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Support of Academies in the Oakland Public Schools by the Oakland Redevelopment Agency: Interim Report from Project Evaluators

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

SUPPORT OF ACADEMIES IN THE OAKLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY THE OAKLAND REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

**Interim Report from Project Evaluators
University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum**

October 22, 1992

This is the second interim report for 1992 of the ongoing evaluation of the Academies program in the Oakland Public Schools, focusing on the activities supported by the Oakland Redevelopment Agency. This report emphasizes the new information obtained since our last report in April 1992. It is not intended as the final analysis of the 1991-92 school year, since much of the data required for that report has not yet been acquired or is still being analyzed.

SUMMARY

Since last April, the Academies program has made substantial progress toward fulfilling the goals and standards of the ORA contract, and toward improving the administrative problems identified in earlier reports and policy discussions. The data on students' career-related activities and academic achievement during the 1991-92 school year are generally more positive than for the 1990-91 year. Recent changes in District management practices have resulted in improved communications and more timely implementation of elements of the contract. There are still important steps that need to be taken, but the District's capacity to take those steps appears to us to be enhanced.

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Specific outcomes for which we have new data include the following:

INTERNSHIPS: 172 paid work experience internships were obtained for Academy students through ORA funds during the summer of 1992, compared to 84 the previous year. In 1992, 35 percent of the internships were in the Central Redevelopment District, compared to only 11 percent in 1991. In 1992, all four of the academies exceeded the ORA contract standard requiring that 60% of their seniors receive internships. This is a positive trend when compared with the previous summer, when only two of the four designated academies placed a significant number of students. (See Tables 1, 2 and 3.)

MENTORING: The number of mentors in the program more than doubled: 141 mentors were matched with ORA academy students in 1992, compared with 62 during the previous school year. The contract standard of identifying mentors for 75% of the juniors was still not attained, but the large increase in mentor matches brought the program close to this goal. (See Table 4.)

INDUSTRY LIAISONS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES: This aspect of the program is

more energized and organized than in previous years. The liaison consultants have been hired earlier in the school year, they have been more thoroughly oriented and trained, they meet regularly as a group with District management, and have more direct responsibility for organizing the advisory committees of employers, professionals and representatives of higher education.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: All academies, with the exception of the Business Academy, completed a draft tenth grade curriculum guide by the beginning of the summer, and are well underway with guides for grades 11 and 12. The Guides codify the ways in which courses are "integrated" through common themes and projects, and are a critical step in the institutionalization of the program.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS IN SPRING 1992: Sufficient numbers of students in all three grades of the Health and Pre-Engineering academies had grade point averages that exceeded the ORA contract standards. Eleventh and twelfth grade students in the Business Academy also exceeded the grade point average standard while tenth graders were below. Students in the Media Academy and Law and Government Academy (which has only tenth grade) fell below the standard, but by relatively small margins. (See Tables 5 and 6.)

As always, we stress that aggregate grade point average, particularly for tenth grade, is more a reflection of who has been admitted to the program than it is of the program's immediate impact. Since the programs are expected to serve a large proportion of students who are "at-risk" of school failure, a low initial GPA should not be viewed as a program deficiency. More importantly, every academy showed an improvement of GPA in each successive grade.

ATTENDANCE: Student attendance in the Spring 1992 semester consistently met the contract standard at three academies: Media, Health, and Pre-Engineering. However, attendance at the two McClymonds High School academies, Business and Law and Government, remained very poor: 63 percent of Law and 49 percent of Business students missed class more than 20 percent of the time. The scheduling format used at McClymonds last year (and abandoned for 1992-93) which called for fewer but longer sessions of each class, probably contributed to these high rates, but low attendance has been a chronic problem for these two programs nonetheless. We will analyze the causes of low attendance for our next report.

GRADUATION: Data have so far been received on two of the four academies, showing a graduation rate of 88 percent of Business academy seniors and 76 percent of Media academy seniors. The standard in the ORA contract is 85 percent.

ASPECTS OF THE 1991-92 YEAR STILL TO BE REVIEWED

Many aspects of the program have still not been completely reviewed. Data are not yet available on the post-graduation activities of 1992 seniors. Standardized test scores for academy students were received by the Forum too late to be analyzed for this report. We

plan to do a year-to-year comparison of individual students' academic progress as seen in grades, attendance and test scores. Our survey of the students who had internships during the summer is still being analyzed. Measures of career-awareness that fit with the District's curriculum goals have still to be determined and carried out. Independent and peer reviews of the draft curriculum guides are still underway. Surveys of the quality of mentoring from the mentor's and student's perspectives remain to be done. Data on the number and distribution of ORA- supported tutors have not yet been obtained.

The ORA staff, the Forum, and the Academies Program office are working closely to see that the District provides the necessary information and that it is then reviewed in a timely fashion, both to determine the level of payment due under the performance- based contract and to assist the program evaluation.

EARLY FINDINGS ABOUT THE 1992-93 SCHOOL YEAR

Enrollment and Scheduling: This year, as before, the challenge of scheduling academy students into the right classes was only partially met at the outset of school. The first (six week) marking period remains a time for major adjustments of the assignments of teachers and students. Our assessment, based on incomplete information, is that the process has worked somewhat better this year than last. We do not yet have the complete rosters and class assignments for this new year by which we can evaluate the scheduling outcomes, the retention of last year's students, or the profile of incoming students with regard to ethnicity, gender, home attendance area, at-risk status or other factors which may be of interest to policy-makers. Nor have we begun the classroom observations planned for this year.

Hiring and Contracting: ORA staff and City staff have worked closely to maximize the timely start-up of program elements while remaining contract issues are being resolved. Implementation of most elements is several months ahead of last year, and the contract will apparently be completed much sooner as well.

School District Oversight and Communications: The District has charged an Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Barbara Daniels, with direct oversight of the academies, along with vocational education and adult education. This more focused portfolio for a cabinet-level administrator appears to provide the academies with more timely action from senior management than under the previous arrangement. (Last year the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, whose responsibilities for programs and policies were much broader, identified the key management obstacles and had begun to act on them.) There are four new high school principals this Fall who are responsible for seven of the ORA academies, and they need to be quickly and thoroughly oriented to the academies' mission, structure and administrative requirements. This orientation and their active participation in shaping the program has begun but is far from complete.

The District has formulated an approach to developing a strategic plan for the long-term

role and structure of the academies and their relationship to the vocational education program, the Five- Year Educational Plan, and the development of career-awareness in middle schools.

The District and the ORA have also agreed to support a senior account clerk for the Academies office, a move which we hope will greatly expedite more timely payment of teachers and consultants, requisitions of equipment, and other basic tasks. We see this as essential to improving efficiency and staff morale. We also anticipate that data for management and evaluation purposes will be more readily available.

CONCLUSION

The data at this time show some significant recent progress in the capacity of the academies to meet their contractual obligations and the needs of their students. There is also reason to believe that the remaining areas in need of improvement will be addressed more effectively by the School District in the coming year.

This is only an interim status report to address the informational needs of the City/Schools Partnership Committee, the School District, and the Oakland Redevelopment Agency soon after the beginning of the school year. The Forum will prepare a much more detailed and comprehensive evaluation report with assessments of the quality as well as the completion of program elements, along with a full set of recommendations, early in 1993, in time for the policy and budget deliberations of the respective entities.

* * *

This report was written by Victor Rubin, Ph.D., Executive Director of the University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum. The tables were prepared by Chris Waldron. Data were supplied by the Oakland Unified School District's Academy Directors and Magnet Programs Office staff. Forum research assistants whose work contributed to this report include Mikala Rahn and Karen Gibson.

TABLE 1

LOCATION OF 1992 INTERNSHIPS

Summary Table

Location	#	%
In Central District	60	35%
Elsewhere in Oakland	74	43%
Outside Oakland	33	19%
Insufficient Data	5	3%
TOTAL OF # AND %	172	100%

TABLE 2

LOCATION OF 1992 INTERNSHIPS**Business Academy**

Location	#	%
In Central District	21	51%
Elsewhere in Oakland	19	46%
Outside Oakland	1	3%
Insufficient Data	-----	0%
TOTAL OF # AND %	41	100%

Media Academy

Location	#	%
In Central District	19	35%
Elsewhere in Oakland	25	46%
Outside Oakland	9	17%
Insufficient Data	1	2%
TOTAL OF # AND %	54	100%

Pre-Engineering Academy

Location	#	%
In Central District	11	28%
Elsewhere in Oakland	7	17%
Outside Oakland	20	50%
Insufficient Data	2	5%
TOTAL OF # AND %	40	100%

Health Academy

Location	#	%
In Central District	9	24%
Elsewhere in Oakland	23	62%
Outside Oakland	3	8%
Insufficient Data	2	6%
TOTAL OF # AND %	37	100%

TABLE 3

LOCATION OF 1991-1992 INTERNSHIPS

Summary Table by Location

Location	Number of Internships in 1991	Number of Internships in 1992
In Central District	9	60
Elsewhere in Oakland	52	74
Outside Oakland	12	33
Insufficient Data	11	5
TOTAL OF # AND %	84	172

Summary Table by Academy

Academy	Number of Internships in 1991	Number of Internships in 1992
Business	9	41
Media	34	54
Pre-Engineering	6	40
Health	35	37
TOTAL	84	172

TABLE 4
NUMBER OF MENTOR MATCHES
1991

Academy	Number of Mentors Assigned	Target # [*]	Percent of Target Reached
Business	27	30	90%
Media	26	44	59%
Pre-Engineering	1	34	3%
Health	8	48	17%
TOTAL	62	156	40%

* 80% of total junior class enrollment

NUMBER OF MENTOR MATCHES
1992

Academy	Number of Mentors Assigned	Target # [*]	Percent of Target Reached
Business	53	55	96%
Media	30	40	75%
Pre-Engineering	20	37	54%
Health	38	39	97%
TOTAL	141	171	82%

* 75% of total junior class enrollment

TABLE 5

SPRING 1992

ACADEMY STUDENTS WITH GPA OF 2.00 OR HIGHER
End of Semester Grades

Business Academy	Percent of Students ¹ w/GPA 2.00 or Higher	Number of Students (# w/GPA $\geq$ 2.00/ Total #)
9th Grade	0%	0/3
10th Grade	58.1% [†]	25/43
11th Grade	87.8%	65/74
12th Grade	82.8%	24/29

Law and Government Academy	Percent of Students w/GPA 2.00 or Higher	Number of Students (# w/GPA $\geq$ 2.00/ Total #)
9th Grade	0%	0/6
10th Grade	60% [†]	21/35
11th Grade	66.7% [†]	2/3
12th Grade*	-----	-----

Media Academy	Percent of Students w/GPA 2.00 or Higher	Number of Students (# w/GPA $\geq$ 2.00/ Total #)
9th Grade*	-----	-----
10th Grade	62.2% [†]	23/37
11th Grade	67.9% [†]	36/53
12th Grade	78.6% [†]	33/42

¹ ORA contract performance standard calls for 70% of 10th grade students, 75% of 11th grade students, and 80% of 12th grade students to have a GPA of 2.00 or higher. There was no performance standard in the contract for 9th grade students.

[†] Below contract standard

* There are no students at this grade level enrolled in the academy.

TABLE 5 cont'd

SPRING 1992

**ACADEMY STUDENTS WITH GPA OF 2.00 OR HIGHER
End of Semester Grades**

Pre-Engineering Academy	Percent of Students ¹ w/GPA 2.00 or Higher	Number of Students (# w/GPA $\geq$ 2.00/ Total #)
9th Grade	100%	1/1
10th Grade	89.1%	41/46
11th Grade	91.8%	45/49
12th Grade	84.9%	45/53

Health Academy	Percent of Students w/GPA 2.00 or Higher	Number of Students (# w/GPA $\geq$ 2.00/ Total #)
9th Grade	71.4%	5/7
10th Grade	78.6%	33/42
11th Grade	88.5%	46/52
12th Grade	92.5%	49/53

¹ ORA contract performance standard calls for 70% of 10th grade students, 75% of 11th grade students, and 80% of 12th grade students to have a GPA of 2.00 or higher. There was no performance standard in the contract for 9th grade students.

[†] Below contract standard

^{*} There are no students at this grade level enrolled in the academy.

TABLE 6

SPRING 1992

SUMMARY TABLE BY ACADEMY

STUDENTS WITH GPA OF 2.00 OR HIGHER
End of Semester Grades
*** For All Grades ***

Academy	Percent of Students w/GPA 2.00 or Higher	Number of Students (# w/GPA $\geq$ 2.00/ Total #)
Business	76.5%	114/149
Law & Government	52.3%	23/44
Media	69.7%	92/132
Pre-Engineering	88.6%	132/149
Health	86.4%	133/154