

The Oakland REACH's

Liberator Model



The Problem

Only **3 in 10 Black and brown kids in Oakland are reading at or above grade level**. According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, **"2/3 of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of the fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare."** The results are just as unacceptable for math. Our students are trapped in a failure loop – and our systems leaders too often do not see low-income Black and brown families as the partners and change agents they can be. This is why REACH exists.

The Journey to the Liberator Model

In summer 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, The Oakland REACH built our Virtual Family Hub, which provided high-dosage tutoring to Oakland K-2 students. The results were amazing: During the first phase of the Hub, 60% of K-2 students went up 2 or more reading levels on the district's SIPPs assessment and 30% went up 3 or more reading levels. These results were possible because adults centered kids learning first, and we're committed to teaching based on the science of reading.

All of this was accomplished with mamas and aunties in our communities. We wanted to know: *Could we inspire more parents and caregivers to step up in an even more powerful way as leaders in our children's education?*

From that question the Liberator Model was born. This model upskills parents and caregivers to be paid tutors, providing high-dosage tutoring in some of the lowest-performing schools.

Our model is unique because it creatively addresses five academic and socio-economic needs of both students and families.



Our first Liberator fellowship cohort graduates!

"Being a Literacy Liberator means being a student AND a teacher....you're teaching kiddos to read and you're also learning how to correctly teach them to read."

–Shanice



Academic Support

Liberators provide high-dosage tutoring during the school day.



Economic Mobility

Liberators are paid, with the option of full-time hours and benefits.



Workforce Development

Liberators gain marketable skills like G-suite certification, Salesforce, presentation and communication skills, and more.



Talent Pipeline

Liberators are untapped talent to fill national teacher shortages.



Social Emotional Learning

Liberators provide students and families with a sense of agency and belonging.

The Liberator Value and Experience

- **Meet our Liberators:** Our Liberators are primarily Black and Latino parents, caregivers, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, many with their children in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). We recruit our Liberators by canvassing in front of schools, talking to parents during drop-offs and pick-ups. [Watch this video from our fellowship graduation ceremony](#) and [this news story from CBS Bay Area](#) to hear from them firsthand!



Recruiting parents/caregivers in front of our elementary schools!

- **The Liberator Fellowship:** Liberators participate in a multi-week, paid fellowship where the REACH and our pedagogical partner provide Liberators with research-based literacy training, leadership development, and culture building. During the fellowship, we also provide application and onboarding support to help place our Liberators in OUSD schools.
- **The Infinite Value of a Liberator:** Liberators are proof that our communities are full of assets that always have existed, but too often are sidelined. Our Liberators can access a diverse growth trajectory—the opportunity to stay tutors, become teachers, coaches, or specialists, and/or go to/finish college.

“For a lot of children it gives them comfort to know it’s a mom, auntie, cousin—it’s someone that looks like them.”
—Myeisha

What’s on the horizon for the Liberator model

The 2023–24 school year will be our busiest year yet:

- **We’re training and coaching our existing tutors:** We’re supporting the training and retention of ~200 tutors, supporting 5,500 students across 38 schools.
- **We’re recruiting new tutors:** Our long-term goal, working together with OUSD, is to ensure that every student in K-8 has at least one tutor.
- **We’re planning our expansion into math:** We will be expanding the Liberator Model to math this Fall, partnering with OUSD to pilot a centrally-driven Tier 2 & 3 intervention model within a cohort of our lowest-performing elementary schools.
- **We’re codifying our model for impact and scale:** We are partnering with the [Center on Reinventing Public Education](#) to study our model. Our team of Parent Liberators are participating in site visits, assessing the learning conditions across our schools, highlighting school level conditions that support the successful implementation of high-dosage tutoring, and those that do not.
- **We’re sharing our model nationally:** There has been a ton of interest from organizations across the country who want to learn more about the Liberator model. We are excited to be building a network of organizations leaning in together to increase literacy and math outcomes.
- **And we’re advocating for what works—and only what works:** It’s really important that every child receives high-quality, Tier 1 instruction. We recognize that there are reading and math wars going on all across the country, and this often creates stagnation around progress. That’s where our advocacy superpower comes in—we will continue to be a powerful voice for what works.