



## OAKLAND INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY WELCOMES NEW IMMIGRANTS



While today's news is regularly filled with accounts of anti-immigrant sentiment, Oakland International Academy puts out a welcome mat for students from all over the world. The 400-student school in North Oakland, California attracted 800 visitors last year who were interested in learning more about its physical and emotional supports for newly arrived immigrants, its program for students who have missed multiple years of formal education, and a teacher-training program that prepares educators to serve new arrivals.

In 2016, NEPC's Schools of Opportunity program honored Oakland International with its silver-level recognition. And this past spring, the news site *EdSource* featured Oakland International in an article headlined *Innovative high school for new immigrant students a model in California*.

"Our school was designed to welcome kids whenever they came — whether it was the first day of school or April 15," Principal Carmelita Reyes told *EdSource*, "to be a place that would support them academically and socially and emotionally."

Oakland International Academy was opened in 2007 to serve the unique needs of recent arrivals from nations outside the U.S. The school was created through a partnership between the Oakland Unified School District and the Internationals Network for Public Schools, which had previously created similar high schools in New York City.

Innovative practices at the school include:

- Community walks in which groups of students lead teachers through their neighborhoods as they teach them to say phrases in their languages and share stories of how they came to arrive in Oakland.

- Teaching assistants and coaches for every teacher.
- A catch-up program called “Students with Interrupted Formal Education.”
- A course called “Survival English.”
- A partnership with a local food bank.
- A partnership with the [Reach Institute for School Leadership](#) that offers a teacher certification program to paraprofessionals at the school with bachelor’s degrees.

This latter partnership focuses on preparing the teachers to serve immigrants who are new arrivals. “They are working in our classrooms during the day and getting their credentials at night,” Principal Reyes told *EdSource*. “We’re going to be minting them and putting them out into the world as newcomer teachers.”

*Interested in learning more about Schools of Opportunity? Visit <http://www.schoolsofopportunity.org/> or email us at [opportunity@colorado.edu](mailto:opportunity@colorado.edu).*

## NEPC Resources on Schools of Opportunity

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