



# FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IN OAKLAND

In each of Oakland's full-service community schools, the mix of programs, services, and supports reflect the unique assets and needs of the students and families served.

## Healthy Schools, Thriving Students: Key Themes in Community Schools

A full-service community school shares much in common with one of Oakland's stately old oaks. Just as our beloved oaks need deep roots and healthy branches to grow and thrive, our schools need to be rooted in caring, respectful relationships and to cultivate strong partnerships if they are to provide students with the safe and supportive environment they need to be successful inside and outside of school.

What follows are the key elements of vibrant and supportive community schools, which are featured in more detail in our community schools stories (see accompanying pieces), and can be seen throughout all schools in Oakland.



**Students at Coliseum College Prep Academy celebrate their college acceptances**

## Tight Integration and Coordination of Services

Successful community schools have developed the systems, strategies, and culture to manage and coordinate the range of services offered to maximize their impact on student success. Close attention to the integration and coordination of services can reduce students' time out of class and provide for ongoing evaluation and refinement of schedules and activities.

Community School Managers and site-based teams play an important role in this process, connecting school leadership with leaders from key partner organizations and service providers. Coordination of Service Teams (COST), for example, create a structure for staff to discuss student needs and then create a coordinated plan that activates appropriate services.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Roosevelt Middle School, Coliseum College Prep Academy 6-12, and Oakland Technical High School.*

## Strategic Partnerships

At their core, community schools are about partnerships – tapping into the capacities, expertise, and talents of area agencies, community colleges and universities, businesses, and nonprofits to provide students and families with the diverse array of supports that are critical to students' success.

Although the mix of partners varies by school site, key services and supports that are typically provided through strategic partnerships include: healthcare, including mental health services; after-school programs; expanding learning opportunities through internships and specialty classes (robotics or STEM, for example); mentorships; and structured opportunities for students to explore and prepare for post-secondary education options.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Roosevelt Middle School, and Coliseum College Prep Academy.*

## Shared Leadership

Each of the schools profiled in our community schools stories has invested time and resources to developing a shared vision for student and school success and each has nurtured shared leadership to support the implementation of that vision. Parents, teachers, site leaders, students, and community partners all have a role to play in a distributed model of leadership.

Practicing shared leadership allows schools to tap into the diversity of talents and viewpoints on campus and to cultivate the broad and deep support for programs and strategies that are critical for sustained success, even during times of staff transition.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Martin Luther King, Jr., Coliseum College Prep Academy, and Ralph Bunche High School.*

## Connecting to Neighborhood and Community

Community schools don't just exist within a neighborhood; they become part of their neighborhood, leveraging local resources and contributing to the improvement and safety of their surrounding community.

Participation in neighborhood and community service activities, connecting to larger issues of social justice and equity, and partnering with local community-based organizations are all strategies that are being employed by Oakland's community schools. Deepening connections to the surrounding neighborhood and broader community has the added benefit of increasing the understanding and cultural competency of school staff.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Coliseum College Prep Academy and Martin Luther King, Jr.*

**Personalized, tech-based learning at Roosevelt**



## Commitment to Staff Diversity

In a city with the cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity of Oakland, it's important that the adults on campus – teachers, administrators, and support staff – reflect the diversity of their student population and understand the rich history and cultural influences of the neighborhood in which their school is located. While many of our schools – like schools around the country – still struggle to recruit and retain a diverse pool of teachers and administrators, our community schools are making important steps in that direction, as evidenced by the leadership of staff of color at each school and the investment in community school staff that are from Oakland and that speak the home languages of the parents and students.

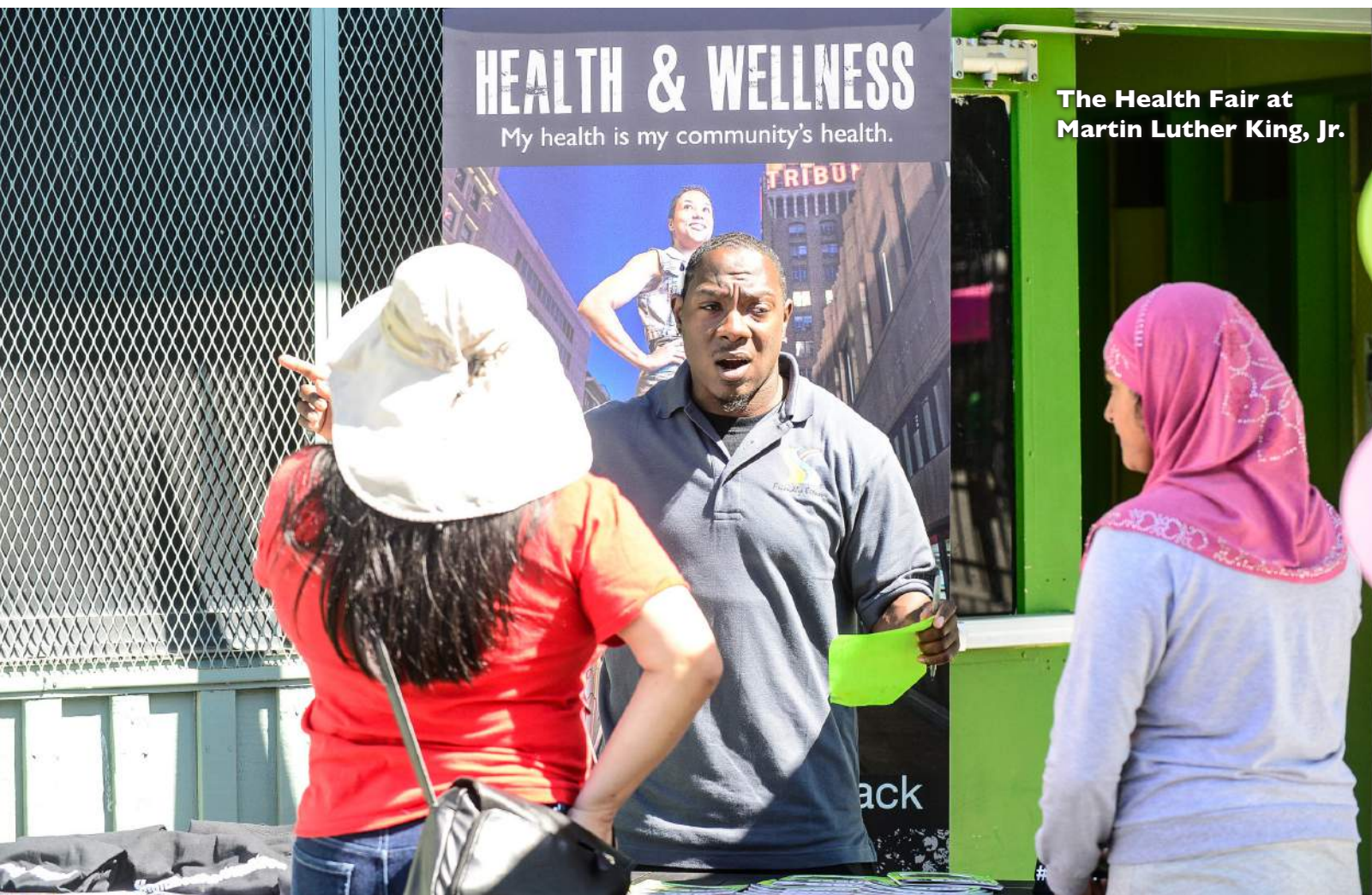
*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Roosevelt Middle School and Coliseum College Prep Academy.*

## Support for Students' Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Many of our families grapple with multiple challenges that have a direct impact on students' ability to be in class on time and ready to learn. Immigration status puts some parents at risk of arrest and deportation. Economic insecurity translates into missed meals, frequent moves, and periods of homelessness.

Gun violence, which is all-too-familiar in some of Oakland's neighborhoods, contributes to trauma and a deep sense of loss and insecurity. Each of these community schools has invested heavily in providing students — and at times their families — with an array of social-emotional supports: mental health professionals on staff and available through partner organizations, support groups for students dealing with similar life challenges, training in trauma-informed practices for teachers and staff, and one-on-one support for students through mentorships and other adult-student relationships.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Roosevelt Middle School, Ralph Bunche High School, and Oakland Technical High School.*



**The Health Fair at  
Martin Luther King, Jr.**



The Health Center at Roosevelt

## Promoting Physical Health and Well-Being

Understanding the link between student health and academic success, community schools provide a wide-range of programs and services to address students' medical, dental, and behavioral health needs. School-based health centers often serve as primary care providers for many students, helping to manage chronic health concerns, like childhood asthma, as well as providing routine care, such as immunizations and physical exams.

Health center staff members are part of school-based teams to ensure coordination of services and to minimize student time outside of class. Annual health fairs, community gardens, and workshops on everything from healthy eating to managing stress and positive discipline practices are also part of fostering a culture of healthy living among students and their families.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Roosevelt, Coliseum College Prep Academy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Partnership with Parents

Decades of research point to the essential role parents play in students' academic success. Community schools featured in our community schools stories, like schools throughout Oakland, are implementing programs and strategies to build relationships between parents and school staff and provide parents with the tools and capacities they need to support their children.

Among the many strategies being employed in our community schools: parent-teacher home visits, parent education classes, partnering with parents in Restorative Justice circles and other positive discipline strategies, parent resource centers, Parents Raising the BAR [Behavior, Attendance, & Reading] trainings, workshops on understanding the Common Core State Standards or college admissions and financial aid, and school-wide events that bring families on campus to explore and learn together, develop strategies to address school or neighborhood equity concerns, and celebrate the rich diversity of school communities.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Coliseum College Prep Academy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ralph Bunche.*

## Expanded Learning

The traditional school day and school year often do not provide students with enough time to master academic standards and ensure they are on a path towards graduating college- and career-ready. Expanded learning time also creates opportunities for students to explore educational opportunities beyond their campus and community.

After school programs that combine enrichment activities with academic supports are a common use of expanded learning time. Other effective strategies include summer academic and enrichment programs (both on school sites and off campus) and computer-based tools that allow students to accelerate learning and advance at their own pace.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Coliseum College Prep Academy, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary, and Roosevelt Middle School.*

## Culturally Responsive and Restorative School Culture

Community schools are embracing strategies and practices that promote a positive and supportive school culture. Restorative Justice practices and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) are being used to build community, foster authentic and respectful communication, and to provide alternatives to harsh discipline policies.

Gender and race-specific circles and groups are creating a culturally responsive space to support students' social-emotional needs, and mentors and counselors are providing students with additional caring adults on campus to whom they can turn for advice and support. Through the African American Male Achievement Initiative's Manhood Development Program, several schools have introduced a unique academic mentoring model designed and implemented by and for African American males.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Ralph J. Bunche High School and Oakland Technical High School.*



**A student in the garden at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary**



**Students in Coliseum College Prep Academy's Family and College Resource Center**

## Fostering a College-Going Culture

For many students, particularly those who will be the first in their families to go to college, preparation for post-secondary options and success requires the development of a range of supports, services, and activities that make attending college not only expected, but possible.

Developing a college-going culture begins in elementary school and includes talking about college and setting clear expectations about college attendance; it includes providing students, particularly during the high school years, with the range of information and resources that is necessary to help them navigate the complex college admissions and acceptance process, including financial aid. It also involves supporting families, many of whom rely on their older children for practical support with siblings and with income, and struggle with the emotional challenges associated with a student leaving home for the first time.

*Community schools stories in which we see these themes highlighted include Coliseum College Prep Academy 6-12 and Oakland Technical High School.*



To learn more about about Oakland Community Schools, read our five community schools stories covering these schools: Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Oakland Technical High School, Roosevelt Middle School, Ralph J. Bunche High School, and Coliseum College Preparatory Academy.

## HEALTHY SCHOOLS, THRIVING STUDENTS: Key Themes in Community Schools

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**OAKLAND UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Community Schools, Thriving Students

**FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**  
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