



Press Release: New Alliance for Girls Study Provides Roadmap to Increase Equity for Girls of Color in Oakland Schools

OAKLAND, Sept. 20, 2016 – A new report, “Valuing Girls Voices: The Lived Experiences Of Girls Of Color In Oakland Unified School District,” was released today by the Alliance for Girls (AFG), whose membership of 130 organizations serve more than 250,000 girls and young women annually in the San Francisco Bay Area.

AFG commissioned the landscape study by Bright Research Group to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of girls of color within Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). The report was the initial step in a larger project spearheaded by AFG after being one of three organizations nationally to receive the inaugural National Girls Initiative Innovation Award, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice. The award enabled AFG to launch a partnership with OUSD to create policies, practices and programs that are informed by the lived experiences of at-risk girls and gender-responsive, culturally relevant, trauma informed, strength-based and developmentally appropriate approaches.

Report findings are based on results from an analysis of OUSD data on academic success and school-engagement indicators, a series of focus groups with girls of color and interviews with district leaders and other adult stakeholders. Except where noted, the key findings refer to girls of color as a group, including African American, Latina, Native American and Asian / Pacific Islander girls. Key findings include:

- Sexual harassment is a part of every day school experience for girls, particularly for girls of color.
- African American girls are uniquely negatively impacted by structural gender and race discrimination in schools.
- When available, gender-specific girls’ programs help girls of color develop healthy relationships and feelings of school connectedness.
- More research on the lived experiences of girls of color in Oakland schools is critical

Alliance for Girls and Oakland Unified School District have partnered to leverage the key findings of the report to fortify the school district’s existing efforts, as well as create new efforts, to improve equity for girls of color, and improve their academic and life outcomes. These efforts include crafting a modified sexual harassment policy and implementation plan within OUSD, training OUSD staff in the findings of AFG’s report and effective approaches to addressing the unique needs of girls of color, as well as supporting OUSD’s new African American Girls and Young Women Achievement initiative, and amplifying girls’ programs across the district



OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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“Our partnership with Alliance for Girls aims to dramatically improve outcomes for girls and young women of color,” says OUSD Superintendent Antwan Wilson, “We know that the recent report revealed critical areas of focus that we need to address. Moving this important work forward is a District priority that will be led by our new Director of African American Girls and Young Women Achievement and our Deputy Chief of Equity.”

Christopher P. Chatmon, the district’s Deputy Chief of Equity added, “The District’s Office of Equity is committed to creating a system of care that engages, encourages, and empowers girls and young women.”

In October, Alliance for Girls will release its *Meeting Girls’ Needs* Toolkit, which will include a roadmap and tools encompassing policy, programs, and training to improve the lived experience of girls of color in OUSD. The toolkit is being developed by Project Lead Consultant Iminah Laura Ahmad, as well as a leadership team of girls and AFG members that serve Oakland including: Oakland Unified School District students, Community Works West, Equal Rights Advocates, Girls Inc. of Alameda County, MISSEY, The Mentoring Center and The Respect Institute, as well as the community at-large.

“Collectively, Alliance for Girls’ members have more than 100 years of experience in addressing girls’ of color unique needs,” says Emma Mayerson, AFG’s executive director. “We are honored to bring the rich wealth of expertise, experience and collective resources represented within Alliance for Girls to Oakland schools, to help schools become safer, more supportive and inspiring places of learning for girls whom the nationwide school system has historically marginalized.”

About Alliance for Girls

Alliance for Girls is a membership-based association developing leadership in the service sector, based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Nationally, we are the largest regional alliance of girl-serving organizations, which now includes 130 organizations and individuals that employ 2,400 people with more than 5,100 volunteers serving more than 250,000 girls across 6 Bay Area counties. Our member organizations collectively support girls in a wide range of issues including education, STEM, media literacy, outdoor exploration and athletics, domestic violence, leadership skills, political participation, restorative justice, human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and physical and mental health.

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