

FINAL



Oakland Unified School District

Charter School Site Visit Report

American Indian Public Charter School II

**171 12th Street
Oakland, CA 94607**

Site Coordinator: John Glover

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Reviewer: David Montes de Oca

OUSD Office of Charter Schools

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Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

American Indian Public Charter School II (AIPCS II) is a small charter middle school in its second year of operation. The school currently serves approximately 150 sixth through eighth grade students and is located in a commercial building in downtown Oakland. AIPCS II is one of three charter schools operating in Oakland under the same governing board sharing a single school model.

The mission of the AIPCS II is:

“The American Indian Public Charter School II will serve 200 inner-city students in sixth through eighth grade. The focus of AIPCS II is excellent student attendance (99%), which helps to ensure the academic needs of American Indian students and others interested in attending our school. We will provide them with an education to enhance their academic skills in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, science, social science, business, and humanities in order to compete and be productive members in a capitalistic society. This will be a collaborative effort between school, family, and community.”

In 2008, AIPCS II had an Academic Performance Index (API) of 917. The school opened in 2007 serving grades 6 and 7, under the shared leadership of Jorge Lopez, who is the Executive Director of Oakland Charter Academies which shares a facility with AIPCS II. In the current year the school is led by Site Coordinator, John Glover, a former American Indian Public Charter School teacher.

Part 2: Overview

School Strengths:

- AIPCS achieved an API score of 917 in its first year of operation.
- The school leadership is aware of the strengths and growth areas of the teaching staff and has developed strategies for encouraging collaboration and mentorship to support the needs of teachers.
- The school's classrooms operate with a precise level of consistency. The daily schedule is followed uniformly across classrooms and very consistent approaches to instruction were observed across all grade levels.
- Classrooms are well equipped with standards-based instructional materials and consistent with the school's charter, classroom instruction was aligned to CA state standards.
- Student behavior was focused on work and students were on task virtually 100% of the time.
- Teacher rapport with students, while businesslike, was encouraging of students and interactions were respectful and supportive of a rigorous academic environment.
- ***Consistent with the terms of the approved charter:***
 1. The program offers a self-contained classroom model for all 6th through 8th grade students, with the exception of PE.
 2. Students receive 90 minutes of math daily and Algebra is taught to all 8th grade students.
 3. Student: Teacher ratios observed ranged between 13:1 in 8th grade and 27:1 and 26:1 in 7th grade and 24:1 in the 6th grade – terms of the charter indicates a student: teacher ratio of 25:1.
 4. State approved textbooks aligned to state standards were provided and used by students in all classrooms.
 5. Teaching methodology is lecture and teacher-directed.
- Grade level work was evident throughout the school and student work, while limited to a few sample work products, was displayed in all classrooms covering all core content areas.
- Most classrooms appeared to have completed the required curriculum texts assigned to each course and students were in the process of reviewing the material in preparation for the annual state testing.
- The facility was clean, orderly, and well kept with appropriate classroom temperatures maintained at a comfortable level.
- Discussions with AIPCS II leadership noted a staffing change within the past month of the 8th grade teacher and it was evident that the newly hired teacher, Mr. Thaggard the students had rapidly acclimated to one another.

School Challenges:

- The size of the facility space currently allocated to AIPCS II is limited. In some cases, students' desks are placed in rows side-by-side due to the small size of the classrooms. The school makes good use of the central room for exercise on rainy days, however growth by the school is predicated on acquiring additional classroom space within the facility. Currently the school accesses use of space allocated to Oakland Charter Academy High for supplemental instruction purposes, which is located within the same building.
- The school is currently located in a facility that has not yet met all of the CA Building Code requirements for educational use. As of November, 2008, the landlord has been notified of the concern and is currently researching solutions. OCS staff will provide formal notice to the school of facility requirements prior to the close of the 2008-09 school year in an effort to ensure future compliance.

Part 3: Additional Findings

Classroom observations on 2/25/09:

Ms. Avelino – 6th grade

Mr. Thaggard – 8th grade

Ms. Patel – 7th grade

Mr. Young – 7th grade

Admissions

AIPCS II leadership, along with the leadership of all AIPCS schools have been engaged in a dialog with the Office of Charter Schools (OCS) regarding their admissions practices as of November, 2008. Over-all, the goal of the OCS is to ensure all Oakland charter schools provide equal and equitable access to all students wishing to enroll. Historically, AIPCS has utilized a multi-page application which includes a request for information typically reserved for a “registration” process following the initial offer of placement in the school. This information request, as part of the AIPCS II process has included requesting teacher comments on report cards as well as the provision of STAR CST test results. The AIPCS II leadership has acknowledged that the requested information is not a factor in the admissions process.

As a result of the dialog between AIPCS II and OCS, AIPCS II has developed a fact sheet that describes the admissions and enrollment process for parents, interested students, and feeder schools. A draft of this fact sheet was shared with OCS staff at the time of the visit with a request for feedback, which was provided by OCS staff. AIPCS II acknowledged its intent to reduce the requirements embedded in the initial application process beginning with the enrollment window for the 2010-2011. AIPCS II leadership has stated a commitment to employ a two-step process where-in applicants will first receive an offer of placement, contingent only on the provision of the necessary documents for subsequent “registration”. Efforts on the part of the school reflect a commitment to avoid the implementation of any practices that may be construed as discriminatory or have the risk of allowing for preferential treatment to be given to any applicant that is not otherwise outlined in the school’s approved charter agreement.

Special Education

During the site visit APICS II leadership acknowledged notable success in the provision of Special Education services for students with IEP’s during the current 2008-09 school year. AIPCS II leadership noted the convenient and adequate scheduling of services developed between AIPCS and district schools sharing the assigned OUSD RSP teacher.

Expectations and Consistency

OCS staff noted the uniformity of classroom structure, decor and pacing of lessons across the school. AIPCS II leadership indicated that, while clear expectations of course content and levels of student performance are held and widely communicated to staff, as well as the required provision of weekly lesson plans; teachers are provided substantial freedom within which to deliver the lessons, and organize their classrooms. AIPCS II leadership attributed the consistency across classrooms to the collaboration, mentorship and communication among teachers. Staff notes that the charter terms indicate *teaching methodology is lecture, and teacher directed.* (pg. 8) This is consistent with the observed method of instruction across all classrooms.

Looping

The AIPCS model applied at AIPCS II promotes the looping of teachers, where-in students ideally remain with the same teacher from 6th through 8th grade. AIPCS II leadership noted that one 6th

grade teacher remained in his 6th grade assignment for 2008-09 versus looping up with his prior year students to the 7th grade. AIPCS II leadership noted that; given the continued access former students have to receive support and assistance from this teacher; given the collaboration between this teacher and the students' current 7th grade teacher; and given the aptitude of this teacher to both support the acclimation of incoming 6th grade students to the school's unique structure and rigor as well as his strength in supporting the development of English Language Learners assigned to his class; the school leadership felt in this case, that the benefits outweighed the costs of this deviation from the school's traditional looping structure.

Teacher Certification

During a Ten-Point Compliance visit conducted in October, 2008 proper teacher certification was evaluated at all Oakland charter schools, including AIPCS II. AIPCS II received one Notice of Concern dated November 25, 2008 due to the absence of required certification for one teacher. Within the timelines established within the Notice for remedying the concern, AIPCS II acquired all necessary certification and at the time of the visit on February 25, 2009, all teachers assigned to core courses were appropriately certificated.

Part 4: Follow-up

Future site visitations

1. OCS staff will follow-up in future site visits to observe evidence of:
 1. *foreign language instruction* as outlined in the approved charter
 2. *visual and performing arts curriculum* as outlined in the approved charter
 3. *afterschool tutoring support for underperforming students* as outlined in the approved charter
 4. *supplementary instruction for English learners* as outlined in the approved charter
2. OCS staff will follow-up in future site visits to interview teachers regarding the extent and effectiveness of professional development they receive in *recognizing gifted and talented students and applying differentiated instruction in the classroom*, as outlined in the approved charter.