Oakland Asian Students Educational Services (OASES)

Academic Success:
A Safe Entry Point to Mental Health Conversations

February 1, 2012
OASES Vision and Mission

Founded in 1983 by a group of UC Berkeley students who wanted to provide a safety net for youth living in Oakland Chinatown. Since then, OASES has continued to provide services to low-income, immigrant youth.

Our vision is for all students in the public education system reach their fullest potential and are supported to achieve success in school, careers and civic life.

Our mission is to empower youth with limited resources through education, mentorship, and service to strengthen the Oakland community.
Our Clients and Program Services

- Our clients
  - K-5 Grades
  - 80% Chinese
  - 47% Poverty
  - 89% Parents has a high school or less education

- Program Services
  - School-based after school programs
  - Programs operate daily - Mon-Fri, 3pm-6pm
  - Programs offer enrichment workshops, academic support, and mentorship
  - Over 350 college volunteers from UC Berkeley and Laney College serve as tutors and mentors
  - Family events and parent workshops
  - Grounded in youth development principles

- Initiatives
  - College and Career Preparedness
  - Parent Engagement
Case Sample

Student Profile
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade male student
- Lost father recently
- Lives in a small apartment with limited space for activities
- Started to peel paint off the walls of apartment with hands due to lack of activities
- Had a high level of lead as a result of habit of biting his nails

Issues Presented
- Unsafe physical environment
- Emotional stress and isolation
- Affects of lead on physical health
- Inability to concentrate in the classroom
- Potential long term impact on learning ability
Strategies Implemented

• Address ability to pay attention in class with Mother
• Enroll student in “Mentorship Circles” enrichment workshop, a part of menu of workshops (e.g. Poet Society) facilitated by bilingual and bicultural clinician
• Meet with Mother and provide referral services
• Consult and coordinate services with the School Family Liaison and School Psychologist

• Host Parent Workshops e.g. Stress Management
• Host Family Literacy Night events to connect parents with each other and provide opportunities to engage in fun activities together
What Worked for Us

• Take advantage of family’s cultural emphasis on education and use it as an entry point
• Offer Enrichment Workshops that creatively incorporate prevention counseling and normalize the “issue”
• Host parent workshops that cover broad topics that all parents can identify with to lessen the stigma attached
• Provide translations at parent workshops
• Align program activities with School District’s priorities (Full Service Community School)
Challenges

- Limited resources (funding, staff capacity, etc.)
- Language and cultural barriers and differences
- Emphasis on academics by School Community
- Time to build trust
- High academic test scores mask the underlying social, emotional, mental health, and behavioral needs
- Data Collection
- Parent Engagement
Lessons Learned

• Training offered by partner organizations’ clinicians (ACMHS) to build staff capacity
• Hiring consultant (also a community member) to provide translation
• Hosting of small parent roundtables to solicit input
• Framing and connecting issues to academic success and skills building
• Alignment of programming with school district’s priorities toward a full service community school district
• Coordination of services with school day e.g. teachers, psychologist, family liaison, etc.
• Extracting stories to capture “data” points and expanding impact on academic success.
Successes

• LEAP After School Program Results
  • 99% of the youth reported that there is an adult staff member who takes time to help them when they don’t understand something
  • 93% of parents reported their student improved their social skills and were able to get along better with other students
  • 81% of teachers selected “student academic success” as a way that the program supports the goals of the school

• Quest After School Program Results
  • 100% of youth reported “I feel safe when I am here”
  • 86% of parents reported that their child attitude toward school has improved since coming to the program
  • 80% of teachers selected “student academic success” as a way that the program supports the goals of the school