

**PREPARED BY**  
THE OAKLAND PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND



**OAKLAND**  
PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND

# CRANKSTART FOUNDATION

## COMMUNITY WELLNESS AND LEARNING HUBS INITIATIVE

### FINAL GRANT REPORT





## Meeting the Need for In-Person Learning Opportunities in Oakland

Moving to remote learning in COVID-19 only exacerbated the equity issues plaguing public education throughout the country. Almost immediately, families, schools, and communities recognized the need for in-person academic and social-emotional interventions for students struggling during distance learning. While all Oakland public school students were provided computers and internet access who needed them through their school and the #OaklandUndivided programs, many families and students faced compounding needs and struggled to provide at-home environments conducive to learning. Students had to learn to navigate distance learning while also facing language barriers, trauma from community violence, deaths in the family, and more. As a result of these challenges, Oakland public schools saw a decrease in attendance rates, assignments completion rates, and a rise in the number of disengaged learners.

Thanks to the contributions of the Crankstart Foundation, the Oakland Public Education Fund (the Ed Fund), in collaboration with 20 community based organizations at 24 sites across Oakland, served over 1,300 students during the 2020-2021 school year with the “Community Wellness & Learning Hubs Initiative”. With this significant investment by the Crankstart Foundation, local youth-serving organizations throughout Oakland were able to provide in-person academic and personal wellness services targeting students and communities most in need during COVID school closures. Many of these community based organizations partnered with school sites to run Learning Hub programs while some organizations were active on multiple campuses and in their own facilities, where available.



Learning Hubs program staff worked closely with families, teachers, and administrators to identify students most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic who struggled with attendance and academic achievement and would most benefit from the services that Learning Hubs had to offer. Learning Hubs centered student needs and connected them with the right resources to ensure their success. A tailored approach to each school and community meant that students attended between 2-5 days a week for 2-8 hours a day depending on their needs and the capacity of the community-based partners. Through relationship building and family surveys, staff across all programs worked to ensure students and their families had access to food, financial and housing assistance, translation services, and referrals to external resources such as counseling.

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## Outcomes and Achievements

Despite facing one of the most challenging years on record for public schools, extraordinary results were achieved through Crankstart Foundation-funded Learning Hubs. This year we learned that even in a global pandemic, we can make a difference in the lives of students by creating programs and services that meet their unique needs. As Oakland REACH reported, "The Crankstart grant supported the implementation of sustainable strategies that have increased Oakland students' educational outcomes and empowered parents to be strong advocates for their children's education."

Our partners highlighted the following achievements of students as a result of participation in their Learning Hubs:

- Academic progress
- Improved engagement in online classes
- Higher completion rate of assignments
- Improved school attendance compared to prior to Learning Hub enrollment
- Enhanced social emotional learning and improved behaviors
- Support for English Language Learners

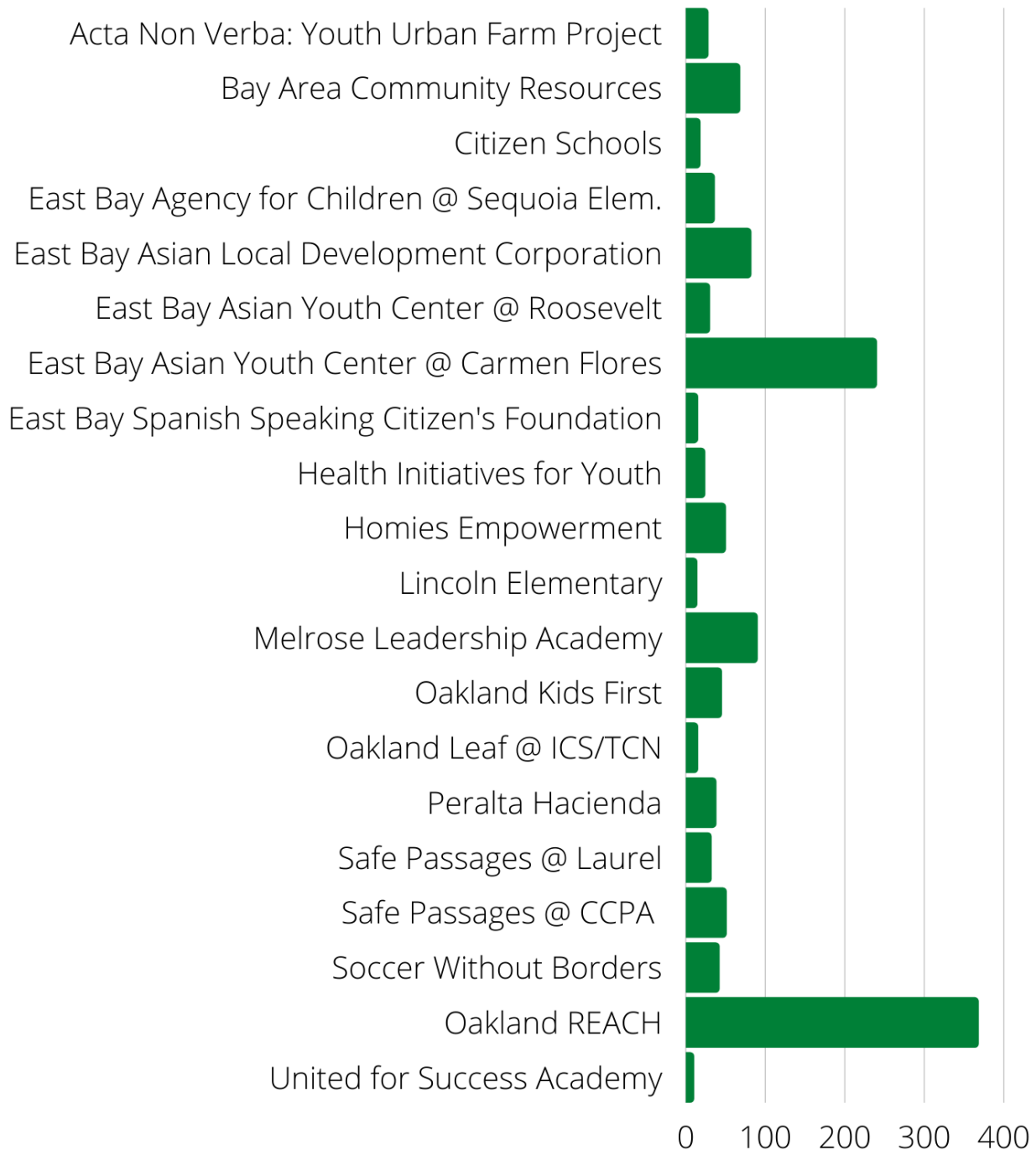
At the Oakland Kids First Learning Hub, many students entered the Hub in danger of not earning the credits needed to graduate. Despite this, every student demonstrated academic improvement, with 100% of students with English as their first language graduating on time.

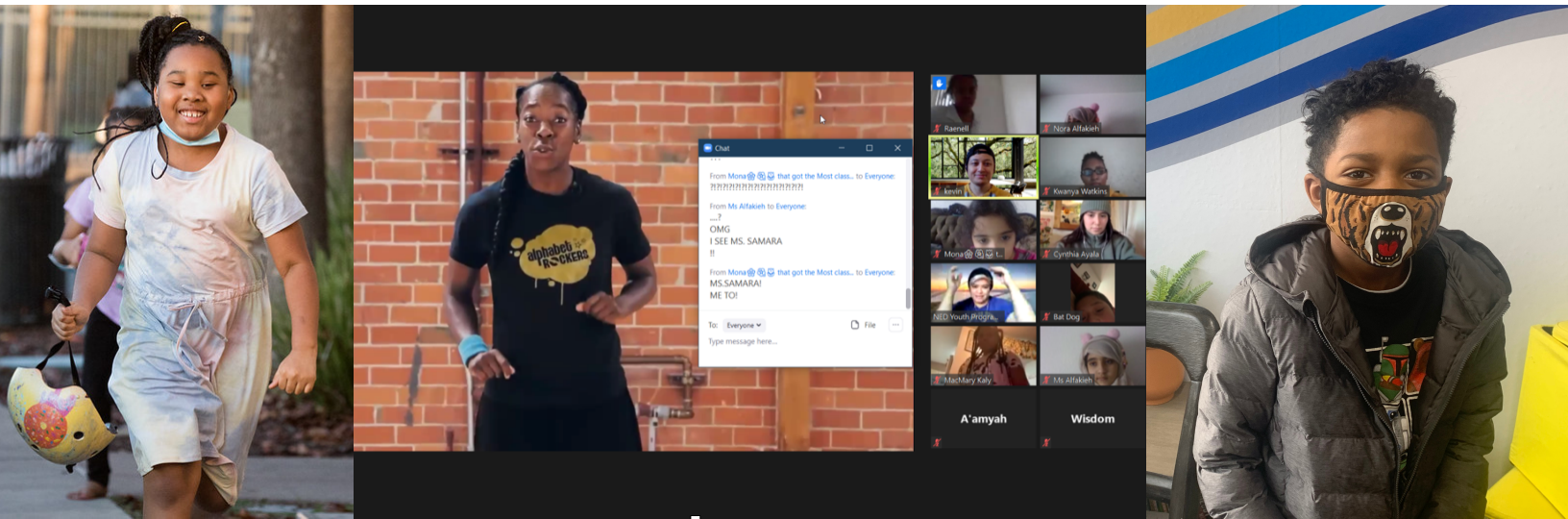
Culturally competent technical support for online learning was a pressing need and Learning Hubs provided the opportunity for Oakland educators to meet that need with in-person support. Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) served Oakland students through multiple Learning Hubs. They reported, "From the beginning, it was clear these Hubs would become a model on how during the pandemic, we could get students back to campus. Weeks of thoughtful planning and collaboration helped to create a safe and engaging environment for some of OUSD's most vulnerable students."

At Oakland International High School, an undocumented senior navigated a very challenging home situation. He needed to work to support his family and was at risk of not graduating. When he started attending the Soccer without Borders Learning Hub, he had been disengaged from virtual learning. However, through the strong relationships he built with staff and the support he received, he was able to earn his high school diploma and complete his community college and FAFSA applications. He now plans to attend Laney College in Fall 2021.

As program staff at learning hubs learned to navigate the pandemic and make plans for students and families to move forward, participation and engagement across Oakland surged. For example, Citizen Schools Learning Hub reported that 61% of their scholars showed improvement in their course grades and 83% of their scholars showed improvement in their attendance.

## Attendance by Agency





Not only did Learning Hubs impact student success, they also strengthened partnerships between the Ed Fund, community based organizations, and school leaders. East Bay Agency for Children facilitated a Learning Hub at Sequoia Elementary School. They reported a positive experience in collaborating with the school's administration to facilitate the Learning Hub saying, "Our partnership with the school principal was a blessing and the reason our Learning Hub ran so incredibly smooth. This Learning Hub was not only successful for students but was so good for our staff to be back on site working with students in person."

Melrose Leadership Academy (MLA) opened their Hub in late March and identified middle school students that urgently needed support to get re-engaged with their school work. These students were newcomers<sup>1</sup> and special education students who had been struggling during the pandemic with connectivity and work completion. When planning for opening up Learning Hubs, MLA program staff centered safety first and foremost in order to continue to serve students in person. They reported, "by being able to really focus on student safety, we were able to get kids back in the building, which ultimately led to the beginning of healing and increased attendance and learning." Their dedication resulted in increased student engagement. Prior to participating in the Learning Hub, the students attended Zoom class 62% of the time on average. Once they joined the Learning Hub, average participation increased to 90%. Melrose Leadership Academy later welcomed TK-5th grade students, ultimately serving 90 students in total.

<sup>1</sup>newcomer: students with a refugee, asylum seeker, immigrant and/or status

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## Challenges and Lessons Learned

Ensuring the health and safety of youth, families, and staff was the guiding principle in implementing in-person Learning Hubs. However, implementing this principle was challenged by the fear of emerging new variants, as well as evolving guidance from local and state agencies.

Our partners highlighted the following challenges for students and partner organizations during this ever-changing landscape:

- Navigating changing student schedules and health guidelines
- Supporting students to eat healthier snacks to sustain their energy levels
- Re-engaging students in school to ensure successful graduation
- Challenges recruiting, hiring, and training qualified staff
- Supporting consistent student attendance; the economic and health pressures related to the pandemic reducing the capacity of families to support students in attending Learning Hubs and completing school work
- Re-introducing students to a social setting after sheltering in place

Partners and educators remained flexible throughout the year and implemented a variety of strategies to overcome these challenges. Our partners noted that it was increasingly important to stay in deep communication with youth, families, and staff and to keep empathy at the center of this work. BACR shared that its program leaders and school principals approached the collaboration with patience and a focus on strong communication. They also shared, “when we embarked on this work in the Fall there was a lot of pushback from teachers, some principals, parents, people within our agency etc. ...We had never been faced with this before. However, our agency has a long history of being committed to the communities we serve. One of our best practices is, ‘We build healthy relationships and are guided by a caring heart.’” This statement rings true for other programs as well.

Citizen Schools went above and beyond to reach students and families knowing that continuous attendance was key to student success. This meant implementing a multi-pronged action plan to combat lagging attendance including incentivizing students, making regular phone calls home, and having individual conversations with each student to determine students’ goals, and creating customized success plans to reach them.

## Conclusion - What's Next?

While Learning Hubs began as a temporary method to address the needs of our most vulnerable Oakland students and families, throughout the pandemic they proved to be powerful community resources where students demonstrated academic and social-emotional improvements. Program staff observed a significant shift in virtual engagement, student achievement, and social interaction. Learning Hubs contributed to student success by providing consistent support through the in-person Learning Hub experience. Building relationships and promoting engagement among students proved to be one of the greatest challenges in public education during the pandemic. However, Learning Hubs served to meet these challenges and made a powerful impact in the lives of students, allowing those in need of academic recovery to receive their diplomas, improving the social-emotional health of students experiencing isolation, and providing parents with the tools needed to support their advocacy of their children's education.

While the pandemic continues to evolve, the Oakland school community is aware that it is not over and that the needs of disenfranchised students will continue to be paramount. Per California Department of Education guidance, a return to in-person learning is of the utmost importance to ensure student success. Community based organizations play a critical role in the return to in-person instruction as the need for ongoing academic and social-emotional interventions from a variety of educators and community partners will continue. As such, support for these organizations should continue to be prioritized by the funding community.



## Financial Overview and Graphs

Funds from Crankstart Foundation were regranted to 20 partner community based organizations and schools to support the staffing, program supplies, and other materials required to implement and facilitate the Learning Hubs for Oakland public students. Details of funding allocations are listed below.

<i><b>Program Area</b></i>	<i><b>Amount</b></i>	<i><b>Notes</b></i>
Funds granted for learning hubs to community-based organizations partnered with the Ed Fund	\$2,500,000	Funds distributed to 20 CBOs for staffing, program supplies, and healthy meals for students.
Grant Administration	\$250,000	N/A

ORGANIZATION NAME	# OF STUDENTS	# OF DAYS/WEEK	# OF HOURS/DAY	# OF WEEKS	# OF LOCATIONS
ACTA NON VERBA: YOUTH URBAN FARM PROJECT	28	4	4	7	1
BAY AREA COMMUNITY RESOURCES	68	5	6-8	24	3
CITIZEN SCHOOLS	18	5	5	12	1
EAST BAY AGENCY FOR CHILDREN @ SEQUOIA ELEM.	36	3	4.5-5	14	1
EAST BAY ASIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	82	5	3	19	2+
EAST BAY ASIAN YOUTH CENTER @ CARMEN FLORES	30	5	5	12	1
EAST BAY ASIAN YOUTH CENTER @ ROOSEVELT	240	5	3	40	1
EAST BAY SPANISH SPEAKING CITIZENS' FOUNDATION	15	5	8	20	1
HEALTH INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH	24	3	5	8	1
HOMIES EMPOWERMENT	50	5	4	6	1
LINCOLN ELEMENTARY	14	5	4	8	1
MELROSE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	90	2	4.5	8	3
OAKLAND KIDS FIRST	45	5	5	15	1
OAKLAND LEAF @ ICS/TCN	15	5	4	10	1
PERALTA HACIENDA	38	5	5.5	30	1
SAFE PASSAGES @ CCPA	32	4	8	7	1
SAFE PASSAGES @ LAUREL ELEMENTARY	51	4	6	28	1
SOCCER WITHOUT BORDERS	42	4	3	16	1
THE OAKLAND REACH	368	4	2	12	VIRTUAL
UNITED FOR SUCCESS ACADEMY	10	4	5	8	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1296</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>94.5-97</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>24+</b>