



School and Organization Overviews

Oakland Unified School District

Oakland Unified School District serves 46,600 students in Oakland, CA. [Nearly half](#) (49%) of these students identify as Hispanic or Latino, 21% identify as African American, and 11% identify as Asian. The district's [current strategic plan](#) emphasizes the following four priorities:

1. Ensuring strong readers by the 3rd grade
2. Supporting empowered graduates
3. Creating joyful schools
4. Growing a diverse and stable staff

The district has also funded a [districtwide community school initiative](#) and [implemented policies that prioritize restorative practices](#) and [police-free schools](#) as a way to transform relationships between students, staff, and families. The Oakland Unified School Board includes [two non-voting student representatives](#), called student directors, and [the city recently passed a measure](#) to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in its school board elections. [Board Policy 3625](#) established the power of school governance teams composed of employees, parents, students, and community partners in making decisions for their local schools. In 2014, Oakland passed [Measure N](#), which created a parcel tax that funded the development of Linked Learning pathways in Oakland high schools. Ninety percent of these funds go directly to schools for site-based shared decision-making. In 2022, Oakland voters saw the [benefits of this investment](#) and renewed the initiative by passing Measure H, the [College and Career for All Initiative](#).

Many of these transformative policies are due to the strong culture of community organizing present in the district, led by organizations such as Bay Area PLAN, Black Organizing Project, Californians for Justice, EBAYC, Faith in Action East Bay, Oakland Kids First, and several other Oakland-based partners.

Californians for Justice

Californians for Justice (CFJ) organizes young people throughout the state to become advocates for themselves and their communities and fight for racial and educational justice. As part of their current work, CFJ has advocated for relationship-centered schools as a model for school transformation; [relationship-](#)

[centered schools](#) are schools where youth and all members of the school community feel a sense of belonging, address bias and advance equity, and are empowered to succeed. As part of this campaign, CFJ provides transformational assistance that supports school and district staff throughout the state to develop a shared understanding of racial justice, co-lead school transformation with students, and develop systems to institutionalize equity initiatives. Five high schools in Long Beach Unified School District participate in CFJ's professional learning network, where they work in design teams that include students, teachers, administrators, and families and caregivers to tackle equity dilemmas at each site and throughout the district.

Long Beach Polytechnic High School

[Long Beach Polytechnic High School](#) (LB Poly) is one of the Long Beach Unified School District sites participating in CFJ's professional learning network. This is their third year participating in the program. To develop the guiding question for their work, design team members conducted empathy interviews to understand school culture and students' experiences in the classroom. They have been working to address the question of how LB Poly can increase student voice and representation in leadership structures and decision-making spaces. Next, they are taking up the question of how they can create a just and equitable LB Poly campus and community for Black students. To get at the answers to these questions, the design team uses CFJ's [student voice continuum](#) as a guide. In doing so they seek to provide concrete opportunities in which BIYOC (Black, Indigenous, and Youth of Color) student voices are shared and discussed in decision-making spaces (like the school's Instructional Leadership Team) with the intention of using student voice to spark restorative, authentic, and immediate change to create a just and equitable LB Poly campus and community.

Parent Teacher Home Visits

[Parent Teacher Home Visits](#) (PTHV) is a parent engagement strategy focused on building trusting and respectful family–teacher relationships. Started in Sacramento, CA, the PTHV model is now in use in schools in 28 [states](#) and is rooted in five core practices:

1. Visits are voluntary for both families and teachers.
2. Educators receive training and are compensated for their time.
3. Visits are conducted with all students—or across a cross-section—rather than targeting specific students (such as for behavioral reasons).
4. The first visit focuses on understanding the hopes and dreams of families, rather than on academic outcomes.
5. Educators visit in pairs and reflect with their partners after each visit.

This model can provide a foundational shift in relationships that contributes to better outcomes for students. In one study, home visits corresponded with a [24% decrease in students' school absences](#). In another, students

and their families reported an [increase in how much they trust their educators](#), which led to improved communication beyond the initial visit. Teachers involved in home visits reported a [mindset shift](#) in how they regard students', families', and communities' assets, as well as an increase in teachers' perceptions of job satisfaction and efficacy.