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District Progress Report**

Oakland Forum

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Evaluation of the Academies Program of the Oakland Unified School District Progress Report

Oakland Forum



The University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum is a partnership of the University of California at Berkeley; California State University, Hayward; Mills College; Holy Names College; the Peralta Community College District; and the Oakland community.

University of California at Berkeley
Institute of Urban and Regional Development

This is a report on the progress of the evaluation of the Career Academies program of the Oakland Unified School District, specifically those academies which are supported by funds from the Oakland Redevelopment Agency. The ORA granted \$1,202,000 to the School District for activities during and immediately after the 1994-95 school year. Payment of the funds to the District is subject to performance standards and timetables established in the agreement between the ORA and the School District. This report covers evaluation activities undertaken by University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum to analyze the 1994-95 school year. The Forum's agreement with the ORA calls for a progress report regarding work completed through December, 1995, and a final report following completion of the research in March, 1996. Upon acceptance of this progress report, the agreement calls for the City of Oakland to pay the University \$15,000 -- the first half of the full year's amount.

Overview

The data collection and analysis for the evaluation of the 1994-95 school year has mostly proceeded according to schedule. Where there have been delays they have corresponded to delays in the program itself. No policy or payment decisions have been delayed as a consequence of a lack of data. The analysis is on schedule to be completed for final report by March 31, assuming no further delays in the receipt of information from the District.

This report is organized into components which correspond to the tasks in the University's agreement with the City.

Finalizing Study Design and Schedule

Forum staff met several times with staff of the Office of Public Works (Harry Schrauth and Edna Davis) and with the School District program manager and data processing staff to update and refine the evaluation objectives and methods. Adjustments to the original work schedule were agreed upon.

Meetings with academy personnel

Forum staff have attended several site and citywide advisory committee meetings and functions, and have had numerous additional meetings with the program coordinator.

Design of survey instruments

Questionnaires and informed consent forms for internship supervisors, academy students who completed internships, and mentors were drafted and approved by the University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects. A survey of graduates from recent years was also drafted and approved, and the procedures for administering this instrument are being reviewed by the District's Research and Legal offices at this time.

Administration of surveys

The survey of all students who completed a summer internship was completed by 197 interns at the conclusion of their summer assignment, a response rate of 64 percent. The employers who supervised these interns were surveyed in November 1995 with follow-up telephone calls in December and January.

Questionnaires from 48 percent of the employers, covering 44 percent of the interns, have so far been returned. These data have been entered into the Forum's computers and analysis of them is underway. The survey of mentors has been postponed until at least February 1996. Only a partially complete list of mentors' addresses was received by the Forum from the District, and a complete address list would be necessary to have representative sample of all sites. If the remaining addresses are not received by February 15, the Forum will survey mentors at those sites for which we have addresses, and do a spot check by telephone for the other sites.

The survey of academy graduates and a comparison group of non-academy students will be conducted in conjunction with California State University Hayward with support from a grant from the Upjohn Institute for Labor Research. If, as now seems likely, that survey is not completed in time for use in a report on the 1994-95 year, information from it will be included in the following year's analysis. All use of the graduate survey will be governed by the terms of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the District and the two Universities concerning the Upjohn grant.

Create and analyze data collection system on student records

The Forum has received a largely complete set of computerized records of student grades, attendance and courses for academy students from the District, but there remain several technical issues of reconciling these records with printed report

cards and sorting out certain codes. These issues are currently being worked out with District staff, and preliminary reports for the full 1994-95 school year should be available in February. These will be made available to the District and City to assess performance against contract standards for the District's payment request, and then for inclusion in the Forum's final report. (No payment requests which need these data have been submitted yet, so there has been no delay.) The data will be added to the Forum's ongoing cumulative records on academy students to permit year-to-year comparisons. Forum staff have provided periodic written updates to City and School District staff on the status of data collection.

Budget-related analyses

A methodology for conducting a rudimentary but useful cost/benefit analysis of the academies has been developed, and some of the information on costs has been collected. We anticipate that this analysis will be completed in time for inclusion in the final report on the 1994-95 year. Also, the Forum will update the record of all outside support won by the academies and analyze the prospects or future outside fund-raising in relation to the budgetary needs of the program.

Site-specific documentation

Interviews and site visits will be conducted with all programs in the Spring of 1996, covering issues from both the previous and the current program years. The emphasis will be on

assessment of progress toward meeting the individualized plans of each academy.

Policy recommendations/Information for future funding decisions

Forum staff met during 1995 with Public Works and District staff regarding changes to be made to the 1995-96 contract, and also reported in the Spring of 1995 to the Educational Partnership Committee (City Council and Board of Education.) We will be available for future presentations or consultations throughout the contract period and into the next period as well, as the annual budget deliberations of the City typically take place in April, May and June of each year. Forum staff will be available for other presentations as necessary.