



## 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. Coliseum College Preparatory Academy leverages the leadership of parents and teachers and a broad network of partners to provide its grade 6-12 students with the academic and life skills necessary to be college-ready at graduation.

### COLISEUM COLLEGE PREPARATORY ACADEMY Partnerships Key to College-Ready Success

It's Decision Day at Coliseum College Preparatory Academy. The auditorium hums with excitement and every seat is filled as students, staff, and family members are gathered to learn where seniors will be headed for college. It's a day for the entire community to celebrate the hard work, support, and partnerships that have led to options after high school. And it's a day to send a powerful message to younger students and their families: College is possible.

One by one, each of the seniors on stage stands as his or her name is called. The big screen flashes with the student's profile: the list of college acceptances, as well as the student's GPA, reading "lexile" level, co-curricular programs, and scholarships received. As students announce their "decision," the auditorium erupts with cheers and applause. It's a beautiful ritual, made all the more powerful by the reality that most of the students will be the first in their families to go to college.

#### One Community's Vision

Located in East Oakland, near the Oakland Coliseum sports arena, Coliseum College Preparatory Academy (CCPA) is a 6-12 school created through a community-based design process. It opened in 2006, one of two neighboring schools to replace Havenscourt Middle School. A team of parents, staff, students, and community members designed the

school with extensive community input during a visioning, research, and planning process. The result is a community school with a deep commitment to partnering with families and a tightly integrated web of supports and services to help students and parents be college-ready by the end of twelfth grade.

"Through our work we were able to see the kind of school we wanted," says Maria Robles, the parent of two CCPA students and a member of the original design team. At the top of the list: a school where parents would be welcome and supported, with staff who spoke Spanish (the primary language for 83 percent of the parents) and a dedicated space for parents to meet and learn together.

Years after that original vision was first articulated, home-school partnerships continue to provide the foundation for CCPA's success. Parents are not only welcome at school, the calendar is packed with opportunities for them to learn and engage with other parents and with school staff. Teachers are accustomed to parents dropping in on classes to observe instruction and rely on their partnership with parents to maintain the school's rigorous schedule (students typically stay until 5 p.m.) and its family-focused discipline policies and practices.

Potluck dinners for students and their families, morning coffee once a month with the principal, and parent and family workshops are a few of the ways in which space is created to build community. A health center on campus provides medical and dental services for students and its staff lead parenting support groups on issues of common interest, such as maintaining a positive relationship with adolescent children.

CCPA's Family and College Resource Center (the "FRC") is the hub for many of these programs and activities. Four mornings a week throughout the school year, part of the space is converted to a classroom for parents learning English as a second language through a partnership between CCPA and the district's adult school. Childcare is provided free of charge for the (mostly) moms in the class.

On the second Friday of every month the classroom space is home to "Coffee with the Principal." These informal gatherings are an opportunity for parents to ask questions or express views on any topic. Over the course of an hour, topics range from tutoring support for struggling students to the pressing need for a science lab. Principal Amy Carozza thoughtfully responds to each question, often checking Jupiter Grades (an online student information system accessible to students, staff, and parents) before offering a suggestion or proposing strategies to support and motivate students.

"Your daughter is attending all of her classes and turning in her assignments," Carozza tells one mom who expresses concern about her daughter's chemistry grade. "Since she's working hard and her mastery is low, it means she probably

needs more help learning *how* to study," she notes, offering some suggestions for strategies to try at home. The mom nods her head in understanding and then smiles as she says to the group, "I like this meeting."

In addition to the structured events, the FRC is a place for parents to seek out and receive individual support on everything from navigating Jupiter Grades to communication with a teen or a teacher. It hums with activity throughout the school day as parents and students stop by to ask questions, inquire about resources, or just to say a quick hello to the FRC staff. Sometimes, all a parent needs is another parent to listen and provide support, says Robles, one of the school's parent coordinators. Other times, she connects parents to services offered by community-school partners, such as tax or legal help, counseling services, or information about food-assistance programs.

Supporting families is key to supporting students, says Robles. "When the family is fine, the student is fine. When the family struggles, the student struggles. It's all connected."

Beyond the myriad programs and services available at the school, once a year teachers visit the homes of students, a foundational practice that sends a powerful message to parents and families about the school's commitment to partnerships, says FRC Director Abby Friedman. "Home visits provide a totally different context for conversations between parents and teachers," says Friedman, and help teachers better understand their students and how to support and motivate them. "And they give parents the opportunity to meet in a space that is more comfortable to them."



**Sarah Moore-Goepfert with Entrepreneurial Pathway students**



Technology-based learning at CCPA

## Two Pathways, One Goal: College Prep

Academics at CCPA, like the services for parents and families, are aligned around one singular goal: preparing students for college. That preparation begins when students first step on campus in sixth grade, and over the next seven years includes a careful orchestration of academic classes and co-curricular programs that marry challenging curriculum with intensive support.

Sixth and seventh grades are focused on rapid academic growth, with the goal of ensuring that all students are at grade level by eighth grade, when college preparatory classes begin. All students participate in an extended day program, partnering with the after school program until 5 p.m. for academic support and enrichment activities. Summer programs are mandatory and have helped ensure that students don't lose ground, particularly in reading, between June and August.

When students reach ninth grade, they enter one of two Linked Learning Pathways, one focused on social justice and a second on entrepreneurship, which provide the structure for their final four years at CCPA. Each of the pathways provides an opportunity for students to "go deep" in a focus area, honing their ability to analyze and present complex information and to work as part of a collaborative team.

In the Entrepreneurial Pathway, students spend their freshman year engaging in rigorous academics in the context of developing a 25-page business plan, a project that

culminates in a presentation at the University of California at Berkeley's Haas School of Business before hundreds of other students and adults. In their sophomore year, they apply their business acumen to running a small business. Working in teams, they implement their business plans, designing and building products that they sell at school and in the community.

"It's rigorous hard work," says Sarah Moore-Goepfert, who leads the Entrepreneurial Pathway, noting that students develop the ability to think creatively and to "push through" and solve difficult problems, even when they're frustrated. "A lot of education does not encourage students to be independent thinkers," says Moore-Goepfert. "They're often trained that there is one right answer, so it can be difficult and scary when that isn't the case."

The Social Justice Pathway, new in the 2014-15 school year, grew out of a popular ethnic studies course offered for several years to CCPA freshman. In addition to the full complement of college-prep classes, ninth graders take the year-long ethnic studies course, as well as a campaign course where they study and take action on a social justice issue of their choosing. For the 2014-15 year, students chose to focus on the issue of police brutality and have created informational web sites and organized marches, and engaged in lively and thoughtful classroom discussions on the hot-button issue affecting many in their community.



**Seniors celebrate college acceptances during Decision Day**

## Cultivating Leadership

Ask Principal Amy Carozza how CCPA has been able to grow and thrive and she'll quickly point to the leadership of parents and teachers, who are partners in decision making and share a common commitment to the school's college-ready goal for all students. Teachers lead department and grade-level Professional Learning Communities, through which most of the professional development occurs. Experienced teachers mentor and coach their newer colleagues and regularly propose new ideas, strategies, and programs to support the school's mission.

Parents have played a pivotal leadership role at critical junctures in the school's history, including petitioning the district to expand CCPA from a middle school to a high school, successfully advocating to retain the adult education program on campus, and monitoring district budgeting to ensure the school site has sufficient resources. CCPA parents were key community leaders in the campaigns for Measure N and Proposition 30, local and state ballot measures that have substantially increased the school's budget and ability to build and provide programs for students. "Without our parent community and their direct advocacy for schools in Oakland, we would not be able to improve and grow the school for the kids the way we have been able to over the past two years," says Carozza.

Class lectures, research projects, and ongoing opportunities for discussion help students develop a deep analysis of their issue. It also encourages them to examine policies close to home. As part of a unit on the school to prison pipeline, for example, students examined suspension and expulsion practices and statistics at CCPA, discussing — first in pairs and then in the larger group — the impact of discipline policies at their school. (They concluded that positive discipline practices were the norm at CCPA, rather than policies and practices that result in students being suspended or expelled from school.)

As ninth graders, students in the Social Justice pathway tutor younger students at neighboring Community United Elementary School (CUES). In tenth grade, they are grouped in teams for off-campus internships at area social justice organizations, such as 67 Sueños, which works with immigrant youth, and All of Us or None, which works with formerly incarcerated individuals and their families.

Through the Social Justice Pathway, Michael Ford's ninth grader, Davonte, has participated in Saturday community service programs through buildOn, a partner organization, as well as tutored the younger students at CUES. "He didn't realize working with the younger children would be so hard," says Ford with a chuckle. "It's been awesome to watch."

## Make the Road

Internships expose students to a rich set of experiences off campus and outside of their East Oakland neighborhood — a critical piece to preparing students and their families for a successful transition to college. For students, the experiences help build important life skills, like independence, self confidence, and resiliency. For parents, the activities are about helping them learn to let go, confident that their child has both the roots and the wings to be successful.

The first opportunity for students to “spread their wings” occurs in the Spring of their sixth grade year, when the class heads to Vida Verde Nature Center in San Gregorio for a three-day outdoor education program. Although the center is just an hour’s drive from CCPA, the trip represents a huge first step for parents, whose children will often be spending their first night away from home and family. From there, students are introduced

to a wide-range of travel experiences, many in conjunction with partner organizations. Students have travelled to China, Cambodia, and Costa Rica with Learning AFAR/No Barriers Youth, and will be traveling to Haiti and Nicaragua with buildOn.

Even those students who don’t participate in far-flung trips get outside their neighborhood and comfort zone during their four years of high school. All eleventh and twelfth graders take one or more courses at Laney College as part of the concurrent enrollment program and participate in at least one internship of their choosing.

“Internships provide students with a sense of autonomy over their own education,” says teacher and Social Justice Pathway coordinator Perry Bellow-Handelman. “Students are also building a resume and learning how to network and code switch,” she adds, moving with increasing comfort and ease between the world of school and the world of work.

## Ensuring Parents Feel Welcome, Supported

In any given month, CCPA offers more than a dozen different opportunities for parents to participate in programs and events on campus, ranging from workshops on financing a college education to a morning exercise class for moms or an end-of-term awards’ celebration. In addition to programs targeting specific interests and needs, CCPA has been purposeful about reaching out to all members of the school community to make them feel welcome and supported. At the start of the 2014-15 school year, CCPA began connecting its outreach to African American parents to its support for African American students (who make up roughly 11 percent of the studentbody). Toynessa Kennedy, who’s taught the Black Student Leadership class, now coordinates the outreach to families, bringing parents and students together throughout the year for fellowship, support, and education.



Parents in CCPA’s Adult Education program

# The Power of Presentations

For one week in early June, school uniforms are replaced with business attire and high school classrooms become presentation spaces. It's CCPA's Exposition Week, a celebration of learning for students, parents, teachers, and community members.

For sophomores and juniors, it's a time to reflect on their academic progress and demonstrate their readiness to advance to the next grade or division. For seniors, Expo Week is an opportunity to showcase their critical thinking, research, and presentation skills as they present their Senior Project (focused around the investigation of a critical question of the student's choosing) share their portfolio, and reflect on their preparation for graduation.

**Assistant Principal Fabiana Ahumada announcing college acceptances on Decision Day**



**Students sharing their work during Exposition Week**



**Students gather in CCPA's Family and College Resource Center**

## Relationships Matter

The transition from middle to high school can be a challenging one, as students and their parents alike must learn to navigate a new schedule and campus and cultivate new relationships with peers and school staff. At CCPA, the transition entails changing classrooms, not changing schools, and going across campus rather than across town.

“Being a 6-12 school made a big difference, especially as we moved from middle to high school,” says Daniela Garcia, who graduated in 2014. “There were teachers on campus and administrators who knew us and knew the type of student we were,” she adds.

It's not just the extended time together that fosters deep relationships. CCPA has thoughtfully instituted systems and structures to build connections among students, families, and staff. In sixth and seventh grade, students have the same teachers, a practice called “looping,” which helps to form strong relationships and support academic growth. The high school pathways provide another powerful structure to foster relationships and ease communication between home and school. High schoolers stay together for all four years, working with a core group of staff that

includes teachers, a college counselor, and pathway-specific FRC staff. They take seminar classes together as juniors and seniors and stay in their cohorts as they explore college options and navigate the application process, with support from two core partners: the Pre-Collegiate Academy (PCA) and the Mills Educational Talent Search (METS), a program of nearby Mills College.

As more and more families choose CCPA for all of their children, it has become the neighborhood school that the community envisioned in the early days of its design. Many of the students are the second or third member of their family to attend the school (more than 40% of the 2014-15 sixth grade class were siblings), leveraging existing relationships of trust and respect. It's also become a place that graduates choose to return to, working with the after-school program or providing academic support through AmeriCorps, adding another dimension to the school's family-like atmosphere.

And, as with any family, members of the CCPA community are committed to one another's success. “We hold on to our kids, we hold on to our teachers, and we hold on to our families,” says Carozza. “We get them in sixth grade and then we just hold on.”

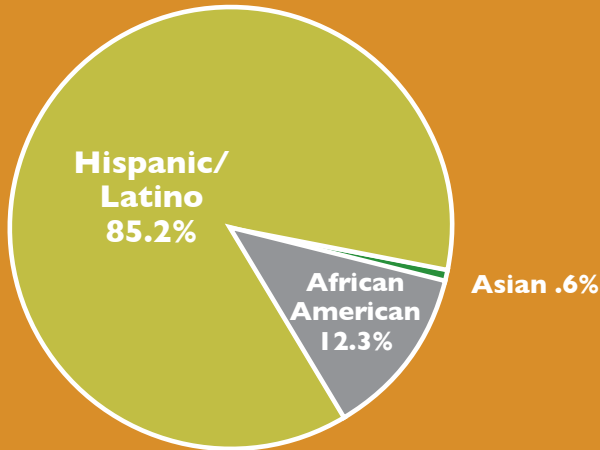
## 2014-15 DEMOGRAPHICS

**Number of students: 480**

**Hispanic / Latino: 85.2%**

**African American: 12.3%**

**Asian .6%**



**Students' Home Language:**

**English: 14.6%**

**Spanish: 83.9%**

**Vietnamese: 0.2%**

**Other Non-English: 0.7%**

**Tongan: 0.7%**

**Students Receiving Free/  
Reduced Price Lunch: 93%**

## Colliseum College Prep Academy

Coliseum College Prep Academy sits on a shared campus that serves students and families from transitional kindergarten all the way through high school. The school is located in the Havenscourt neighborhood, a 25-square-block area bordering bustling International Boulevard. The neighborhood is home to predominantly Spanish speaking families, including many immigrants from Mexico and Central America.

As the name suggests, CCPA is just a three-minute drive from the Oakland Coliseum complex, which has been a popular venue for a wide variety of athletic and cultural events since its construction in the 1960s. The Coliseum is home to the NBA Champion Golden State Warriors, the Oakland Raiders, and the Oakland Athletics. It's also where Nelson Mandela closed his historic visit to the U.S. in 1990.

## 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.



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

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