

West Oakland Middle School

991 14th St, Oakland, CA 94607 | <https://sites.google.com/ousd.org/woms/>

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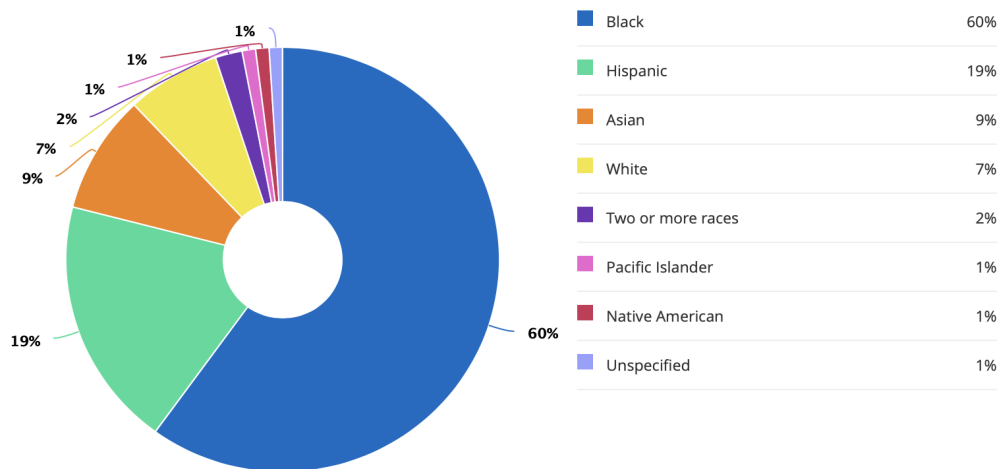
Overview

Mission/Vision: West Oakland is deeply committed to building a school that empowers students to be a positive force in their communities through creating a learning environment that is anti-racist, culturally relevant, and academically rigorous. Students at West Oakland will move on to high school with critical thinking skills, a love of learning, and pride in themselves and their community. WOMS will achieve this vision through engaging student voice, and providing grade-level instruction. Principal: Neha Ummat

Demographics:

Total # of Students	Under-Resourced Students	Dual/Multi Language	Equity Rating	Students to Teacher Ratio	Students : Counselor
199	94%	20%	1/10	17:1	N/A

Race/Ethnicity:



What Makes This School Unique

[West Oakland Middle School](#) (WOMS) is becoming a full-service community school:

- Run by [LifeLong Medical](#), with an on-site **Health Center** that offers wellness services to WOMS students and families.
- Connecting with the **wider West Oakland community** in several ways, through partnerships with local organizations as well as a strong relationship between Martin Luther King Elementary and McClymonds High, their main feeder and destination schools. Their strong community partners include Attitudinal Healing, Elev8, Safe Passages, YMCA, OTX, and more.
- WOMS families are engaged in supporting their children’s learning, and have a voice in the decisions made as a school community.



As part of the Oakland Unified School District’s “STEM Corridor,” West Oakland Middle School gives students a range of learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math. WOMS has a recently modernized campus — with a new computer lab and renovated classrooms — provides the perfect setting for our STEM focus.

- In the summer before 6th grade, incoming students take part in the six-week STEM Academy, featuring weekly projects at UC Berkeley’s Lawrence Hall of Science. The Academy prepares new students to hit the ground running in science and math.
- WOMS fully-equipped Science Lab offers students hands-on and project-based learning.
- Technology is everywhere on the campus, which has recently modernized to include an updated computer lab, Promethean Boards and Smart Pen in the classrooms, and more.
- STEM field trips to STEM-based companies such as Pixar, Facebook, Expression College of Digital Arts, and more.
- Science Night brings families (and students from nearby Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary) together to witness our students’ science learning in action.

Girls, Inc. is the WOMS After-School Program. Girls, Inc. is open to students of ALL genders and backgrounds. The organization provides homework help and is specifically focused on improving students' literacy through culturally relevant programming and educational activities. Girls, Inc, partners with multiple enrichment programs to provide education in

the visual and performing arts. Students in the WOMS After-School Program participate in sports, including basketball, lacrosse, cheer, and football. The purpose of the program is to expand learning beyond the school day and complement daily classroom instruction, while providing a structured environment that encourages creativity, imagination and flexibility.

What does Girls Inc. do?

- **Academic Engagement:** STEM, Basic Career Exploration, Homework support
- **Healthy Living:** Nutrition, Sports, Adolescents Health, Social Emotional Development
- **Leadership Development:** Confidence, Relationships, with Peers and Adults, Positive Self and Community Images, Positive Risk-Taking.
- **Gender Specific Programming:** We support the individual growth of boys and girls in same gender activities like sports, STEM and social-emotional learning. Adolescent boys and girls have different needs and participate differently when they are in single gender spaces; these groups give them a unique opportunity to build brotherhood and sisterhood in addition to other people's relationships.

School and Neighborhood History

The [Ohlone and Chochenyo nations](#) inhabited the coastal region of Central and Northern California that includes Oakland.⁴ Due to [Spanish colonization of the Ohlone and Chochenyo lands](#), there was a drastic change and evolution of the region over the years that leads us to it's physical layout today.

WOMS is located within Oakland's Oak center neighborhood. Before World War 2 West Oakland had been a very diverse working class area of Oakland: Irish, Italians, Greeks, African Americans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Latinxs, and Asians lived and worked together side by side in West Oakland. Many worked in the various Industrial jobs and for the nearby shipyards and Railroad Yards.

By 1930, West Oakland was a thriving, predominately [African-American](#) neighborhood of about 280,000 residents. Seventh Street was lined with jazz and blues clubs. [Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association](#) had its West Coast headquarters at 8th and Chester Streets. The start of World War 2 brought many Workers to fill in the Labor shortages. African American Population of West Oakland increased as thousands of African American War Workers came from the Southern United states. Many found Jobs at the shipyards in Oakland and the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond and at Various Industrial Jobs and many found work in the Southern Pacific Railroad. Many settled in the Lower Part of

West Oakland Also many segregated Housing Projects were built in West Oakland to House Black War Workers because of Shortage of Housing Campbell Village being a prime example.

In the 1940s, West Oakland became the major West Coast blues center, and was considered the "Harlem of the West". The local clubs around 7th attracted military visiting the port, out-of-towners and locals alike. Aretha Franklin, Billie Holiday, T-Bone Walker, Big Mama Thornton, Al Green and others all performed in the Harlem of the West scene.

Development: The Oak Center redevelopment project area was designated for redevelopment in either 1962 or 1965. After the [Acorn](#) housing project area, this was the second major area slated for redevelopment by the [Oakland Redevelopment Agency](#) (ORA). With Acorn, the ORA demolished almost every structure in the area in order to construct new structures. This created a great deal of opposition and mistrust towards redevelopment in the West Oakland community. In order to try and address this issue, the ORA's public stance on Oak Center was that it would aim for an 80/20% split of rehabilitation vs. demolition of existing structures. According to [Hayes, 1972](#), though, the director of the ORA at the time told the San Francisco renewal agency that the actual plan was to demolish 80% of structures and rehabilitate only 20%. The conflict between the public and "official" policy apparently led to the resignation in protest of a number of ORA staff. Additionally, someone from the San Francisco Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office complained to Oakland's City Council which ended up firing the director of the ORA! While the Acorn redevelopment project was marked by lack of inclusion of residents' concerns and focused heavily on demolition of existing properties, the [Oak Center Neighborhood Association](#) was able to successfully shift the Redevelopment Agency's plans away from a focus on demolition/high-rise-construction towards rehabilitation of previously-existing structures.



Gentrification within the neighborhood: [Gentrification](#) is a process that includes economic and demographic changes to historically disinvested neighborhoods. It's important to be aware of the process because new, affluent residents moving to a neighborhood for housing or business can contribute to significant increases in rent and real estate prices. These increases impact the most vulnerable and pressure low-income residents to meet the demand which alters their own household/family budget.⁶ Many Bay Area neighborhoods have [changed culturally and financially due to gentrification](#).

In the 1930s and '40s, African Americans from Louisiana and Texas began pouring into West Oakland, most coming through the historic 16th Street train depot, and settled. African Americans had few choices about where they could live due to discriminatory housing covenants, but by nearly all accounts West Oakland was a thriving, vibrant community. In fact, it was the largest African American community in Northern California.

When World War II began, West Oakland became the major point of entry for Black people coming in from the South, who came in to take advantage of the economic expansion and opportunities of the war economy. But post-World War II, dwindling jobs and divisive urban planning decisions thwarted the Black community's success. Oakland officials labeled the neighborhood a "slum" and a "blight," ultimately deciding to "redevelop" the area. Under the Housing Act of 1949, and through eminent domain — which gives governments the right to expropriate private property for public use — dozens of Black-owned homes and businesses were destroyed.

A series of urban planning decisions continued to devastate the Black community. In 1955, the construction of the highway leading to the Bay Bridge — the Cypress Freeway — cut through West Oakland, displacing swaths of Black families. Ultimately, the city's decision to "redevelop" West Oakland post-WWII had profound consequences on the Black community.

Endnotes

1. <https://sites.google.com/ousd.org/woms/>
2. https://www.greatschools.org/california/oakland/17720-West-Oakland-Middle-School/#Teachers_staff
3. https://www.ousd.org/cms/lib/CA01001176/Centricity/Domain/2432/WOMS_Brochure_2014_FINAL.pdf
4. <https://native-land.ca/>
5. https://localwiki.org/oakland/History_of_Mexican_and_Latino_Americans
6. <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/gentrification-explained>
7. <https://metroidideas.org/blog/gentrification-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/>
8. <https://sites.google.com/ousd.org/woms/after-school-program?authuser=0>
9. <https://thebolditalic.com/west-oaklands-seventh-street-was-once-a-prosperous-hub-for-the-bay-s-black-community-28582b4c591f>