

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE ACHIEVEMENT
COMMUNITY UPDATE: 2014

ENGAGE.
ENCOURAGE.
EMPOWER.

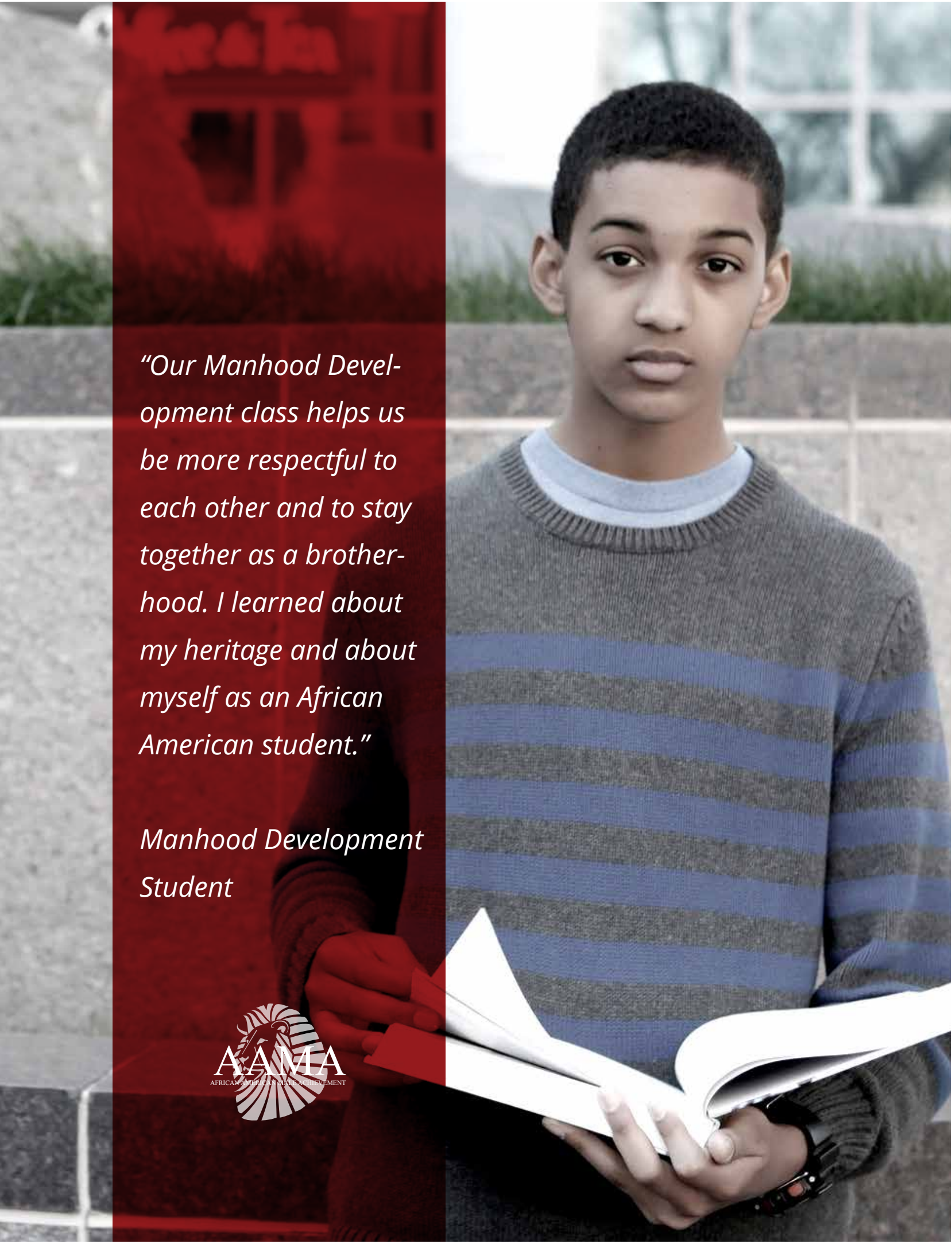




"EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO UNLOCK THE GOLDEN DOOR OF FREEDOM." George Washington Carver

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“Our Manhood Development class helps us be more respectful to each other and to stay together as a brotherhood. I learned about my heritage and about myself as an African American student.”

Manhood Development Student





LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Parents, Friends, and Colleagues,

Our work began as a call to action. Four years ago, the newly appointed Superintendent together with OUSD's Board of Education, embarked on a journey to create a full-service community schools district. We believe that all schools should be at the center of neighborhood and community life providing a thoughtful continuum of service and support toward the development of healthy children in partnership with its residents.

To make real progress on this universal goal of implementing community schools, leaders had to confront a brutal fact—across the country urban districts reforms had done little to transform the overall experiences, access, or educational attainment of African American male students. It was with this assessment that the Superintendent and Board of Education took the unprecedented action of creating an Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA).

The mission of AAMA is to stop the epidemic failure of African American male students in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). We will create the systems, structures, and spaces that guarantee success for all African American male students in OUSD. By using data, we will identify entry points into schools and systems to increase equity, improve cultural competency, and implement practices that support African American male students. We believe all African American male students are extraordinary and deserve a school system that meets their unique and dynamic needs.

The fight for civil rights today in educational equity. We have to ask the tough questions: How does a system rethink structures and budget allocations so that students who are furthest away from opportunity are aligned with more resources? How do we ensure that schools with the highest need are recipients of long-term support and intervention? How do we assure parents that their students will be served in a system that has not served them well?

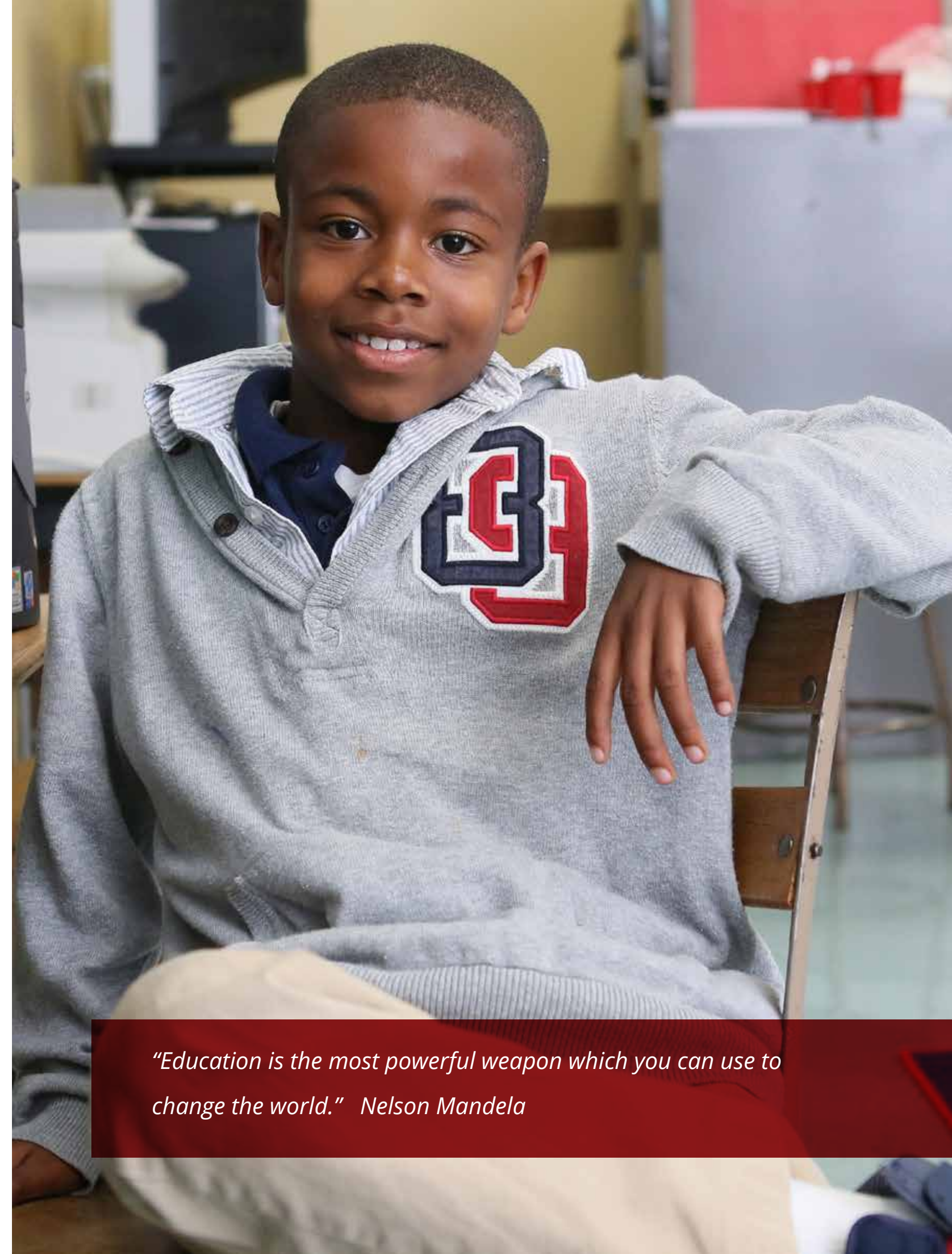
AAMA will release a comprehensive three-part report this year. The report will include an in-depth program analysis, a data review, and a strategic plan for 2015-2018.

Report release dates:

1. Manhood Development Program, *Tentative release date: June 1, 2014*
2. AAMA data and outcomes, 2010-2014, *Tentative release date: July 1, 2014*
3. Strategic plan 2015-2018, *Tentative release date: Sept 1, 2014*

Serving as Executive Director for this groundbreaking initiative is an honor. My life's work—my experiences, personal and professional—have prepared me for this day. I encourage you to continue your community work, to exercise your community voice, and to ENGAGE, ENCOURAGE, and EMPOWER our African American male youth.

In the spirit,
Christopher P. Chatmon,
Executive Director, African American Male Achievement



"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Nelson Mandela

GROUNDBREAKING INITIATIVE

OUR MISSION : AAMA strives to stop the epidemic failure of African American male students in the Oakland Unified School District by creating the systems, structures, and spaces that guarantee success for all African American male students.

ABOUT AAMA:

It's just amazing how our approach not only liberates our children's minds but we're changing the mindsets of adults who have these racist ideologies of our youth and we're helping to liberate their minds from discriminatory practices."

Reginald Richardson

Claremont Middle School, Principal

African American Male Achievement (AAMA) was launched on October 1, 2010, under the leadership of Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith. AAMA is an ambitious six-year project designed to dramatically improve academic and life outcomes for African American male students in Oakland.

Oakland Unified is the first district in the United States that has supported the creation of a department to address the specific needs of African American male students. AAMA is positioned to leverage community partnerships, research best practice, and to create reforms that will affect systemic change through Targeted Universalism. AAMA is leading the school district by analyzing the patterns and processes that are producing systemic inequity.

OUSD's theory of action, Targeted Universalism, ascertains that by transforming the system to support successful outcomes for OUSD's lowest performing subgroup OUSD will create a district that improves academic and social-emotional outcomes for all of its students. AAMA will help the district address African American male needs and will strengthen the district's movement toward cultural and resource changes that benefit all students.



OUSD STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Community Schools, Thriving Students

❖ REVERSING INEQUITIES

1. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Student achievement data in OUSD will show significant reduction in the gap between African American males and other OUSD male averages.

2. GRADUATION

African American male graduation rate will double to 94% and the drop out rate for African American males will reduce by 50%.

3. LITERACY

African American male students will score at or above grade level on the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI).

4. SUSPENSION

Suspension rates for African American males will not show significant disproportionality.

5. ATTENDANCE

Chronic absenteeism (>18 days/yr) will reduce by 75% for African American males.

6. INCARCERATION

Incarceration rates for African American males will decrease by 50%.

7. MIDDLE SCHOOL HOLDING POWER

Increase middle school holding power by improving school culture and experience for African American males. Academic performance of male African American middle school students will be on par with district averages for GPA .

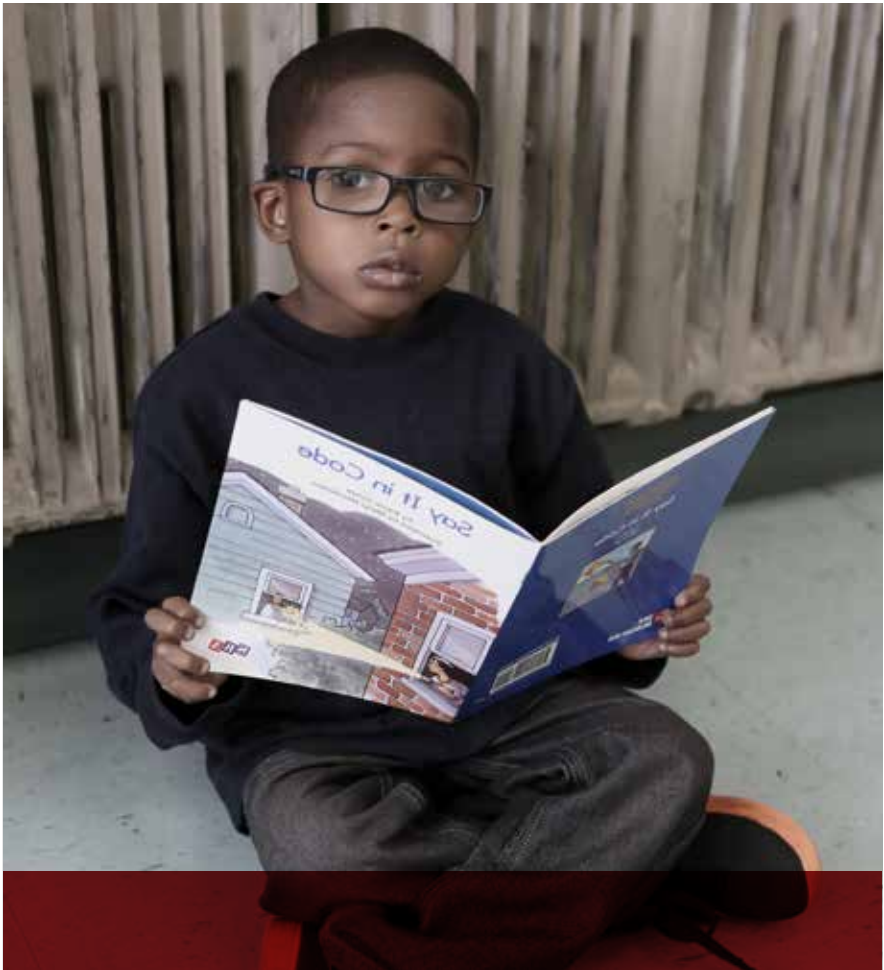
Baseline data is available in the AAMA Task Force Summary Report. Read more online at www.thrivingstudents.org/reference-materials.



OUR STORY

OUSD is the primary institution responsible to ensure that all Oakland's children receive a quality education that includes high levels of social-emotional growth, learning, and preparation for post-secondary education, career, and life.

Since 2010, OUSD has made explicit and systematic attempts to improve outcomes for African American males including the creation of AAMA.



"Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education."
Martin Luther King Jr.



❖ OUR PROCESS
YEAR ONE: **PLANNING**
2011-2014

AAMA recruited and trained students, parents, educators, community members and OUSD staff to participate in one of seven Goal Teams.



PHASE ONE | INITIALIZATION AND DISCOVERY

- Performed school site visits and listen to youth talk about their educational experiences.
- Initiated a listening campaign with select principals, teachers, community-based organization leaders, after-school providers and parents.
- Developed rationale and data for the targeted focus on African American males.
- Initialized the AAMA Technical Assistance Team (TAT).
- Identified and implemented AAMA 2010-2011 pilot programs.
- Conducted monthly AAMA community task force meetings.
- Recruited, trained, and engaged volunteers to support Goal Team work.
- Gathered student data for Goal Teams.
- Gathered best practice research and models for African American male achievement.
- Results became recommendations to Board of Education and OUSD Superintendent for one, three, and five-year strategic goals.

PHASE TWO | RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Goal Teams and AAMA conducted interviews of key individuals responsible for successful program models.
- AAMA conducted a listening campaign with African American male students in grades K-12, and with 18-22 year-old community members.
- Goal Teams demonstrated clear understanding of baseline data.

PHASE THREE | FORM STRATEGIC QUESTIONS

- Each Goal Team synthesized and documented what they learned about OUSD’s culture, conditions, and capacities.
- Goal Teams conducted a review and inventory of effective practices at schools and program sites.
- Goal Teams synthesized findings into three categories of questions for OUSD’s consideration:

- 1. CULTURE:** What are the rituals, routines, and practices that result in effective learning environments for African American males?
- 2. CONDITIONS:** What are the policies, structures, systems, and supports necessary to facilitate the healthy development and learning of African American males?
- 3. CAPACITIES:** What are the skills, knowledge, and awareness that adults need in order to effectively teach and reach African American males?

“They are learning about legacy [what they want to leave behind] and the critical thinking skills that are necessary to be successful in school and life.”
Jason Seals, AAMA Manhood Development Instructor

OUR PROCESS

IMPLEMENTATION: **PROGRAMS**

2011-2014

MANHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

AAMA African American Male Achievement's Manhood Development Program (MDP), is an in-school elective for African American male middle and high school students. MDP is based on a rites of passage group mentoring model that has proven successful in raising attendance, improving student behavior, and deepening academic motivation among students to increase achievement.

We piloted the program at three high schools in the spring semester of 2010-2011. Each year we added additional secondary schools and we are piloting an elementary-level program during the 2013-2014 school year.

MDP teachers lead students in exercises that develop their social and emotional learning skills through culturally relevant values-based education. The curriculum is best used with a student-centered approach with an emphasis on academic discourse.

Findings showed that the MDP classes create unique and productive spaces for African American male students; these were safe spaces within school settings that often felt hostile to students. Three key aspects of MDP classes were identified: MDP classes provided opportunities for students to craft new identities, caring and nurturing teacher-student relationships were built between MDP teachers and students, and MDP instructors enacted new kinds of discipline practices, which students perceived as fair and effective, in contrast to the discipline they experienced in schools and classrooms.

MDP students:

Become life-long learners

Increase awareness of the blessings and challenges of being an African American male

Learn to successfully navigate school

Improve writing skills

Become college and career ready

Increase Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Goals

Decrease suspensions

Increase attendance

Increase academic achievement

Improve literacy

Services

Culturally proficient leadership and character development curriculum

Case management

Transcript evaluation

Parent training

Cultural events and field trips

Transcript reviews and college and career readiness

Outcomes

1. MDP participants showed a significant increase in critical thinking skills, communication skills, and organization skills.
2. MDP Life Skills Assessment for high school students showed a statistically significant increase in goal setting and communication.
3. MDP program participants had less suspension incidences, acknowledged an increase in the number of positive adult role models and better understood the blessings and challenges of being an African American male.
4. MDP program participants showed an increase in emotional intelligence, social acceptance, self efficacy and were more connected to school.
5. MDP program participants showed improvement in academic attitudes, grades, reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

ENGAGE.
ENCOURAGE.
EMPOWER.



❖ IMPLEMENTATION: PROGRAMS

“I am inspired and encouraged to be a strong and better leader in my community.”
Attendee, Spring Parent Conference, 2012

MAN UP! CONFERENCES

The Man UP! Conference was created in 2010 for the purpose of uplifting the spirit of African American boys and increasing the access to positive adult role models into the lives of our children and youth. Our conference theme, “My Brothers Keeper” builds on rituals, activities and workshops that guide our young brothers through their journey of becoming a man.

Traditionally held on Saturdays and select school days, African American men volunteer and engage, encourage, and empower African American boys with positive affirmations, knowledge of self and emotional support. These gatherings start with drumming and libations and are followed by group activities and workshops featuring topics such as: digital story telling, STEM, fitness and martial arts, self-management, personal hygiene.

Self-realization and the activation of brilliance are two objectives we provide as part of the experience. The entire day is based on recognizing the beauty and brilliance of African American boys and breaking down stereotypes and negative imagery and replacing them with visions of becoming men who provide love and internalize self-determination.

Past Conferences:

Montera Middle School – 2013, 2014

Oakland High School – 2013

Frick Middle School – 2010, 2011, 2012

Madison Middle School – 2012



M A N U P ! C O N F E R E N C E

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

African American men have stories to tell. Those who listen have much to learn. The African American Oral History Project, composed by OUSD high school interns, captured the voices of over 100 African American males across Oakland. The interns learned how to interview, film (sound and lighting), and edit videos with an oral history methodology. Through a partnership between OUSD’s Office of AAMA, Alameda County Department of Health and Human Services and Story For All, we produced “The Griots of Oakland” book, video and exhibition at the African American Museum and Library.

Goals

This project uplifted the African American male voices that are normally stifled and misrepresented across urban U.S. cities, including Oakland. The teenage males who were trained learned valuable skills to set-up on location interviews at a variety of spots across the city. Those interviewed shared compelling new stories that reveal the beauty and brilliance of African American males in Oakland.

Outcomes

1. Uplifted and valued the story of over 100 African American males, from students to elders, across Oakland to expose the rich diversity, amazing brilliance and lift up the struggles and triumph of African American men that reside in Oakland.
2. Opened a multi-media art installation at the African American Library Museum.
3. Produced a short documentary and book that will be a mobile exhibit.
4. Created tandem curriculum for students to utilize the book for lessons.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

AAMA added a parent and family engagement component in the spring of 2013. The purpose of this component is to assist families on how to engage in the academic progress of their students. It began with the parents of students in the Manhood Development Programs and has since expanded to African American families throughout the district.

The parent engagement staff includes a parent coordinator and ten parent leaders. Each comprehensive high school has at least one assigned parent leader. The parent leaders create and conduct parent workshops using the “Believing the College Dream” curriculum designed by the University of California, Berkeley. Parent leaders also work with their individual school sites and other stakeholders to deliver at least one workshop per month. In addition, a convening of all families together occurs twice a year to celebrate students and their families.

Goals

Parent leaders will: create workshops based on the “Believing in the College Dream” curriculum, become an intricate part of their assigned school’s culture by working with key school site staff, have an effective presence at school sites, and provide MDP parents with information and resources to assist their students to be academically successful.

❖ IMPLEMENTATION: PROGRAMS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AAMA executive director and staff have led and facilitated local, regional and national trainings for students, parents, staff and school district officials. We use the framework of Engage, Encourage and Empower to help improve teacher and adult practice to support the whole child. We have facilitated workshop sessions at OUSD Principal Retreats, Teacher Training Days, New Teacher Induction Trainings and at numerous local and national conferences.

Goals

Educators will learn, discuss and practice ways to engage, encourage and empower African American male students in their schools, classrooms and community. Through building a culture of using an equity lens, educators can create nurturing learning environments for ALL students to achieve.

Outcomes

1. Annually we will reach over 50 Principals and 300 Teachers.
2. Share educator tools and resources.
3. Educators join our monthly MDP Professional Learning Community meetings.
4. Educators have more knowledge, understanding and empathy to serve all students equitably.

READ2LEAD

Believing that literacy is the key to academic success, AAMA developed the Read2Lead program to encourage and cultivate a love for reading. AAMA trained African American men from the community to be Literacy Ambassadors, and each was assigned to an OUSD elementary, middle, or high school where he read to a classroom of students at least once per month.

Goals

Students who participate in Read2Lead experience an increase in the enjoyment of reading, an understanding of the importance of reading and its connection to academic achievement, and are exposed to positive African American male role models and culturally-relevant texts.

Outcomes

1. Read2Lead programs were implemented at eight OUSD schools in north and west Oakland.
2. 400+ students participated in Read2Lead.
3. African American male volunteers were recruited and trained to be Literacy Ambassadors.
4. AAMA partnered with schools and community-based organizations to host Family Literacy Nights aimed at sharing information and resources with the entire school community.

VOLUNTARY SCHOOL STUDY TEAM (VSST)

In 2011, AAMA piloted the Voluntary School Study Team (VSST) model at Edna Brewer Middle School. The VSST process was designed to interrupt hierarchal school power structures by lifting the voices of students, parents, teachers, classified staff, and community members with the hope of engaging, encouraging, and empowering the entire school community.

The VSST team worked together with AAMA and district staff to transform the culture, conditions, and capacities at their school site in ways that created powerful learning opportunities for African American male students. The VSST process empowered representatives of all school stakeholder groups to work in concert, designing, and adapting district reform efforts for their community context and vision.

Goal

The goal of the VSST was to shift the culture, conditions, and capacities at the school to better support and serve African American male students.

Outcomes

1. Three school-wide African American Family Summits were held. The entire school community came together to review site-based data and to uplift student, parent, staff, and community voice.
2. The participants created goals and selected a representative body to develop an action plan and implement changes.
3. The representative body attended two weekend study circles that led to the development of a Black Student Union.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Description

AAMA hosts several community events throughout the year.

Goal

Community events will connect, inform, and honor students, families, school staff members, and the community.

Outcomes

1. More than 2,500 students, parents, educators, and community members attended events throughout the year.
2. Annual events include:
 - STAR CST Perfect Score Celebration
 - Black History Month Celebrations featuring KRS-One, student performers, and local artists
 - Question:Bridge (Oakland Museum)
 - Word Becomes Flesh (Laney College)
 - African American Educator Recognition Ceremony (Teach Tomorrow Oakland)
 - African American Spring Parent Conference (OUSD Family Schools Community Partnerships)
 - OUSD African American Honor Roll Celebration
 - Student Academic Achievement Celebration
 - Community Report Out

OUR IMPACT

"This is not a one-year proposition. It's not a two-year proposition. It's going to take time. We're dealing with complicated issues that run deep in our history, run deep in our society, and are entrenched in our minds." *President Obama, Regarding My Brother's Keeper: Creating opportunity for boys and young men of color*

When President Obama announced 'My Brother's Keeper' we were pleased. That is the work we have been committed to for the last four years in Oakland—and we're just getting started. We must continue through 2015 and beyond if we want to create systemic change. Our goal is to positively impact learning experiences and outcomes for African American males and all students in Oakland.

ENGAGE. ENCOURAGE. EMPOWER.

CHANGING LIVES ONE DAY AT A TIME

1

GETTING STARTED

3

BEYOND OAKLAND

2

DISTRICT-WIDE

OUR IMPACT

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS AAMA HAS:

- Fostered enthusiastic investment from the funding community and provided communities with the ownership to transform their schools.
- Developed key partnerships with community organizations, faith-based communities, schools, recreational venues, city and county agencies, families, and students.
- Established data sharing agreements and partnerships to link African American males to existing services and opportunities available through the city of Oakland and Alameda county and is monitor progress against indicators associated with each of the seven key goal areas.
- Helped families connect to resources including conflict resolution at school sites and safe and affordable housing. AAMA fields dozens of calls each week from families whose sons are experiencing the impact of institutionalized racism in their daily lives.

DISTRICT-WIDE

- Every school is required to include specific goals and outcomes for African American males in their site plan.
- OUSD School Quality Review standards include specific African American male standards.
- AAMA Executive Director sits on the OUSD Cabinet—providing both access and a voice for African American males at the highest level of district administrative leadership.
- AAMA staff members participate in cross-functional committees to help formulate policies and structures in support of African American male students.

BEYOND OAKLAND

AAMA has attracted national attention which has led to partnership opportunities for OUSD with non-profits, other districts, institutions of higher learning, and individuals. OUSD's membership in the California Alliance for Boys and Men of Color is noteworthy. See the AAMA endorsed vision statement below.

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color – Vision Statement

All Californians stand to benefit by doing everything possible to ensure that young men of color have the chance to grow up healthy, to get a good education, and to make positive contributions to their communities.

We will reap the rewards of this investment. Boys and young men of color can make our neighborhoods safer and stronger and they can work hard, innovate, and keep California competitive in the global economy. It's time for California to renew its commitment to making sure that all young people have a fair shot to grow up healthy and successful.

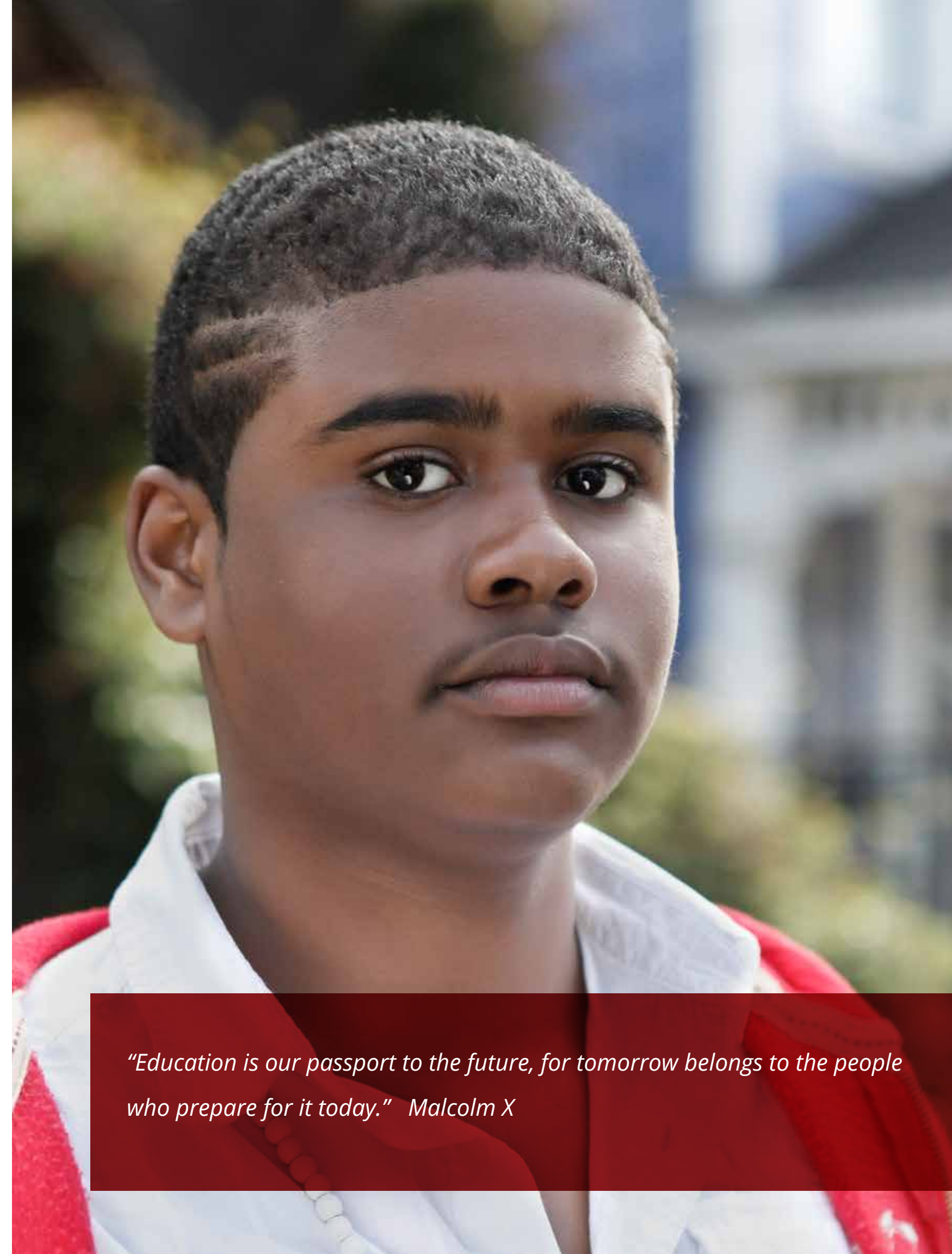
❖ OUR VISION



AAMA identifies entry points into schools and district systems to increase equity, improve cultural competency, and implement practices that support African American males. AAMA believes that all African American male students are extraordinary and deserve a school system that meets their needs.

MOVING FORWARD

As we look into the future we envision a district where every school serves students well and integrates families into the learning process. AAMA will impact more than 6,500 African American males over the next five years.



"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today." Malcolm X

OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS

FUNDERS

Atlantic Philanthropies
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East Bay Community Foundation
Kaiser Permanente Hospital Fund for Community Benefit Programs
Mitchell Kapur Foundation
Next Fund, in Memory of Sheila Gadsden
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Open Society Foundations: Campaign for Black Male Achievement
San Francisco Foundation
S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation
Stuart Foundation
The California Endowment
Walter & Elise Haas Fund
Waste Management of Alameda County
Zellerbach Family Foundation

PARTNERS

100 Black Men of the Bay Area, Inc.
180 Degrees
African American Education Task Force
Alameda County Department of Social Services
Alameda County Health and Human Services
Alameda County Health Care Services Agency
Alameda County Juvenile Probation
Merritt College, Maximum Achievement Program (MAP)
Laney College
Alternatives in Action
America's Promise
Bay Area urban Debate League
City of Oakland
East Bay Asian Youth Center
East Bay College Fund
Leadership Excellence
Oakland Community Organizations (OCO)
Oakland Housing Authority
OTX West
Partners in School Innovation
Peacekeepers
Question Bridge
The Mentoring Center
UC Berkeley Destination College Advising Corps
UC Berkeley Graduate School of Education
Urban Strategies Council
Youth Speaks



OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS HELP AAMA PAVE THE ROAD TO THE FUTURE



E N G A G E . E N C O U R A G E . E M P O W E R .

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