



Things to Know

About OUSD's Yemeni Students

FYI: Our Arab & Yemeni students are not yet accurately tracked in OUSD's data systems because there has not been a racial/ethnic code for them, so we can only search data dashboards by Arabic Home Language and Birth Country Yemen right now, which may exclude Yemeni students born in the U.S. whose families speak English at home. Good news: Enrollment and Technology Services will implement relevant codes in Fall 2020!

- **910** students in OUSD are from Arabic-speaking families.
 - **87%** of the **483** *foreign-born* Arabic speakers in OUSD are from Yemen.
- **47%** of Arabic speaking students in OUSD are born in the US. The Yemeni-American community has been long-established in Oakland.
 - **84%** of **NEWCOMERS** who speak Arabic are from Yemen (251 out of 289).
Yemeni students are the **3rd** largest group of newcomers in OUSD.
- At the end of 2016-17, **34%** of Arabic speaking 12th graders were not on track to graduate. Under war in Yemen, students often receive only a few hours of schooling instead of a full day. *Transcript transfer of credits can be more challenging for students coming from war-torn countries.*
 - Yemeni families are *not* categorized as refugees by the U.S. government, so they *do not qualify* for federal refugee programs that help families transition.

- Arabic-speaking students reported the highest rates of BULLYING at almost 68%, according to the California Healthy Kids Elementary School Survey.

Ways Educators Can Support Students:

Allow students space & time to **PRAY** during the school day.

Support students when they may miss school to celebrate **Eid Al-Fitr & Eid Al-Adha** (which is their legal right) by rescheduling tests and accepting homework later.

Allow students to wear *culturally appropriate* gym clothes, as girls may be unable to wear shorts. Understand that there can be sensitivity to being photographed, so *please ask* first.

Create a **SAFER ENVIRONMENT** from bullying and promote understanding by teaching about Islamic cultures and history, and dispelling stereotypes in the media that assume all Muslims are terrorists or that they are all the same. Empower students to share about the culture and families, through **CULTURAL NIGHTS** and **COMMUNITY WALKS**, where students can teach school communities about their lives, mosques, and family traditions.

Understand that sometimes separate spaces for girls and boys are needed. Several schools have supported **CIRCLES** for Yemeni boys and girls during lunch and afterschool.

Understand that Yemeni women wear different styles of clothing, and some Muslim girls may choose to cover and wear a **HIJAB** in the presence of any male outside of their immediate family. Do not make assumptions that this is oppressive or forced, and respect girls' self-determination while asking them what their own opinions and viewpoints are. Other students may bully by pulling off girls' hijabs "for fun," so educate all students about respecting cultural and religious dress and expression.

When providing food or snacks for students and families, provide Halal food options!

Please contribute to this developing guide by e-mailing
lailan.huen@ousd.org | Information as of May 2018