



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. At Roosevelt Middle School, the well established health center is tightly integrated into the life of the school, creating powerful opportunities to meet the health needs of the school's diverse student body while keeping them in school.

ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bridging Cultures, Creating Community

A small blue and green globe is passed from hand to hand as parents, staff, and community partners introduce themselves and share about a cultural tradition or characteristic that they're proud of – and that they want other members of their school community to understand and appreciate, too. David shares that he values the humility of Japanese people. Sandra is proud of the role food and family play in her Salvadoran culture. Esther speaks about the community orientation of Koreans and their respect for elders. The activity is part of a Restorative Justice circle and sets the tone for Roosevelt Middle School's Spring retreat. Each introduction reinforces the connection among participants and deepens their appreciation for the gifts and traditions of their diverse school community.

Located in the Oakland's San Antonio District, Roosevelt reflects the multi-

cultural and multi-lingual richness of its surrounding neighborhood. Walking through classrooms or visiting the cafeteria at lunch, visitors may hear as many as a dozen different languages being spoken, as nearly one-third of its students – and even more parents and guardians – are learning to speak English. Many students are newcomers to the U.S., including refugees fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries of Guatemala, Nepal, and Burma.

For newcomers and more established families alike, Roosevelt's full-service community school provides the tightly integrated services and supports that are vital to students' success. An on-site health center offers easy access to medical care. The after-school program is a seamless extension to the school day, providing a safe and affordable place for students to receive academic support, enjoy a

hot meal, and explore enrichment activities. Over the years, students and their families have received a range of services through Roosevelt's web of partnerships, including counseling, tax preparation support, and food and housing assistance.

It's that tight integration of services and supports, together with its team approach to addressing challenges, that earned Roosevelt Middle School the 2014 Community School Award from Oakland Unified School District, says Andrea Bustamante, the district's director of community school partnerships.

"We want our neighbors to see Roosevelt as an asset and as a center for the community," says Principal Cliff Hong. "Roosevelt should be their school," he adds. "A place where they are welcomed and supported."

Healthy Students, Better Learners

With a history stretching back nearly 15 years, the Roosevelt Student Health Center is one of the most well established and tightly integrated school-based clinics in the district. The Center, located in the basement of the school, is managed by La Clinica de la Raza, a leader in the city and throughout the country in providing community-based health services. At Roosevelt, the health center is not simply located *in* the school. It is part of the school. Members of the health center staff participate in school committees and leadership structures to facilitate communication between the clinic and the broader school community and to bring a health perspective to school-wide concerns or challenges.

Because of this team approach, Clinic Supervisor Mizan Alkebulan-Abakah and her staff have been able to work closely with school leadership to integrate health services into the school culture and the school day, with minimal disruption to classroom learning. For example, every morning, classroom teachers receive a list of students who have appointments in the Health Center. The introduction of this simple, yet high-impact system enables teachers to more easily coordinate class projects and testing, and reduces the need for disruptive phone calls to classrooms.

“We want to empower students with positive health-seeking behavior,” says Alkebulan-Abakah. That means,

in part, making it safe and easy for the teenagers to acknowledge their health needs and then to seek out the services necessary to address them. Just as middle school students are developing the academic habits that will stay with them in high school and beyond, Alkebulan-Abakah says they are also developing the health habits that will carry them into adulthood.

The Health Center provides both basic health services, such as immunizations and regular check-ups, as well as support for the ever-changing needs of adolescents, ranging from minor first aid to crisis intervention. All Roosevelt students are eligible to receive services, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. Clinic staff helps parents complete paperwork for Medi-Cal, and the cost of visits and services are adjusted based on family income. Just about every student on campus walks through the doors of the Health Center at least once each year and many would not have access to routine medical services without the school-based option.

The Health Center has also expanded its services to respond to the needs of the community, adding dental and behavioral health services, for example. Counseling interns from John F. Kennedy University provide additional support, as do counselors from Asian Community Mental Health Services and Alameda County Behavioral Health Providers.



The Roosevelt Student Health Center



Principal Cliff Hong (at right) looks on during an info session for Roosevelt families

You Can't Learn If You're Not in School

Understanding the link between good health and good attendance, Alkebulan-Abakah and her staff have also played a critical role in successfully addressing one of Roosevelt's most costly challenges: chronic absences, defined as missing 10 percent or more of the school year – about 18 days of school. Principal Hong first learned about the adverse impact of chronic absence on students' academic success at a school district meeting in 2010. Armed with this new information, he took a closer look at Roosevelt's attendance data and discovered that 15 percent of his students missed the equivalent of one month or more of school each year.

"I quickly realized that the Number One academic intervention we could implement would be to make sure our students were getting to school," says Hong. Under his leadership, staff began with an in-depth look at overall absence rates and trends, then sought to understand the causes of each student's absences and develop a personalized strategy to improve attendance.

Their efforts have paid off. Roosevelt has cut its chronic absence rate in half, from a high point of over 15 percent in 2010-11. And, as Hong predicted, the added time in school translated into a boost in student achievement –

Roosevelt's Academic Performance Index (API) increased 30 points in the first year that the school implemented its chronic absence strategy, the highest growth of any middle school in the district.

A key factor in Roosevelt's success was the development of an Attendance Team, a crosscutting group that includes the attendance clerk, the school nurse, the community school coordinator, and other key staff. The team is responsible for monitoring students who are chronically absent – or who are at risk of becoming so – and then creating a plan to address the cause of their poor attendance.

In addition to personalized plans for each student, the school also employs strategies to address patterns they observe among groups of students, including efforts to increase students' sense of safety at school – another critical factor in attendance. For example, the school, with support from Alkebulan-Abakah, introduced race and gender-specific healing circles, where girls could have a safe space to interact and share their thoughts. The first circle, for African American girls, was so successful that the school later added gender-specific circles for Asian and Latino girls, as well as African American and Latino boys.



An EBAYC instructor with a Roosevelt parent and student

A Team Approach to Teaching and Learning

In the Spring of 2014, Roosevelt applied the team model that it had used so effectively to address chronic absences and student health needs to introduce a school-wide thematic unit called “Science in Society.” Science and history teachers partnered to teach integrated units in which students at each grade level were given a real-world challenge or inquiry question to research and analyze. Working in teams, students presented their findings to their classmates, teachers, and later, the broader Roosevelt community.

For eighth graders, the challenge came in the form of a letter from Vice Principal Aubrey Layne. He’d just won the lottery and the students were charged with providing advice on the most strategic way to invest his winnings. Layne’s request to the students: select one of several energy sources to research as a possible investment strategy, and then provide an analysis of the viability of the investment, based on such factors

as costs, potential for profit, and environmental impact.

For the next four weeks, Shelley Gordon’s eighth graders devoted every science class to the assignment. Working in teams of three, they selected an energy source to investigate, such as wind, hydroelectric, nuclear, or solar, and scoured the Web for reliable research, which they used to analyze the economic and environmental risks and benefits. Their analysis became the basis for their final investment recommendation to Layne. Each team was charged with documenting its findings and detailing its recommendation in a PowerPoint presentation, which was shared with classmates. Based on assessments by both the students and the eighth grade teachers, teams were selected to present to the broader school community.

Throughout the school, students engaged in one of three grade-level challenges. Sixth graders were charged

with designing city-states, wrestling with critical decisions about the form of government, sustainability, and use of available resources. The seventh grade challenge required students to prepare a research proposal for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), based on their investigation into the history and consequences of one of several diseases.

In each case, students were expected to research and then analyze data, weigh different perspectives, and draw conclusions based on their team’s examination of evidence. In the energy project, for example, eighth graders studying wind energy had to weigh the tradeoffs between its eco-friendly design and its significant start-up costs before making a final investment recommendation. Teams working on the CDC proposal were faced with life or death decisions about whether or not to fund research projects, based on their analysis of the risk of an epidemic and the likelihood of finding a cure.

Developing a College-Going Culture

Roosevelt's Science in Society unit is part of its broader commitment to equip students with the academic skills and behaviors that will prepare them for success in high school and set them on a path towards college. This preparation involves the development of rigorous coursework, as well as creating systems to better support students as they develop greater ownership of their own academic future.

Parents play a vital role in this effort by supporting their students as they learn to become more independent and self-directed in their learning. Monthly parent meetings, offered in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese, are designed to help parents and families understand how to use district tools and navigate systems to support students. For example, in one of the first meetings of the year, parents were trained in how to use Jupiter Grades, the online system for monitoring academic progress, attendance, and other information that is critical to student success. In the next session, families were introduced to the high school selection process, a critical transition point that provides the opportunity to evaluate high school options based on the unique needs and interests of each student.

An advisory program was introduced in the Fall of 2014 at the recommendation of parents in the Roosevelt Parent Association (RPA), who learned of the practice in a visit to Coliseum College Preparatory Academy, a 6-12 secondary school. The classroom-based structure is designed to build community, simplify communication between home and school, and better support students to take charge of their own learning.

Every advisory looks a little different, but all share a similar structure and schedule. In each advisory, a classroom teacher is paired with an East Bay Asian Youth Center after-school mentor, who also provides additional classroom support throughout the school day. Advisories meet every day during fifth period for 20 minutes, with time divided between academic support (such as classroom activities to promote good study habits and self-directed learning) and community building exercises, using lessons created by the school's Restorative Justice coordinator.

"It's still new, but we're beginning to see how the structure of advisories can shift the culture and sense of community in the classroom," says Helida Silva, a seventh grade English teacher and member of the parent engagement leadership team.

Silva, who has introduced Restorative Justice practices in her classes, says the combination of advisories and Restorative Justice circles has been particularly powerful. "I'm seeing that students are more present. They're really listening to each other as we go around the circle and responding with questions or other follow-up," she notes.

During the one-on-one academic conversations, advisors and students review grades, attendance, and other key markers of academic performance, and then identify strategies and craft improvement plans. Students and advisors then revisit plans regularly to check on progress and make any necessary changes. "It's an opportunity to look at grades together and to foster academic accountability," says Brandon Copeland, who teaches seventh grade math. Through this process, "students are beginning to take more ownership of their academic success," he adds.



An EBayc staff member works with a Roosevelt student



A Roosevelt Middle School student

EAST BAY ASIAN YOUTH CENTER: A San Antonio Neighborhood Gem

It would be difficult to find a community partner more deeply connected to a school than the East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) is to Roosevelt. Through personal relationships, strategic participation in the school leadership structure, and support for key programs and services, the EBAYC staff provides the glue that connects Roosevelt to the larger San Antonio community.

Brenda Saechao, the EBAYC coordinator at Roosevelt and a member of the school's leadership team, grew up in the San Antonio neighborhood and understands both its assets and its challenges. Saechao is proud of EBAYC's "whatever it takes" attitude when it comes to expanding opportunities for students and families at Roosevelt. Over the years EBAYC has offered a range of programs and services to fit the changing needs of the community -- from starting the school clinic to launching a Saturday program to introduce students to college and career options to providing programming and counseling supports during the school day.

"Most of our staff are from the neighborhood and we have worked hard to build relationships here at school and to build trust with parents," says Saechao.

EBAYC is perhaps best known for its after school program. During the critical 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. time slot every school day, EBAYC staff provides students with academic support, enrichment activities, and a safe place to spend time with their classmates. The program is deeply connected to classroom teaching and learning. After-school mentors also work in classrooms during the school day and are able to monitor students' academic strengths and challenges. These connections add to the program's impact on both building community and extending learning time, particularly for struggling students.

EBAYC staff have also played a critical role in the school's parent outreach efforts, the introduction of classroom advisories, and in providing counseling and related services to young men in need of additional support. In fact, the organization is so tightly integrated with the school that it's difficult to know where Roosevelt stops and EBAYC starts.

Saechao says she wouldn't have it any other way. "If you know something needs to be done or you see a gap somewhere and you have the means to make things better, then why not step in and do it."

A Spirit of Innovation

As Hong and his leadership team look ahead, they're focused on building on the school's core strengths, including a commitment to both improving school-wide systems *and* creating a more personalized approach to teaching and learning. They're exploring both high-touch strategies, like advisories and deeper integration of Restorative Justice practices, as well as high-tech approaches, such as how to better use computers and tablets to assess and accelerate student learning.

Roosevelt is also exploring specialized courses, such as a Robotics elective offered for the first time in the Fall

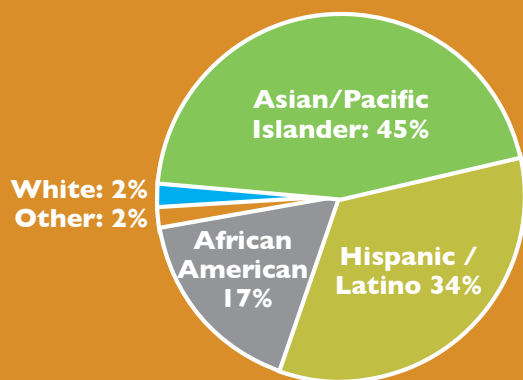
of 2014, and ideas for a school-wide thematic focus, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), the International Baccalaureate curriculum, or a dual-language immersion program. Hong will be working with the senior leadership team and exploring the different options with parents and partners over the 2014-15 school year.

Whichever direction they choose, Hong is confident in the school's ability to challenge, prepare, and support its diverse student body. "Roosevelt is a dynamic place," he says with a smile. "We're not just doing things. We're moving forward."

**Personalized, tech-based
learning in action**



2014-15 DEMOGRAPHICS



Number of students: 574

Students' Home Language

English: 29%

Spanish: 30.2%

Cantonese: 8.8%

Vietnamese: 13.4%

Arabic: 4.6%

Other Non-English: 6.4%

Khmer (Cambodian): 3.6%

Mien (Yao): 3.4%

Filipino (Tagalog or Pilipino): 0.6%

**Students Receiving Free/
Reduced Price Lunch: 95%**

Roosevelt Community

Roosevelt is located in the heart of the San Antonio District, one of the most diverse areas of Oakland. The 2.5 square mile neighborhood runs from east of Lake Merritt to Fruitvale Avenue and from 20th Street to the Estuary. It is home to nearly 36,700 residents, roughly 45 percent of whom were born outside the United States. Because of the area's large newcomer population – 18 percentage points higher than the citywide average – the San Antonio District is also known as the immigrant gateway to Oakland.

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

FULL SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
communityschools@ousd.org
www.ousd.org/communityschools

This community schools story would not be possible without the partnership of Atlantic Philanthropies (funding), Roberta Furger (writing), Hasain Rasheed (photography), Cathy Barragan (design), and the Oakland Public Education Fund (project coordination).