



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Supporting Empowered Graduates

www.ousd.org



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Supporting Empowered Graduates

The high school experience has changed a lot in the last few decades. Gone are the days of prescriptive, one-size-fits-all coursework in secondary school.

Instead, we have taken the innovative approach of meeting students where they are and cultivating their curiosity.

In OUSD, this is “how we do high school”:

- We provide intensive math support in our middle schools ensuring that our rising 9th graders are well prepared for high school.
- We offer an incredible array of linked learning pathway opportunities for young people to explore careers of interest and gain real world insight.
- We partner with trades organizations to allow our students to explore technical work and apprenticeships.
- We give students access to college courses on our high school campuses, thanks to dual enrollment, allowing them to expand their horizons and earn college credit before leaving high school.
- We support all students through the exploration of, and application process for, college, trade school, financial aid, and other post-secondary needs.

This approach has proven successful time and time again. Our data and student outcomes continue to improve and we are a model in the state of California. Please read on to learn more about this initiative: what’s working, what needs to be improved, and where we are headed.

OUSD Students: Succeeding Now, Planning for the Future

In this inspiring video, students from Oakland Unified School District share their personal journeys, reflecting on their education, challenges, and aspirations. Hear how mentorship, family support, and career pathways have helped shape their futures, and discover the power of setting goals and seizing opportunities. Watch our Video on YouTube →



Supporting Empowered Graduates

Data Tells The Story

Post-Secondary Readiness & Explosive Growth in Graduation-Related Metrics

The work of supporting our young people to thrive in high school, to graduate on time, and to enter the post-secondary world equipped with the skills they need to succeed has a long history in OUSD thanks to the collaboration between site-based support staff and post-secondary related organizations. These staff and community partners provide students with individualized assistance to achieve their post-secondary goals.

For example, school leaders have prioritized post-secondary planning, while staff members such as College and Career Readiness Specialists, Career Transition Specialists, and counselors have ensured that students receive tailored support for life after high school. This includes strategies for credit recovery, guidance on selecting Dual Enrollment courses during high school, and access to tools for securing financial aid. These efforts help students prepare for two- and four-year colleges, workforce training programs like apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and direct entry into the workforce.

All of these efforts have been paying off as evidenced by the explosive growth of our graduation rates and A-G completion rates over the last six years. In addition, our Drop Out rate has also improved.

	2016-17 School Year	2023-24 School Year	Improvement
Overall Graduation Rate	70.7%	79.5%	8.8%
Overall A-G Completion Rate	34.7%	48.7%	14.0%
Overall Dropout Rate	15.0%	10.0%	5.0%



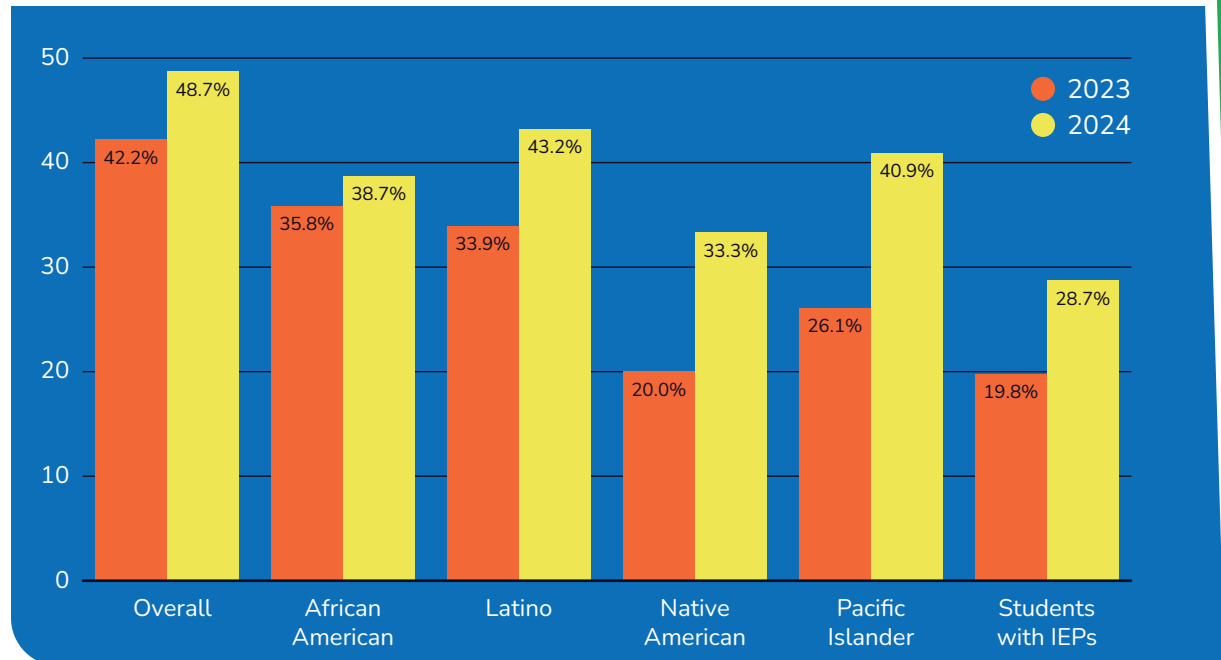
Supporting Empowered Graduates

Data Tells The Story

A-G Completion Rates (courses required for entry into U.C. or C.S.U. schools)

The High School Linked Learning Office (HSLLO) has invested significant resources in establishing district-wide systems to ensure students have increased access to A-G courses, by removing course offerings that were not A-G compliant and adding more A-G aligned courses. The HSLLO will continue to focus on providing course offerings for all students to meet A-G requirements by the end of 12th grade, to ensure that students are enrolled in the right courses to help them with A-G eligibility and, where needed, provide access to credit recovery to help students get back on track for graduation and post-secondary success.

- The District has made significant progress in A-G completion rates for 12th graders from 2023 to 2024, improving overall from 42.2% to 48.7%.
- Latino, Native American, and Pacific Islander students saw the largest gains, with increases of 9.3, 13.3, and 14.8 percentage points, respectively.



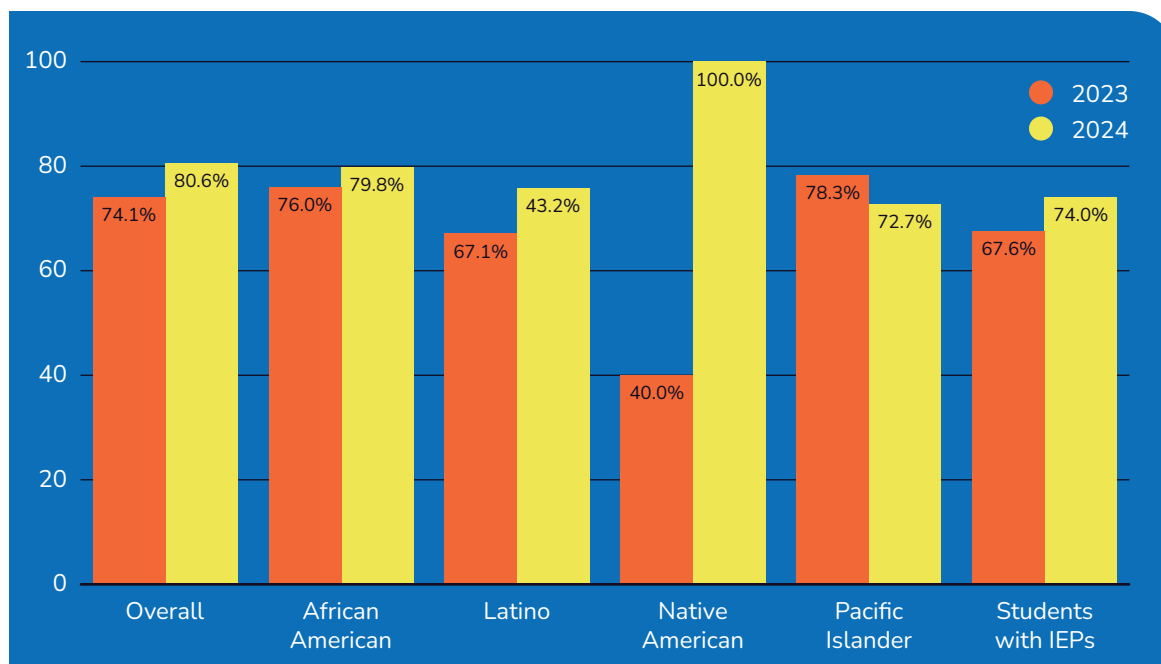
- Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) improved from 19.8% to 28.7%.
- Despite these gains, disparities persist, with IEP and Native American students having the lowest completion rates.
- While we still have room for growth, the upward trend reflects positive steps toward greater educational equity.



Data Tells The Story

Graduation Rates - Success Reflects District Commitment to Improvement as Nine Schools Reach 80+%

- The District's four-year cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2024 increased by over 6%, reflecting a significant improvement across the student population.
- Graduation rates among several groups - African American, Latino, and Native American students, as well as students with an Individualized Education Program, or IEP—also demonstrated notable gains, ranging from single-digit to double-digit increases. These outcomes underscore the effectiveness of targeted interventions and equity-focused initiatives.
- Conversely, the graduation rate for Pacific Islander students declined by 5.6%, highlighting the need for renewed efforts to address disparities and ensure equitable outcomes for all student groups.
- When looking at graduation rates for our high schools individually, **nine OUSD high schools have graduation rates at 80% or higher**, with Life Academy leading the way at 95.1%.



High School	Graduation Rate 2023-24	High School	Graduation Rate 2023-24
Life Academy	95.1%	Metwest	87.5%
CCPA	91.5%	Oakland High	86.1%
Oakland Tech	91.3%	McClymonds	84.1%
Skyline	91.0%	Fremont	81.0%
Madison Park 6-12	88.5%		

Supporting Empowered Graduates

Data Tells The Story

Of note, several OUSD high schools showed substantial increases in graduation rates in just the last year alone.

High School	Graduation Rate 2022-23	Graduation Rate 2023-24	Change
Rudsdale Continuation	40.9%	66.1%	+25.2%
Sojourner Truth	44.7%	57.8%	+13.1%
Castlemont	61.3%	68.1%	+6.8%
Skyline	85.1%	91.0%	+5.9%
Fremont	76.0%	81.0%	+5.0%
Oakland High	82.0%	86.1%	+4.1%

Particularly impressive are the double digit gains posted by two schools in our Alternative Education program, which provide innovative and engaging options for students seeking new ways of learning as an alternative to regular comprehensive middle and high schools.

- Rudsdale Continuation School - a voluntary program dedicated to providing educational options for students sixteen to eighteen years old who are at risk of not graduating from comprehensive high schools - showed a 25.2% improvement between the last two graduating classes.
- Sojourner Truth Virtual Academy, which offers students in grades TK–12 an engaging, and rigorous online instructional environment where they can learn in the way that works best for them also showed tremendous growth at 13.1%.

Skyline High School also merits a special mention after having shown an almost 6% increase since 2022-23, bringing the graduation rate for 2023-24 to 91%. The 2022-23 school year was a difficult one for the Skyline community, but they **started the last year strong**, doubling down on student supports and showcasing that resilient Titan Pride.

Supporting Empowered Graduates

Spotlight on Empowered Graduates



Cecilia Vaskonen

Senior at McClymonds High School

Cecilia Vaskonen, who has attended OUSD schools in West Oakland since Kindergarten, recently got some outstanding news: she received early acceptance to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for the fall.

“Honestly I was not expecting to be accepted,” she said. “I opened it and saw the word ‘offer’ and saw the confetti and closed it immediately and had to stand there and process it for like five minutes.”

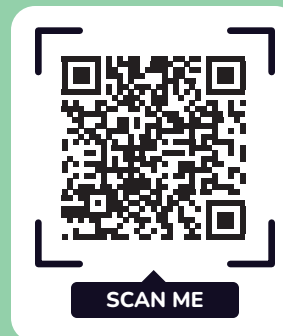
Because she is interested in studying linguistics and MIT has an exceptional linguistics program, the school seems like the perfect fit. “Honestly the more I learned about MIT, the more I thought, ‘oh, this is a place for people who are like me.’” The fact that MIT is tuition free for students whose families earn less than \$200,000 annually is the icing in the cake.

Reflecting on her time in OUSD, Cecilia has nothing but praise. “I’ve lived in West Oakland my entire life. And I’ve only had incredible experiences at West Oakland schools - from Prescott Elementary to West Oakland Middle to now at McClymonds.”

“McClymonds has a lot of resources for students in terms of looking at colleges and I also took concurrent enrollment while I was here ...In terms of preparation, one of the biggest things was being able to explore the things I am interested in. I know people that go [private school] and are just so swamped by school work that they don’t really have time to find out what they are interested in. But because I have more freedom, I was able to find out what I like and then learn more myself, on my own.”

Meet Michele and Maximus, The New Student Directors on the Board Of Education

Meet our Student Directors as they discuss advocating for more than 34,000 students in Oakland schools. Their goal is to improve justice, raise student voices, and build an inclusive environment through community engagement and platforms like the All City Council. Watch our Video on YouTube →



Supporting Empowered Graduates

Spotlight on Empowered Graduates



Maximus Simmons

Junior at Oakland High School

Maximus is one of two Student Directors on the Board of Education. He is currently in the Law and Social Justice Pathway at Oakland High. "I have always felt compelled to help people, so much so, that I now say my whole purpose in life is to help anyone and everyone no matter their past or future," he says. "I now spend most of my time volunteering, teaching restorative justice, and meeting with other leaders. Restorative justice (RJ) is one of the most important things in my life. I have been practicing RJ for three years now, holding circles at two national restorative

justice conferences while also helping set up RJ at Oakland High. I have been a delegate for the All City Council (ACC) Student Union since middle school. I joined the ACC leadership team as a sophomore as Culture and Climate Director helping to establish community within the ACC."

As a Student Board Director, Maximus is committed to "...amplify every students' experience, and ensure that the school district provides the resources and support needed to ensure all of our students graduate with a clear mind and ready for success."



Michele Vasquez

Senior at MetWest High School

Michele also serves as Student Board Director, a role that is the natural evolution of her years as a student leader. Says Michele, "At MetWest, I've been deeply involved since my freshman year, starting with the Student Council and progressively taking on more responsibility, including roles as Grade Representative and Media Director."

Michele manages these duties while also taking advantage of the incredible offerings available through our Linked

Learning program and community partners such as internships, college classes, and summer programs. At ECCCO (Exploring College, Career, and Community Options), Michele completed paid college courses in cosmetology and criminal investigation, and this year, she joined Genesys Works for a paid internship with Databricks and participated in The Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Project's statewide conference.

Supporting Empowered Graduates

Spotlight on Middle School Math

We know the work of building empowered graduates begins before high school, and in OUSD, we couple our early literacy investments in elementary school with an intense focus on math in the middle school grades to set our 9th graders up for a successful high school career.

Thanks to continued support from Salesforce, we have been able to deploy coaches at our focal schools across the district to great success. OUSD focal schools include Bret Harte, Frick United Academy of Language, Montera, United for Success Academy, West Oakland (WOMS) and Westlake middle schools.

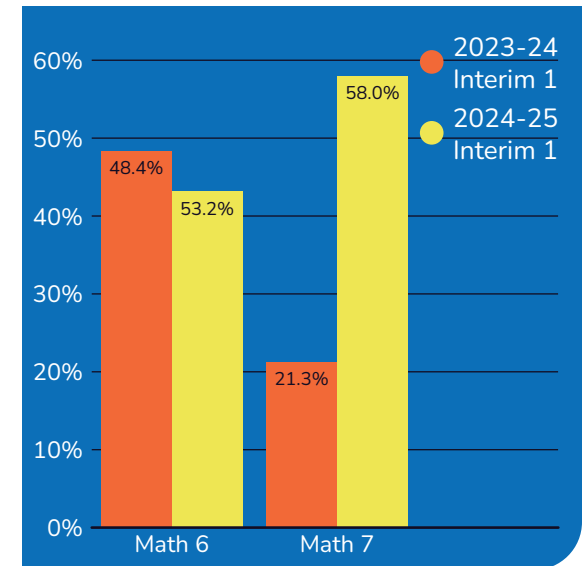
We have designed the middle school math program so that all students take Math 6, Math 7, Math 8, in grades 6, 7, and 8, respectively. This should prepare all students for 9th grade Algebra. Having the foundational skills to pass Algebra successfully in the first year of high school is a key indicator to our students being on track for graduation with A-G completion.

One of our goals is that each student cohort (grades 6, 7 or 8) achieve a 10% increase in Math proficiency on each interim from 2023-24 to 2024-25 - and we are succeeding.

Sixth and seventh grade students at focal schools are outperforming their peers from the previous year.

- Compared to sixth grade students last year, 4.8 percent more sixth graders are meeting or exceeding standards on our Fall Interim Assessment this year.
- Compared to seventh graders last year, 36.7 percent more seventh graders this year are meeting or exceeding standards on our Fall Interim Assessment.
- Teachers are still scoring Math 8 interim assessments and we anticipate that those final results will show growth, as well.

Our focus on supporting teachers to progress monitor weekly formative assessments is also leading to more students experiencing success on our end-of-unit assessments, like our interim assessment.



Middle School Math - Performance of Schools Where We Have Focused Salesforce-Funded Coaching

Supporting Empowered Graduates

Spotlight on Middle School Math



Schools that have shown growth have done so thanks to intentional supports and structural changes including:

- a site-based math coach
- dedicated and consistent time for teachers to collaborate and analyze student work
- time for students to talk through math problems with their peers

Moreover, students from schools with math coaches are outperforming our district average.

Here are a few highlights:



Montera Middle School 6th and 7th grade students have made significant progress on the math front with the majority now either meeting or exceeding state standards. 71% of 6th grade students are meeting or exceeding standards (17 points higher than the District average), while 86% of 7th grade students are meeting or exceeding standards (26 points higher than the District average).

science courses, robotics competitions - we held our first Districtwide Robotics Invitational Competition in 2023 - and a multitude of engaging offerings thanks to our Expanded Learning Program. Expanding Learning provides students with safe and joyful spaces to spend time with their peers and learn new things—from cheerleading and judo to skateboarding and wrestling to the arts.



7th graders at **United for Success Academy** also made significant growth with 69% now meeting or exceeding standards (9 points higher than the District average).

Our conscious investments in the middle school experience truly pave the way for a successful transition to high school by providing students needed structure and support while they are encouraged to challenge themselves and explore an array of learning opportunities.

In addition to a focus on math support, our middle schoolers enjoy access to computer

Eighth graders at, top to bottom, Bret Harte, West Oakland Middle, and Frick United

Supporting Empowered Graduates

Community Partner Impact

One of our amazing partners, **Cypress Mandela Training Center**, continuously opens its doors to our students, exposing them to a world of career opportunities. They host career exploration visits throughout the year, attend career fairs throughout the school district, host our two annual skilled trade fairs, serve as a home base for the Oakland ACE Mentor Program, and also host our annual Demonstration of Mastery Celebration.

Cypress Mandela Training Center offers OUSD students a rich and rigorous skilled trades summer internship program that can lead to a great career in construction. Our first cohort had 11 OUSD students and the 2024 cohort had 60 students from OUSD and SLUSD combined.

Several OUSD students have found success in the trades thanks to this partnership. Victor Collazo, a 2022 Castlemont graduate, and Miguel Diaz, a 2023 Madison Park Academy graduate, are both currently working as apprentice electricians, while Jamar Davis, a 2024 graduate from Oakland High School, was just sponsored into the trades by Swinerton Builders.

Our ongoing partnership and collaborative work with the **Oakland Promise** and **Center for Education Partnerships** (CEP) have helped OUSD to support students' postsecondary success. As our key partners for postsecondary access and success, the Oakland Promise and CEP have worked closely with our High School/Linked Learning Office teams on the following:

- Helping our scholars complete their college essays and college applications for CSUs and UCs
- Working with our elementary and middle school Community School Managers and site leaders to deliver lessons to help build a college going mindset amongst our young scholars
- Signing up more OUSD students and families to take advantage of the Oakland Promise Scholarship and CalKids Scholarships through the state
- Participating in college fairs and helping to by ensure that students and families understand the financial aid application and college application processes, A-G coursework and graduation requirements
- Leading the planning and coordination of our OUSD College Day fair held at Oakland Tech in which over 30 colleges and universities sent their recruiting representatives to meet with our K-12 students and families
- Engaging with OUSD, site leaders and other Community Based Organizations at three East Oakland Schools (East Oakland Pride, Elmhurst and Castlemont) to improve student attendance rates, increase school support for our site identified students with social emotional intervention, and improve parent engagement



Supporting Empowered Graduates

Community Partner Impact

The OUSD Dual Enrollment (DE) Program offers free Peralta College courses to interested 9th-12th grade students at participating OUSD high schools.

Dual Enrollment (DE) courses are conveniently located at the high school site during the school day* and taught by Peralta College instructors. Upon passing the DE course, students earn college units (which can often be applied to college degrees), A-G high school credits**, and receive a GPA bump (increasing their overall GPA).

Dual Enrollment is an excellent way for OUSD students to save time, money, and try out college courses, explore majors, and career opportunities - completely for free - while still in high school!

- OUSD is currently offering 62 DE courses across 14 sites with 1,634 student enrollments (includes duplicates taking more than one DE course)
- 9,077+ OUSD students have taken 1+ DE course(s) since Fall 2015
- 44% of OUSD seniors graduate having taken 1+ DE course(s)
- DE takers are 20% more likely to enroll in postsecondary than non-DE takers

*There are a few exceptions of courses that are virtual, after school or located at a different school site or a Peralta College.

** A-G eligibility depends on the specific Dual Enrollment course. Please check with your counselor or check here.



Supporting Empowered Graduates

Key Insights

- High school graduation and A-G completion rates across the district are improving thanks to the collaboration between site-based support staff and post-secondary access organizations.
- These staff and community partnerships provide students with individualized assistance to achieve their post-secondary goals.
- School leaders have prioritized post-secondary planning, while staff members such as College and Career Readiness Specialists, Career Transition Specialists, and counselors have ensured that students receive tailored support for life after high school, including strategies for credit recovery, guidance on selecting Dual Enrollment courses during high school, and access to tools for securing financial aid.
- All of these efforts help students prepare for two- and four-year colleges, workforce training programs like apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and direct entry into the workforce.



