



OAKLAND  
LITERACY  
COALITION

2023 - 2024  
IMPACT REPORT

# Guiding Beliefs and Values



## Mission

Working together  
to ensure that  
every Oakland  
child learns and  
loves to read.

### The OLC's work towards our mission is guided by our beliefs:

#### **Literacy enables learning and liberation.**

Allowing children to become powerful advocates for themselves, their communities, and their world.

#### **Families are powerful agents of change.**

Families want what's best for their children and have many different assets. Families deserve strong allies to support their children's learning.

#### **All kids can learn, succeed, and thrive.**

With strong instruction, caring adults, and opportunities that affirm who they are and respond to their needs.

#### **Our collective success depends on one another.**

And how we work in authentic and sustained partnership as a community.



# Table of Contents

<b>Guiding Beliefs and Values</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Letter from the Co-Executive Directors</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Impact: The Year at a Glance</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Learn</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Collaborate</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Champion</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Financials / Staff &amp; Board</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Supporters</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Ways To Support</b> .....	<b>16</b>



Author and artist Ajuan Mance reads from her book *What Do Brothas Do All Day* at an event organized by AfroComicCon at the 81st Ave Library

“The project made a difference for the children and their families because they got to hear the stories, see the books (which have gorgeous illustrations), and keep a book. Being able to meet and talk to the author gives the kids a very different experience than just getting a book with no context for the author, especially for young children of color. They can see from an early age that people who look like them can be successful creatives.”

**- Oakland Technology & Education Center, Summer Action Grantee**

# Letter from the Co-Executive Directors



Dear friends, colleagues, and supporters,

We are thrilled to share the Oakland Literacy Coalition's 2023-2024 Impact Report with you.

We believe literacy thrives when the entire ecosystem is healthy and interconnected. This means creating and sustaining **thriving, supported schools** with reading-rich environments, **strong core instruction, and evidence-based curricula and practices**. It requires fostering **aligned partnerships and programs** that bridge learning in and out of school, and developing **tools to support educators, families, practitioners, and decision-makers** across the literacy landscape. Most importantly, we believe that **literacy is the responsibility of all of us**—and by working together, we can build a world where every child has access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Over the past year, we deepened our investment in capacity and field-building to align and equip partners with tools to adapt to changing times. We also spotlighted evidence-based practices that bring the science of reading to life. Through it all, we have remained true to our ethos: **to do better, we must know better**, which is reflected in where we focused our work. In this report, you'll read about how we leaned into our three pillars: **learn, collaborate, and champion**.

- We expanded the reach of our annual Literacy and Justice for All Symposium, bringing educators and literacy leaders from across the state and country to elevate proven solutions and strategize how to cross-pollinate and accelerate progress.
- We launched our first Literacy Institute for practitioners to deepen their understanding of what the science of reading looks like in practice.
- We leveraged the power of community partnerships to reach families across all parts of our city with high-quality books and literacy resources to support learning beyond the classroom.
- We empowered literacy stakeholders with information, connections, and tools to strengthen how we work in greater alignment toward shared goals for our students.
- We improved conditions for learning by supporting school libraries, ensuring that all students have access to culturally affirming, high-interest texts to support their learning and cultivate a love of reading.

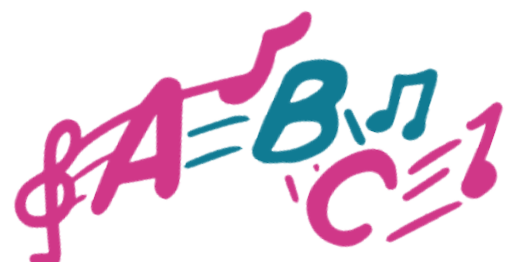
**The next year will bring new opportunities to engage directly with schools and educators, elevating school voices and evidence-based practices.** We will continue to cultivate authentic community partnerships and family connections, surrounding students with reading-rich spaces and interactions. We will deepen connections across Oakland's local literacy ecosystem while linking with efforts across the region, state, and beyond to share learning, build momentum, and impact the systems that shape the conditions for students' success.

Finally, this year marks the final year in the tenure of our Founding Co-Executive Director, Cassie Perham. Sanam will continue as the organization's Executive Director, together with our team carrying forward the mission with the same commitment and values that have always guided us. And while we say goodbye, Cassie's leadership will always remain a part of our story.

We are deeply grateful to work alongside this dedicated community of educators, families, and partners—together, we can deliver on the promise of literacy and unlock every Oakland student's power to learn, dream, and thrive.

With gratitude,

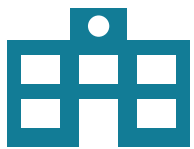
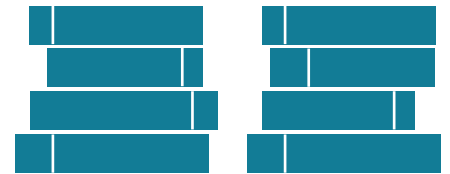
Sanam Jorjani and Cassie Perham  
Co-Executive Directors



# Our Impact: The Year at a Glance



Curated and distributed **163,000+** culturally affirming books at more than **50** school and community events in partnership with Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation.



**5,300** new books purchased for **30** OUSD elementary school libraries and **11** secondary schools.

**8,998** books given out through Reading Everywhere Action Grants in **10** languages.



**58** Reading Everywhere Action Grants awarded to community groups.



**673** people and **341** organizations engaged through OLC convenings and programs.

**2,800** people staying informed through OLC digital communications

# Learn

“Even on the drive home, my colleagues and I engaged in rich conversations regarding what we learned and new interests within the literacy research that we wanted to explore. Once home, I watched additional on-line seminars from some of the presenters I saw and others that my colleagues shared. I was excited to share my new knowledge with others that didn't attend the conference.”

**- 2024 Symposium Attendee**



Every child deserves a joyful and rigorous learning environment and access to high-quality instruction, and there are multiple pathways to get there. By advancing knowledge across the field and increasing the capacity of educators and organizations, the Oakland Literacy Coalition helps educators and out of school time providers to deliver effective literacy learning and development for students based on the science of reading.



This past year, we expanded the Literacy and Justice for All Symposium, ran a pilot literacy institute for Oakland literacy providers, and held virtual forums with expert researchers and practitioners from Stanford University and the National Center for Improving Literacy (NCIL).



## Literacy and Justice for All Symposium

In March 2024, 425+ educators and literacy practitioners came together to learn about the science of reading and share effective practices at the 3rd annual Literacy and Justice for All Symposium.

School & community-based educators, literacy practitioners, funders, leaders, and literacy champions came from dozens of California school districts and 14 states to learn evidence-based practices and approaches for improving student reading and how to advocate for and implement them.

Highlights included pre-conference site visits to five elementary schools and early learning centers, an inspiring, no-holds-barred fireside chat by educator and Black Lives Matter activist Deray McKesson and Oakland literacy leader Dr. Sabrina “Bri” Moore, and a riveting keynote address by “Sold a Story” podcast producer Emily Hanford.

“This was one of the highlights of my career. To be in one common space with so many others with the same drive and commitment to ensure that ALL students are afforded adequate reading instruction was inspiring and humbling.”

- **LJ4All Attendee**

### By the Numbers:

**20** Breakout Sessions.

**53** Speakers.

**9** Lunch table talks.

**98.9%** of attendees said they left with renewed urgency & motivation to improve literacy in their communities.

**92%** agree the symposium contributed to their professional learning and growth.





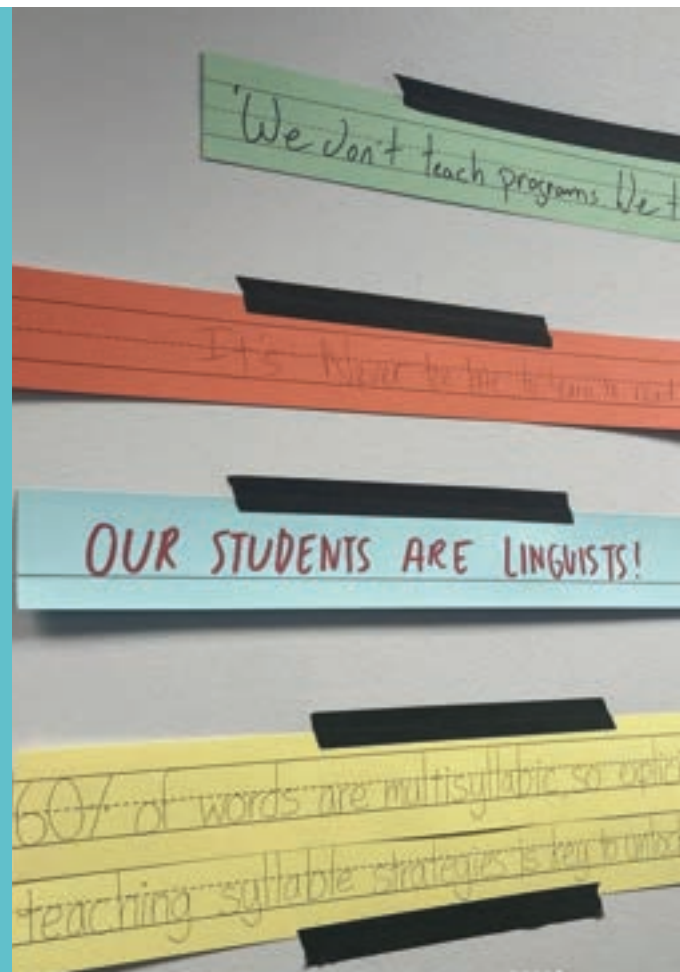
## Inaugural Literacy Institute for Oakland Literacy Providers

To bridge the gap between literacy instruction in and out of the classroom, the OLC designed and delivered an introductory two-day literacy workshop to eight Oakland organizations serving students grades TK-8, where participants learned strategies for working with multilingual and older learners, and took a close look at Scarborough's Reading Rope to identify which strands of the rope their programs support.

We piloted three online, self-paced learning sessions after the literacy institute on the language comprehension strands of the reading rope, including: fluency, background knowledge, and literacy knowledge.

"The videos helped me learn how to better connect tutoring support and home family support. The way she explains fluency, I didn't realize how much expression and tone is tied to comprehension. It's so smart and so simple, but I wouldn't have known without this. It gave me a better understanding and outlook of how I can help my tutors and parents, because if you are not in the teaching world, you don't know how to teach. It all needs to work together- at home and at school."

- **Boost West Oakland Program Assistant  
Shatoya Harper**





# Collaborate

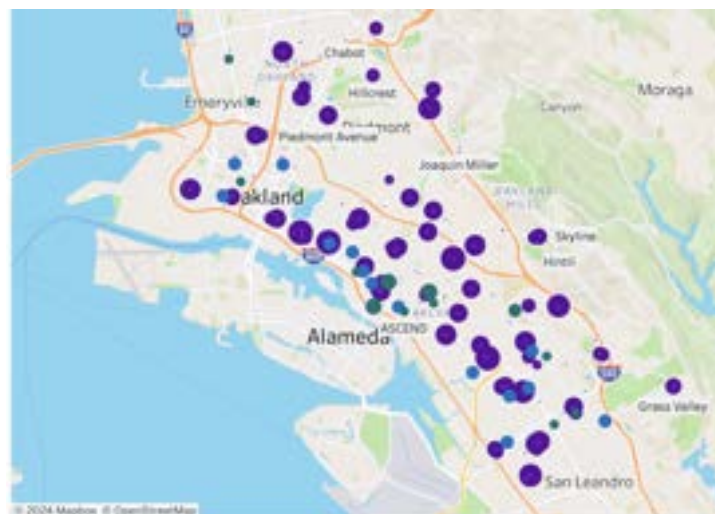
Parents, schools, community groups, philanthropic organizations — Oakland has a vast ecosystem of institutions dedicated to supporting youth, and none of us can achieve citywide impact on our own. By strengthening and sustaining a coalition of organizations and leaders, embracing collectivism, and finding shared opportunities for impact, we make sure that we are more than the sum of our parts.

The OLC works with school systems and community organizations to strengthen alignment between programs and strategies to maximize impact and improve collaboration. An important piece of this work is the use of data and the development of tools that support the identification of programs and community assets to further alignment across systems and organizations.

## Mapping the Literacy Ecosystem with the LitMap

The LitMap is a dashboard of literacy resources, assets, and data at Oakland PreK-12 public schools. The Oakland Literacy Coalition created the LitMap to increase transparency and collaboration across the literacy ecosystem and support community awareness and accountability for student literacy outcomes.

Visitors to the Litmap can see iReady assessment data at the district level and school-by-school, showing difference in growth from the prior year, along with the number of early literacy tutors per site, and which literacy programs are serving which schools.



Map: The relative size of each circle represents the no. of literacy programs operating at the school.

## School Library Partnerships

School libraries are a key component of building student literacy from kindergarten all the way to 12th grade. Teachers instruct students so they can learn to read and then read to learn. To learn anything well, the learner must practice diligently and substantially. To become a strong reader, students need to learn the skills of decoding and comprehension; and they must have the opportunity and motivation to practice those skills. That is how they build their reading muscle. School libraries are the one place in the school that can offer something appealing for practice for just about every kid.

Since bringing the Friends of Oakland Public School Libraries (FOPSL) under the OLC umbrella in 2022, the School Library Partnerships (SLP) program has grown and evolved to support school libraries through:

- Raising awareness of the role and importance of school libraries
- Giving grants for collection curation ensure that school libraries are equipped with high interest books in multiple languages.
- Maintenance of the OUSD digital library, Sora
- Recruiting and matching volunteers with libraries that need them. The SLP has developed a cadre of 20+ dedicated volunteers who offer weekly hands-on support at school libraries.

## Supporting the OUSD Digital Library

Thanks to the generosity of the Bernard E. and Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation and individual donors, the OLC raised \$12,500 for collection development and outreach for the OUSD digital library, Sora.

Sora provides every OUSD student with 24/7 access to thousands of ebooks and audiobooks. Last year, **12,346 OUSD students** checked out **242,992 books** and collectively read for a total of **88,124 hours**.





## Books Kids Want to Read Grant Program

With an investment of \$90,000 from Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation and Quest Foundation, the OLC School Library Partnerships program was able to administer book grants to 41 OUSD school libraries in the 2023-2024 school year!

**5,300 new books** purchased for OUSD school libraries.

**30 OUSD elementary schools** received funds through the Books Kids Want to Read grant program, enabling them to update their school library collections.

**11 OUSD secondary school libraries** received book grants.

Awards ranged from **\$1,000-\$5,000 per school**.

**Books Kids Want to Read grants are one of the only sources of funding for OUSD school library collection development.**

"We extend a warm thank you to your organization for creating access to marginalized genres in the urban community and your book donation to our school library! This award from your organization will be extremely helpful with building a diverse perspective in our library collection for our middle school students."

- Remi Lacey, West Oakland Middle School Librarian

# Champion



The OLC informs and engages Oaklanders to champion literacy, cultivate joy, and create reading-rich spaces for children and their families.

All families should have what they need to help their kids learn and love to read. Families are their children's first teachers and should have quality, affirming, highly engaging books along with resources to support literacy development

## Championing Literacy Outside of School

Through Reading Everywhere Action Grants, the OLC promotes the joy of reading by providing funds and books to community groups working with youth outside of school time.

The vision is an Oakland where students are reading not only at school, but all through their day – on the bus, at their after school program, at the park, at mosque, temple or church, and at home.

### By the Numbers

**58 grants** awarded to 46 unique community organizations.

**\$17,825 awarded** between September 2023 and June 2024.

**8,990 books** given out, including titles in English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Mam, Vietnamese, Khmer, Dari, Pashto, and Mien.



“Youth and families were delighted to select from the book selection that included high-interest texts ranging from pre-readers to middle school. It was a joy to see them browse books sweetly displayed on our malongs, Filipino cloth with designs that carry story and meaning for the originating tribal communities.”

– **Rose Lynn Abesamis-Bell, Sama Sama Cooperative**



*Through our partnership with Stephen and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation, we curated and distributed 163,000+ books at 50 events.*

## Partnering to Provide Culturally Affirming Books

Through our Reading Everywhere book distribution programs, hundreds of thousands of new, high interest books made it into the hands of students, teachers, and families. OLC serves as the lead librarian for the Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation's book inventory, sourcing high-quality and culturally affirming titles for Oakland students and families. Together with our volunteers, the OLC staffs Eat. Learn. Play. Bus events and coordinates restocking for school-based Little Town Libraries.

## Oakland Reads: Putting Tools in the Hands of Educators and Community Members

Oakland Reads, the website created in collaboration with OUSD's early literacy team, drew 2,300 visitors last year. The site empowers Oakland families with information to support their students' reading development, in multiple languages.

The Oakland Reads website inspired the Big Lift, a San Mateo County initiative dedicated to advancing third-grade literacy, to launch their own version, called "Let's Read SMC."



**OaklandReads.org**

A project of the  
Oakland Literacy Coalition

**Statement of Activity**

Revenue: \$1,193,706

Expenses: \$1,252,917

**Balance Sheet**

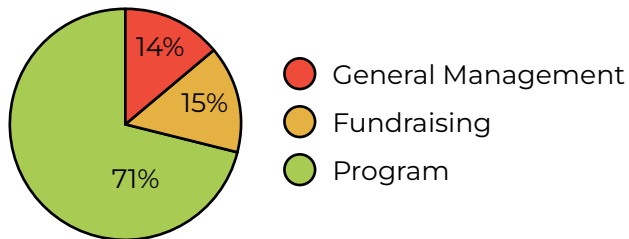
Assets: \$726,441

Liabilities: \$66,054

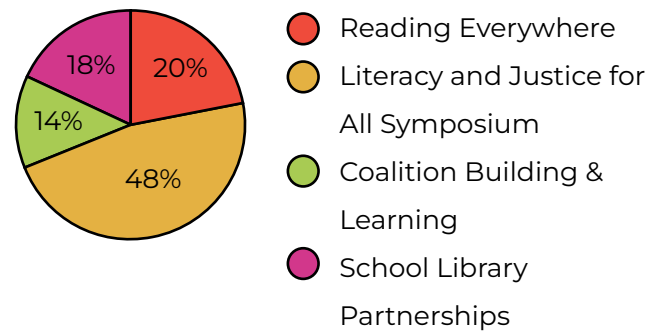
Equity: \$660,386

Total Liability and Equity: \$726,441

**Organization Expenses**



**Program Expenses**



# Staff and Board

## Oakland Literacy Coalition Team

- Sanam Jorjani** Co-Executive Director
- Cassie Perham** Co-Executive Director
- Jennifer Bloom** Director of Programs
- Heather Appel** Senior Communications Manager
- Julia Sen** Reading Everywhere Program Manager
- Yareli Arreola** Coalition Programs & Outreach Manager
- Leigh Carroll** School Library Partnership Program Coordinator
- Tenisa Lyles** Lead Family Book Connector
- Sydney Lee** UC Berkeley Public Service Intern

## Board of Directors

- Tiffany Furrell** Board Co-Chair
- Matt Aguiar** Board Co-Chair
- Townes Bouchard**-Dean Board Treasurer
- Allison Lopez** Board Secretary
- Dulce Torres-Petty**
- Kyra Mungia**
- Michelle Goldenberg**
- Ellen Moyer**
- Michael De Sousa**
- Landon Hill**
- Catherine Chiabaut**
- Shrim Bathey**
- Laura Holmes**



**Your Support Makes Our Work Possible, Thank You**

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our funding partners and donors. Your generosity goes beyond financial assistance; it signifies a profound belief in the transformative power of literacy and the vital role it plays in shaping young lives.

**Institutional Supporters**

Alibris, Inc.

Bernard E. and Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation

Bruce and Carolyn Costin Martin Charitable Foundation

Chamberlin Education Foundation

The Christensen Fund

Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation

Hellman Foundation

Initialized Capital

Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Plank

Quest Foundation

T. Gary and Kathleen Rogers Foundation

Tipping Point Community

Trifecta

Warriors Community Foundation



Every donor and every donation fuels our mission and furthers our work. Thank you to each and every one of the more than 250 individuals who, together, contributed over \$115,000 to support Oakland students.



# BECOME A PART OF THE OLC STORY

## Volunteer

Invite your colleagues, friends, and neighbors to help out at school libraries, or a book distribution event with the Eat. Learn. Play. Bus! Contact [julia@oaklandliteracycoalition.org](mailto:julia@oaklandliteracycoalition.org) or visit [bit.ly/OLCvolunteers](https://bit.ly/OLCvolunteers)

## Donate

Each month, folks who donate monthly or give \$250+ annually to the Oakland Literacy Coalition receive book recommendations specially curated by Oakland school library staff and special guests, as a way to say thank you.

Your monthly gifts help the OLC to plan our programs ahead, knowing we can count on your sustained generosity.

[oaklandliteracycoalition.org/donate/](https://oaklandliteracycoalition.org/donate/)



## Become A Member

We welcome organizations whose work contributes to literacy access and achievement for Oakland students. Coalition members learn, collaborate, and champion literacy together.

Contact [membership@oaklandliteracycoalition.org](mailto:membership@oaklandliteracycoalition.org) to join our network

[oaklandliteracycoalition.org](https://oaklandliteracycoalition.org)

