



The Office African American Male Achievement
Oakland Unified School District
746 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610
510.287.8313 / F: 510.874.3622

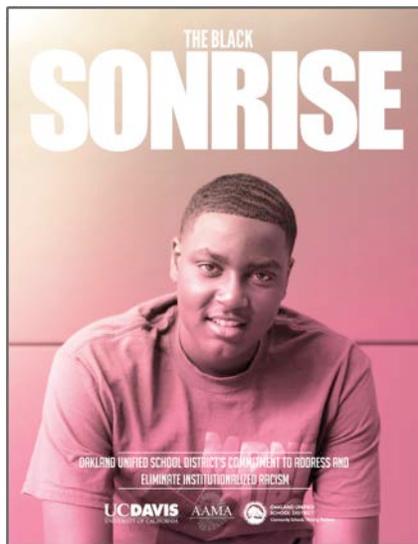
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Contact: Tanara Haynes
Mobile: 510.915.0141
Email: Tanara.Haynes@ousd.k12.ca.us

Step Into the Light of the Black Sunrise

Oakland, CA - January 15, 2015 - Amidst national trauma over the death of African American youth at police hands, a course and mentoring program of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) offers the nation a beacon of hope, says a researcher from the University of California, Davis.

“Oakland Unified School District is one of the only school districts in the country systemically addressing and eliminating institutionalized racism. As a qualitative researcher, I am fascinated by the seeds of courage and determination that spurred a school district to make an unprecedented commitment to the education of Black males,” says Vajra Watson, Ed.D., director of research and policy for equity, University of California, Davis.



The Black Sunrise: Oakland Unified School District's Commitment to Address and Eliminate Institutionalized Racism is the first in a series that examines the work of the Office of African American Male Achievement. This stage of analysis examines the Manhood Development Program, from its inception to its current practices and future goals.

Walking into a Manhood Development class, it is typical to witness students smiling, working together, and getting along. The camaraderie nourishes the education. A student affirms, “Our Manhood Development class helps us be more respectful to each other and to stay together as a brotherhood. I learned about my heritage and about myself as an African American student.”

The Manhood Development Program is unique because the course is taught during the school day *by* African American males at nearly every middle and high school in Oakland.

“We learned that few adults at schools even ask students *how are you?* or *what do you want to be?* There is a general consensus that our young brothers are not having a good experience. While we are trying to change the school system and improve adult behavior, we need something that is tangible for these students. It’s *not* just about changing structures. It’s *not* just about changing policies. It’s *not* just about changing practices. It’s about helping students, in real time, who are being treated like villains and suspects when they have done nothing wrong,” says Christopher P. Chatmon, executive director, African American Male Achievement, OUSD.

The Manhood Development Program supports African American male achievement through:

- Culturally relevant curriculum
- Leadership and character development activities
- Transcript evaluation and college and career guidance
- Family engagement focused on college readiness and parent leadership development
- Recruitment and development of African American male instructors
- Cultural, college, and career field trips



MDP student, Asim and his mother, Nicole Wiggins

The second report released today documents the approach, impact, successes, and challenges of the Office over the past four years (2010-2014). *Lean Into the Wind: Emerging Themes and Strategic Recommendations for AAMA 2.0* provides the following emerging themes and recommendations for executing the next iteration of the Office's work on behalf of District students.

Emerging Themes and Recommendations:

- Continue to Foster a District-wide Culture which Nurtures African American Male Achievement
- Create an OUSD Office of Race and Equity and Build an Equity Data Dashboard

- Create Robust Professional Development and Supports
- Expand and Deepen the Manhood Development Program
- Engage Parents as Critical Allies
- Develop a Robust Communications Strategy



MDP Student, Jolando with Jerome Gourdine

“It is powerful for our young men and boys to go to a place where they feel safe and to explore what is on their minds. The outcome of this freedom, to think and authentically be, is transformational,” says Jerome Gourdine, Manhood Development, program manager, African American Male Achievement, OUSD.

View [*The Black Sunrise*](#)

View [Manhood Development Student Spotlight](#)

View [*Lean Into the Wind*](#)

Both reports will be discussed at a student-led live event on Thursday, January 15th, 2015 from 6:30-8:30pm at Impact Hub Oakland, 2323 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612. For more information and to register for the FREE event click [here](#).

Other Contacts:

for Manhood Development Program Student and Parents

contact Tanara Haynes

AAMA Communications VISTA

510.915.0141

Tanara.Haynes@ousd.k12.ca.us

for AAMA Executive Director

contact Christopher P. Chatmon

510.287.8313

christopher.chatmon@ousd.k12.ca.us

for The Black Sunrise Author
contact Vajra Watson, Ed.D.
530.370.2889
vmwatson@ucdavis.edu

About AAMA

The Office of African American Male Achievement (AAMA) was launched in 2010 and creates the systems, structures, and spaces that guarantee success for all African American male students in OUSD.

AAMA is an ambitious project designed to dramatically improve academic and ultimately life outcomes for African American male students in Oakland. AAMA is leading the school district by analyzing the patterns and processes that are producing systemic inequities. OUSD's theory of action, Targeted Universalism, ascertains that by transforming the system to support successful outcomes for OUSD's lowest performing subgroup, OUSD will create a district that improves academic and social-emotional outcomes for all of its students.

Visit us online at <http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/aama> and follow us on social media at @AAMAOUSD.

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