement Makes a Difference* series. Harvard Family Research Project, 2004.

What are the Greatest Challenges to Reaching the Goal of 85% of Oakland Students Reading Proficiently by Third Grade?

The data gathered in this report around reading success and the four levers of change—school readiness, attendance, summer learning and family engagement—signal that OR2020 partners face challenges in supporting students to reach excellent and equitable outcomes. The areas that stand out as particularly needing our collective attention are:

▶ **Consistently Low Rates of Third Grade Reading Proficiency:** More than two-thirds of OUSD's third graders do not read at grade level, and in the last three years, none of the major student subpopulations—by race/ethnicity, gender, English fluency or Special Education status—have reached the OR2020 goal of 85% reading proficiently by third grade.

▶ **Significant Achievement Gaps by Race/Ethnicity and Gender:** The rates of reading proficiency for Latino and African American students were disproportionately low compared to other groups, and between two and three times lower than White students. Third grade boys of color (Latino, African American, and Asian) also had lower rates of proficiency compared to girls of color (five to ten percentage points), although African American and Latina girls had extremely low rates of proficiency as well.

▶ **Large English Learner Population Needing to Gain Proficiency:** English Learners comprise 30% of the OUSD student population, and only 8% of third grade English Learners became proficient by the end of the year in 2012–13. More than half of Latino students and more than one-third of Asian students are English Learners.

▶ **Student Populations with Lowest Reading Proficiency Rates Affected by Multiple Challenges:** OUSD student populations with the lowest levels of third grade proficiency have poor outcomes in one or more of the areas we know contribute to reading success.

- Of the major student ethnic groups, Latino kindergarteners, have the lowest rates of school readiness as measured by an early grades literacy assessment, and Latino students in early elementary school have among the highest rates of "at risk" attendance. The majority of Latino students in kindergarten to third grade are also English Learners, who have low rates of third grade reading proficiency since they are still engaged in learning English.

- Of the major student ethnic groups, African American kindergarteners have the second lowest rate of school readiness, and African American K–3 students have the highest rate of chronic absence.

- English Learners have among the lowest rates of school readiness and among the highest rates of "at risk" attendance of any student population we evaluated.

- Special Education students have the second highest rate of chronic absence and the highest rate of "at risk" attendance of any student population we evaluated

▶ **Socioeconomic Status Affects Resource and Learning Opportunities:** Although currently it is not possible to track individual student-level income data, we know that almost three-quarters of OUSD students qualify for free and reduced price lunch.[5] Studies have suggested that children in low-income families hear fewer words[6,7] and have less access to high quality early care and pre-kindergarten programs, exposure to which we know positively affects school readiness. Low-income families also often lack the resources for summer programs and summer camps, enrichment opportunities that bridge the summer learning loss gap for children who regularly participate over time.

What are Focus Areas and Potential Strategies for Oakland Reads 2020?

❶ **Focus on providing targeted support for student groups with the most disparate outcomes:** Partners can identify and implement targeted supports for student groups with the most disparate reading success outcomes: Latino, African American, English Learner and Special Education students, and particularly boys of color. Partners can adopt shared benchmark indicators to support and coordinate intervention efforts for students whose literacy skills are very low and/or not progressing.

❷ **Focus on addressing English Learner needs in instructional, enrichment and early learning settings:** Nearly one-third of OUSD students are English Learners, and demographic projections tell us that population will continue to grow, especially among Latino students. Bilingual materials and expertise in working with bilingual and transitioning English Learners will be crucial to the success of OR2020 partners' efforts.

❸ **Focus on early years intervention and support:** Paying attention to strong early indicators for reading success (engagement of families around language and literacy from birth onward, kindergarten first sound fluency, kindergarten and first grade attendance rates) can help partners develop multi-pronged and aligned early intervention strategies for students struggling in one or more of these areas. Supporting the development of citywide indicators for school readiness can also help systems and partners better identify and coordinate strategies to meet student needs.

❹ **Focus on aligning supports with challenge areas for each student group:** Knowing what combination of factors presents the greatest barriers for a particular student population means that partners can target programmatic strategies accordingly. For instance, given African Americans' low rate of third grade proficiency and high rate of chronic absence, partners could coordinate efforts to address those areas in early learning, summer learning and family engagement opportunities, and develop aligned instructional strategies to improve early indicator areas like first sound fluency.

❺ **Focus on addressing socioeconomic-related challenges:** Low income and its negative impact on access to opportunities is clearly a barrier to many OUSD students, and should be accounted for when planning program and other strategies. Partners should consider cost to participants, transportation requirements, food/nutrition and other income-related issues when planning literacy enrichment and other opportunities.

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5 To qualify for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in 2012–13, a student's family income must have been below or between 130% ($29,965) and 185% ($42,643) of the federal poverty level.
6 Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd. *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Brookes Publishing, 1995.
7 Fernald, Anne, "SES Differences in Language Processing Skill and Vocabulary are Evident at 18 months", *Developmental Science*, 2013.

INTRODUCTION

Oakland Reads 2020 (OR2020) is a citywide initiative focused on one of the most important predictors of school success and high school graduation: grade-level reading by the end of third grade.[1] OR2020 is a multi-sector, collaborative effort combining the strength of the Oakland Unified School District, the City of Oakland, City and County agencies, community-based organizations, and funders, all committed to the progress and success of early learners. OR2020 was initiated by the Oakland Literacy Coalition (OLC)[2] in 2011–12, when that group supported Oakland to join more than 130 communities across the country in the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Children who are not reading proficiently by 3rd grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school on time than those who are reading proficiently.

Reading proficiently by third grade is linked to later reading and academic success, especially the ability to digest new knowledge, which becomes even more critical in fourth grade.[3] One in six children who are not reading proficiently in third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers.[4] Yet each year many Oakland children fall behind in their reading skills.

What is the aim of Oakland Reads 2020?

Oakland Reads 2020 (OR2020) is working to ensure that more children in our community succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, career and active community engagement. Our aim is to double the percentage of Oakland students reading at grade level by third grade from 42% (2010–11) to 85% by 2020. Paramount to achieving this goal is addressing low rates and significant disparities in academic achievement among Oakland students, many of whom are disproportionately impacted by challenges related to poverty, language fluency and other barriers. We recognize that to reach our goal, strategies must at once identify and provide universal supports for students in Oakland who are not on track to read proficiently by third grade, and provide targeted resources and attention for those populations that have additional or exceptional barriers.

Oakland Reads 2020 aims to double the percentage of Oakland students reading successfully by 3rd grade from 42% to 85% by 2020. OR2020 is part of the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading including more than 130 communities across the U.S.

We believe that the academic success of children requires engaged communities mobilized to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and create equitable conditions for our children to achieve.

OR2020 will utilize a collective impact framework,[5] which begins with a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of our challenge and a joint approach to solving it. In this report, we begin

OR2020 believes that the academic success of our children requires engaged communities mobilized to remove barriers, expand opportunities, and create equitable conditions for our children to achieve.

1 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters, A KIDS COUNT Special Report.* 2010.
2 The Oakland Literacy Coalition is collaborative of literacy service providers and stakeholders, first convened in 2008.
3 Annie E. Casey, 2010.
4 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation.* April 2011.
5 Kania, John and Mark Kramer. "Collective Impact." *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* (Winter 2011).

with data that describes and defines this challenge, and aids partners in identifying and developing aligned actions and strategies. We will also measure our progress using shared indicators developed by and vetted with OR2020 partners with expertise in early childhood learning and literacy.

What are Oakland Reads 2020's four levers of change for reading success?

In order to meet the overall goal of third grade reading proficiency, OR2020 and the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading have focused on four levers of change critical to reading success.

▶ **School Readiness:** Our goal is that all children enter kindergarten ready to learn and backed by a quality early learning experience so that they are prepared to succeed in elementary school.

▶ **School Attendance:** Our goal is to reduce chronic absence and increase school attendance so that students receive sufficient instructional time and support to read at grade level or above.

▶ **Summer Learning:** Our goal is to create greater access to and engagement in summer learning, including opportunities to build literacy skills, because many children lose academic ground over the summer months if they are not able to practice and reinforce these skills.

▶ **Family Engagement:** Our goal is to increase family engagement around literacy because we recognize that families are a child's most important teacher and greatest partner in learning.

What is the Oakland Reads 2020 Baseline Report?

As a community, we have galvanized around the effort to bring our third graders to reading at grade level, knowing the critical importance of this milestone for their later achievement and opportunities. This report examines where we are now as we ready ourselves to engage in a concerted multi-sector effort to increase the reading proficiency of Oakland's third graders. The report takes a hard look at whether and where there has been progress toward grade-level reading by the end of third grade in the last few years; where there are disparities in outcomes; and what resources we have to offer children in Oakland. We also focus on the work already being done by OR2020 its partners, and others in the community.

The report *is not* an accountability report or a "report card" on the efforts of the many organizations trying to create change in our community. We recognize the magnitude and seeming intractability of the issues that we are facing and also that no single agency or system can effect progress by itself. OR2020 is working to support students' success, and we have designed this report as a resource to inform how we direct our collective efforts and resources toward our common goal of building third grade reading proficiency.

The Baseline Report covers a period of three school years from 2010–11 to 2012–13. Though we are looking at outcomes over time, we consider these data a "baseline," or a starting place from which to compare future outcomes. OR2020 activities so far have been largely laying the groundwork for a larger, multi-sector effort toward increasing literacy in Oakland. Thus, this report will serve as a critical planning tool. It is designed to explain why this initiative has chosen to focus on third grade reading and why each of the levers of change supporting it—school readiness, attendance, summer learning and family engagement—are significant contributors to reading successfully by third grade. The report aims to build understanding of the work and its challenges, and to bring the community together around this critical issue.

> The Baseline Report is an opportunity to see where we are as we ready ourselves to engage in a concerted multi-sector effort to increase the reading proficiency of Oakland's 3rd graders.

> The report looks at whether and where there has been progress in the last few years, where there are disparities in outcomes, and what resources we have to offer children in Oakland.

> This is not a "report card" on the efforts of the many organizations trying to create meaningful change in our community. We have designed this report as a resource to inform how we direct our collective efforts and resources toward the common goal of building 3rd grade reading proficiency.

What are the demographics of OUSD's students and Oakland's residents?

School Enrollment in Oakland

The majority of children attending school in Oakland are enrolled in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) public schools: 36,180 attend OUSD schools; 11,918 attend public charter schools; and an estimated 8,923 are enrolled in private, parochial, home school or other programs.[6] Because OUSD enrolls the majority of students attending school in the City, and because data for many indicators in this report are not available from charter or private schools, OR2020 has focused in this baseline report on student outcomes, strategies and programs for OUSD public schools only. Future reports will explore data from these schools if and when it is available.

> Nearly two-thirds (64%) of students attending school in Oakland are enrolled in the Oakland Unified School District public schools. About one fifth (21%) attend public charter schools.

6 MK Think. *Oakland Unified School District Asset Management: 2013 Facility Baseline*. Special Committee on Property Asset Management. April 2013.

Racial/Ethnic Populations in Oakland and in OUSD

Oakland is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse cities in the United States, and in many ways represents the future demographics of California, which is leading the nation in demographic change. For instance, recent research predicts that by 2020, Latino and Hispanic residents will comprise a plurality (42%) of the state's population for the first time.[7] Latino students are currently the largest ethnic group and one of the fastest growing in OUSD. (See Figure 2, next page) But the tapestry of ethnicities that makes up Oakland and OUSD is even richer; we live with a diversity seldom found elsewhere. There are more than 40 languages spoken by families and students in OUSD.

Oakland had approximately 400,740 residents in 2012,[8] including almost equal percentages of African American (25%), Latino (27%), and White (27%) residents. Asian residents followed at 16%. (See Figure 1) As in many urban districts, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) student population does not strictly parallel the general population. African American (31%) and Latino (38%) students are more represented in OUSD than in the City as a whole, and White students less. (See Figure 1) The other racial/ethnic categories are proportional to their overall City population. Although we collected data for the largest racial/ethnic categories, there are many more.

> Research predicts that by 2020, Latino and Hispanic residents will comprise a plurality (42%) of the state's population for the first time. Latino students are currently a plurality (38%) in OUSD.

Latinos and African Americans are represented at higher levels in OUSD than in the City of Oakland population, while Whites are represented at lower levels
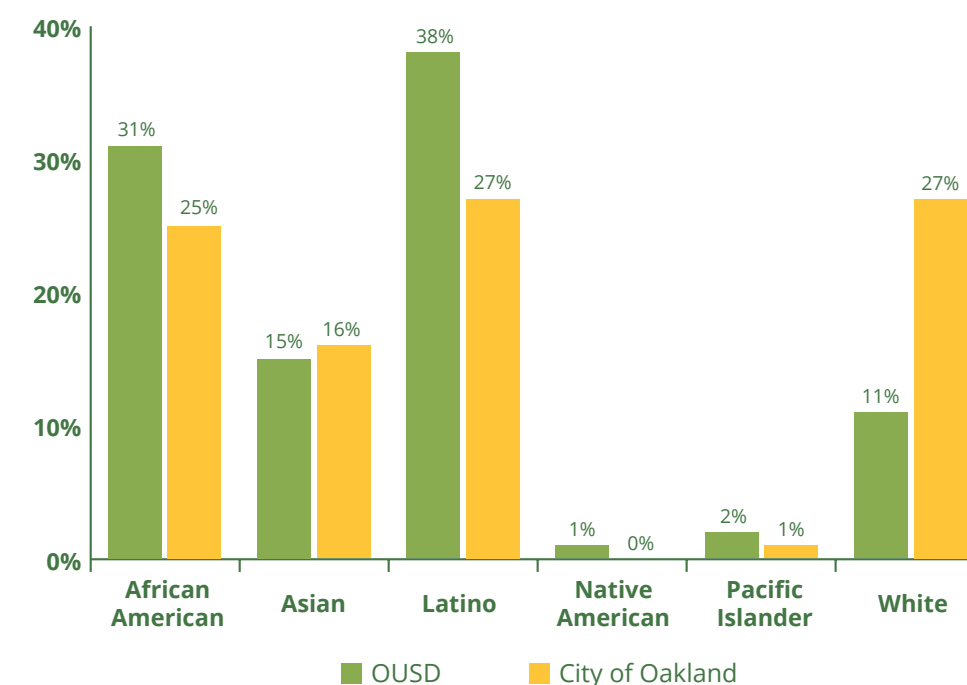

FIGURE 1: OAKLAND AND OUSD POPULATIONS BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN 2012

7 PolicyLink. *California's Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model*. Oakland: 2012.
8 U.S. Census Bureau. *2012 American Community Survey*. http://www.census.gov/acs/www/

English Learners in OUSD

English Learners (EL) comprise 30% of the student population, and Latino students account for the largest percentage (73%) of EL in the District. In fact, the majority of Latino students in OUSD are English Learners (57%), while 39% of Asians are EL and 22% of Pacific Islanders. (See Figure 3) The fact that OUSD has a high proportion of students who are English Learners focuses our attention on the need for the ongoing development of OR2020 strategies responsive to this population.

30% of OUSD students are English Learners (EL). EL students account for 57% of Latino students and 39% of Asian students.

Latino and Asian students in OUSD have higher proportions of English Learners than other groups
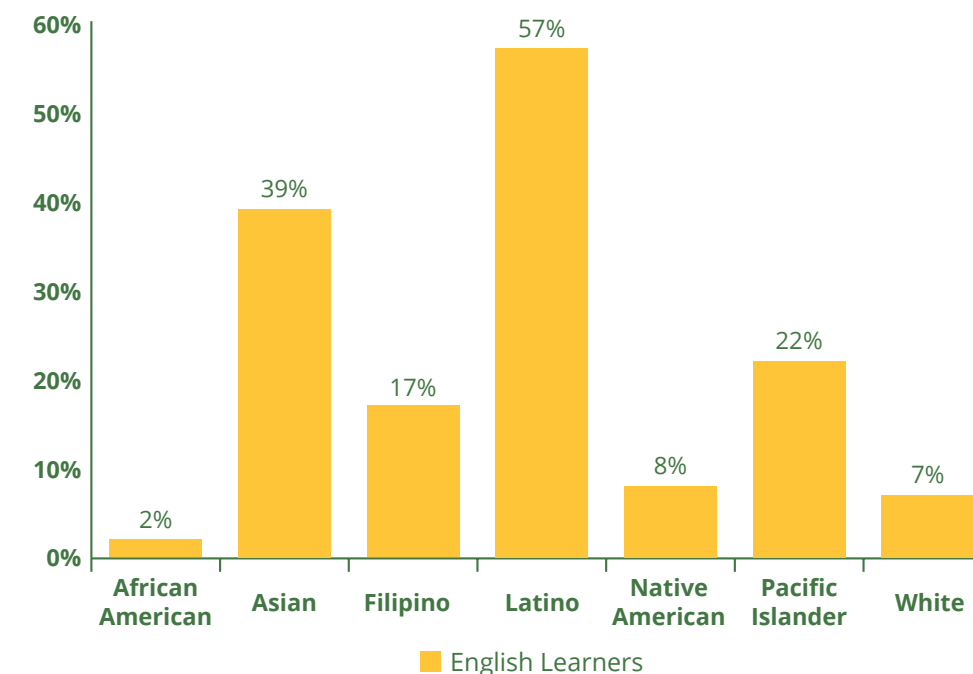
FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF K–12 OUSD RACIAL AND ETHNIC POPULATIONS WHO ARE ENGLISH LEARNERS, 2012–13

The population of Latino and White students in OUSD increased, while the African American population declined

African American   Asian   Filipino
Latino   Native American   Pacific Islander
White

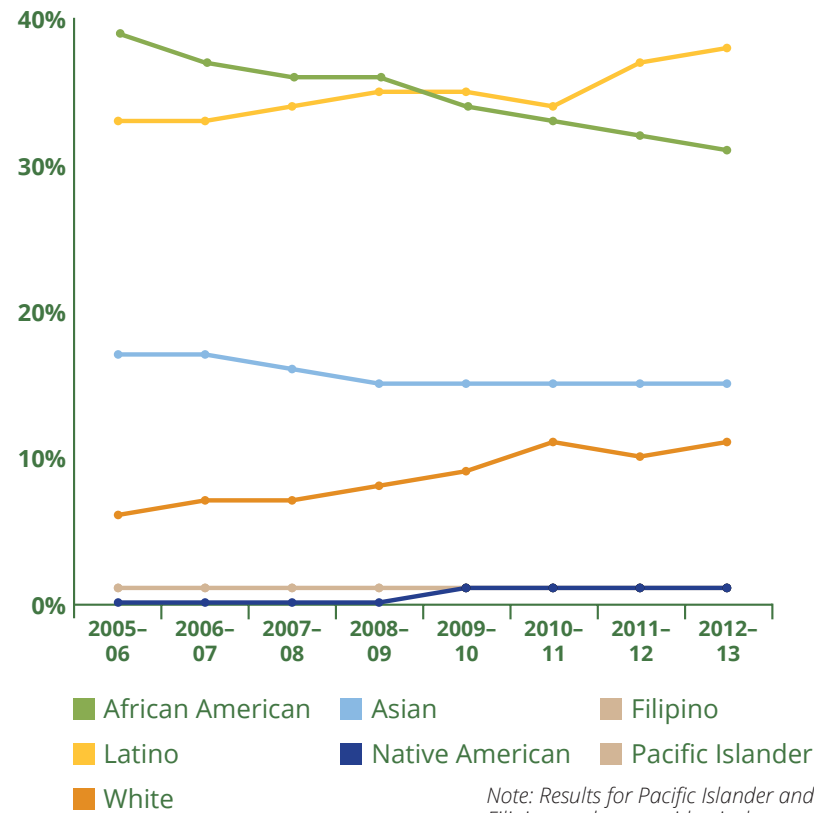*Note: Results for Pacific Islander and Filipino students are identical.*

FIGURE 2: OUSD ENROLLMENT BY STUDENT ETHNICITY AND RACE FROM 2005–06 TO 2012–13

9 U.S Census Bureau. 2000 Census, 2010 Census.

Paralleling the demographic change in the City, African American enrollment in OUSD has declined steadily since 2005–06, in contrast to a steady increase in Latino and White students. This isn't surprising considering that Oakland's African American population dropped by 25% in the past decade.[9]

Oakland's African American population dropped by 25% in the past decade; African American enrollment in OUSD has also declined.

Poverty in Oakland and among OUSD Students

The 2010 Census reports that 22% of people in Oakland live in poverty,[10] and an alarming 32% of children live below the federal poverty line. (See Figure 4) Latinos are the most likely to live in poverty with 30% of residents living below the poverty line, followed by African Americans at 28% and Asians at 20%. Eight percent of White residents live below the poverty line.

While there is no OUSD student-level data on poverty, we looked at students eligible for free and reduced price lunch as a rough proxy.[11] In 2012–13, 73% of students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, compared to an average of 58% in California.[12] Research suggests that some low-income children are read and spoken to less regularly, and that low-income children often have less access to books, literacy-rich environments, high-quality early care, and preschool programs.[13] Poverty can inhibit learning and is correlated with lower high school graduation rates,[14] raising another key factor to consider in our approach to improving literacy outcomes.

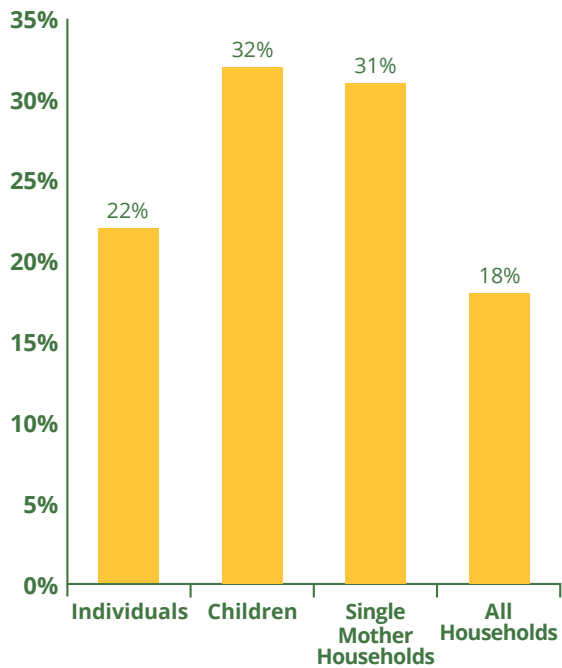### About 1 in 3 children in Oakland lives in poverty

FIGURE 4: POPULATIONS LIVING BELOW FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL IN OAKLAND

Source: 2010 Census

> In 2012–13, 73% of OUSD students qualified for free and reduced price lunch compared to 58% in California overall.

> Low-income children often have less access to books, literacy-rich environments, and high-quality early care and preschool programs. Living in poverty is correlated with lower high school graduation rates.

10 The 2010 federal guidelines for poverty were $22,050 for a family of four; the 2014 federal guidelines are $23,850 for a family of four.
11 To qualify for free meals, children must come from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level, or $29,965 for a family of four. To qualify for reduced-price meals, students must come from families whose incomes are between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level, or between $29,965 and $42,643 for a family of four. (Figures are for 2012-13 school year.)
12 DataQuest: California Department of Education 2012-13. http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/
13 O'Donnell, Kevin. "Parents' Reports of the School Readiness of Young Children from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2007," Table 2. National Center for Education Statistics. August 2008.
14 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. April 2011.

BASELINE REPORT METHODOLOGY

What is the timeframe of the Baseline Report?

The Baseline Report looks at outcomes for Oakland Unified School District's third graders in 2010–11, before Oakland Reads 2020 began, and in 2011–12 through 2012–13, the first two years of the initiative, which focused on planning and mobilizing the community around OR2020 goals. Though we examine data and indicators over time, the report results can be considered a "baseline" and used as a starting point to assess where we are as we move from planning into implementation of a concerted, cross-sector community effort. Wherever possible, the report provides data for all three years,[1] however, because of limitations in data availability, for school readiness and summer learning we focused primarily on 2012–13, the most recently completed year of OR2020.

> The Baseline Report examines data and indicators over time; we consider the period from 2010–11 to Year 2 of Oakland Reads 2020 (2012–13) as the baseline period. This provides a starting point to assess where we are as we move from the planning phase into implementation of a concerted, cross-sector community effort.

What data and indicators does the Baseline Report include?

Reading Success and the Four Levers of Change

The national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and OR2020 have identified four levers of change as critical for reaching the ultimate goal of children learning to read at grade level by third grade:

- school readiness
- attendance
- summer learning
- family engagement

Population Outcomes Examined in the Data

Where possible, all data for reading success, and for the four levers of change are analyzed by:

- race/ethnicity
- gender
- English language fluency
- Special Education status[2]

1 It is important to note that our analysis is not a "cohort analysis," tracking a group of children by matching their data across time and levers of change, since the current data systems do not permit such an analysis. We looked at each dataset independently and summarized results.
2 Special Education refers to students with disabilities who have qualified for individualized education plans (IEPs) to meet their unique learning needs, which, according to state law may be caused by one or more of the following conditions: visual, hearing or other physical impairment; learning disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury, mental retardation, or emotional disturbance.

Data[3] and Indicators

Indicators to measure progress for reading success and the four levers of change were developed by and vetted in collaboration with OR2020 partners with expertise in early childhood learning and literacy. These include indicators that will be used by OR2020 to benchmark our efforts, that is, where we intend to measure and track the data to assess progress in future reports. Other indicators are included for informational purposes but are not benchmarks that OR2020 intends to use to track progress. The distinction between benchmark and informational indicators is made below. Please see Appendix A for a more detailed description of the indicators, as well as potential future data to examine. Our indicators are drawn from the following data.

FOUNDATIONAL GOAL AREA: READING SUCCESS

Benchmark Data for Indicators:

- This report measures reading proficiency (reading at grade level) by the California Standards Test in English Language Arts (CST ELA), an assessment administered annually in the spring.

- The CST ELA test will no longer be used by the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) after spring 2013; future reports will analyze other benchmark assessments as the District adopts them as part of the transition to the Common Core State Standards.[4]

Informational Data for Indicators:

- None

> Indicators to measure progress on reading success and the four levers of change were developed by and vetted with OR2020 partners who have expertise in early childhood learning and literacy.

> The CST test will no longer be used in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) after spring 2013; future reports will analyze other benchmark assessments as the District adopts them as part of the transition to the Common Core State Standards.

LEVER OF CHANGE: SCHOOL READINESS

Benchmark Data for Indicators:

- This report measures school readiness using results from the fall kindergarten administration of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), a test of early literacy skills. We used data from the 2011–12 and 2012–13 school years.

- Future reports will also use data from the Desired Results Developmental Profile for Preschool (DRDP-PS) and for Transitional Kindergarten (DRDP-SR), administered in fall and every six months thereafter. The DRDP assesses several domains of a child's physical, social-emotional and academic development, including English language and literacy. The DRDP is being administered in OUSD, but results over time were not available for analysis in time for this report. The other challenge with this data is that DRDP results for preschoolers are only available for students in OUSD preschools, which currently represent only 20% of incoming kindergarteners.

> Future reports will also use data from the DRDP for preschool and transitional kindergarten, assessing several developmental areas including language development and literacy.

- We also hope to use Fountas and Pinnell (Balanced Literacy) benchmark assessments for grades K–1.

- Another assessment that will be available in 2014 is the First 5 Alameda County school readiness assessment.

Informational Data for Indicators:

- Early learning seats available and enrollment versus number of preschool-age children in Oakland

- Subsidized preschool seats available versus number of low-income preschool age children in Oakland

LEVER OF CHANGE: ATTENDANCE

Benchmark Data for Indicators:

- This report measures attendance using rates of chronic absence (missing 10% or more of days enrolled in school) and "at risk" attendance (missing between 5% and 9% of days enrolled), two measures that have been validated nationally and in the state of California as being predictors of achievement and high school graduation.

- We also look at rates of absence due to suspensions.

Informational Data for Indicators:

- None

LEVER OF CHANGE: SUMMER LEARNING

Benchmark Data for Indicators:

- None

- As OUSD moves towards using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test as a benchmark reading assessment for grades 2–5, future OR2020 reports will look at SRI results from spring—before summer program enrollment— and from the following fall for students participating in summer learning programs.[5]

Informational Data for Indicators:

- OUSD Summer School enrollment by grade level and demographics

- Enrollment in Oakland Fund for Children and Youth summer enrichment programs by content area, including those with a literacy (reading or writing) component

- Enrollment in The Oakland Public Library's summer reading program

LEVER OF CHANGE: FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Benchmark Data for Indicators:

- None

Informational Data for Indicators:

- OUSD School Quality Review Report's Student, Family and Community Engagement Standards

3 See Appendix A for data sources.
4 Please see Appendix A for more information about the transition to the California Common Core Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment, which will replace the CST.

5 The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is a research-based reading assessment program for students in kindergarten to twelfth grade that measures reading comprehension. Typically administered three to four times a year, the SRI is used to inform instruction and make placement recommendations; it is aligned to the California Common Core Standards. In OUSD, it is administered at the elementary level in second to fifth grades.

READING SUCCESS

Defining Reading Success

Why and how are we looking at reading proficiency?

Oakland Reads 2020 is faced with a momentous task: to bring 85% of Oakland's third graders to reading at grade level by 2020. To reach this goal, the initiative needs to build a movement with embedded strategies to raise an estimated 1,500 more students to proficiency by third grade. Reading capably by the end of third grade opens the gateway for children to use reading skills to learn and digest new knowledge, which becomes more critical in fourth grade.[1] Because third grade marks the point when children transition from learning to read to "reading to learn," it is a strong predictor of later academic achievement, including on-time graduation from high school.[2]

This report also examines reading proficiency outcomes for the grades just before and after third grade to understand students' proficiency patterns over time. When the literacy imperative is expanded to include all second to fifth graders, the hope is to impact more than 6,500 students who are reading below grade level.

Why are we looking at reading proficiency among student subpopulations?

To understand how to support our students most effectively, Oakland Reads 2020 (OR2020) must take into account disparities among sub-populations of students. Rates of reading proficiency for third graders in 2012–13 were disturbingly low for some students:

- African American third graders at 27%
- Latino third graders at 21%
- Special Education third grade students at 15% (state average 26%)
- English Learners in third grade at 8% (state average 18%)

By contrast, the proportion of OUSD third graders proficient in reading in four other subpopulations was between two and eight times higher than the groups mentioned above.

- White third graders at 77%
- Initial English fluent[3] third graders (bilingual students who enter school already fluent) at 76%
- Reclassified English fluent[4] third graders (bilingual students who were reclassified as fluent during the school year) at 64%
- Asian third graders at 54%

It is important to note that no student subpopulation has reached the OR2020 target rate of 85% reading proficiently. Thus, the relatively low rate of proficiency even for those at the higher end of the spectrum, and the marked disparities between subpopulations means that OR2020 will need to develop both universal and targeted strategies to reach the 85% goal for our students. That is, some strategies will support all students, and some will support the more urgent and differentiated needs of students with the lowest rates of proficiency.[5]

How We Chose Data to Measure Reading Success

While third grade proficiency is a key predictor of academic success and on-time high school graduation, this report looks at outcomes for second to fifth graders as well as for third graders in OUSD in an effort to discern patterns over time and to begin to determine where and how interventions and supports might be most effective. This report also analyzes data for student populations disaggregated by race and ethnicity, gender, English Learner status, and Special Education status to pinpoint where disparities in outcomes exist and must be addressed.

All student data in this chapter is sourced from OUSD and includes California Standards Test for English Language Arts (CST ELA) scores for second to fifth graders,[6] and race/ethnicity, gender, English Learner and Special Education status. We anticipate including mid-year and end-of-year literacy assessment results for kindergarten and first grade when such assessments are available from the District.[7] As the Common Core curriculum is incorporated into classrooms across the District, we also will use Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and other benchmark assessments that OUSD will employ in place of the CST during the statewide transition to the Common Core literacy assessments.[8] This transition will disrupt our ability to compare scores over time.

The Challenge: To reach the goal of 85% of 3rd graders reading proficiently, we must support at least 1,500 more students to read at grade level by 2020.

The Hope: As the literacy work expands, we aim to support all 6,500 students in grades two through five who are reading below grade level.

OR2020 must address significant disparities in outcomes:

Fewer than 27% of Latino, African American, English Learners (EL), and Special Education 3rd graders in OUSD are reading at grade level. The proportions of White, bilingual fluent, and Asian students reading at grade level are two to nearly three times higher.

Why is 3rd grade reading important?

3rd grade marks the period when students transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn," making reading proficiency in 3rd grade a gateway to the knowledge students need to master in subsequent years.

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1 *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters,* A KIDS COUNT Special Report, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010.
2 *Double Jeopardy: How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, April 2011; and *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, National Research Council, Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children. National Academy Press, 1998.
3 Initial English fluent means bilingual students who tested as Early Advanced or Advanced in English on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) when they started school and who have a teacher and parent recommendation.

4 Reclassified English fluent means students who tested as below advanced on the CELDT when starting school and then later tested as advanced on the CELDT test and at basic or above on the CST ELA test as well as receiving recommendations from parents, teachers, and other school staff.
5 As john powell points out in his groundbreaking "Post-Racialism or Targeted Universalism?" (Denver Law Review, Vol. 86, 2009), to address disparities, a universal targeted strategy is one inclusive of the needs of both the dominant and marginal groups, but pays particular attention to the situation of the marginal group. Analysis drives our ability to identify the varied conditions and outcomes among groups within the student population and to develop targeted interventions which effectively address their specific needs.
6 As Chapter II of this report mentions, data for charter and private schools are not included here, as those schools do not have shared metrics for most of the OR2020 goal areas. Also, OR2020 work has so far focused on the largest group of students in Oakland, those who attend OUSD public schools.
7 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments beyond early kindergarten were not available for analysis in time for this report. We plan to utilize them in the next progress report.
8 The Common Core State Standards, a national set of common expectations for student knowledge and skills, was designed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association for Best Practices. The CCSS was approved by the California State Board of Education in August 2010; local California school districts began transitioning to the Common Core Standards in 2012–13.

Baseline and Formative Data for Reading Success

How are OUSD third graders performing in reading?

Figure 5 illustrates the stark reality that in 2012–13 nearly two-thirds of third graders scored "below proficient" on the CST ELA.[9] This comprises 2,017 students and is a strong call to action for our community given the critical importance of reading capably at this age.

Moving more than 2,000 students into proficiency is no small task, although Figure 6, which breaks down scoring bands on the CST ELA, reveals that the largest proportion of students scoring below proficient are in the "Basic"[10] band, just below proficient. ("Advanced" and "Proficient" comprise the "Proficient or Above" category in Figure 6 and the remaining sub-categories account for the "Below Proficient" category.) While it is encouraging that a significant percentage of students fall in a category approaching literacy, the proportion of those students (31%), is equal to the proportion of students in the "Below Basic" (18%) and "Far Below Basic"[11] (13%) categories combined. Thus, just under one-third of OUSD students are in the bottom two levels of this five-level scoring system. These measures provide a sense of the tremendous need for efforts toward literacy in Oakland, as well as the transformative work that will be required to bring students up to standards.

The Challenge: 62% of OUSD 3rd graders are reading below grade level: of those students, half scored "basic" (just below proficient) and half scored in the lowest two levels.

Community Assets: In the last two years, OR2020 has worked with three elementary schools to identify appropriate literacy supports, then matched and funded partners for each school to provide services aimed at impacting 3rd grade reading proficiency.

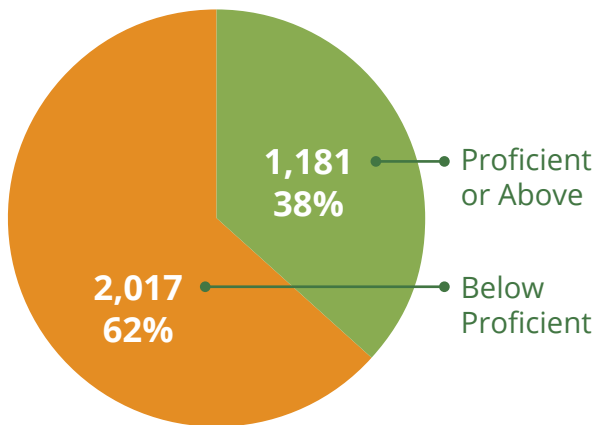### Nearly two thirds of 3rd graders are reading below proficiency

FIGURE 5: OUSD 3RD GRADERS ABOVE AND BELOW PROFICIENCY ON THE CST ELA TEST IN 2012–13

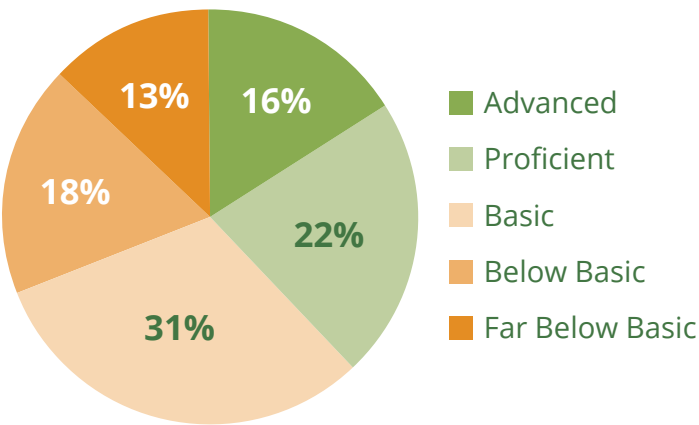### Of those scoring below grade level, 31% scored just below proficient and 31% scored lower

FIGURE 6: OUSD 3RD GRADERS' LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE ON THE CST ELA TEST IN 2012–13

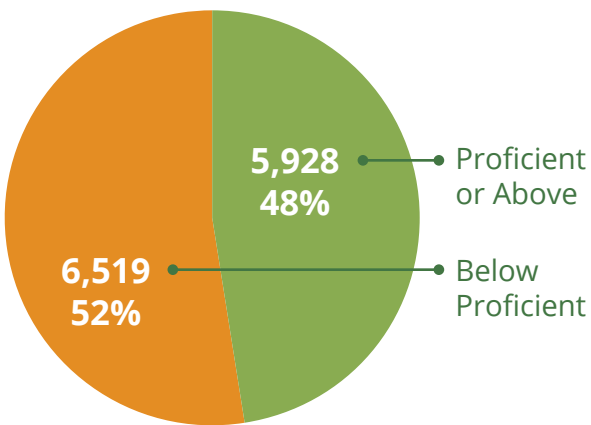### Almost half of 2nd–5th graders are reading at grade level

FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF OUSD 2ND TO 5TH GRADE STUDENTS PERFORMING ABOVE AND BELOW PROFICIENCY ON CST ELA TEST IN 2012–13

29% of 2nd–5th graders scored just below proficient, 24% scored lower
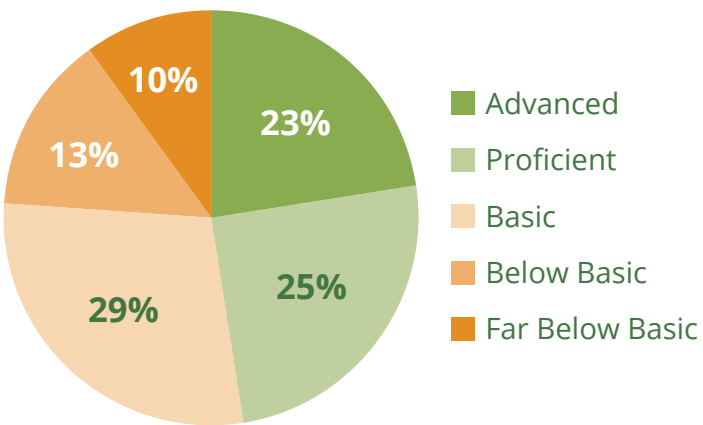

FIGURE 8: OUSD 2ND TO 5TH GRADE STUDENTS' LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE ON THE CST ELA TEST IN 2012–13

How are OUSD elementary students performing in reading?

Looking at proficiency levels for all elementary school students who are tested using the CST ELA (Figures 7 & 8) provides a slightly improved picture for grades two through five. There are still more students below than above proficiency, but the proportion less than proficient among second to fifth graders is slightly more than half, compared to 62% of third graders. Still, 48% proficient is far from the goal of 85%. It also leaves 6,519 students below proficiency.

While 3,657 elementary school students are hovering just below proficiency in the basic category, 2,862 students are reading at the bottom two levels of proficiency.

Almost one-third of second to fifth graders are hovering in the basic band just below proficient (29%). However, 23% (2,862 students) are reading at below basic or far below basic levels. Helping this large a group with this challenge will require strong instructional and enrichment supports. Although the focus of the OR2020 is primarily third graders, the initiative must also maintain a broader view that many students need help beyond third grade to read proficiently enough to succeed in middle and high school.

The Challenge: Though nearly half of OUSD elementary students taking the CST test are reading at grade level or above, 6,519 are below proficiency.

Community Assets: OR2020 raised funds on behalf of OUSD to create leveled libraries in 26 elementary schools, where books were sorted and labeled by reading level in 340 preschool to 3rd grade classrooms.

9 The CST ELA is administered every spring to students in grades 2 through 11 and has been the standard benchmark for literacy across the state. However, that will change with the introduction in 2012–13 of the Common Core curriculum and its related assessments beginning in spring 2014.
10 This basic level represents a limited performance on the CST. Students demonstrate a partial and rudimentary understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by this assessment, at this grade, in this content area.
11 The California Department of Education describes below basic and far below basic together as representing a serious lack of performance. Students demonstrate little or a flawed understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by this assessment, at this grade, in this content area.

How does reading proficiency vary by race/ethnicity?

Significant differences in proficiency exist among the major racial and ethnic populations. On average over the past three years, 25% of Latino third graders and 30% of African American third graders were reading at grade level. Comparatively, the average proficiency rate for Asian third graders was 59% and for White third graders 78%. (See Figures 9–12)

More than one in five Latino third graders is not reading at grade level (21% proficient in 2012–13). (See Figure 9) This finding is explained in part by the large proportion of English Learners in this population who are just developing reading proficiency (69% of Latino students in kindergarten to fifth grades in 2012–13). Interestingly, the proportion of proficient Latino students is about double in the fourth (43%) and fifth grades (41%). This may be due in part to English Learners who become fluent over time, given our finding below that students who become fluent have drastically higher scores than many of their native English speaking counterparts. (Data shows that large numbers of students become "reclassified" as fluent in third, fourth and fifth grades in particular.)

African American students have particularly low scores in third grade, declining in 2012–13 to 27% proficient. African American students in other grades saw proficiency rates approaching 50%, which still leaves more than half of this population behind in reading and vulnerable to academic challenges, including eventual dropout.

Fewer than half of Latino students in 2nd–5th grade were reading at grade level over the past three years

Grade	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
2nd	34%	39%	33%
3rd	27%	27%	21%
4th	47%	46%	43%
5th	47%	44%	41%

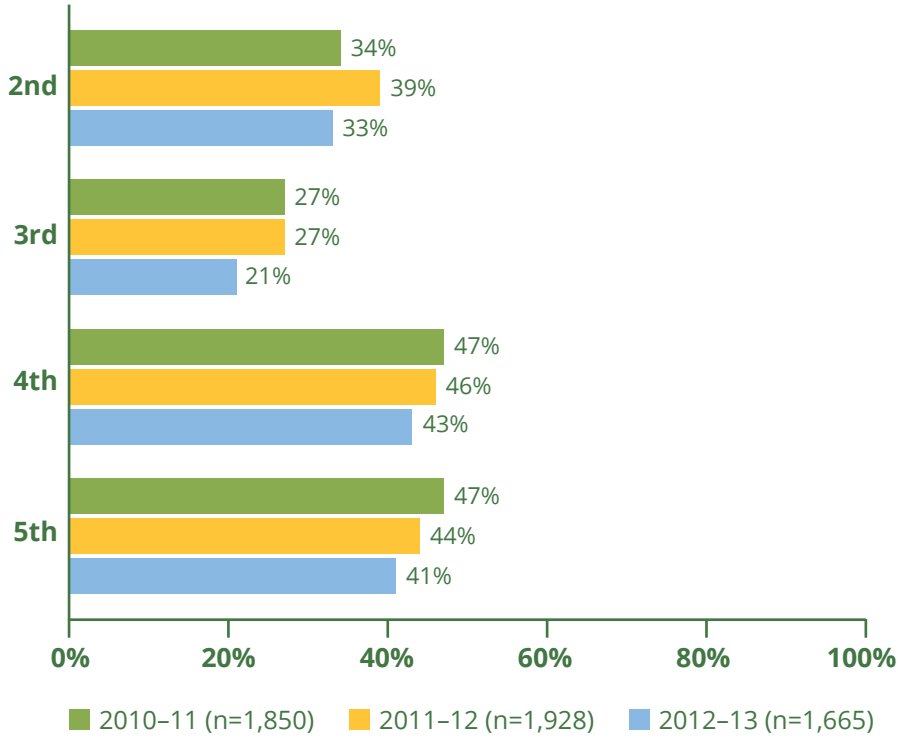■ 2010–11 (n=1,850) ■ 2011–12 (n=1,928) ■ 2012–13 (n=1,665)

FIGURE 9: OUSD LATINO 2ND TO 5TH GRADERS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST OVER TIME

The Challenge: *A large proportion of Latino 3rd graders are not reading at grade level. This is due in part to the large number of English Learners (69% in grades K–5) who are working to develop reading proficiency.*

Community Assets: *OR2020 has funded literacy partners with bilingual staff and materials in Spanish in several elementary schools to support English Learner and bilingual Latino students.*

Fewer than half of African American students in 2nd–5th grades were reading at grade level over the past three years

Grade	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
2nd	43%	41%	37%
3rd	32%	31%	27%
4th	45%	49%	46%
5th	39%	42%	42%

■ 2010–11 (n=1,650) ■ 2011–12 (n=1,563) ■ 2012–13 (n=1,359)

FIGURE 10: OUSD AFRICAN AMERICAN 2ND TO 5TH GRADERS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST OVER TIME

The Challenge: *African American students have extremely low rates of reading proficiency, suggesting the need for strong supports.*

Community Assets: *As part of its five-year strategic plan, OUSD created an African American Male Achievement office focused on improving academic and social outcomes for African American male students. In 2012-13, the District also began a Leveled Literacy Intervention program, providing intense instructional support for students reading below grade level in elementary schools with high proportions of African American students struggling with reading.*

Like other groups, the proportion of Asian students reading at grade level is lower in third grade than in second, fourth and fifth grades, as low as 54% in 2012–13. By contrast, Asian fourth graders achieved a 75% proficiency rate in 2012–13.

This report combines different Asian categories to manage the amount of information shared, but it is important to note that groups within this category often have drastically different academic outcomes, so that what is shown here may be masking a diverse set of needs.

Because many different ethnic groups make up the "Asian" category, and other data tell us these groups have disparate academic outcomes, future work needs to examine the diverse needs within these subgroups.

White students are the only group where there is not a substantially lower proportion of students proficient in third grade than other grades. Still, White students have not reached the OR2020 goal of 85% reading proficiently in third grade. However, in fourth and fifth grades 88% of White students were proficient in 2012–13.

On average 69% of Asian 2nd–5th graders were reading at grade level over the past three years

2nd 77% / 73% / 67%
3rd 62% / 60% / 54%
4th 72% / 77% / 75%
5th 73% / 70% / 66%

- 2010–11 (n=1,397)
- 2011–12 (n=1,383)
- 2012–13 (n=1,197)
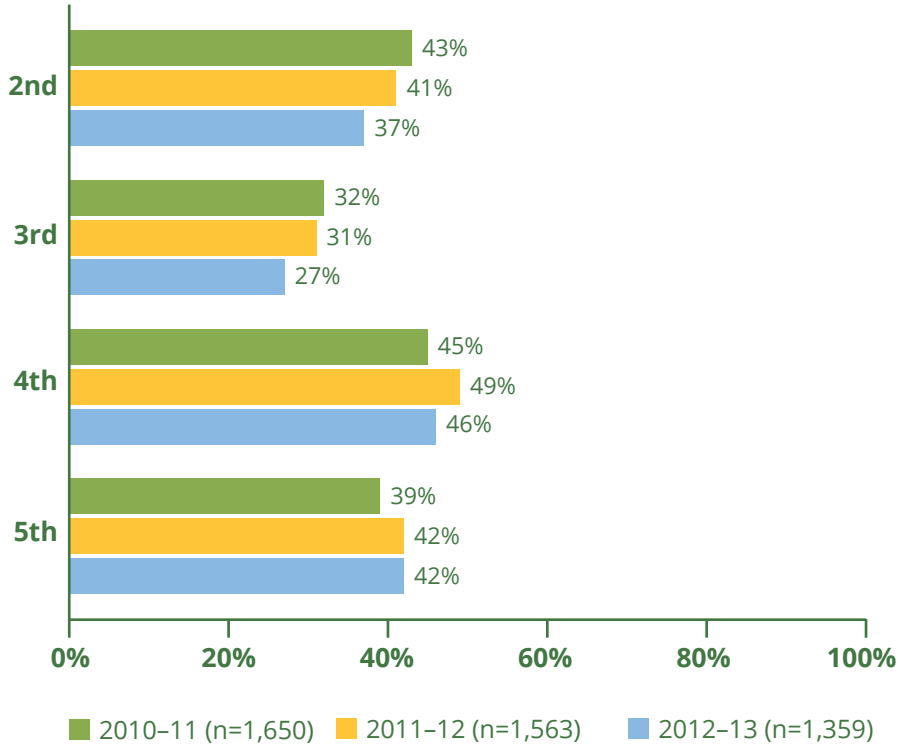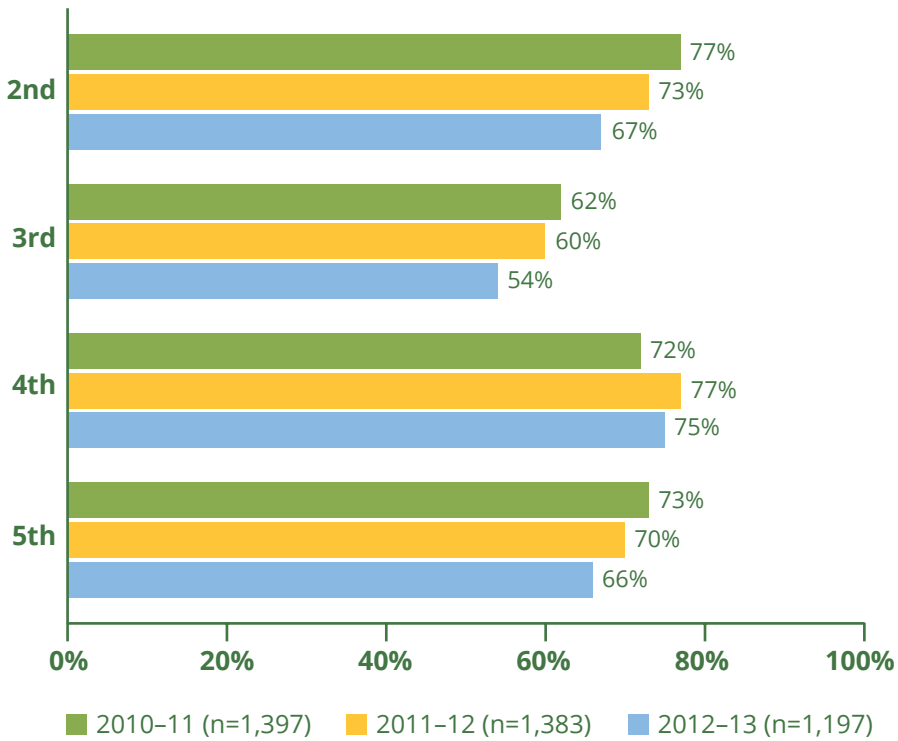
FIGURE 11: OUSD ASIAN 2ND TO 5TH GRADERS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST OVER TIME

The Challenge: Like other groups, Asian elementary students have lower scores in 3rd grade but overall have a relatively high proportion of proficient readers.

Community Assets: The East Bay Asian Youth Center and Oakland Asian Student Educational Services together provide one of the largest volunteer forces in any elementary after school program of OUSD; services include academic tutoring to supplement literacy-rich programming.

On average 81% of White 2nd–5th graders were reading at grade level over the past three years

2nd 77% / 73% / 67%
3rd 80% / 78% / 77%
4th 90% / 90% / 88%
5th 81% / 87% / 88%

- 2010–11 (n=1,239)
- 2011–12 (n=1,314)
- 2012–13 (n=1,409)
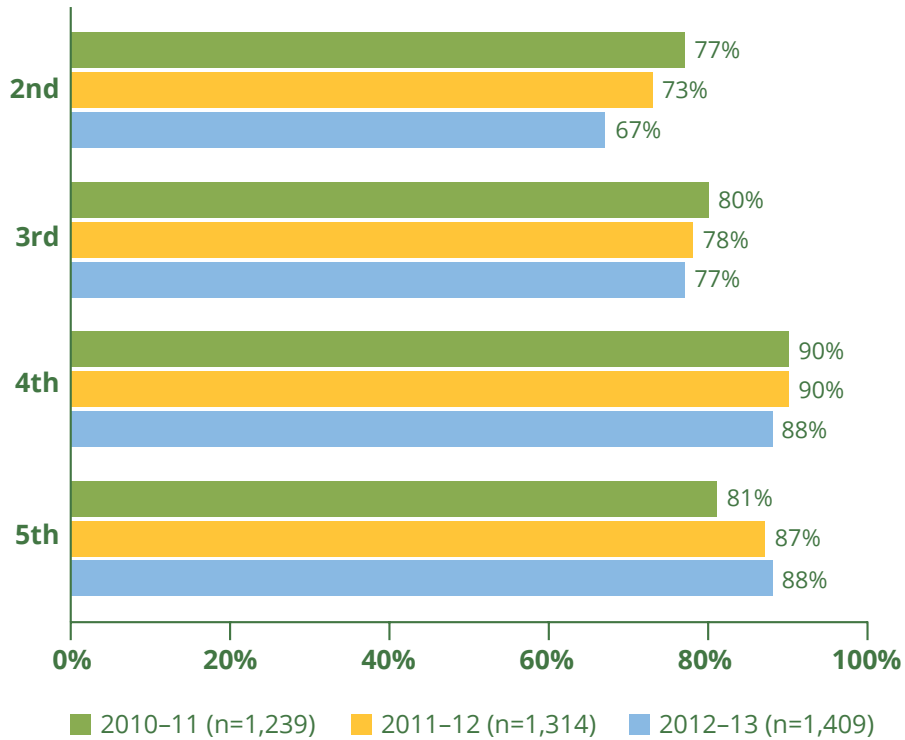
FIGURE 12: OUSD WHITE 2ND TO 5TH GRADERS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST OVER TIME

The Challenge: About three-quarters of White 3rd graders are reading at grade level, still well below the OR2020 goal of 85% of 3rd graders proficient.

Community Assets: In 2012–13, OUSD began redesigning its early learning (0–8) framework to align curriculum, professional development, student assessments, data collection, and other areas supporting instructional and classroom quality with a specific focus on literacy.

Figure 13 below illustrates that within ethnic groups, there are some notable disparities in reading proficiency between boys and girls. Among third grade African American, Asian and Latino students, rates of proficiency for girls was higher by between five and ten percentage points. Clearly, though, outcomes are still low for African American girls, with only 31% proficient, and Latinas (girls), with 24% proficient. These differentials point to the importance of targeted strategies that take into account both race/ethnicity and gender.

Fewer boys of color than girls are reading proficiently in 3rd grade
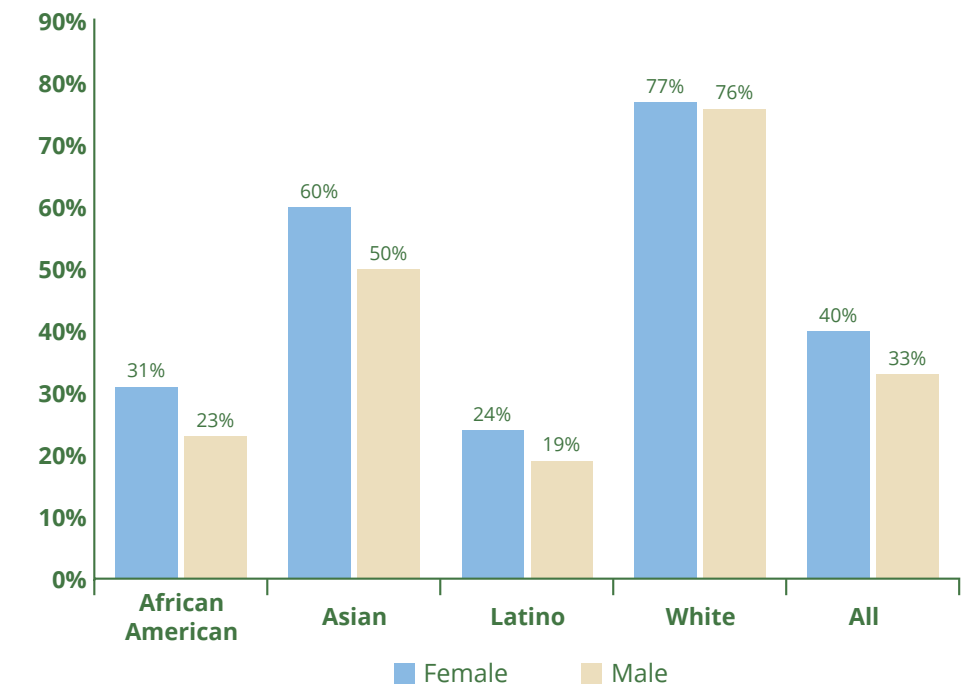
FIGURE 13: OUSD 3RD GRADERS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST IN 2012–13 BY ETHNICITY AND GENDER

The Challenge: 3rd grade boys of color were consistently less likely to read at grade level compared to girls. However, Latina and African American 3rd grade girls have very low rates of reading proficiency; less than one-third read at grade level.

Community Assets: The Oakland-Alameda County arm of the statewide Boys and Men of Color Initiative brings together systems leaders who are developing programmatic and policy change that focuses on improving outcomes—including school success—for boys of color. OR2020 has also partnered with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and the Black Male Achievement Campaign to develop strategies targeted toward children with the lowest outcomes.

How are English Learners performing in reading?

Findings in Figure 14 show the role of English fluency in CST ELA outcomes. Bilingual third graders (including Initial English fluent and Reclassified English fluent) scored near the top of all groups in OUSD: 76% and 64% proficient, respectively, compared to 77% proficient for White students.

Not surprisingly, a large proportion of those still learning English did not test proficient (8% of third grade English Learners reached proficiency by the end of the year in 2012–13). This rate is about half the state proficiency rate for third grade EL students (18%). In future reports, we would like to look at data that tell a more nuanced story about the progress made by English Learners and the interventions around these students. For example, since English Learners in third grade are transitioning from bilingual instruction to English instruction by the end of the year, fourth grade reading proficiency in English tends to be much higher (23% in 2012–13, compared to 30% at the state level). Changes in proficiency may be better captured by looking at benchmark data throughout the school year to track progress that may fluctuate as the students master English. Further, a better measure of interventions may be to track the reclassification process in terms of the percent of students reclassified in each grade and the length of time until reclassification. It is clear, though, that given that almost 1,000 third grade English Learners need to gain proficiency, there is an urgent need for intensive supports for this population. On the other hand, the promising finding that such a large proportion of those who become fluent are proficient readers suggests that instructional and enrichment strategies are positively impacting a large proportion of English Learners. The Common Core Standards, which OUSD began implementing in 2012–13 as part of a statewide adoption process, requires that English Learners meet rigorous, grade level academic standards. OUSD's revised master plan for EL students includes bilingual and biliteracy pathways and targeted supports for students not showing progress in literacy skills. The District is working with a set of evidence-based guiding principles that includes taking into account English Learners' proficiency level and prior schooling experience; and leveraging home language(s), cultural assets, and prior knowledge.

English Learners need intensive supports while fluent bilingual students scored near the top of all groups in OUSD

- ■ English Learner (n=4,256)
- ■ English Only (n=6,502)
- ■ Initial English Fluent (n=257)
- ■ Reclassified English Fluent (n=1,861)
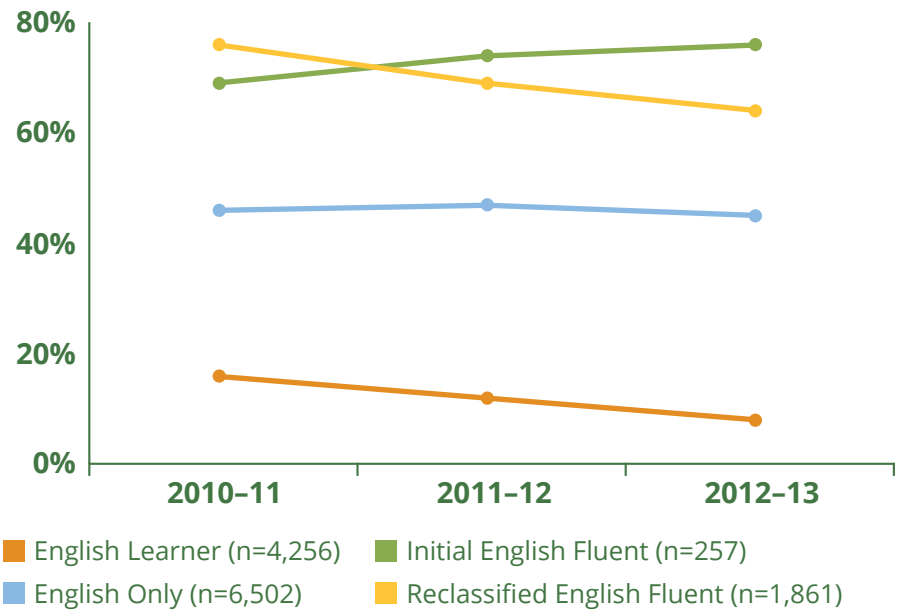
FIGURE 14: OUSD 3RD GRADERS SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST BY ENGLISH FLUENCY

The Challenge: Bilingual fluent students have relatively high rates of proficiency in OUSD, but data indicate that a large proportion of English Learners (EL) need literacy supports.

Community Assets: OUSD recently revised its master plan for EL students to provide additional targeted supports, and to develop criteria for identifying "at risk" students in the early grades who are not showing progress in literacy skills. OR2020 has created opportunities for Oakland Literacy Coalition members to learn about strategies for teaching EL students.

How are Special Education students performing in reading?

Special Education students are another population that has a large proportion of third graders who are not proficient in reading (only 15% in 2012–13), a statistic that suggests the need for targeted strategies for this group. The California state average for Special Education third grader proficiency was 26%, nearly twice the OUSD rate but still a very low proportion. Special Education students make up 11% of the OUSD student population.

15% of 3rd graders in Special Education were reading at grade level in 2012–13

- ■ Special Education
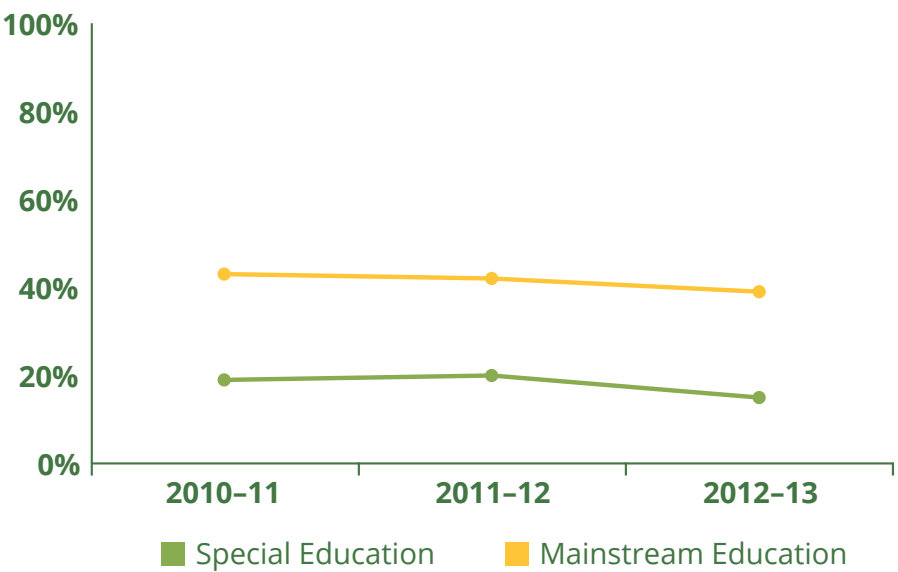- ■ Mainstream Education

FIGURE 15: OUSD 3RD GRADERS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION SCORING PROFICIENT OR ABOVE ON THE CST ELA TEST

OR2020 and Partner Activities Addressing Reading Success

What is OR2020 already doing to support reading success?

During this early phase of the initiative, OR2020 has dedicated efforts toward:

- building the capacity of community organizations and literacy partners,
- mobilizing volunteers, and
- providing literacy-rich resources in schools.

Specific projects include:

▶ **Literacy Zone Pilots:** Oakland Literacy Coalition members participated in literacy pilots at two public schools and one charter elementary school in East Oakland, working with principals to identify appropriate literacy supports, then matching and funding partners for each school to provide programming, evening family literacy events, and reading challenges. Each pilot school was funded for three years through the Oakland Literacy Coalition with the aim of raising third grade reading levels.

▶ **Leveled Classroom Libraries:** OR2020 raised $85,000 in 2013 on behalf of OUSD to provide leveled classroom libraries in 26 elementary schools serving approximately 7,000 students. Leveled classroom libraries are part of the Balanced Literacy curriculum, allowing children to select books that match their reading level and supporting their ability to incrementally master new literacy skills. They also allow teachers to provide literacy materials tailored to individual learning needs. The District has committed additional funds to establishing leveled classroom libraries in all 54 elementary schools.[12] To further support leveled classroom libraries, the Oakland Literacy Coalition (OLC), a collaborative of literacy service providers and stakeholders, began organizing book-leveling events in 2013; volunteers have sorted and labeled more than 2,000 books in five elementary schools.

▶ **Professionally-Staffed School Libraries:** OR2020 has backed efforts by Friends of the Oakland Public School Libraries to establish comprehensive school libraries at each site, staffed five days per week. Currently, 23 of OUSD's 54 elementary schools are open three or more days per week, 25 are open half the week or less, and six are non operational.

A critical strategy of OR2020 is increasing the number of leveled classroom libraries, which allow children to select books that match their reading level and support their ability to incrementally master new literacy skills. OR2020 raised funds to purchase sets of books already collected and organized by reading level, and also rallied volunteers to organize and mark levels on existing book collections in classroom libraries.

▶ **Increased Literacy Partner Capacity:** In the last two years, the OLC has hosted literacy and language learning coordinators from across the District who have shared expertise with providers on topics such as teaching strategies for EL students and professional learning opportunities for staff at schools with low literacy outcomes.

▶ **Campaign for Black Male Achievement:** As part of the national Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, OR2020 is partnering with the Campaign for Black Male Achievement to look closely at data for children with outcomes in the lowest quarter (i.e., "fourth quartile,") in reading, school attendance, and/or frequency of school discipline, with the goal of developing strategies targeted toward the children who most need intervention.

What is OUSD doing to raise reading proficiency and reduce disparities in proficiency?

Literacy is the main focus across the District's instructional system; OUSD has developed a framework to support high-quality literacy instruction, including teacher and site professional development, a response-to-intervention framework, parent engagement strategies, and increased coordination of student assessment and benchmarking for literacy throughout the school year. The District is also utilizing the Balanced Literacy Framework,[13] a curricular methodology designed to provide all students with differentiated instruction

OUSD's literacy framework includes an Intensive Intervention Program in Reading/Language Arts designed to address the instructional needs of students in grades four through eight whose reading achievement is two or more years below grade level—including students who use African American vernacular English, English Learners, struggling readers, and students with disabilities.

through methods such as guided reading, and reading and writing workshops. This framework also aligns with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts, which the District began implementing in 2012–13 as part of the national and statewide adoption of the Common Core Standards. The CCSS for English Language Arts establishes an equal focus on student mastery of reading, listening, speaking and writing; and integrates these areas of literacy across all other content areas.[14] As part of the Balanced Literacy Framework and Common Core Standards, OUSD has developed and implemented universal and targeted literacy strategies. These types of strategies are considered the heart of the District's commitment both to increase achievement levels and create equitable opportunities and outcomes.

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12 Board Resolution No. 1314-0052—Authorizing expenditure of the District's state allocation of $6.9 million for the implementation of California Common Core Standards, Nov. 20, 2013. The Board allocated $1.8 million of a total of $6.9 toward establishing classroom libraries.

13 The Balanced Literacy Framework is based on the nationally-validated work of Fountas and Pinnell and the Teacher's College, Reading & Writing Project.

14 National and international research, evidence, and standards—including standards from countries that are often recognized for high quality education—informed development of the CCSS. The CCSS was approved by the California State Board of Education in August 2010; an implementation plan was approved in March 2012.

Universal Strategies

▶ **Full Service Community Schools:** OUSD adopted a strategic plan in 2011 to develop Full Service Community Schools across the District with a focus on equity and quality teaching—beginning with a framing focus on literacy.

▶ **0–8 Realignment:** In 2011–12, OUSD began redesigning its early learning (ages 0–8) framework to align curriculum, professional development, student assessments, data collection, and other areas supporting instructional and classroom quality with a specific focus on literacy. Part of the realignment effort is a Professional Learning Community of preschool, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade teachers who have been meeting monthly since 2012–13 to shift their instruction and assessment to the Balanced Literacy Framework. This initiative is especially important to closing opportunity and achievement gaps prior to third grade.

▶ **Increased Use of Formative Assessments:** The District has increased coordination of student assessment and benchmarking for literacy throughout the school year, using the Scholastic Reading Inventory for grades 2–11 and transitioning to assessments designed for the Balanced Literacy Curriculum for the early grades.[15]

▶ **Intervention Program in Reading/Language Arts:** OUSD's literacy framework includes an Intensive Intervention Program in Reading/Language Arts designed to address the instructional needs of students in grades four through eight whose reading achievement is two or more years below grade level—including students who use African American vernacular English, English Learners, struggling readers, and students with disabilities.

Targeted Strategies

▶ **Leveled Literacy Intervention:** Leveled Literacy Intervention began in 2012–13 at 14 elementary schools where there was a high proportion of African American students with low achievement levels in literacy. This intervention, which has initially focused on kindergarten to second grade students, provides separate 30-minute sessions focused on word work, guided reading, and writing for students reading below grade level. It is aligned to the Balanced Literacy Framework which includes a new assessment system that is part of the realigned 0–8 framework. The program is funded by an OR2020 partner, the Oakland Public Education Fund.

▶ **Office for African American Male Achievement:** Also as part of the strategic plan, the District in 2011–2012 created an Office for African American Male Achievement with seven goal areas, including literacy. Program strategies have included screenings at key points in elementary school for low-achieving students and peer tutoring pairing older and younger African American students.

▶ **Revised Strategic Plans for English Learners and Special Education Students:** The District recently redesigned the master plans for English Learners and Special Education students to provide additional targeted supports for these student populations. The EL plan includes development of criteria for identifying "at risk" students in the early grades who are not showing progress in literacy skills.

▶ **Boys and Men of Color (BMOC):** OUSD is a system leader in the Oakland-Alameda County Alliance for Boys and Men of Color (BMOC), part of the statewide BMOC Initiative, aimed at improving educational, health and employment outcomes for boys and men of color.

15 OUSD will use the Benchmark Assessment System designed by Fountas and Pinnell for grades K–2.

Summary and Conclusions

What challenges do we face as we strive to increase literacy in Oakland?

Third Grade Reading Proficiency

The OR2020 initiative's major goal, ensuring that 85% of OUSD third graders will read proficiently by 2020, demands universal and targeted efforts both to raise achievement levels and close achievement gaps.

▶ **Universal needs:** Nearly two-thirds of OUSD third graders read below grade level, and none of the student populations, by race/ethnicity, English Learner status or Special Education status, have reached the OR2020 goal of 85% reading proficiently by third grade.

▶ **Need for targeted efforts to close achievement gaps:**
  • There are major disparities in outcomes for Latino, African American, English Learner, and Special Education students as compared to Asian and White students.

  • Boys of color have lower outcomes in third grade reading than girls.

  • Third grade Latina and African American girls also have extremely low rates of proficiency.

Overall Elementary Level Reading Proficiency

Although third grade literacy is the ultimate goal, the magnitude of the challenge for accelerating third graders requires strategies for younger students as they are progressing; and for older students who do not reach proficiency by third grade. Analysis of second to fifth grade student outcomes identifies the following challenges:

▶ **Need for targeted efforts to close achievement gaps:**
  • While there is some shift upward in proficiency for all racial and ethnic subgroups from third to fifth grade, disparities persist particularly for Latino and African American students.

  • The proportion of students who are proficient by the end of fifth grade is still low, with the exception of White students: proficiency for Latino, African American and Asian students ranged from 41% to 66% in 2012–13, while 88% of White students were reading proficiently in fifth grade.

What are potential strategies for OR2020?

  • Identify, align, and implement targeted supports for student groups with the most disparate reading proficiency outcomes: Latino, African American, English Learner and Special Education students. Because they indicate especially high need, boys of color and African American and Latina girls should receive particular attention.

  • Use benchmark indicators to track and coordinate early intervention efforts for students whose literacy skills are very low and/or not progressing.

  • Given the high proportion of Latino students who are English Learners (57%) and Latino students' relatively low rates of reading proficiency, pay particular attention to identifying and implementing additional supports and expertise to help accelerate Latino EL students.

  • Identify and coordinate promising practices for supporting improved reading outcomes for Special Education students.

What data do we need to better understand how to increase reading proficiency in Oakland?

  • Benchmark indicators such as SRI scores and early years assessments (Fountas & Pinnell) to identify where progress is occurring throughout the year and what programs and strategies may be positively impacting achievement.

  • Disaggregated proficiency data for Asian students. Though overall reading proficiency outcomes fall on the higher end of the spectrum, we know from other data that there are large disparities in academic outcomes within this group, and targeted supports may be needed.

  • Additional assessments—such as Common Core State Standards tests—as they are implemented across the District.

SCHOOL READINESS

Defining School Readiness

Why is school readiness critical for reading success?

The trajectory toward school readiness stretches from the prenatal period to the time a child first enters the classroom. In fact, from conception to the first day of kindergarten, human development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life.[1] From birth to age five, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities: in addition to their remarkable linguistic and cognitive gains, they exhibit dramatic progress in their social and emotional capacities.[2]

Because oral language is the foundation for literacy development, early interactions with parents and primary caregivers are crucial beginning at birth; sensitive and responsive parent-child and caregiver-child relationships are associated with stronger cognitive skills in young children.[3] Language and brain development occur through social interactions like talking, singing, playing, "reading" books and other interactive experiences. Learning to read and write is an ongoing process from infancy. The broader quality of the home environment—including toys, activities and interactions within the family setting—is also strongly related to early cognitive and language development.[4]

However, barriers to language development can emerge at a very young age and consequently, children may enter elementary school with marked differences in literacy skills. For instance, while children from different backgrounds typically develop language skills around the same age, the subsequent rate of vocabulary growth is strongly influenced by how much parents and caregivers talk and read to their children.

Research over the last 20 years has found that socioeconomic differences have a strong bearing on language development in children. The verbal stimulation received by a child varies by the education and occupation of their caregivers; in one study, mothers of a higher socioeconomic status talked more, provided more object labels, sustained conversational topics, responded more contingently to their children's speech, and elicited more talk from their children.[5]

> Early interactions with parents and primary caregivers are crucial beginning at birth; sensitive and responsive parent-child and caregiver-child relationships are associated with stronger cognitive skills in young children.

> Children's rate of vocabulary growth is strongly influenced by how much parents and caregivers talk and read to them. Because the verbal stimulation a child receives differs by the education and occupation of their caregivers, socioeconomic differences can have a significant impact on language development; by the age of 2, less-advantaged kids are already six months behind their better off peers.

1 Shonkoff, J., and Deborah Phillips, eds., Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. National Academy Press, 2000.
2 Ibid.
3 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, *Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships*, Harvard University, 2004.
4 Ibid.
5 Hoff-Ginsberg, E and Tardif, T. "Socioeconomic Status and Parenting," Handbook of Parenting, Volume 4. M.H. Bornstein, ed. Lawrence Erlbaum. 1995

Another study showed that middle-class children on average entered first grade with 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, compared with an average of just 25 hours for a child in a low-income family.[6] As a result, children from higher income families tend to gain vocabulary at a quicker rate than their peers from families at lower socio-economic levels.[7] By age three, cumulative vocabulary for children in high-income families is more than twice as high as children from low-income families. By kindergarten, this gap had widened considerably: a child in an affluent family has a vocabulary of ten times as many words as that of a child living in poverty.[8] A more recent study also demonstrated that poorer children are already well behind in acquiring language skills than wealthier children by the time they are 18 months old. By the age of two, less-advantaged kids were on average six months behind their better-off peers.[9]

Because most of the connections among brain cells are formed during infancy and early childhood, this period presents a significant opportunity for supporting foundational cognitive development. Early intervention and supports for families and the benefits of a quality preschool experience can substantially improve the cognitive skills and social-emotional readiness of young children by school entry.[10] In fact, research has shown that the largest and most lasting academic gains from quality pre-kindergarten programs—particularly those that work closely with families—occur for disadvantaged children.[11,12] These results place urgency on addressing this important lever of change.

The term "school readiness" refers to children entering kindergarten with the physical, cognitive and socio-emotional skills necessary to learn in an elementary school environment. School readiness also includes schools' readiness for children, and family and community supports and services—such as health screenings and good nutrition—that contribute to children's readiness for school success. Further, the benefits of pre-kindergarten programs are reinforced and more likely to show long-term effectiveness when they are part of aligned, coherent programs that run from pre-kindergarten to third grade.[13]

> The term "school readiness" refers to children entering kindergarten with the social, emotional and academic skills necessary to learn in an elementary school environment.

How We Chose Data to Measure School Readiness

How do we measure school readiness?

There is no universal definition of specific school readiness skills nor is there agreement on how to assess them. Though neither the City of Oakland nor the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has a set of school readiness indicators or a standard assessment, OUSD is developing standards and does use several assessments, including some widely used, valid measures that focus in particular on assessing early literacy skills which can predict later reading success. Research has established key skills and abilities for children entering school that predict later reading outcomes.[14] These include:

- Oral language (listening comprehension, oral language vocabulary)
- Alphabetic code (ability to discriminate sounds in words, letter awareness)
- Print knowledge (making sense of the concept of print, e.g. where to begin reading a book)

California schools use a national assessment, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), first administered in fall of the kindergarten year. This assessment gathers information on several skills associated with later literacy and is considered a window into students' pre-kindergarten learning experiences. The OUSD data below explore two of these indicators, letter naming and first sound fluency. Research shows that both of these skills are valid early literacy measures;[15] though first sound fluency in particular is considered a foundational skill for reading and predictive of later literacy.[16]

Because physical, socio-emotional and cognitive skills are all essential to school readiness, we would like to use another widely used readiness assessment in future reports: the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The DRDP evaluates these three domains of development and includes language and literacy.

Along with measures of students' early literacy skills, it is important to understand how many children actually have center or program-based pre-kindergarten experience, and for those who do, to assess the quality of that experience. In this report we also examined the availability of preschool seats but could not directly assess quality standards, as neither the City nor Alameda County has a quality assessment system in place. However, the County has begun to pilot such a system, and OR2020 expects that outcomes and indicators from that assessment will be useful in beginning to understand the quality of early childhood education in Oakland.

6 Adams, M.J. *Learning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
7 Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd. *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Brookes Publishing, 1995.
8 Hart & Risley, 1995.
9 Fernald, Anne, "SES Differences in Language Processing Skill and Vocabulary are Evident at 18 months", *Developmental Science*, 2013.
10 Schorr, Lisbeth and Marchand, Vicky. Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade, Pathways Mapping Initiative, Washington, D.C., 2007.
11 Magnuson Katherine, Ruhm, Christopher, and Waldfogel, Jane, Does Prekindergarten Improve School Preparation and Performance? Working Paper 10452, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2004.
12 Schorr & Marchand, 2007.
13 Ibid.
14 Frede, Ellen and Barnett, Steven, eds., "Early Literacy: Policy and Practice in the Preschool Years." National Institute for Early Education Research, 2006.
15 Ehri, L. C. *Learning to read words: Theory, findings, and issues*. Scientific Studies of Reading, 2005.
16 Oakland Unified School District. *A Closer Look at DIBELS and SRI*. Presentation to the Oakland Literacy Coalition: January 2014.

Baseline and Formative Data for School Readiness

How are kindergarteners doing on assessments of the first signs of literacy?

We analyzed DIBELS data of kindergarteners entering in the fall of 2012–13, so these results represent the early literacy skills that they bring as they enter school. Overall, just over half of OUSD kindergartners scored at or above the benchmark for first sound fluency[17] in 2012–13 (54%), while 74% scored at or above benchmark in letter naming. However, when results are broken down by race and ethnicity, there are some substantial disparities. (See Figures 16 & 17) Pinpointing strengths and challenges in skill areas that are predictive of third grade literacy can help teachers and instructional partners zero in on early interventions for students who are struggling with these skills.

Latino students scored well below other groups in first sound fluency in 2011–12, but, in 2012–13, approached the same proportions as African American and Asian students above benchmark. (See Figure 16) Context within OUSD should be explored to see if this improvement might be tied to early interventions targeted at Latino students (or English Learners, who make up more than half the Latino student population). African American, Asian and Latino kindergartners scored, on average, more than 25 percentage points lower than White students.

Overall, kindergartners showed higher rates of reaching benchmark for letter naming than for first sound fluency on DIBELS, although Latino students had substantially lower scores in letter naming than other groups.

However, letter naming proficiency rates for both Latino and White students jumped in 2012–13 (by 13 and 11 percentage points, respectively). (See Figure 17)

English Learners had proficiency rates for first sound fluency (in English) that were substantially lower in both years, compared to their peers who are fluent in English. Though fewer than half of English Learner kindergarteners reached the benchmark for first sound fluency, two thirds reached the benchmark in letter naming. In letter naming, English Learners' proficiency rate was well below that of their English only peers in 2011–12, but the gap closed from 15 percentage points in 2011–12 to nine points in 2012–13. In fact, the proportion of English Learners scoring at benchmark increased for both letter naming and first sound fluency in 2012–13. (See Figure 18) The gap for first sound fluency closed from 27 percentage points in 2011–12 to 16 points in 2012–13.

Many fewer Latino kindergarteners scored at benchmark in letter naming than other groups, but scores increased markedly in 2012–13
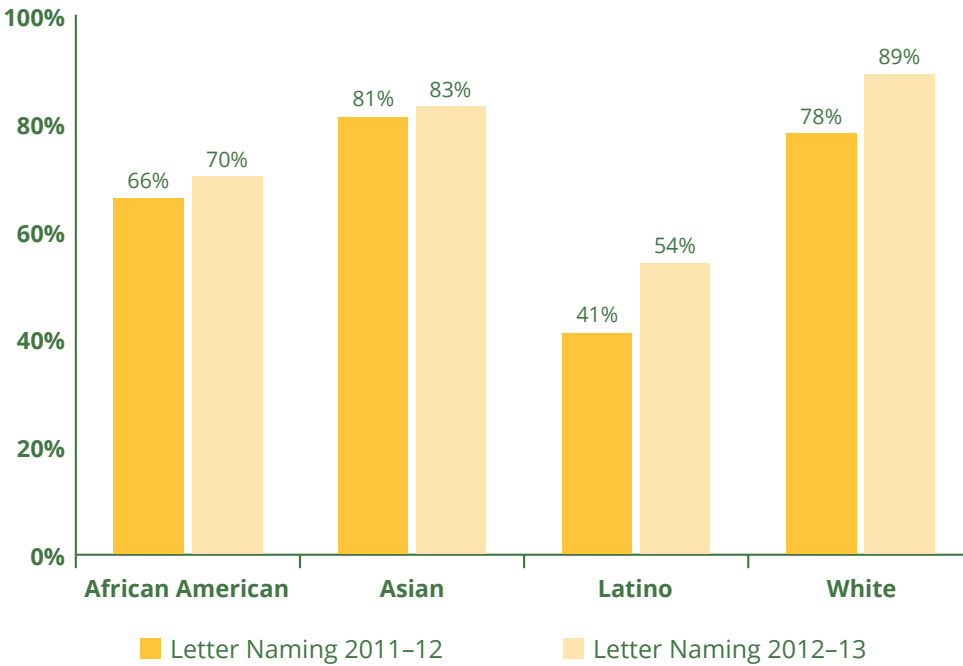
FIGURE 17: OUSD KINDERGARTENERS SCORING AT OR ABOVE DIBELS LETTER NAMING BENCHMARKS BY ETHNICITY, FALL 2011 AND FALL 2012

Many fewer English Learners scored at benchmark for first sound fluency, but the gap for both measures closed somewhat in 2012–13
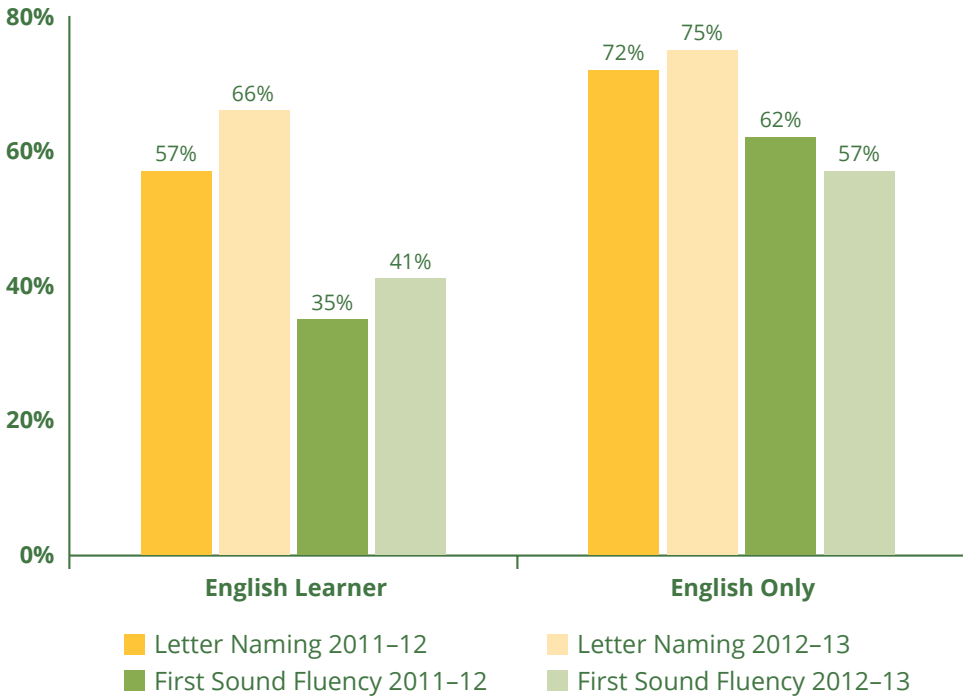
FIGURE 18: KINDERGARTENER EL STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE DIBELS BENCHMARKS FOR LETTER NAMING AND FIRST SOUND FLUENCY, FALL 2011 AND FALL 2012

Many fewer African American, Asian, and Latino kindergarteners scored at benchmark in first sound fluency, although Latinos' results markedly increased in 2012–13
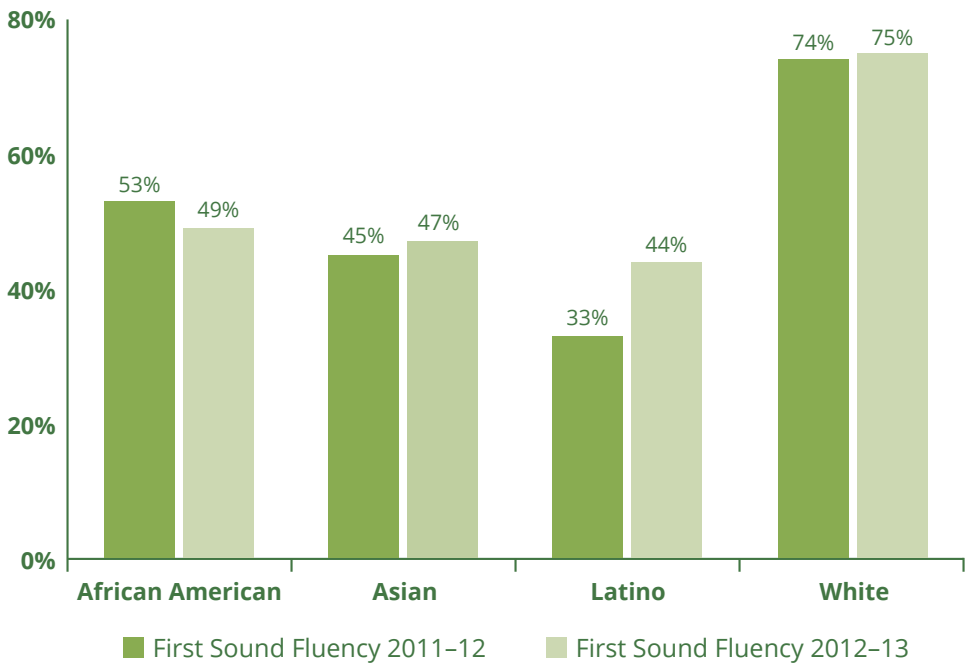

FIGURE 16: OUSD KINDERGARTENERS SCORING AT OR ABOVE DIBELS FIRST SOUND FLUENCY BENCHMARKS BY ETHNICITY, FALL 2011 AND FALL 2012

Just over half of OUSD students entering kindergarten in 2012 (54%) scored at or above the benchmark for first sound fluency, a foundational skill for reading.

17 First sound fluency is assessed by asking a child to identify the first sound in a word spoken aloud, including words that start with "sh" "st" or "th" sounds.

How many students are enrolled in an early learning program before kindergarten?

One of the leading indicators for school readiness, as mentioned above, is access to and participation in a quality pre-kindergarten program. While OUSD is just beginning to collect early childhood education information upon enrollment in kindergarten, we get a general sense of availability by looking at citywide numbers for early learning seats versus preschool-age children.

Preschool spaces are available for 70% of children in Oakland, if affordability is not considered. There are preschool spots for only 41% of Oakland children who qualify for subsidized preschool.

As of 2012, 15,908 children aged three to five resided in Oakland, while an estimated 11,192 preschool slots for ages three to five were available through state-licensed early child care providers.[18] This means that potential spots are available to 70% of children, if affordability is not an issue. For those who need subsidized care, an estimated 4,398 of the total slots are available through state and federal resources. According to the Alameda Child Care Planning Council, 10,734 of preschool-aged Oakland children qualified for some type of subsidized early learning care, leaving approximately 59% of low-income children unserved.

Of OUSD's 54 elementary schools, 31 offer full- or half-day preschool serving approximately 1,800 children. In addition, 20 schools offer transitional kindergarten (TK), a new program introduced across California in 2012–13 to provide an additional year of early education for those who turn five after the start of the school year.[19] Transitional kindergarten also provides a new opportunity to pay attention to early literacy.

A Comparison of Available State-Licensed Early Child Care Providers in Oakland: Overall and Subsidized
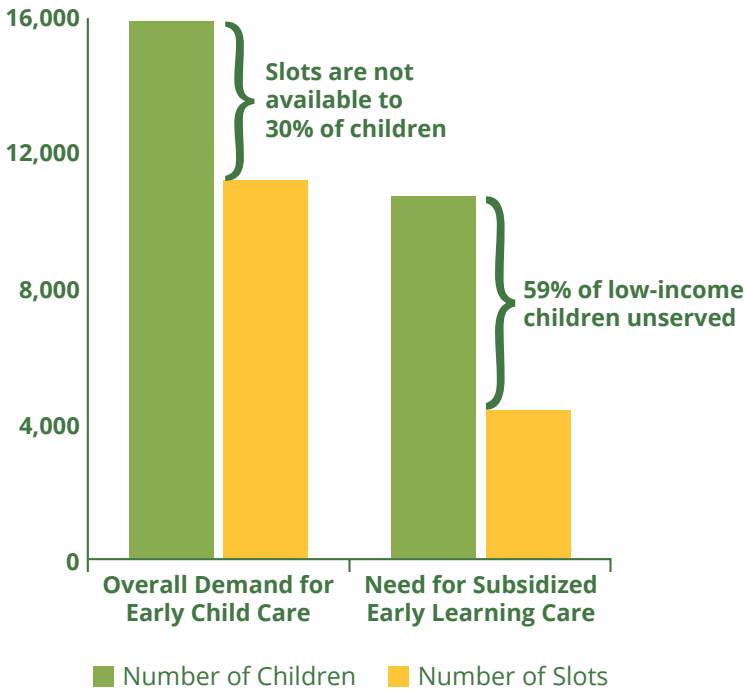

Slots are not available to 30% of children

59% of low-income children unserved

■ Number of Children   ■ Number of Slots

FIGURE 19: NUMBER OF PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN AND AVAILABLE EARLY LEARNING SLOTS IN OAKLAND, 2012

A quality rating improvement system is being piloted across Alameda County that will assess early learning centers based on federal and state standards, providing a clearer picture of assets and challenges for quality early learning in Oakland.

As mentioned earlier, the quality of early learning environments are crucial to their effectiveness. While OUSD is phasing in some uniform measures of its own preschool quality, neither the City nor the County has a universal assessment of early learning quality. However, a quality rating improvement system being piloted across Alameda County will assess early learning centers based on federal and state standards, providing a better picture of assets and challenges for quality early learning in Oakland as well as support for continuous improvement.

18 Kenneth Rainin Foundation and the Alameda Childcare Planning Council. *Preschool in Oakland*. Oakland, 2012.
19 The Kindergarten Readiness Act of 2010 (SB 1381) changed the kindergarten entry cutoff so that children must turn five by September 1 to enter kindergarten. In 2012–13, SB 1381 established a new grade level—transitional kindergarten (TK)—which is the first year of a two-year kindergarten experience for students who turn five between September 2 and December 2. The new grade level uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is developmentally appropriate.

OR2020 and Partner Activities and Programs Addressing School Readiness

What are OR2020 and its partners already doing to support school readiness?

▶ **Preschool literacy supports:** Since the first Year of OR2020 (2011–12), several local funders under the auspices of the Oakland Literacy Coalition (OLC) have supported two preschool partners to provide literacy instruction, supports and materials in OUSD preschool classrooms in the OLC Literacy Zone schools. The Literacy Zone included three elementary schools in East Oakland—two public and one charter—where the OLC worked with principals to identify appropriate literacy supports, then matched and funded partners for each school to provide programming, evening family literacy events, and reading challenges with the aim of raising third grade reading levels.

The Oakland Literacy Coalition supported literacy instruction, supports and materials for preschool classrooms in three OUSD elementary schools in East Oakland.

▶ **Balanced Literacy Professional Learning Communities:** Beginning in 2012–2013, OUSD invested in an ongoing professional learning community bringing together preschool, transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade teachers to focus on the Balanced Literacy curricular approach, which supports reading, listening, speaking and writing, the foundation skills of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy. Like many other

OUSD is redesigning its 0–8 framework to align curriculum, professional development, student assessments, data collection, and other areas supporting instructional and classroom quality.

school districts around the country, OUSD is redesigning its 0–8 framework to align curriculum, professional development, student assessments, data collection, and other areas supporting instructional and classroom quality to provide a strong, consistent pathway from early learning to third grade and beyond. As mentioned above, the benefits of pre-kindergarten programs are more likely to show long-term effectiveness when they are part of aligned, coherent programs that run from pre-kindergarten to third grade.

▶ **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** First 5 Alameda County is part of a regional partnership coordinating an assessment system in five Bay Area counties, including Alameda County. First 5 has begun piloting the QRIS, which rates early learning centers on how they incorporate child observation, developmental and health screenings, effective teacher-child interactions, and a stimulating program environment. It also documents class ratios and teacher qualifications. In 2014 and 2015, this assessment—part of a statewide pilot in 16 California counties—will be used to rate more than 90 child care centers and homes in Alameda County (including Oakland) that serve high needs children.[20] Each preschool will be on a two-year assessment cycle with professional development and technical assistance provided to support continuous improvement. The four-year project is funded by a Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant through 2015.

▶ **The Oakland Education Cabinet (OEC) 0–8 Early Childhood Committee:** The OEC, a City-wide collaborative re-established in 2011 by the Mayor, Superintendent of Schools and President of Mills College, adopted early childhood as one of its four focus areas. The OEC formed an Early Childhood Committee focused on messaging the importance of school readiness, and increasing enrollment in preschool and transitional kindergarten. The preschool enrollment campaign has filled more than 1,500 empty slots.

▶ **First 5 Alameda County:** First 5 fosters school readiness activities in local libraries and Parks and Recreation programs, and supports summer pre-kindergarten programs in several school districts for children with no prior preschool experience. In 2012–13, 679 children attended 5–6 week summer pre-kindergarten programs, including some in Oakland.

Summary and Conclusions

What challenges do we face in making sure children are ready for school in Oakland?

▶ **Universal needs:** Nearly half of children entering kindergarten in OUSD are not proficient at first sound fluency (initial sounds), a key predictor of reading success, which means they may not be well prepared for kindergarten. One-third of students were below benchmark in letter naming in 2011–12 (33%); however the proportion below benchmark decreased in 2012–13 to 26%.

▶ **Needs for targeted approaches:**

• **Children of color:** DIBELS results disaggregated by race and ethnicity show that outcomes vary substantially: while 75% of White kindergarteners in 2012 scored above benchmark, only 44% of Latino students, 47% of Asians, and 49% of African Americans reached the benchmark for first sound fluency.

• **English Learners:** English fluency also substantially impacted achievement on the DIBELS assessments which depend on comprehension of reading instructions in English. Fifty-seven percent of

kindergarteners speaking English as their only language scored above benchmark in first sound fluency in 2012, while only 41% of English Learners were above benchmark.

▶ **Lack of common definition and assessment of school readiness:** While OUSD utilizes two measures—a literacy test and a measure of several developmental domains—Oakland has neither a universal definition nor a universal assessment for school readiness.

▶ **Lack of bridging between informal and formal early learning systems:** Because the factors that lead to school readiness begin with social and emotional interactions in the home, there is a need to engage and support parents—especially those in low-income families facing multiple challenges—before children reach school age. While quality early learning centers may actively engage parents, community-based efforts for families with children aged 0–5 (playgroups, etc.) are less connected to formal early learning systems.

What are potential strategies for OR2020?

❶ Work towards a community understanding of school readiness that includes factors from birth onward (not only participation in preschool), e.g. development of strong parent-child bonds and interactions, access to and use of health care, access to literacy-rich materials in and outside the home, etc.

❷ Support the development of citywide indicators for school readiness so that systems and partners can better identify and coordinate strategies to meet student needs.

❸ Use existing early learning developments across OUSD, the City and the County (0–8 realignment, Quality Ratings Improvement System pilot, etc.) to support partners working toward a shared definition and assessment of school readiness.

20 High needs is defined in this context as children who are dual language learners, socio-economically disadvantaged, have special needs, are infants or toddlers, are homeless or in foster care, or are tribal migrants.

4. Use existing early kindergarten data that predicts reading success to support mastery of school readiness and literacy skills (e.g. first sound fluency) and develop aligned focus areas for instructional and program supports.

5. Develop an inventory of formal and informal programs for families with children aged 0–5, with a focus on those that engage and support parents before children are school age. Support exploration of further alignment of such programs.

6. Use Quality Rating and Improvement System data to help partners understand in what general areas early learning standards are being met and where there are challenges. Partners can work together to address challenges at a community level (e.g. parent engagement before preschool) or to buttress specific readiness skills in preschool, transitional kindergarten, or kindergarten classrooms.

7. Use information about early learning availability, quality, and enrollment to understand where both opportunity and quality needs are not being met.

What data do we need to better understand how to increase school readiness?

1. DRDP data for preschool and transitional kindergarten. The DRDP is a subjective tool based on teacher observation and evaluates several areas of a child's social-emotional, physical, and cognitive skills development, including language and literacy. The District currently has DRDP results only for children who participate in OUSD preschools, who represent just 20% of each year's incoming kindergarten class. We hope to analyze DRDP data in future reports when it may be available for a wider and more representative portion of the incoming kindergarten class.

2. Quality assessment data (Quality Rating and Improvement System) for early learning centers in Oakland as it becomes available through the Alameda County pilot.

3. Data over time from First 5 Alameda County School Readiness assessments. First 5 Alameda County administers periodic school readiness evaluations that examine skills in four areas: self-care and motor skills, social expression, self-regulation and kindergarten academics. While they did not release a report for 2012, they will release one for 2013; we hope to review and analyze the results for Oakland schools included in that assessment.

4. Geographical data identifying where early learning seats are available, and where they are being utilized (full vs. partial enrollment).

5. Geographical data indicating where quality early learning centers are located and where there is a lack of quality early learning centers.

6. Inventory of programs that support parent engagement, education, and intervention with regards to 0–5 literacy development and school readiness; and any outcomes data from those programs.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Defining School Attendance

Why is school attendance critical to reading success?

A large body of work has established that being "chronically absent" (absent for 10% or more of school days; 18 days in a full year) is strongly associated with achievement. All children, regardless of socio-economic background, do worse academically in first grade if they are chronically absent in kindergarten.[1,2] Further, chronic absenteeism is an established early warning sign of later academic risk and school dropout.[3] One study showed that only 17% of children chronically absent in *both* kindergarten and first grade could read at grade level at the end of third grade while only 41% of those chronically absent in *either* kindergarten or first grade could read at grade level.[4] By comparison, 64% of children with regular attendance in kindergarten and first grade could read at or above grade level.

Poverty and chronic absence combined significantly inhibit academic achievement. Among poor children, chronic absence in kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of the fifth grade.[5] Simply put, when poor children regularly miss school, they fall behind in learning and the achievement gap between them and their peers widens considerably. Children living in poverty are 25% more likely to miss three or more school days per month than more affluent students[6] for reasons related to ill health, housing instability, poor health care access, unreliable transportation, and violence or trauma in the community.

Chronic absence is an established early warning sign of academic risk and school dropout. Recent research found that only 17% of children chronically absent in both kindergarten and 1st grade could read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

Among poor children, chronic absence in kindergarten predicts the lowest levels of educational achievement by the end of 5th grade. Children living in poverty are 25% more likely to miss three or more days of school per month than more affluent children.

1 Bruner, Charles, Anne Discher, and Hedy Chang. *Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain Sight.* Attendance Works and Child & Family Policy Center, November 2011.
2 Chang, Hedy and Mariajosé Romero. *Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades.* National Center for Children in Poverty, September 2008.
3 Bruner, Discher, and Chang.
4 Applied Survey Research. *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Association with Student Characteristics, School Readiness and Third Grade Outcomes.* San Jose: May 2011.
5 Ibid.
6 Ready, D. *Socioeconomic Disadvantage, School Attendance, and Early Cognitive Development: The Differential Effects of School Exposure, Sociology of Education,* 2010.

Baseline and Formative Data for School Attendance

What are the rates of chronic absence and "at risk" attendance for students in kindergarten to third grade in OUSD?

The overall chronic absence rate for students in kindergarten to third grade is 11%, but students in the chronically absent and "at risk" categories combined represented 34% of the K–3 student population, a total of 4,658 students. (See Figure 20)

> OR2020 will join other efforts in Oakland to address attendance, supporting OUSD's goal to reduce chronic absence by 10% annually, or maintain a rate of 5% or less, at the school and District level.

4,658 students in K–3 were chronically absent or "at risk"

- 1,543 · 11% — Chronically Absent
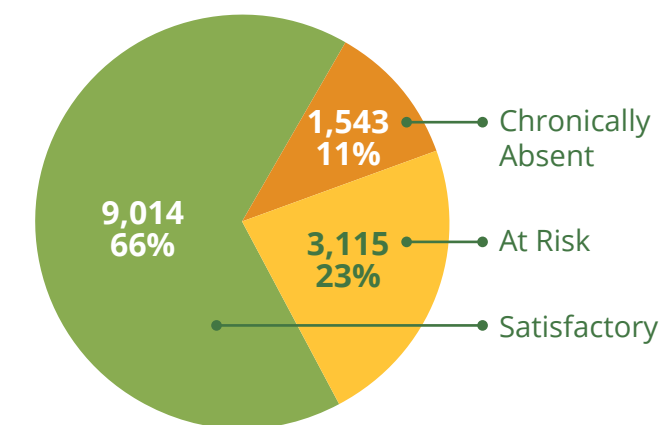- 9,014 · 66%
- 3,115 · 23% — At Risk
- Satisfactory

FIGURE 20: OUSD STUDENTS BY ATTENDANCE LEVEL IN GRADES K–3, 2012–13

Why is attendance in the early grades so important for reading success?

Kindergarten is often taken less seriously by parents who see young children's school as "play time," and since kindergarten is not mandatory, schools have no legal recourse for frequent absence. However, attendance in kindergarten is a strong predictor of reading at grade level by third grade.[8] In fact, one study showed that 77% of students with satisfactory attendance[9] in kindergarten and first grade performed at grade level or above on the CST ELA, compared to 13% who were chronically absent.[10]

> One study showed that 77% of students with satisfactory attendance in kindergarten and 1st grade performed at grade level on the CST ELA, compared to 13% who were chronically absent.

The rate of chronic absence for OUSD kindergarteners (13%) is almost twice as high as the rates for second to sixth graders (ranging from 6% to 8%); first graders also have among the highest early-grade chronic absence rates at 10%. (See Figure 21)

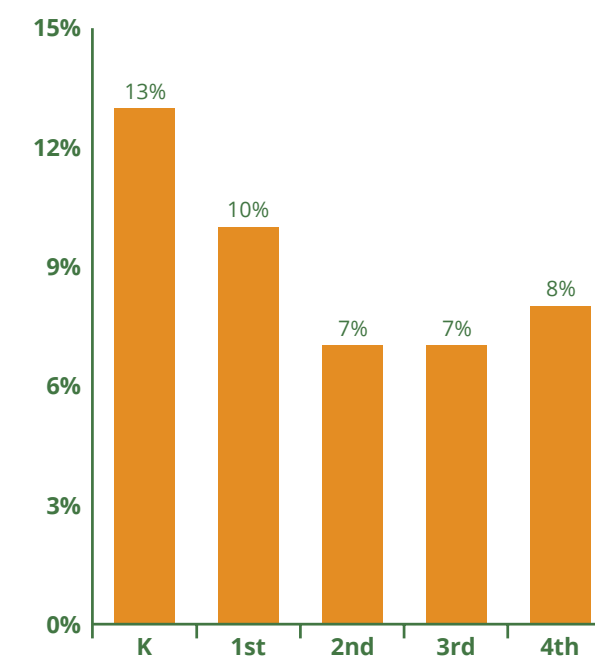**Kindergarten and 1st grade have much higher rates of chronic absence than other elementary school grades**

Grade	Rate
K	13%
1st	10%
2nd	7%
3rd	7%
4th	8%

FIGURE 21: OUSD RATES OF CHRONIC ABSENCE BY GRADE IN 2012–13

How We Chose Data to Measure School Attendance

Since chronic absence is a well-documented predictor of educational achievement, affecting both third grade reading and later dropout risk, this report looks at chronic absence from kindergarten to third grade, and also focuses on chronic absence among kindergarteners. Because we know from research that achievement disparities exist among various student populations and that chronic absence negatively impacts reading scores for some ethnicities at a higher rate than for others, we also analyzed data by race/ethnicity, gender, English Learner status, and Special Education status.

This report also analyzes data for "at risk" attendance levels. Based on OUSD's 180-day school year, chronically absent students are missing 18 days (10%) or more of school per year, and students with an "at risk" attendance level are missing between nine and 17 days (5% to 9%). Research has also documented that this second attendance level—"at risk"—correlates with lower third grade reading scores, though not as strongly as chronic absence does. Recent research shows that students with good attendance across kindergarten and first grade had the highest third grade reading scores, on average 27 points higher than students who were in the "at risk" level for attendance over those two years. Students in the "at risk" category also scored, on average, ten points below proficiency.[7]

> While chronic absence is a well known predictor of lower academic achievement, an "at risk" attendance pattern also has a strong impact on 3rd grade reading proficiency.

7 Applied Survey Research. *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Associations with Student Characteristics, School Readiness, and Third Grade Outcomes.* San Jose: July 2011.

8 Applied Survey Research. *Attendance in Early Elementary Grades: Associations with Student Characteristics, School Readiness, and Third Grade Outcomes.* San Jose: July 2011.
9 Satisfactory attendance means attending 95% or more of enrolled days.
10 Ibid.

Examining kindergarten attendance data by race/ethnicity and gender (See Figure 22) shows that the rate of chronic absence for both African American boys (26%) and girls (25%) is at least twice as high as for all other groups. However, Latina (female) students, in addition to African American girls and boys, have among the highest rates of "at risk" attendance. "At risk" students are an important and often overlooked group; even though their absence pattern is less extreme than those with chronic absence, it has been shown to affect academic achievement.[11]

The Oakland Education Cabinet's Attendance Collaborative launched "Every Day Counts" in 2012 in every elementary school, providing sites with tools to engage families and students around the importance of attendance.

African American boys and girls had the highest rates of chronic absence in kindergarten. Latinas had the highest rate of "at risk" attendance.

African American boys and girls in kindergarten had the highest rates of chronic absence; Latina girls had the highest rate of "at risk" attendance
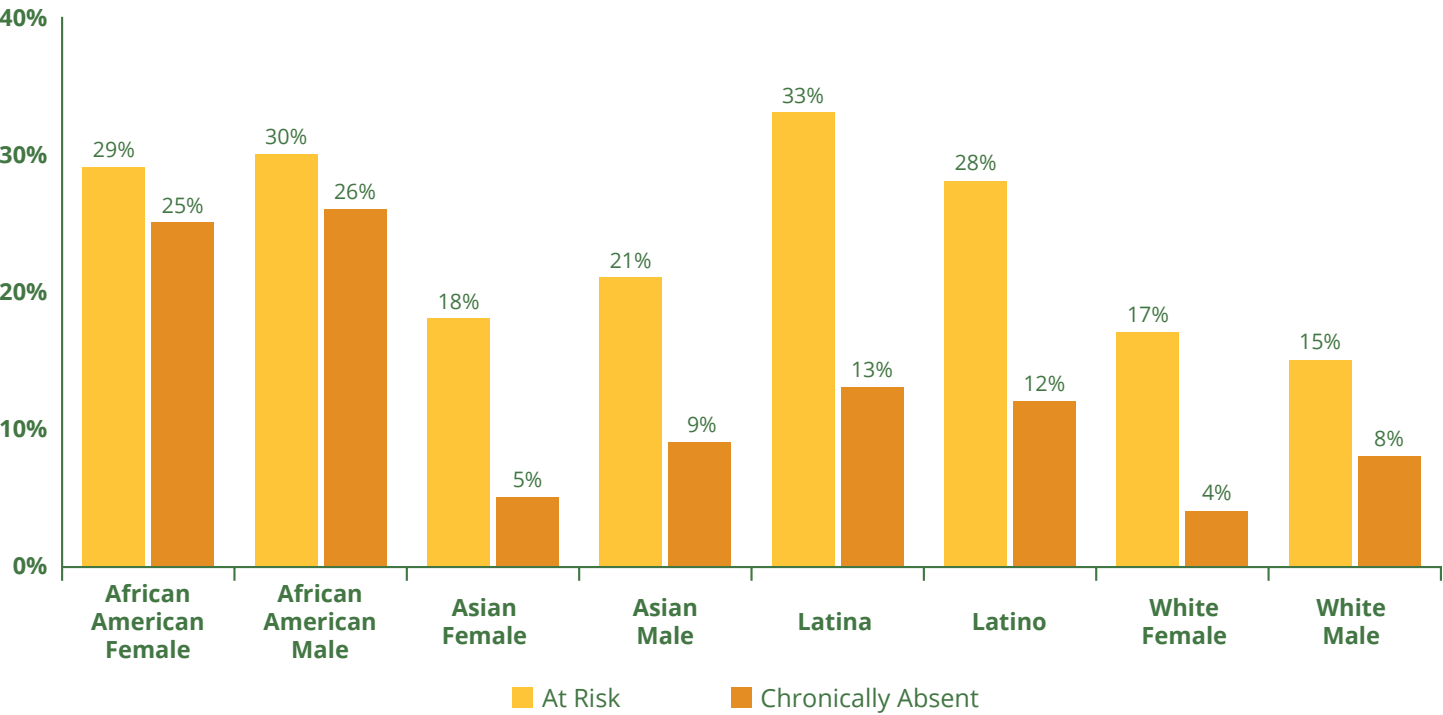

FIGURE 22: CHRONIC ABSENCE AND "AT RISK" ATTENDANCE LEVELS FOR OUSD KINDERGARTNERS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER, 2012–13

Did the rate of early-grade chronic absence change from the OR2020 baseline year to the 2012–13 school year?

Unfortunately there was little progress in decreasing chronic absence for the important target population of kindergarteners. (See Figure 23, next page)

However, for first graders, who also had particularly high chronic absence, and for our target group, third graders, chronic absence declined for African American students (13% for first graders, and 11% for third graders), though their rates remain more than twice as high as other groups. (See Figures 24 & 25, next page) Given that chronic absence is a significant problem within this population, this movement may indicate that strategies developed to address school absence among African American students are having a positive effect.

11 http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Grad-Nation-Summit-2013.pdf

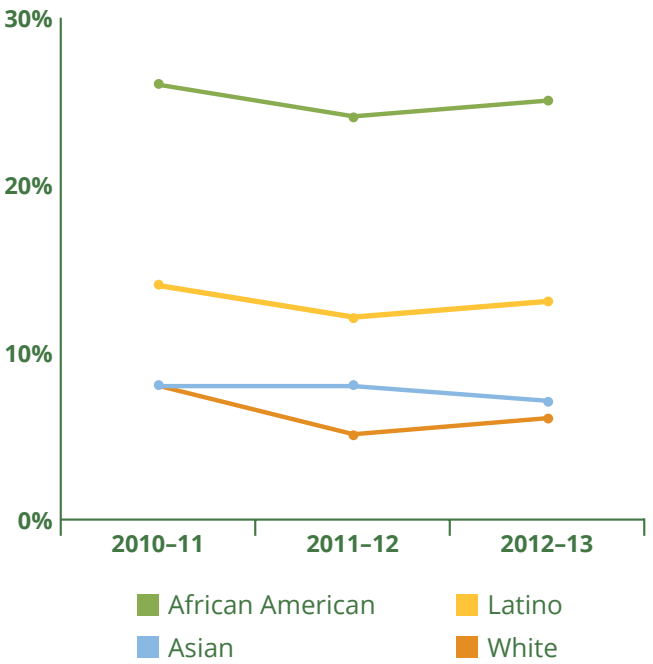### Chronic absence rates in kindergarten were relatively flat

FIGURE 23: OUSD CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES IN KINDERGARTEN BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2010–11 TO 2012–13

A decline in chronic absence is also evident in 3rd grade for African Americans

FIGURE 25: OUSD CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES IN 3RD GRADE BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2010–11 TO 2012–13

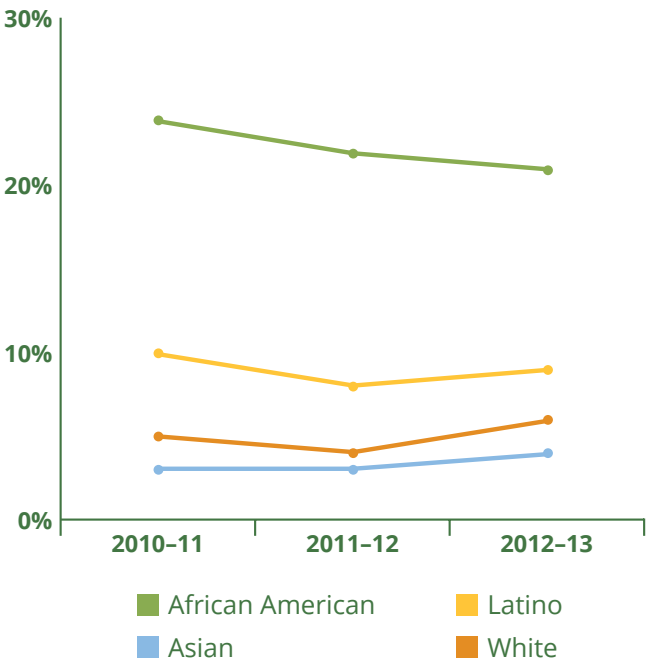### Chronic absence of African Americans in 1st grade declined by 3 percentage points (13%)
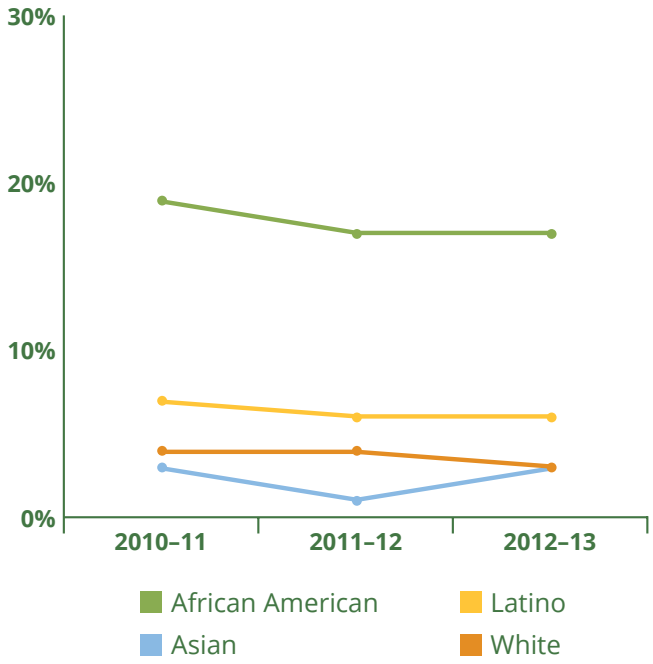

FIGURE 24: OUSD CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES IN 1ST GRADE BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2010–11 TO 2012–13

Although still very high, chronic absence rates for African American 1st and 3rd graders declined in the last three years, suggesting that strategies developed to address school absence among African American students may be having a positive effect.

What are chronic absence, "at risk" and satisfactory attendance patterns for student subpopulations in kindergarten to third grade?

As in kindergarten, African American students in early elementary (kindergarten to third grade) had by far the highest level of chronic absence (21%) of any ethnic group but had an equal proportion of "at risk" students when compared to Latino students (26%). (See Figure 26) Other populations had much lower chronic absence and "at risk" attendance rates.

African American K–3 students had the highest rate of chronic absence at 21%, while Asian students had the lowest at 4%
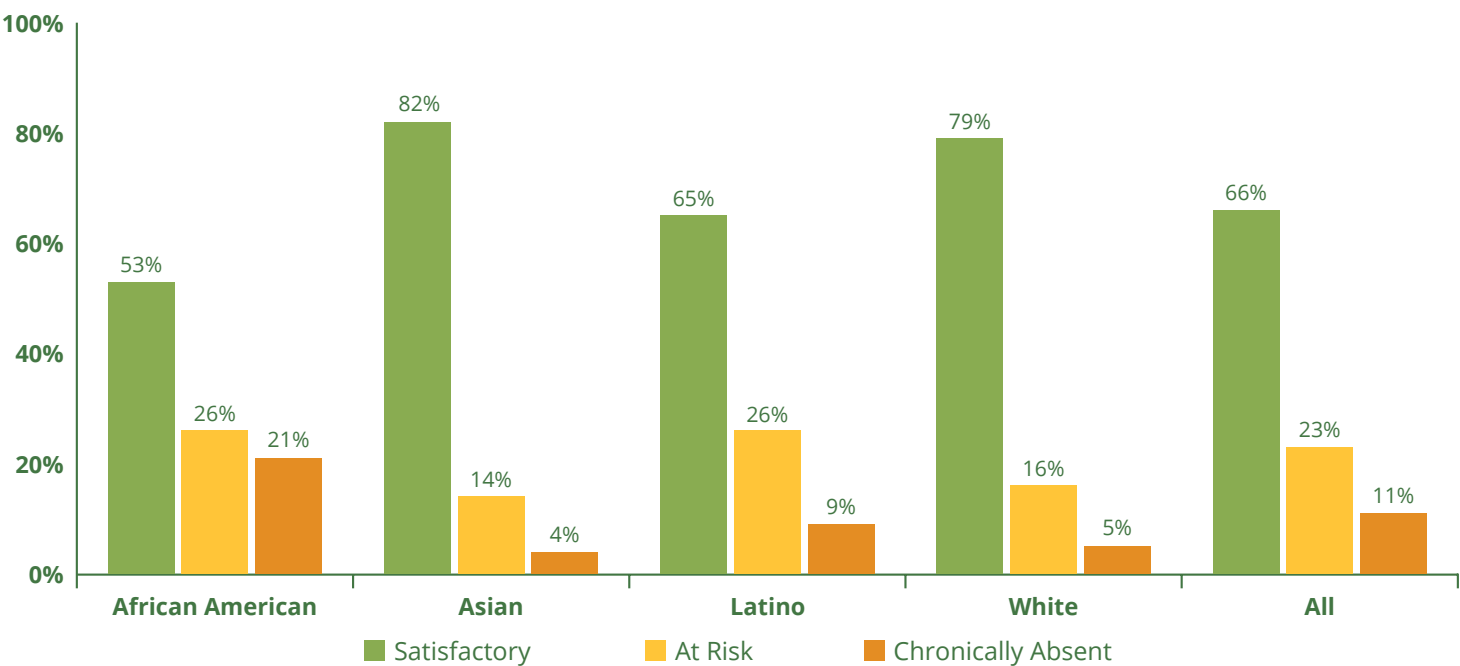

FIGURE 26: RATES OF CHRONIC ABSENCE, "AT RISK," AND SATISFACTORY ATTENDANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY FOR OUSD K–3 STUDENTS, 2012–13

When examining the actual numbers of children impacted, African Americans have the largest number of students in the chronic absence category (781), nearly one-third more students chronically absent than Latinos (477), despite representing a smaller proportion of the overall school population. (See Figure 27, next page) However, more Latino students (1,335) fall into the "at risk" attendance category than do African Americans (991), and there are more Latino students in these two attendance categories combined (chronically absent and "at risk") than African American students. This is particularly important because some research indicates that Latino children may be more strongly impacted by absences than other groups; one study including national data showed that first grade reading scores for chronically absent Latino kindergartners were significantly lower than for their peers of other ethnicities even when they had missed similar amounts of school.[12]

When we look at subpopulations by gender, African American males have the highest rates of chronic absence (22%), followed closely by African American females (20%). Latino girls and boys make up a distant second at nine percent each. Overall, there appears to be little difference in chronic absence between boys and girls. (See Figure 28, next page)

12 Chang and Romero, 2008.

The number of African American and Latino K–3 students who are either "at risk" or chronically absent is nearly equal, despite the smaller population of African Americans
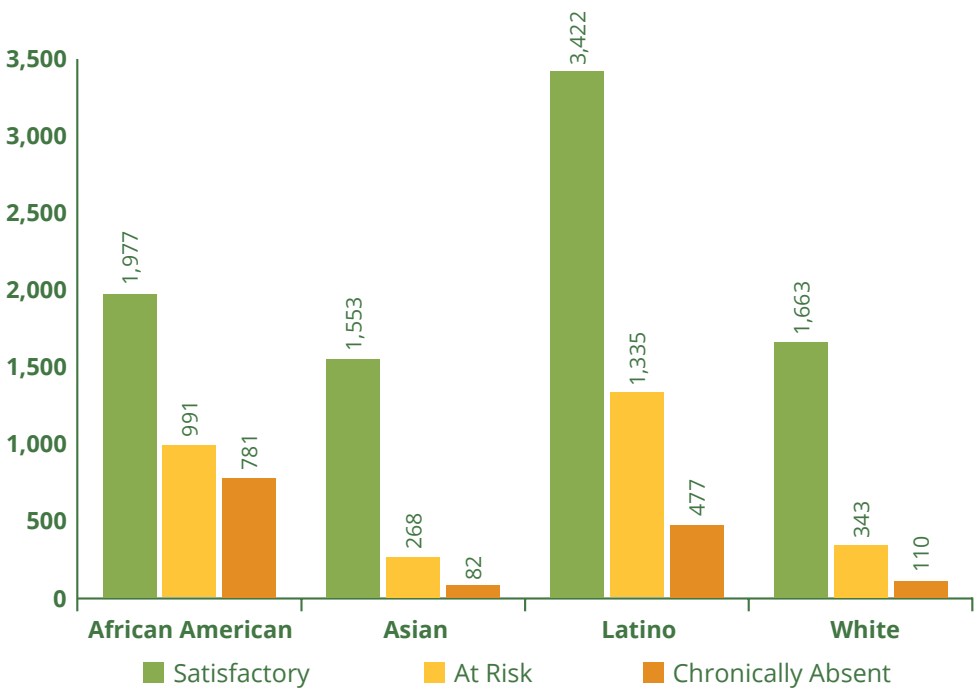

FIGURE 27: NUMBER OF OUSD K–3 STUDENTS BY ATTENDANCE STATUS AND ETHNICITY, 2012–13

African American girls and boys have the highest, and nearly equal, rates of chronic absenteeism
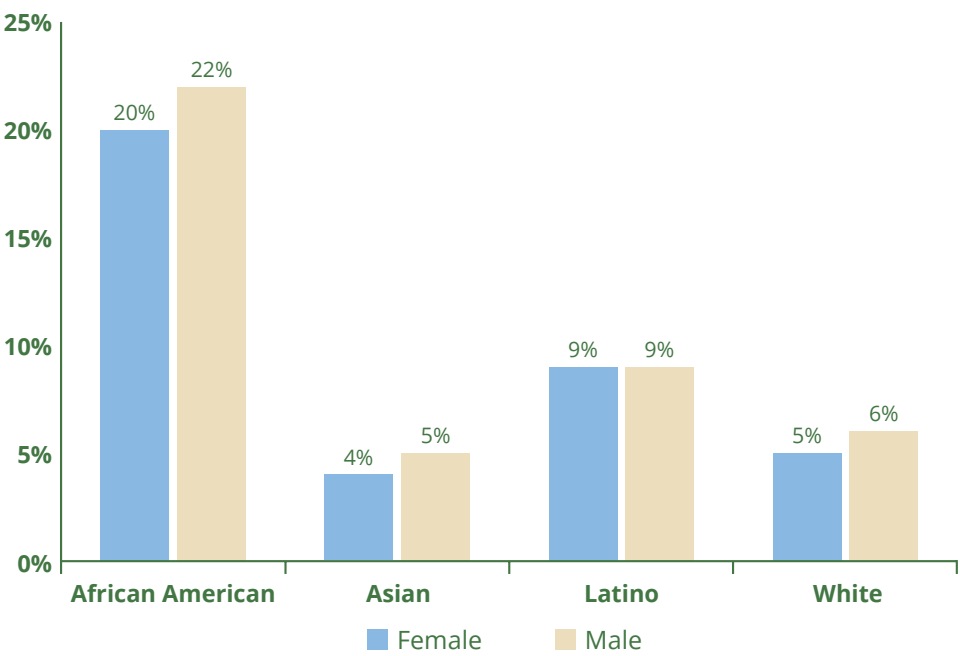

FIGURE 28: CHRONIC ABSENCE RATES FOR OUSD K–3 STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY AND GENDER, 2012–13

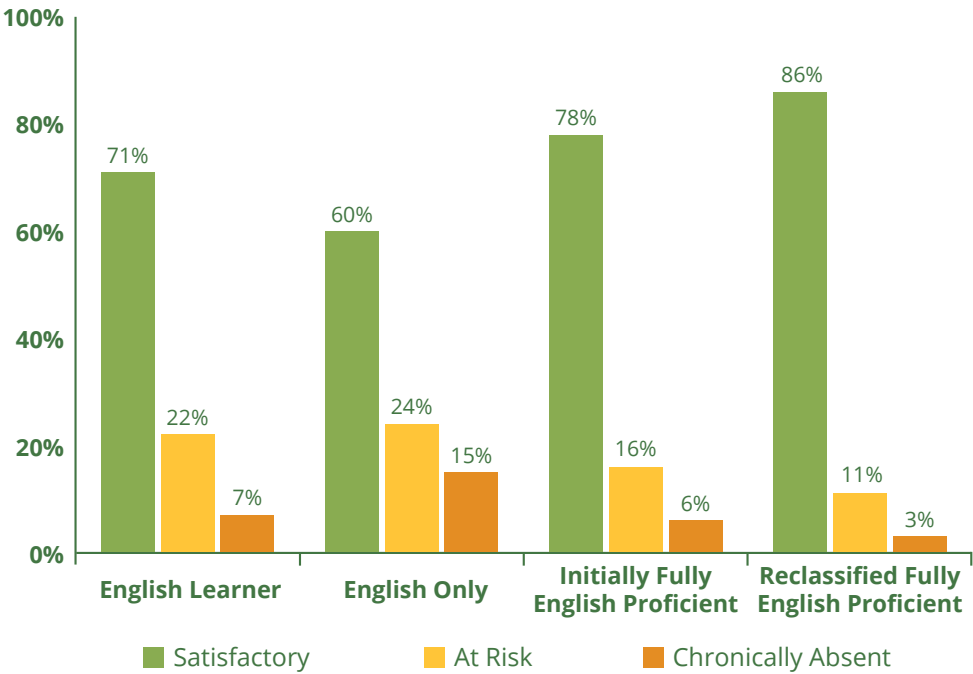## English Learners and students who only speak English have nearly the same proportion of students "at risk"

FIGURE 29: ATTENDANCE RATES FOR OUSD K–3 STUDENTS BY ENGLISH LEARNER STATUS, 2012–13

A coalition of organizations including GO Public Schools, Urban Strategies Council, Attendance Works, First 5 Alameda County, Oakland Public Education Fund, and the United Way are working together to explore OUSD attendance patterns to highlight trends in the data as well as interventions impacting attendance.

46% of Special Education students were chronically absent or "at risk," compared to 33% of students in General Education

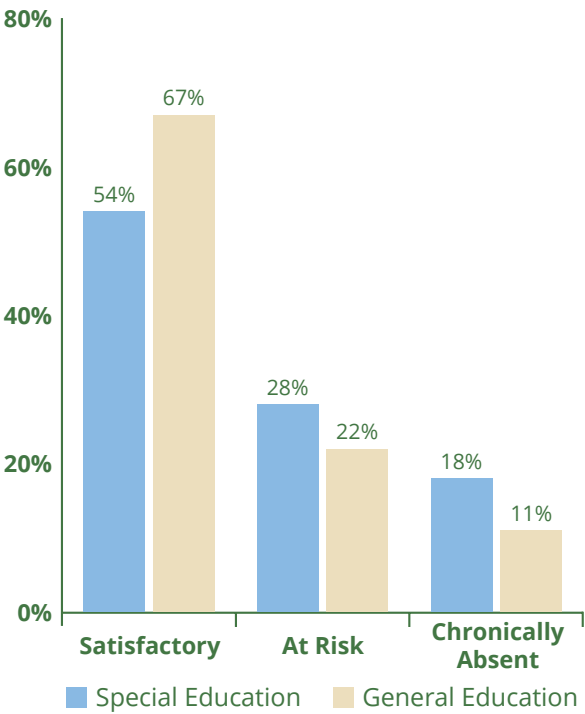**FIGURE 30: AT RISK AND CHRONICALLY ABSENT ATTENDANCE RATES FOR OUSD K–3 STUDENTS BY SPECIAL EDUCATION STATUS, 2012–13**

English Learners and bilingual students have very low rates of chronic absence compared to mono-lingual English speakers. However, English Learners had nearly the same rate of "at risk" attendance as students who speak only English. (See Figure 29)

Students in Special Education were both more likely to be chronically absent (18%) and "at risk" (28%) than students in General Education (11% and 22%). This finding suggests the need for exploration of the particular needs and challenges of students with disabilities so that interventions and supports can be targeted appropriately. (See Figure 30)

We need to explore why Special Education students are missing school so that supports can be targeted to this group.

Are children who are suspended also more likely to be chronically absent?

Suspensions are themselves a type of absence but, more significantly, students who are suspended once or more are more than three times as likely to be chronically absent than those with no suspensions. Chronic absence by definition includes excused and unexcused absences, including suspensions. Further research needs to explore whether it is the number of suspensions that is contributing to the chronic absence, or whether suspension itself is serving as an early warning sign for academic distress that correlates with absences. (See Figure 31)

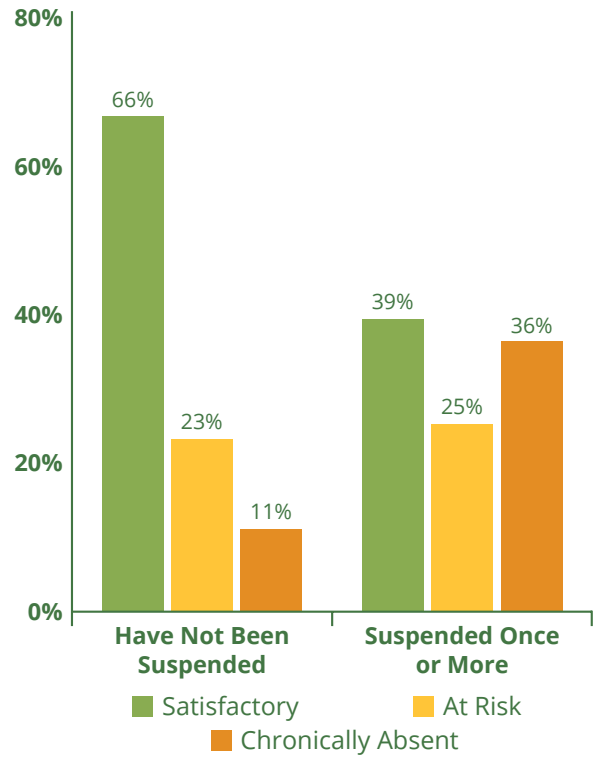## K–3rd graders suspended once or more are three times more likely to be chronically absent

FIGURE 31: ABSENCE PATTERNS FOR OUSD K–3RD GRADERS SUSPENDED COMPARED TO THOSE NOT SUSPENDED, 2012–13

Are there differences in suspension rates by race/ethnicity and gender?

African American students have extremely disproportionate rates of suspensions in grades kindergarten to third grade. While they are 27% of the OUSD population in these grades, they represent 67% of students suspended. (See Figure 33) Other ethnicities exhibit the opposite pattern, with suspension rates lower than their population representation. Future research needs to determine if suspension may be a significant contributor to high rates of chronic absence and "at risk" attendance among African American students.

African Americans make up 67% of K–3 students suspended, while they are only 27% of the students
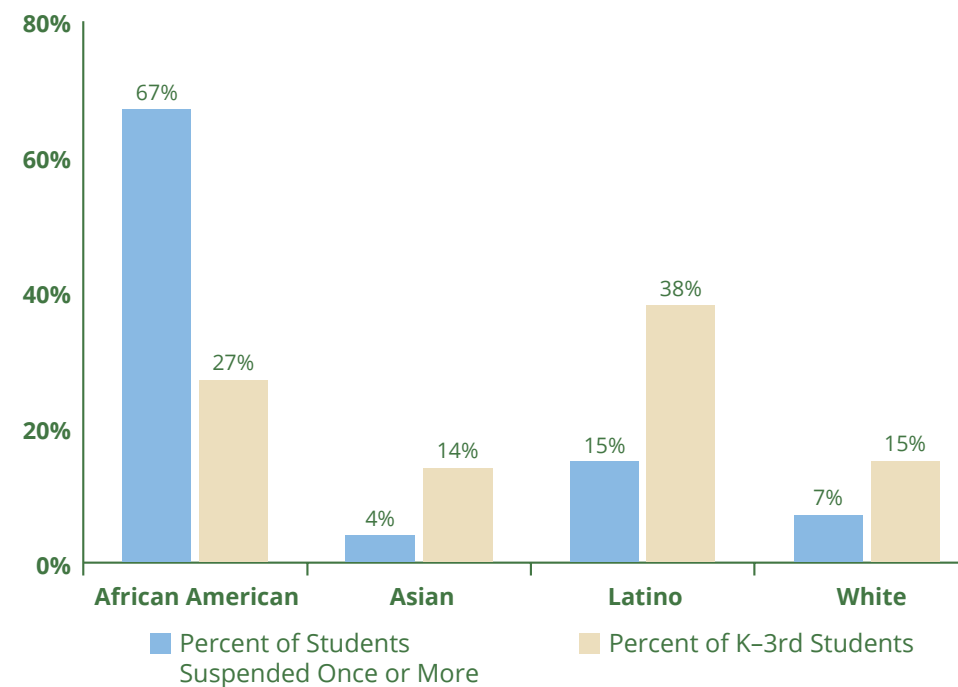
African American students have extremely disproportionate rates of suspensions in grades K–3. While they are 27% of the OUSD K–3 population, they represent 67% of K–3 students suspended.

Chart data (percentages):

Ethnicity	Percent of Students Suspended Once or More	Percent of K–3rd Students
African American	67%	27%
Asian	4%	14%
Latino	15%	38%
White	7%	15%

■ Percent of Students Suspended Once or More   ■ Percent of K–3rd Students

FIGURE 33: SUSPENSION RATES FOR OUSD K–3 STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY, 2012–13

Do suspensions affect reading proficiency?

Suspensions are also critical because students who have been suspended show a much lower rate of reading proficiency than those who have not. Only 13% of second and third grade students who have been suspended once or more score proficient on their CST ELA tests, compared to 42% of students who have not been suspended in those years. The achievement gap here suggests the need for targeted interventions; however, the low rate of proficiency of the comparison group emphasizes the need for universal supports as well.

Students who are suspended are more than three times as likely to be chronically absent than those with no suspensions. Suspensions are critical to attendance and reading because students who have been suspended also show a much lower rate of reading proficiency than those who have not.

2nd and 3rd graders suspended once or more were three times less likely to read at grade level than students not suspended
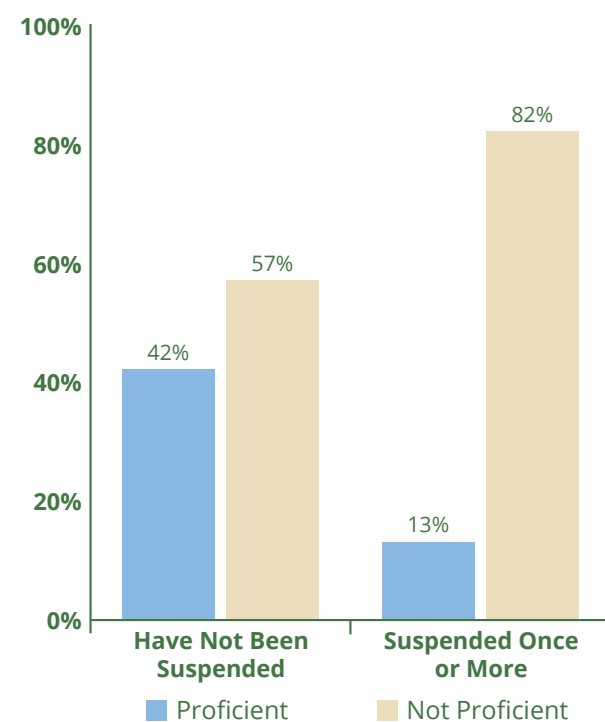
Chart data (percentages):

Group	Proficient	Not Proficient
Have Not Been Suspended	42%	57%
Suspended Once or More	13%	82%

■ Proficient   ■ Not Proficient

FIGURE 32: CST ELA SCORES OF OUSD 2ND AND 3RD GRADERS SUSPENDED COMPARED TO THOSE NOT SUSPENDED, 2012–13

African American boys in kindergarten to third grade had substantially higher rates of suspension in 2012–13 than other groups, with 4% suspended at least once, which is four times the rate for girls. African American girls have the next highest rate at 1%. Other ethnicities have slightly higher rates for boys than girls. (See Figure 34)

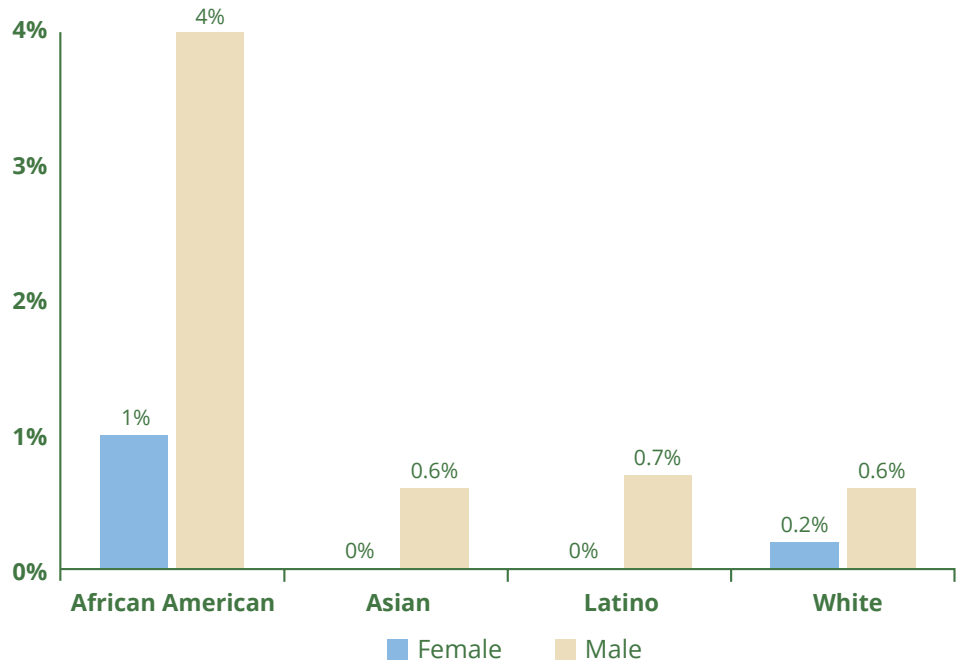## African American boys had by far the most suspensions 2012–13

FIGURE 34: PERCENTAGE OF OUSD K–3 STUDENTS SUSPENDED BY GENDER AND RACE/ETHNICITY, 2012–13

OUSD has agreed to a Voluntary Resolution Plan with the Office of Civil Rights that transforms the disciplinary system within the District, with particular focus on lowering suspension rates at schools with the highest disproportionate suspension by race. Changes also include alternatives to suspension such as Restorative Justice, and the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), a systems approach to discipline that emphasizes prevention, social skills instruction, and data-based decision making to both reduce problem behaviors and increase academic performance.

OR2020 and Partner Activities and Programs Addressing School Attendance

What are OR2020 and its partners already doing to improve attendance?

Many OR2020 partners have been active in promoting school attendance, working to reinforce the benefits of attendance and risks of chronic absence; and tracking and intervening with chronically absent or "at risk" students and families.

▶ **OUSD Balanced Scorecard:** As part of its five-year strategic plan, OUSD developed a Balanced Scorecard comprised of strategic actions to reach desired outcomes. One of the desired outcomes is reducing the overall chronic absence rate by 10% annually or maintaining it at five percent or less across the District and at each school. The 2012–13 chronic absence rate for the District was 11.2%, down from 12.4% in 2010–11.

▶ **OUSD Attendance Tools and Procedures:** OUSD has been working for several years with Attendance Works, a national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance. With support from Attendance Works, OUSD has developed its own tool for tracking the various categories of attendance on a weekly basis and rewrote its Attendance Policy Manual to focus on chronic absence as an early intervention point, providing templates, processes and protocol for site-based attendance teams.

OUSD has developed a tracking tool to focus on student-level chronic absence and support sites in initiating early intervention. The District also provides weekly reports on attendance and professional development on how to use attendance data to intervene early when students begin to have attendance problems.

- **OUSD Attendance Professional Development:** OUSD has worked with Attendance Works to provide extensive professional development for principals on working effectively with attendance data, developing site-based attendance teams, and establishing school-wide attendance initiatives.

- **Oakland Education Cabinet:** The Oakland Education Cabinet (OEC), a City-wide collaborative re-formed in 2011 by the Mayor, Superintendent of Schools and president of Mills College, adopted attendance as one of its focus areas and actively supports messaging campaigns across the City.

- **Oakland Education Cabinet and OUSD Attendance Campaign:** The OEC's Attendance Collaborative launched a District-wide campaign in fall 2012 called "Every Day Counts: Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow," accompanied by attendance toolkits for every school site on how to engage students and families around attendance.

- **Increased Partner Capacity to Support Student Attendance:** In the last two years, the Oakland Literacy Coalition has hosted local and national attendance specialists who have shared expertise and materials on educating parents and students about the long-term adverse impacts of chronic absence on achievement and high school graduation. OR2020 and the Grade-Level Reading Campaign also are working with Attendance Works to conduct further research into chronic absence, its impact, and its prevention.

Summary and Conclusions

What are the challenges we face around attendance?

- Kindergarten and first grade students have higher rates of chronic absence than students in later elementary school grades.

- There are very high rates of chronic absence among African American students, while Latino students have high rates of "at risk" attendance.

- Special Education students in kindergarten to third grade have a higher rate of chronic absence than students in general education, nearly as high as African American students.

- Suspensions impacted the chronic absence rates for K–3 African American boys in 2012–13 at a rate four times as high as the next most impacted group, African American girls. Future research needs to explore the proportion of chronically absent African American students' absences that are suspensions.

What are potential strategies for OR2020?

- Explore the contributing factors that lead to chronic absence, and especially disparities in absence patterns, so that we can address root causes.

- Learn more about promising practices and site-level partner collaboration from schools that have low chronic absence rates, and from schools that have significantly lowered chronic absence rates for African American and Latino students.

- Focus on kindergarten as a targeted intervention point. Because we know poor attendance rates in kindergarten impact third grade reading levels, kindergarten is an important leverage point for supporting early literacy.

- Develop targeted strategies to support student populations with the highest rates of chronic absence: African American, Latino and Special Education students.

- Use disaggregated data for Asian students to determine if particular subgroups need targeted supports.

- Identify ways to support site Attendance Teams through strategies targeted toward groups with the highest need and strategies that are universally beneficial to the overall student population.

What data do we need to explore next?

- School site data to identify which elementary schools have chronic absence rates at or below five percent.

- Disaggregated data over time from elementary schools with significant African American and/or Latino populations to identify sites with improved attendance for both student populations, paying particular attention to improved kindergarten rates.

- Disaggregated attendance data for Asian students. Though overall attendance rates are high, we know from other data that there are large disparities in academic outcomes within this group, and there is a possibility that attendance is affecting reading proficiency among some Asian populations.

SUMMER LEARNING

Defining Summer Learning

Why is summer learning critical to reading success?

During summer vacations, many students lose knowledge and skills; and by the end of summer students are, on average, one month behind where they left off in the spring.[1] Summer learning loss also contributes to the achievement gap in reading 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.[2] Over time, this pattern of losing ground each summer keeps students from progressing in comparison to higher-income students who start the year ready to learn new material. In fact, by the end of fifth grade, low-income students average three grade levels behind higher income students.[3]

One explanation is that low income children often lack the resources to access opportunities like summer programs and summer camps that would encourage and support reading. Thus, efforts to close the achievement gap during the school year alone may not be sufficient. Summer learning typically occurs through any kind of sustained, structured program or activity that is focused on mastering or reinforcing academic skills. Evidence suggests that summer learning programs can mitigate summer learning losses and even lead to achievement gains. What's more, the effects of summer learning have been found to endure for at least two years after the summer program.[4]

> Low-income students lose, on average, two months of reading achievement in the summer, while their middle-income peers tend to make gains. Summer learning loss contributes substantially to the achievement gap because low-income children often lack the resources for opportunities like summer programs and summer camps.

> Summer learning programs can mitigate summer learning loss and even lead to achievement gains, and studies show effects endure for at least 2 years after the program.

How We Chose Data to Measure Summer Learning in Oakland

We looked at two types of data: the first focused on summer school offered through OUSD. Students are selected for summer school based on their CST scores for English Language Arts and for Math, although participation is recommended, not mandatory. Elementary level students attend for four weeks for a minimum of four hours per day. Summer school is free.

The second set of data we looked at was for community-based summer enrichment programs funded by the City's Oakland Fund for Children and Youth. These half or full-day programs run by community based organizations are typically low or no-cost and include activities focused on social development, literacy, arts math/science or some combination of these. We also took a brief look at data for another City-run program: The Oakland Public Library's summer reading program, a free activity that challenges children to read for eight or more hours over the summer.

We began by looking at what percentage of the total OUSD population is served by summer school, then broke down participation by race/ethnicity and English Learner status. All data for summer school was for 2013. We were not able to track reading proficiency before and after summer school participation because students took two incompatible tests that do not allow valid comparison (the California Standards Test for English Language Arts (CST ELA) in the spring and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test in the fall). Future reports will aim to compare SRI results for students participating in summer school in spring and fall.

We also looked at summer program offerings for summer 2013 to understand what proportion of programs had literacy components (reading or writing), and what proportion of students were enrolled in programs with literacy components. Summer programming in Oakland is funded in large part through the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY),[5] which establishes out of school time programming priorities for three year cycles. The programming priorities in Figures 38 and 39 represent the funding cycle for 2013–2016. In future reports, we would like to look at a wider range of summer enrichment programs in Oakland, i.e. those offered through City libraries and the Parks and Recreation Department as well as various service providers and community based organizations.

1 McCombs Sloan, Jennifer; Augustine, Catherine; Schwartz, Heather; Bodilly, Susan; McInnis, Brian; Lichter, Dahlia; and Brown Cross, Amanda, Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs Can Boost Children's Learning, RAND, 2011.
2 McCombs Sloan, Jennifer; Augustine, Catherine; Schwartz et al, 2011.
3 Cooper, H.; Borman, G.; Fairchild, R, "School Calendars and Academic Achievement," In Handbook of Research on School, Schooling, and Human Development. Erlbaum, 2010.
4 Ibid.

5 Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) is a City department that provides strategic funding for youth programming, primarily for out-of-school time activities for grades K–12. It is funded by a 3% set-aside from the City's unrestricted General Fund and requires a three-year strategic plan to guide the allocation of funds.

Baseline and Formative Data for Summer Learning

Who is Enrolled in Summer School Learning at OUSD?

Grade Level

OUSD summer school served 5,023 students in 2013, or about 14% of total OUSD enrollment for 2012–13. Approximately 28% of summer school participants had just completed kindergarten to third grade, with heavier enrollment (10% or more) among students just finishing fifth, tenth and eleventh grade. (See Figure 35) As mentioned above, the majority of students who enroll in summer school have been recommended by their principal due to below grade level scores on the CST.

> Though 3rd graders tend to have lower rates of reading proficiency as measured by the CST ELA than students in other grades, enrollment in summer school among 3rd graders is relatively low.

3rd grade enrollment in summer school is low despite the need for proficiency gains in this grade
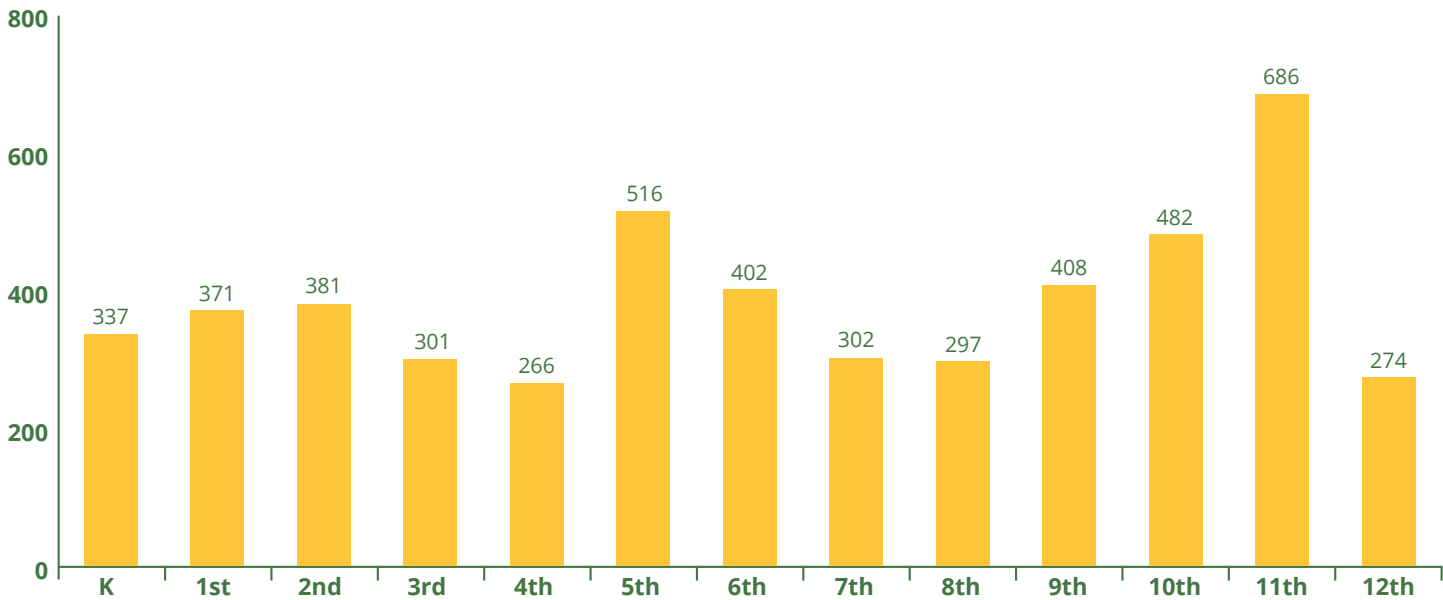

FIGURE 35: OUSD 2013 SUMMER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY GRADE LEVEL

Ethnicity

The ethnic distribution of summer school attendees shows an overrepresentation of Latinos when comparing to the general OUSD population, and an underrepresentation of White students. Other ethnicities have a distribution that is roughly proportional to their representation in the OUSD population. (See Figure 36)

> The strong representation of Latinos in summer school is a positive sign for targeting programming toward a population experiencing disparities in reading proficiency.

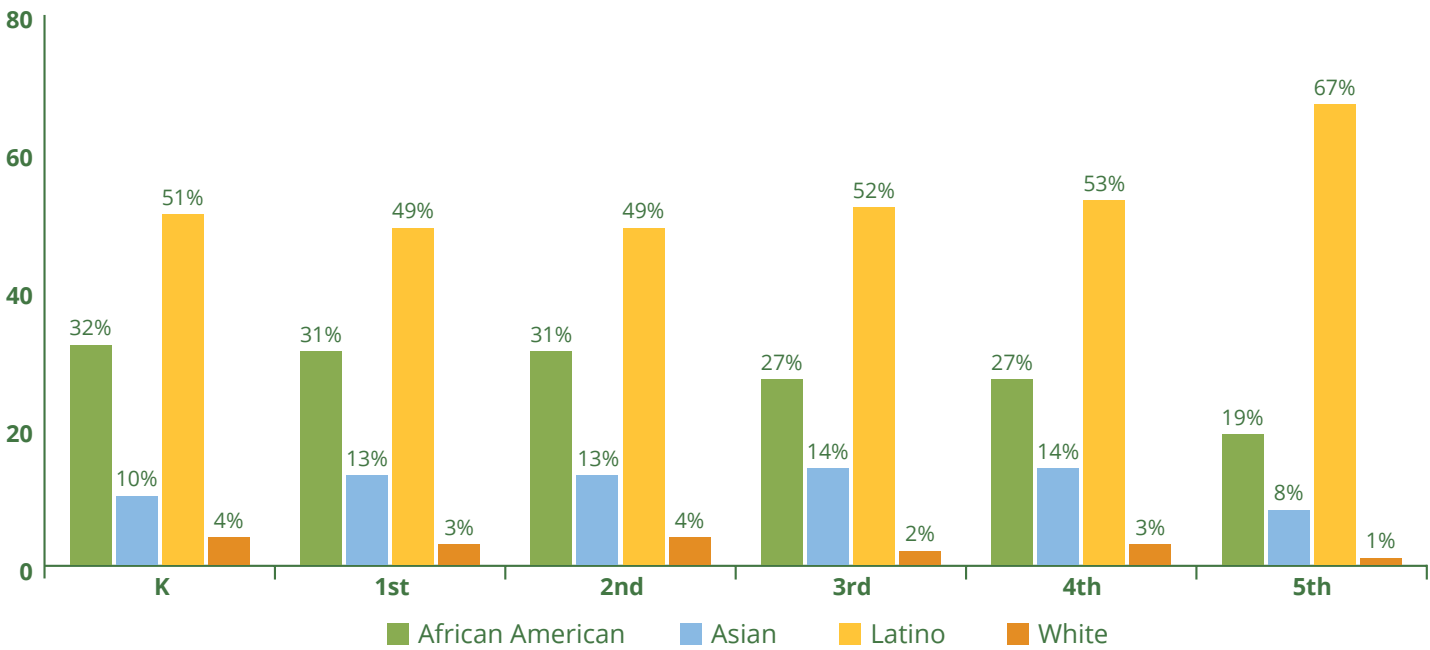### A larger proportion of Latino students are represented in summer school than in the OUSD population

FIGURE 36: OUSD SUMMER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR K–5 STUDENTS BY ETHNICITY

English Fluency

An equal percentage of English Learners and English only students (41%) attended summer school. Reclassified English fluent[6] students are also well represented in the population (15%). (See Figure 37)

English learners comprise 30% of the population in OUSD but 41% of summer school attendees. Summer school may be an opportunity for closing the achievement gap.

What is the enrollment in summer enrichment programs funded by the City of Oakland?

The Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) supports an array of community-based summer enrichment programs in Oakland. Many of the programs address literacy with activities intended to build reading or writing skills (although many are multi-faceted and have reading or writing as one of many activities). Below is a breakdown of the proportion of programs that address literacy (based on student enrollment) as well as the number of students in these programs. (See Figures 38 & 39, next page)

OFCY funds summer enrichment programs for kids in Oakland; the City allocates 3.5% of its unrestricted general budget to OFCY for funding after school and summer programs for youth.
In 2013, 539 children participated in summer programs that addressed literacy through reading or writing.

There were an equal number of English Learners and English Only students in summer school
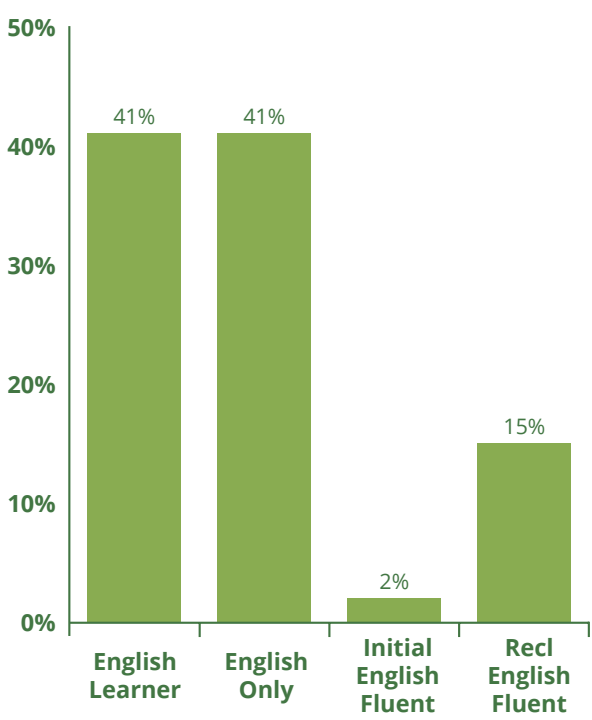

FIGURE 37: OUSD 2013 SUMMER SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY ENGLISH LEARNER STATUS

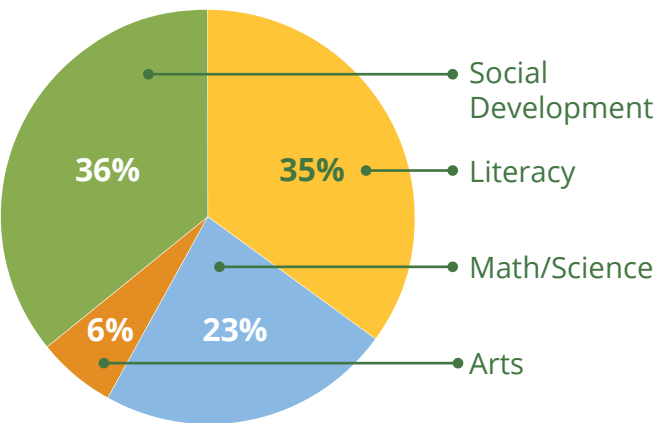## 35% of students attended summer programs with a literacy component

FIGURE 38: PERCENT OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITY-BASED SUMMER PROGRAMMING BY CONTENT AREA IN 2013

About two-thirds of participants met the goal of The Oakland Public Library's Summer Reading Game. A large majority of participants were younger than 3rd grade.
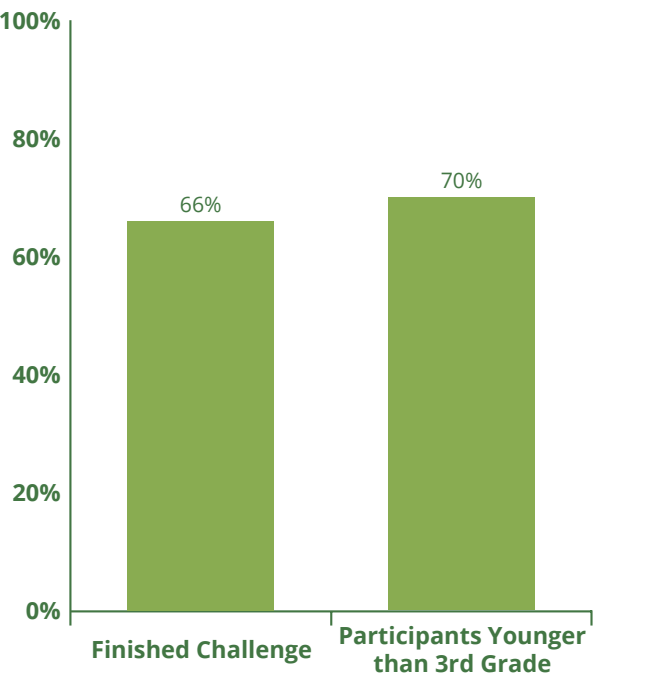
FIGURE 40: PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLETED THE OAKLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY'S SUMMER READING GAME AND PERCENT OF PARTICIPANTS YOUNGER THAN 3RD GRADE

539 youth were served by literacy related programming

FIGURE 39: NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COMMUNITY-BASED SUMMER PROGRAMMING BY CONTENT AREA

The Oakland Public Library offers a Summer Reading Game program that served 9,372 students in 2013.

The Oakland Public Library offers a Summer Reading Game program that served 9,372 students in 2013. The program—a challenge to read 8 hours or more over the summer—is offered every summer at all 17 public libraries. Last year, 66% (6,196) of the participants finished the challenge. Seventy percent (6,574) of the total participants were younger than third grade. (See Figure 40)

6 Reclassified English fluent means students who tested as below advanced on the CELDT when starting school and then later tested as advanced on the CELDT test and excelled in other measures of literacy such as the CST ELA test. Initial English fluent means bilingual students tested as advanced in English on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) when they started school.

OR2020 and Partner Activities and Programs Addressing Summer Learning

What are Oakland Reads 2020 and its partners already doing to support summer learning?

- OR2020 supported a 2013 summer literacy intervention program for rising second to fifth graders at one of its Literacy Zone elementary schools. The program provided literacy skills development along with a social emotional component for children who ended the school year reading below grade level.

- The Oakland Public Library offers a Summer Reading Game program that served 9,372 students in 2013. The program—a challenge to read 8 hours or more over the summer—is offered every year at all 17 public libraries. Last year, 66% (6,196) of the participants finished the challenge.

- In addition, the "Summer Lunch at the Library" program has provided free lunch and literacy activities for children since 2011 by working with local partners in the USDA's summer nutrition program.

- The City of Oakland has supported summer and after school programming for youth since 1996, when Oakland voters passed an amendment to the City Charter to support direct services to youth under 21 years of age. The City's Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY) currently allocates 6.5% of its budget to summer programs.

> OR2020 supported a literacy intervention program for rising 2nd to 5th graders at one of its Literacy Zone elementary schools in summer 2013.

Summary and Conclusions

What is the challenge around summer learning in Oakland?

- Although OUSD offers summer school and the City supports summer enrichment activities, the funded half or full-day summer learning programs reach only 6,567 students. Given the high proportion of low-income students in OUSD and the overall low rates of reading proficiency, there do not seem to be sufficient summer learning opportunities for those most likely to experience summer learning loss.

> Half or full day summer learning programs supported by OUSD and the City (through OFCY) reach only 6,567 students. Approximately 36,000 students attend OUSD schools and nearly 12,000 attend public charter schools.

What are potential strategies for OR2020?

- Because of the high proportion of Latino students reading below grade level and the high rates of Latino students who are English Learners, work together to support or develop targeted summer learning programs for Latino students, with strong supports for EL children.

- Because of the high proportion of African American students reading below grade level, support or develop targeted summer learning programs that address the particular needs of this population.

- Because many students who are behind need more time to master content, any out of school time would likely benefit skill mastery and retention. OR2020 should consider supporting after school and summer learning as strategies for improving literacy rates, especially for low-income students and families.

What data do we need to better understand where we can impact literacy with summer learning?

- To get a clearer sense of the summer landscape, we need more comprehensive data including other summer offerings in Oakland.

- To track whether there have been gains or losses in reading proficiency over the summer as a result of program attendance, we need comparable reading proficiency data before and after summer programming.

- Given the link between low-income students and disproportionate summer learning loss, it would be useful to understand the socio-economic status of students enrolled in summer learning programs and those who are not.

- Longitudinal data for individual students would be helpful to track gains over time related to participation in summer learning programs, especially in the early elementary years leading up to third grade.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Defining Family Engagement

Why is family engagement critical for reading success?

There is widespread consensus and decades of research has established that family engagement is a critical ingredient for children's success, promoting a range of benefits for students, including improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation.[1] We also know that caregivers are a child's earliest and most important teachers and provide ongoing support for and reinforcement of preliteracy and early literacy skills. There is no substitute for the parent's or primary caregiver's role as a child's first teacher, best coach, and most concerned advocate.

Families are critical to student success because they support their children's learning, guide them through a complex school system, advocate for more and improved learning opportunities, and collaborate with educators and community organizations to achieve more effective educational opportunities. Since families raise their children in multiple settings, across time, and in collaboration with many others, engaged families can find learning opportunities in many settings—at home, in pre-kindergarten programs, in school, in after school programs, in faith-based institutions, and in community programs and activities. Family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage families in meaningful ways and in which families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development.[2]

> Family engagement is associated with improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of graduation.

> Families are critical to student success because they support their children's learning, advocate for more and improved learning opportunities, and collaborate with educators and community organizations to achieve more effective educational opportunities.

1 Dearing, E., McCartney, K., Weiss, H.B., Kreider, H., and Simpkins, S. *Family Involvement Makes a Difference* series, Harvard Family Research Project, 2004.
2 This definition, developed by the *Harvard Family Research Project*, was recently adopted by the Family, School and Community Engagement National Working Group, which seeks to inform federal policy issues on family, school and community engagement in education.

Family engagement is crucial beginning with birth, as barriers to educational achievement emerge at very young age and consequently, children may enter elementary school with marked differences in skill mastery. As mentioned earlier in this report, children from different backgrounds typically develop language skills around the same age, but the subsequent rate of vocabulary growth is strongly influenced by how much parents and caregivers talk to their children.[3]

Family engagement is especially relevant to work going on in OUSD as the District transitions all of its schools to the full service community model, which invites the community in and extends boundaries into the community to accelerate academic achievement and overall wellness.

> Family engagement is a core element of OUSD's full service community schools model, providing a ripe opportunity to educate caregivers about how and why to engage their children in practices that support proficient reading by 3rd grade.

How We Chose Data to Measure Family Engagement

While there is no District-wide measure exclusively for family engagement, OUSD has developed an extensive School Quality Review (SQR) process with five main quality indicators, one of which is "Meaningful Student, Family and Community Engagement." Schools are rated within that area on three standards:

- working together in partnership (sharing decision-making with students, their families and the community);
- student/family engagement on student progress (communicating with families so they know how a student is progressing); and
- family engagement on understanding expectations and opportunities (providing opportunities for families to understand academic expectations, i.e. what their child is learning and why they are learning it)

We looked at data for the two engagement standards most directly relevant to learning: student/family engagement on student progress and family engagement on understanding expectations and opportunities.

While the SQR process does incorporate some assessment of site-level family engagement, it does not fully address OUSD's six Standards for Meaningful Family Engagement, which were adopted by the School Board as part of the strategic plan. Those standards are:

1. Parent/Caregiver Education Programs
2. Communication with Parent/Caregiver
3. Parent Volunteering Program is Welcoming and Structured
4. Learning at Home
5. Shared Power and Decision Making
6. Community Collaboration and Resources

However, OUSD's Office of Student, Family and Community Engagement has designed a rubric that identifies metrics for each of the six parent engagement standards; these standards have begun to be used for self-assessment purposes by schools as they adopt or refine their site level family engagement standards. In addition, on-site providers supporting literacy do conduct pre- and post-program surveys that include measures of parent engagement and its effect on desired program outcomes. Examining these could be useful in understanding what partners are assessing and whether there are any measures that would be useful to share and track.

3 Fernald, 2013 and Hart & Risley, 1995.

full range of family engagement standards related to learning, and has been completed at fewer than half of OUSD elementary schools, it is nonetheless a starting point to understand to what degree families are so far being engaged by schools around their children's academic achievement.

OUSD also has an active Office of Family, Student and Community Engagement, which has developed an 8-week leadership course for parents/caregivers focused on understanding and supporting the development of good school attendance, grade-level reading, and appropriate school culture/behavior. So far, 13 elementary schools have participated in the training. In addition, six elementary schools have adopted and are using for self-assessment the Standards for Meaningful Family Engagement rubric that identifies metrics for each of the six family engagement standards. We don't have a measure, however, of how much family engagement is occurring and who may be initiating it before children enter elementary school.

OR2020 and Partner Activities and Programs Addressing Family Engagement

What are OR2020 and its partners doing already to support family engagement?

- OR2020 is collaborating with OUSD to sponsor a Family Volunteer Training Series to encourage and prepare family volunteers in schools. In addition to providing information on how to volunteer in OUSD schools, the series will focus on training volunteers to support student literacy and other skills at the school site.

- OR2020 has supported several family engagement strategies at its three Literacy Zone elementary schools, including coordinating Family Literacy Nights and a Reading Challenge for the entire school community, and bringing in literacy partners who provided take-home family reading and writing materials.

- OUSD has an active Office of Student, Family and Community Engagement whose offerings include site-based and regional family engagement trainings, as well as opportunities for on-site parent leadership training. The Parent Ambassador program trains parents to support parent outreach, stakeholder engagement, and parent-teacher partnership for learning at home.

- OUSD has incorporated some measures of family engagement into its extensive School Quality Review process, which gives sites support and technical assistance to support continuous improvement.

- OR2020 has collaborated with the District and the Oakland Education Cabinet to support partners in promoting family engagement practices around attendance.

- OUSD's focus on increasing attendance and decreasing chronic absence has led to increased rates of family engagement, especially at schools with attendance teams.

OR2020 is collaborating with OUSD to sponsor a Family Volunteer Training Series to encourage and prepare family volunteers in schools. The series will include training on methods for supporting student literacy and other skills at the school site.

OUSD's Office of Family, Student and Community Engagement offers an 8-week leadership course for parents/caregivers focused on understanding and supporting the development of good school attendance, grade-level reading, and appropriate school culture/behavior. So far, 13 out of 54 elementary sites have participated in the training.

Baseline and Formative Data for Family Engagement

What do we know so far about the level of family engagement in OUSD schools?

As explained above, there are no district-wide measures focused exclusively on assessing family engagement, although the SQR process incorporates some integral measures of family engagement around student progress and learning. The standards we looked at focus on communicating with families so they know how a student is progressing (family engagement on student progress) and providing opportunities for families to understand academic expectations including what their child is learning and why they are learning it (family engagement on expectations and opportunities).

Since the OUSD strategic plan was implemented, 20 out of 54 elementary schools have undergone the School Quality Review process, along with 11 middle and five high schools. Once evaluated, each school receives ongoing feedback and support over a three-year self-improvement cycle.

Of the 20 elementary schools assessed, the average score for engagement on student progress was 3.25 out of 5, which corresponds to a "developing" rating. The average score for engagement around expectations and opportunities was 2.5 out of 5, which corresponds to a "beginning/developing" rating. Nine out of 20 schools received high development ratings (4 or 5) for engagement on student progress, while only four of 20 received high development ratings for engagement on student learning. While this is a partial measure of the

The average score for the 20 elementary schools assessed for family engagement on student progress was 3.25 out of 5.0, which corresponds to the "developing" rating; for family engagement on understanding student learning, the average was 2.5 out of 5, falling into the "beginning/developing" category.

Summary and Conclusions

What are challenges for increasing family engagement?

- Though literacy partners often measure parent engagement through pre- and post-program surveys, there is no shared measure of family engagement around literacy.

- There is little information on how parents of children aged 0–5 are being engaged around learning and reading.

- There are few opportunities for partners to share promising practices around family engagement.

- Many schools have not adopted an assessment rubric to support and direct family engagement .

What are potential strategies for OR2020?

- Encourage providers to adopt shared measures for family engagement around literacy that are aligned with the District's Family Engagement standards and measures.

- Use family engagement data from SQR reports for elementary schools to identify what strategies are working at the schools with high scores.

- Coordinate with OUSD Family, Student and Community Engagement Office to develop a set of common strategies to support family engagement where sites find it challenging and reinforce it where sites are successful.

- Use promising practices that have been successful at schools to develop universal strategies and targeted approaches for supporting family engagement.

What data do we need to better understand how to engage families around reading success?

- Aggregated results of latest SQR assessments of Meaningful Student, Family and Community Engagement, in particular results for elementary schools.

- Data from individual SQR elementary school reports to understand where schools face greatest challenges and where they have developed successful practices.

- Family engagement outcomes from schools using the Standards for Meaningful Family Engagement rubric (developed by OUSD's Office of Family, Student and Community Engagement).

- Family engagement measures and results from on-site literacy partners.

- Family engagement data from community-based organizations, early learning centers, and others who interact with parents of children aged 0–5.

ACTIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

What are next steps for Oakland Reads 2020?

Now that we have taken a detailed look at the state of third grade reading proficiency in Oakland and its contributing factors, how do we work together as a diverse and collaborative group of partners to support children in Oakland reaching the ultimate goal of 85% reading proficiently by the end of third grade?

In the first two years of Oakland Reads 2020 (OR2020), we have focused on planning and mobilizing partners and the community in general, creating awareness of the critical importance of our goal and the magnitude of our challenge. In this Baseline Report, we have identified where we need to target our efforts to address unacceptably low and inequitable outcomes among our student population. At the same time, we have looked at the assets partners already bring to impact our goal areas, and what resources are available to our children.

All of the partners who have committed to the OR2020 initiative—systems (school district, City and County agencies and providers), community-based organizations, and funders—understand that none of us can transform our children's learning and accomplishments alone. We will work within a collective impact framework, which calls for a common understanding of the problem and a shared vision for change; shared measurement that includes collecting data to measure results and shared accountability for those results; mutually reinforcing activities coordinated through a joint plan of action; and continuous communication with a focus on building trust and transparency. We will rely on backbone support organizations to provide the resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations.

The next step for OR2020 is planning for implementation by identifying specific strategies (programs, activities, policies, practices) for the overall goal of reading proficiency and for each of the levers of change—school readiness, attendance, summer learning and family engagement. OR2020 will be convening workgroups with content expertise to develop this crucial piece of the work. The groups will use the information collected in this report and the knowledge they hold to develop strategies around how efforts and resources need to be mobilized. Planning for implementation will be an inclusive process, engaging diverse community stakeholders in workgroups with multi-sector leaders from the OR2020 Steering Committee.

> Adopting the collective impact framework for the Oakland Reads 2020 initiative means that partners are accountable to each other for results, and that we agree to focus our collective energies and resources on ensuring our children are able to read at grade level by 3rd grade.

What are the greatest challenges to reaching the goal of 85% of Oakland students reading proficiently by third grade?

The data we gathered in this report around benchmark indicators for reading success and the four levers of change tells us that OR2020 partners must be deliberate in targeting efforts and resources to support students to reach excellent and equitable outcomes. The areas that stand out as particularly needing attention are:

▶ **Consistently Low Rates of Third Grade Reading Proficiency Overall:** More than two thirds of OUSD's third graders do not read at grade level, and in the last three years, none of the major student subpopulations—by race, ethnicity, gender, English fluency status or Special Education status—have reached the OR2020 goal of 85% reading proficiently by third grade.

▶ **Significant Achievement Gaps by Race/Ethnicity and Gender:** While reading levels are alarmingly low for the entire OUSD third grade population, the data suggest that particular attention needs to be paid to our Latino and African American students, as these groups had especially low rates of proficiency. There are also indications that boys of color are less likely to read at grade level than girls of color, although scores for African American and Latina girls are distressingly low as well.

▶ **High Proportion of English Learners (EL) Needing to be Brought to Proficiency:** Since English Learners comprise 30% of the OUSD student population, and only 8% of third grade English Learners reached reading proficiency by the end of the year in 2012–13, this group needs to be an area of focus. More than half of Latino students and more than one-third of Asian students are English Learners.

▶ **Student Populations with Lowest Reading Proficiency Rates are Affected by Multiple Challenges:** OUSD student populations with the lowest levels of third grade proficiency have poor outcomes in one or more of the areas we know contribute to reading success. This presents us with more complexity, but the data also give us information on how to approach disparities from multiple angles.

- Challenges for Latino elementary students: low rates of readiness, high rates of "at risk" attendance

- Challenges for African American elementary students: low rates of school readiness, high rates of chronic absence.

- Challenges for English Learners: low rates of school readiness, high rates of "at risk" attendance

- Challenges for Special Education students: high rates of chronic absence and high rates of "at risk" attendance

Student populations with the lowest reading proficiency rates are affected by multiple challenges: they have poor outcomes in one or more of the areas we know contribute to reading success.

▶ **Socioeconomic Status Affects Resource and Learning Opportunities:** Almost three quarters of OUSD students qualify for free and reduced price lunch,[1] indicating a large proportion of the population is low-income. Low-income children are less likely to have access to high quality early care and pre-kindergarten programs, exposure to which positively affects school readiness. Low-income families also often lack the resources to enroll children in summer programs and summer camps, enrichment opportunities that bridge the summer learning loss gap for children who can regularly participate over time. Low-income circumstances also carry other barriers that impact children in less direct ways, including, but not limited to, a lack of transportation to educational and enrichment activities, lack of parental skills to promote literacy, lack of nutrition, and exposure to trauma.

How can we work together to most effectively increase the number of students reading proficiently by third grade?

As the planning for the implementation phase begins, partners can participate by implementing existing strategies or contributing new strategies to address the challenges above. They can apply expertise in the main goal area (reading success) or toward supporting one or more of the four levers of change by selecting a focus area below. Creating this kind of continuum helps reinforce our collective impact approach, which includes using data to align our work.

❶ **Focus on providing targeted support for student groups with the most disparate outcomes:** Partners can identify and implement targeted supports for student groups with the most disparate reading success outcomes: Latino, African American, English Learner and Special Education students. Partners can share benchmark indicators to support and coordinate intervention efforts for students whose literacy skills are very low and/or not progressing.

❷ **Focus on addressing English Learner needs in instructional, enrichment and early learning settings:** Nearly one third of OUSD students are English Learners, and demographic projections tell us that this population will continue to grow, especially among Latino students. Bilingual materials and expertise in working with bilingual and transitioning EL students will be crucial to OR2020 partners'

The strong performance of the almost 30% of 3rd graders who move from English Learner status to fluent suggests that our collective work as a community in the form of education, interventions and literacy supports is making a difference in the reading proficiency of a large group of our English Learners.

1 Students qualify for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch if their families have incomes below 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

efforts. A promising finding is that English Learners who do reach fluency (about 30% of third graders) have proficiency rates very similar to the highest achieving groups in OUSD (64% in 2012–13, compared to bilingual students who were already fluent at 76% and White at 77%). This suggests that our collective work as a community in the form of education, interventions, and literacy supports is making a difference in the reading proficiency of a large group of our English Learners.

❸ **Focus on intervention and support in the early grades:** Paying attention to strong early indicators for reading success (kindergarteners entering school with first sound fluency, kindergarten and first grade attendance rates, level of family engagement) can help partners develop multi-pronged and aligned early intervention strategies for students struggling in one or more of these areas.

❹ **Focus on aligning supports to address the combinations of challenges faced by each particular student group:** Knowing what combination of factors presents the greatest barrier for a particular student population means that partners can target programmatic strategies accordingly. For instance, given African Americans' low rate of third grade proficiency and the contributing factors of low rates of school readiness and high rates of chronic absence, partners could coordinate efforts to do outreach around attendance in early learning and elementary classroom settings, engage families around the importance of attendance and early learning, and develop aligned teaching strategies to support children transitioning to kindergarten without early literacy skills.

> Knowing what combination of factors presents the greatest barrier for a particular student population means that partners can target programmatic strategies accordingly.

❺ **Focus on addressing socioeconomic-related challenges:** Low-income circumstances are clearly a barrier to many OUSD students and should be addressed when planning programs and other strategies. Partners should consider cost to participants (including the cost of supplies), transportation requirements, the need for a food/nutrition component and other income-related issues when planning literacy enrichment and other learning opportunities. Nutrition in particular is a critical factor in that it fills a basic need for many families and reduces hunger, a major distraction for students trying to learn.

APPENDIX A: Data and Indicators

This appendix is an extension of the information found in the Methodology section of this report. Here we consider in greater detail the data included in this report, as well indicators OR2020 would like to capture and consider in the future, contingent on data availability.

Population Outcomes Examined

Where we indicate "by subgroup" below, we are referring to breaking the data down by one or more of the following categories:

- race/ethnicity
- gender
- English language fluency
- Special Education status

School Data Included

Because much of the data for these goal areas were available only from the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and because the majority of students attending Oakland schools are enrolled in OUSD, we included only OUSD student data in this report. For future progress reports, we will pursue and encourage data sharing and shared metrics from charter, parochial, and independent schools so that OR2020 can further expand its citywide initiative.

Timeframe

Wherever possible data is examined from 2010–11, before the initiative began, through 2012–13, the planning and mobilizing phase of the effort.[1] However, because less data about school readiness and summer learning is available, we analyzed data from 2012–13, the most recently completed year of OR2020.

Indicators

OR2020 partners with early learning and literacy expertise helped to develop and vet a comprehensive list of indicators that can be measured and tracked to establish baselines for outcomes and assess progress on: reading proficiency ("reading success") and the four levers—school readiness, attendance, summer learning, and family engagement. Below is an outline of the indicators included in this report, the measures and methodology used to track them, and additional indicators that have been recommended but not captured in this report. As in the Methodology section, a distinction is drawn between those indicators that OR2020 intends to track as benchmarks of progress and those that are provided as informational indicators to provide community context.

Foundational Goal Area: Reading Success

- This report measures reading proficiency using the California Standards Test in English Language Arts (CST ELA), an assessment administered annually in the spring, but no longer in use in OUSD after spring 2013.

- We used CST ELA data from the 2011–12, 2012–12, and 2012–13 school years. Future reports will use other measures—both annual and more regularly administered benchmark assessments—as the District adopts them as part of its transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).[2]

- In place of the CST in English Language Arts and Mathematics, all OUSD schools will participate in the spring 2014 field testing of the new CCSS test, the Smarter Balanced Assessment. No scores will be reported but other assessments will also be used (the SRI is one) to measure progress. Smarter Balanced Assessment scores will be reported beginning in 2015. There is a possibility that these test results will be lower than the CSTs, a phenomenon that has occurred in other states due to a transition period for teachers and students in adapting to a new curriculum.

1 It is important to note that our analysis is not a "cohort analysis," tracking a group of children by matching their data across time and levers of change, since the current data systems do not permit such an analysis. We looked at each dataset independently and summarized results.
2 The Common Core State Standards were launched in June 2009 through a partnership of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, working together with parents, teachers, school administrators, and experts from across the country. The CCSS for English Language Arts established an equal focus on student mastery of reading, listening, speaking and writing; and integrated these areas of literacy across all other content areas. National and international research, evidence, and standards—including standards from countries that are often recognized for high quality education—informed development of the CCSS. The CCSS was approved by the California State Board of Education in August 2010; an implementation plan was approved in March 2012.

Indicators included in this report:

A. Reading proficiency: Benchmark Indicators
  a. Percentage of third graders scoring at proficiency or above on the CST ELA by subgroups and over time
  b. Percentage of third graders scoring at basic, below basic, and far below basic on the CST ELA
  c. Percentage of elementary students in second to fifth grades in each category of proficiency on the CST ELA by subgroups and over time

B. Reading proficiency: Informational Indicators
  None

Additional indicators suggested for next report:

A. Reading Proficiency: Benchmark Indicators
  a. Analyze benchmark indicators (Scholastic Reading Inventory) throughout the school year of students in first to third grades who gained one or more levels of proficiency from the lowest reading level by subgroup and over time
  b. Percentage of students in first to third grades who moved from just below proficient to proficient by subgroup and over time
  c. Percentage of English Learners in first to third grades who gained one or more levels of proficiency over time
  d. Percentage of English Learners who are reclassified from EL to English fluent in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5
  e. Percentage of English Learners who have been in OUSD one year or more who are reclassified as English fluent in elementary school.
  f. Sixth grade reading proficiency levels by subgroup and over time
  g. On-time high school graduation rate by subgroup and over time

B. Reading proficiency: Informational Indicators
  a. Number of children receiving reading tutoring assistance outside of the regular classroom
  b. Number of students with access to and using leveled classroom libraries and staffed school libraries

Lever of Change: School Readiness

· This report measured school readiness using results from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy

Skills (DIBELS), a test of early literacy skills first administered in the fall of the kindergarten year.

· We used data from the 2011–12 and 2012–13 school years.

· Future reports will also use data from the Desired Results Developmental Profile for Preschool (DRDP-PS) and for Transitional Kindergarten (DRDP-SR), administered in the fall and every six months thereafter. The DRDP assesses five (SR) to seven (PS) areas of a child's development, including English language and literacy. DRDP results over time were not available for analysis in time for this report.

Indicators included in this report:

A. School Readiness: Benchmark Indicators
  a. Percentage of kindergarteners scoring at or above DIBELS benchmarks for letter naming and first sound fluency by subgroups and over time

B. School Readiness: Informational Indicators
  a. Number of early learning seats available and enrollment versus number of preschool-age children by geographical location in Oakland
  b. Number of subsidized preschool seats available versus number of low-income preschool-age children in Oakland

Additional indicators suggested for next report:

A. School Readiness: Benchmark Indicators
  a. Percentage of preschool and transitional kindergarten students scoring at or above developmental and academic benchmarks on the DRDP by subgroups and over time
  b. Percentage of preschool and transitional kindergarten students scoring below developmental and academic benchmarks on the DRDP by subgroups and over time
  c. Percentage of children scoring at, above and below benchmark levels in formative evaluations such as Fountas and Pinnell (Balanced Literacy assessment)

B. School Readiness: Informational Indicators
  a. Number of children enrolled in early learning programs by income level
  b. Number of children enrolled in early learning programs by subgroups

  c. Number of licensed early learning/child care centers in Oakland meeting quality assessment criteria
  d. Enrollment in transitional kindergarten by subgroups over time
  e. Enrollment in OUSD Pre-K Summer Camp
  f. Number of kindergarten-aged students attending and not attending kindergarten by subgroups, income level and over time
  g. Number of students meeting academic readiness expectations at the beginning of kindergarten by subgroups, income level and over time

Lever of Change: School Attendance

· This report measured attendance using rates of chronic absence (missing 10% or more of days enrolled in school) and "at risk" attendance (missing between 5% and 9% of days enrolled in school). These measures have been validated nationally and in the state of California as being predictors of achievement and high school graduation.

· This report also analyzed rates of suspension; being suspended once or more has been correlated with lower rates of reading proficiency.

· We used OUSD data for the 2010–11, 2011–12 and 2012–13 school years.

Indicators included in this report:

A. Attendance: Benchmark Indicators
  a. Percentage of kindergarteners chronically absent or having "at risk" attendance by subgroup
  b. Percentage of kindergarteners chronically absent by subgroup and over time
  c. Percentage of first graders chronically absent by subgroup and over time
  d. Percentage and number of third graders chronically absent, having "at risk" attendance or satisfactory attendance by subgroup
  e. Percentage of students in kindergarten to third grade chronically absent, having "at risk," attendance or satisfactory attendance by subgroup
  f. Percentage of K–3 students chronically absent, by gender and subgroup
  g. Rate of suspensions (suspended one time or

more) for kindergarten to third grade students by subgroup compared to representation in OUSD population
  h. Rate of suspensions for K–3 students by subgroup and gender
  i. Rate of suspensions for K–3 students vs. chronic absence, "at risk" and satisfactory attendance

B. Attendance: Informational Indicators
  None

Additional indicators suggested for next report:

A. Attendance: Benchmark Indicators
  a. Percentage of preschool and transitional kindergarten students chronically absent and having "at risk" attendance by subgroup and over time
  b. Percentage of first, second, and third graders (individually) chronically absent and having "at risk" attendance by subgroup and over time
  c. Percentage of kindergarten and first grade students suspended by subgroup and gender

B. Attendance: Informational Indicators
  None

Lever of Change: Summer Learning

· This report measured OUSD Summer School enrollment by grade level and subgroups.

· The report also looked at enrollment in Oakland Fund for Children and Youth-funded summer enrichment programs by content area, including those with a literacy (reading or writing) component.

· This report also looked at enrollment in and completion of The Oakland Public Library's summer reading program.

· As OUSD moves towards using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test as a benchmark reading assessment at all elementary schools, future OR2020 reports will look at SRI results from spring—before summer program enrollment—and from the following fall for students participating in summer learning programs.[3]

3 The SRI is a research-based reading assessment program for students in kindergarten to twelfth grades that measures reading comprehension. Typically administered three to four times per year, the SRI is used to inform instruction and make placement recommendations; it is aligned to the California Common Core Standards.

Indicators Included in this report:

A. Summer Learning: Benchmark Indicators
   None

B. Summer Learning: Informational Indicators
   a. Enrollment in OUSD summer school by grade level
   b. Enrollment of kindergarten to fifth grade students in summer school by subgroups
   c. Enrollment in Oakland Fund for Children and Youth-funded summer enrichment programs by content area, including those with a literacy (reading or writing) component
   d. Enrollment in The Oakland Public Library's summer reading program

Additional indicators suggested for next report:

A. Summer Learning: Benchmark Indicators
   a. Percentage of students enrolled in summer school who show an increase in reading proficiency level between spring and fall
   b. Percentage of students enrolled in summer enrichment programs who show an increase in reading proficiency level between spring and fall
   c. Percentage of summer enrichment program participants proficient or higher on spring and fall reading assessments

B. Summer Learning: Informational Indicators
   a. Percentage of low-income children who have access to summer enrichment programming
   b. Number of low-income children enrolled in summer school or summer enrichment programming
   c. Enrollment in all summer enrichment programs, (i.e. in addition to OFCY-funded programs, those offered by Parks and Recreation department, The Oakland Public Library, OUSD, and community based organizations)

Lever of Change: Family Engagement

- This report measures family engagement with data from OUSD's School Quality Review (SQR) process, a District-wide assessment of school sites' development as full service community schools.

- The SQR includes five main quality indicators, one of which is "Meaningful Student, Family and Community Engagement." Schools are rated within that area on three standards:

- working together in partnership (sharing decision-making with students, their families and the community);
- student/family engagement on student progress (communicating with families so they know how a student is progressing);
- family engagement on academic expectations and opportunities (providing opportunities for families to understand what their child is learning and why and what it looks like to perform "well"); and

- We looked at SQR assessments from 2011–12 and 2013–14, which include 35 of the District's 54 elementary schools.

Indicators Included in this report:

A. Family Engagement: Benchmark Indicators
   None

B. Family Engagement: Informational Indicators
   a. Average score on family engagement components from School Quality Review's Student, Family and Community Engagement Standard

Additional indicators suggested for next report:

A. Family Engagement: Benchmark Indicators
   a. Number of families and children participating in literacy-focused events across the District

B. Family Engagement: Informational Indicators
   a. Average score on SQR assessments for Meaningful Student, Family and Community Engagement by school level, particularly for elementary schools
   b. Average score on Meaningful Family Engagement assessment (if administered) by school level, particularly for elementary schools

What Data Sources Did We Use for the Baseline Report?

This report includes the data listed above, which came from the Oakland Unified School District, The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Alameda Child Care Planning Council, Friends of the Oakland Public Schools Libraries, the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth, and The Oakland Public Library. Additional demographic information was obtained from the U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, the California Department of Education, and kidsdata.org.

OAKLAND READS 2020

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Urban Strategies Council
urbanstrategies.org

1720 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94612
510-893-2404