

OAKLAND FUND FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH FY2020-2021 STRATEGY REPORT

Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students

The five programs funded under OFCY's Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students (ESEMSS) strategy are designed to help improve attendance, school connectedness, and academic performance (literacy and numeracy). Services included tutoring, writing workshops, dance and drumming classes, parent support groups, and one-on-one meetings to support socioemotional wellbeing. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of programming in FY20-21 was delivered online in one-on-one and small group sessions. To summarize strategy achievements and progress to date, this report draws on attendance records, program reports, youth surveys, and an interview with one program (Safe Passages' Elev8 Youth).

FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Chapter 510 Ink - Writing to Readiness
- Destiny Arts Center - Arts in Oakland Schools
- Lincoln - West Oakland Initiative (WOI)
- S.P.A.A.T. (Student Program for Academic And Athletic Transitioning) - Athletes CODE (TAC) MS Engagement
- SAFE PASSAGES - Elev8 Youth

Strategy Results



1,196 Youth

participated in programming



451,346 Hours

of service provided



377 Average Hours

per youth participant



5 Programs

received funding



79% of Youth

agreed that the program helped them feel more motivated to learn in school



\$562,647

granted to programs

Strategy Results

Beginning in the 2019-2022 funding cycle, OFCY adopted a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to assess its role in contributing toward city-wide goals. The RBA model is a comprehensive approach for assessing the quantity of services provided by programs, the quality of those services, and the effect of those services on the lives of children, youth, and families. It does this by addressing three guiding questions: **(1) How much did we do? (2) How well did we do it? (3) Is anyone better off?**

How much did we do?	
Number of Programs Funded	5
Number of Youth Served	1,196
Total Hours of Service Provided	451,346
Average Hours of Service per Youth	377
How well did we do it?	
Enrollment: Average progress toward projected number of youth served ¹	114%
Total Service Hours: Average progress toward projected total hours of service	100%
Average Hours of Service: Average progress toward projected average hours of service	84%
Safety: Youth who agreed that they felt safe in their program	86%
Caring Adults: Youth who agreed that there is an adult at their program who really cares about them	84%
Positive Engagement: Youth who agreed that they are interested in what they do at their program	83%
Is Anyone Better Off?	
Motivated to Learn: Youth who agreed that they are more motivated to learn in school	79%
Academic Skills: Youth who agreed that they learned skills that help with their schoolwork	77%

The remainder of this report includes the following sections aligned with this RBA framework:

- 1) Overview of Programs and Participants
- 2) How much did the programs provide?
- 3) How well did programs do it?
- 4) Is anyone better off as a result of the strategy's work?

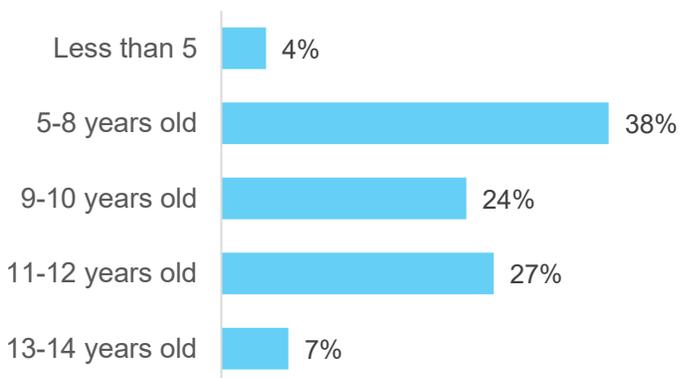
¹ At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate their annual enrollment and the total number of hours of service they will provide. Progress is calculated as the actual enrollment divided by the projected enrollment.

Programs and Participants

During FY20-21, **1,196 unduplicated youth participated in Engagement and Success for Elementary and Middle School Students (ESEMSS) programs** at elementary and middle schools with high levels of environmental stress, such as high unemployment, housing cost burden, and numbers of children and youth who qualify for free and reduced-price meals.² Designed to support academic success and school connection, services include school-based creative writing workshops, school-based dance programming, literacy interventions, and college and career readiness programs. Since the onset of COVID, many programs also deepened their wraparound support offerings. Programs identified participants through their partnerships with school sites and prioritized enrolling low-income youth, as well as youth who were not yet meeting grade level literacy standards.

In line with the strategy's focus on elementary and middle school engagement and success, 89% of participants served by programs in this strategy were between the ages of five and twelve, as shown in the graph below.

Age of Participants



² Oakland Community Stressors Index (2019): <https://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/oakland-community-stressors-index>

ESEMSS programs offered virtual academic support and enrichment activities that encourage school connection to elementary and middle school students at schools with high levels of environmental stress.

Program Spotlight

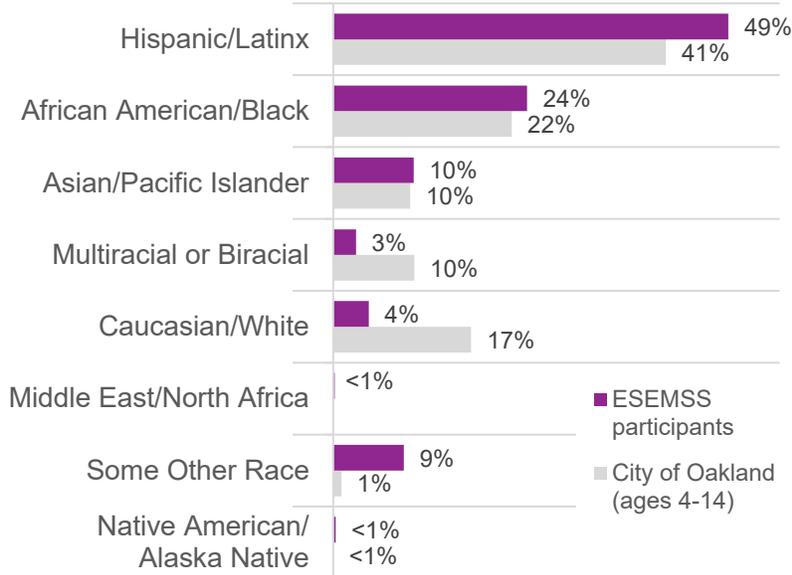


Elev8 Youth serves diverse students and communities at four Oakland schools. In partnership with school staff, Elev8 provided supplemental services to at risk students, including supporting students with IEPs, participating in grade-level meetings, providing individualized literacy and math instruction, and engaging youth during asynchronous learning in the afternoon.

In line with OFCY’s focus on BIPOC children and youth, about 83% of participants identified as Hispanic/Latinx, African American/Black, or Asian/Pacific Islander, compared to 72% of Oakland children and youth aged 4-14.³

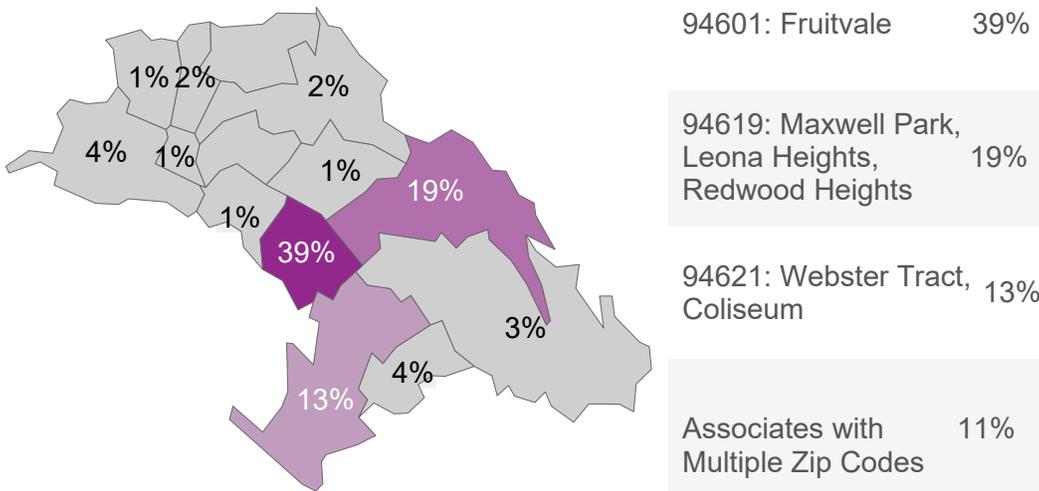
Hispanic/Latinx youth comprised the largest group of youth served.

Race/Ethnicity of OFCY Participants and Oakland Children and Youth



As illustrated below, most participants lived in East Oakland. Close to 40% of the youth served by the strategy lived in or around Fruitvale.

Zip Code of Residence



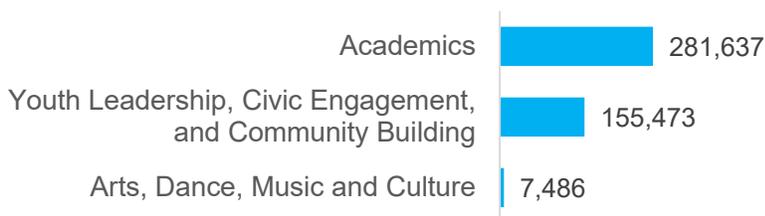
Participating youth were most likely to live in East Oakland, particularly in or around Fruitvale.

³ City of Oakland youth data comes from American Community Survey (ACS) 2018 5-year Estimate. For this graph, Middle Eastern/North African OFCY participants are included in the “Other” category.

How Much Did Programs Do?

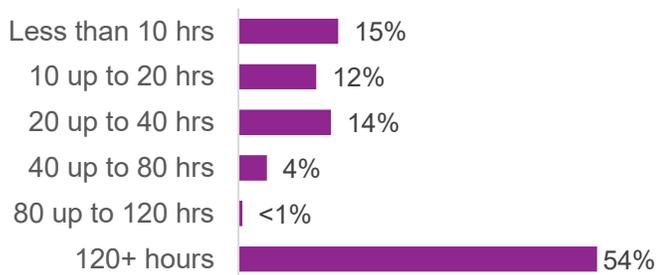
Programs provided 451,346 hours of service. Following county health guidelines and taking their lead from OUSD, programs continually adapted and evolved in response to COVID-19. When schools transitioned to remote learning environments, programs shifted to virtual learning. As schools opened their campus to in-person learning hubs for the highest need students, some programs also shifted to provide in-person support at hubs while continuing to offer virtual programming to students who were still at home. In the virtual environment, some programs adapted services in response to teachers' needs, such as shifting focus from small reading groups to math, which students struggled with online. As shown below, students spent the most time in academic activities, followed youth leadership, civic engagement, and community building.

Hours Spent in Most Common Activities



Working in the virtual space allowed some programs to be more flexible with content, scheduling, and the number of youth served. For example, Elev8 staff were able to meet with students outside their scheduled times, increasing accessibility. Because the level of support provided depended on student needs, the time students spent in programming varied, as shown below.

Hours of Attendance in ESEMSS Programs



Programs provided virtual and modified in-person programming that supported student success, from helping families set up internet to providing individualized math instruction.

“ In the beginning of the school year, we spend time doing team building games that break the ice for the students. We get to know the students as individuals before we move into the academics and the enrichment activities...We use social-emotional learning strategies not only to improve engagement and interactions, but also for them to take those skills and utilize them in other areas of their lives, like breathing techniques and grounding techniques.

– Staff, Safe Passages' Elev8 Youth

Youth spent an average of 377 hours in ESEMSS programming.

On average, youth spent 377 hours in programming. Notably, 96% of the participants who spent at least 120 hours in programming were from the same program that supported students during the school day at four elementary and middle schools (Safe Passages' Elev8 youth). Elev8 staff supported school-day instruction and therefore engaged participants every school day for multiple hours. As shown on the following page, the average time that participants spent in the other programs ranged from 10 to 83.

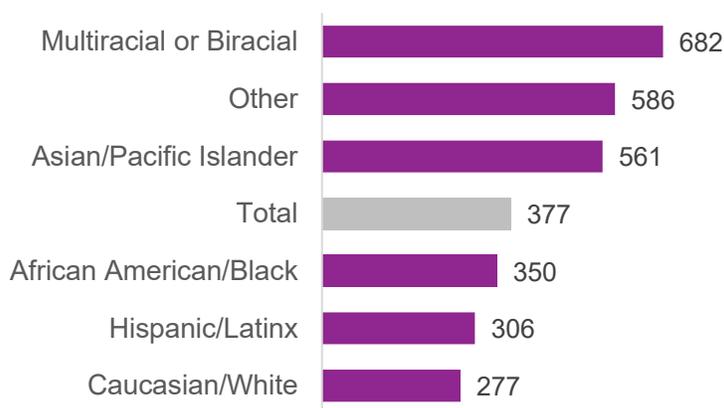
Average hours of attendance varied significantly across programs, with students in a program that supported school day instruction every day receiving the most hours of service.

Average Hours of Attendance by Program



The number of hours spent in programming varied somewhat by race/ethnicity. As shown below, multiracial/biracial youth and Asian/Pacific Islander youth had the highest average hours of participation.⁴

Average Hours of Participation by Race/Ethnicity



⁴ The chart only includes racial/ethnic groups with at least five members.

How Well Did Programs Do It?

OFCY tracks a series of indicators to assess how well grantees implemented their programming.

The first three indicators include progress toward projected program enrollment, total hours of service, and average hours of service per participant.⁵ As shown on the right, **program attendance and enrollment were strong**, with programs enrolling 114% of the youth they anticipated.

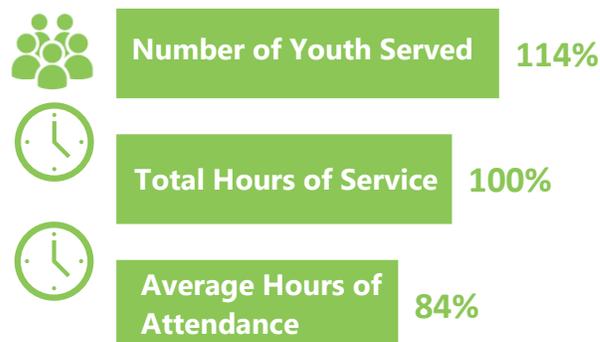
In addition to these performance measures, OFCY uses youth surveys to assess program quality. Surveys reveal that participants generally felt safe, connected to adults that cared about them, and engaged in their programs.

With the transition to virtual spaces, programs focused on **emotional safety** through structured socioemotional learning activities and monitoring what was going on in youths' environments and home lives.

To promote **positive engagement**, programs developed interactive community activities to provide breaks from academics (e.g., Fun Fridays, dance parties, quiz games), provided students with choices among different activities related to the same content, and offered opportunities for youth to celebrate their cultures.

Programs built strong **connections to caring adults** through ice breakers and team builders that allowed staff to get to know participants as individuals. To help youth relate to adults in the program, agencies hired diverse staff that reflect participants' communities.

Program Performance: Average Progress Toward Projected Enrollment and Attendance



Program Quality: Youth Survey Responses (n=102)



⁵ At the start of the fiscal year, programs estimate the units of service enrollment they expect to meet. By the end of the year, programs are expected to reach at least 80% of their projected enrollment and units of service.

Is Anyone Better Off?

As part of the RBA framework, OFCY tracks indicators of youth leadership and community connectedness to assess if career awareness program participants are better off because of their participation. As shown below, most youth reported gaining the experience and skills that the strategy aims to provide.

In addition to these RBA indicators, participant survey data and program interviews tell a more comprehensive story about the ways that EMSSS programs foster positive youth development and academic success.

Participant Outcomes: Youth Survey Responses (n=102)



Motivated to Learn 79%

Youth who agree that they are more motivated to learn in school

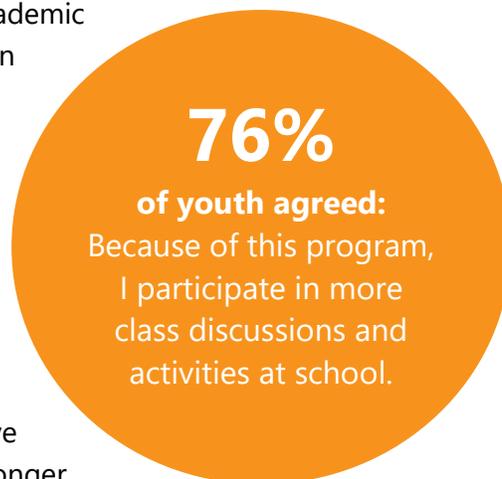


Academic Skills 77%

Youth who agree that they learned skills that help with their schoolwork

Increased Academic Preparedness and Engagement

EMSSS programs have an explicit focus on increasing academic preparedness and engagement with schools. Gains in literacy and math have long been a focus of these programs, and programs placed an even greater emphasis in these areas to combat learning loss during COVID-19. Strategies included working with students via phone calls, offering virtual 1:1 mentoring and group discussions during class and after school, and incorporating wellness check-ins prior to academic sessions. To increase attendance and engagement in the online environment, programs developed interactive activities and collaborated with school staff to build stronger linkages to the school day. For example, at Safe Passages staff from Elev8 participated in synchronous morning sessions with classroom teachers to create a sense of continuity with their afterschool programming.



“ [We do] fun and engaging activities so that the students are showing up for session. Maybe they're not too thrilled about the math lesson, but they're going to be thrilled for Fun Friday. They're going to be thrilled for the art activity. So that sometimes you do need that extrinsic, additional motivation to get them there, because then once they're there, they're going to enjoy the [academic] lesson that was prepared for them, we just need to get them there first.

- Staff, Safe Passages' Elev8 Youth

Increased sense of belonging and mental wellness

Fostering a sense of belonging and supporting youths' mental wellness fall within these programs' broader focus on socio-emotional learning and well-being. During the pandemic, Elementary and Middle School Student Success programs built in extra time and space for program staff and youth to get to know each other through icebreakers, check-ins, and team-building activities. Programs also incorporated self-care strategies to promote mental health, such as breathing and grounding techniques to improve engagement and interactions and help students cope with stress. For example, Elev8 incorporated activities to help students build and practice self-awareness and self-regulation skills like identifying positive and negative emotions and managing those feelings through journaling, meditation, and yoga.



“ [Our program] supports the students in getting to know their instructor and their peers, supports students with social emotional learning, and helps youth make a smoother transition into academics. [We teach] students about self-awareness and identifying positive and negative emotions. When students are comfortable and know what they are feeling, we can teach them how to manage those feelings through activities such as journaling, meditating and yoga.

- Safe Passages' Elev8 Youth Quarterly Report

Increased sense of school connectedness

Elementary and Middle School Student Success programs adapted their approach to supporting school connectedness in a virtual environment by developing group games and virtual activities to promote engagement. Safe Passages Elev8 offered engaging afternoon extra-curricular activities, called specials, like physical education, leadership and junior coach classes, dance classes, and guided art projects. Staff also joined synchronous time in morning with teachers to work with students, which built relationships with students and connected afterschool activities to the school day. To foster a sense of connection to school, Elev8 created large scale group projects like dance parties and guided art projects so that students who had been isolated for so long could feel like they were still part of a school community.



“ It was a tremendous feeling to be to be a part of a hundred kindergartners doing a dance party for Fun Fridays or 50 kids doing guided art. All these kids who were isolated for so long were now continuing to feel like they were still part of a school community.

- Staff, Safe Passages' Elev8 Youth

Survey Responses by Subgroups

An analysis of survey responses by subgroup revealed some differences in outcomes across race, gender, and age:

- **African American/Black and middle school students were less likely to report that they were interested in their program** than their peers were.
- **Females reported lower progress** than males in the areas of *Sense of Belonging, Connections to Adults, Development and Mastery of Skills, and Improved Decision Making*. They were also more likely than their peers to report feeling safe.

