Education Plan
A. 1 Educational Philosophy

The Organization and Its Education Model

The American Indian Model Schools (AIMS) is a nonprofit corporation designed to provide minorities and low-income students with a quality education. The organization's original 501(c)(3) was established in 1999 in Oakland, California, under the name American Indian Public Charter School. The name has since been changed to The American Indian Model Schools (AIMS).

The American Indian Model Schools currently consist of two middle schools, American Indian Public Charter School and American Indian Public Charter School II, and a high school, American Indian Public High School. They are all located in Oakland, California.

American Indian Public Charter School (AIPCS) and its sister schools use the education model that will henceforth in this charter be referred to as the American Indian Model (AIM or AIM Ed). Though not part of the same organization, Oakland Charter Academy (a middle school) and Oakland Charter High School also use AIM. AIM stresses high academic achievement through a structured learning environment and excellent attendance. Academic performance data collected since AIM's implementation in the year 2000 shows that this model is highly successful. (See the performance chart on page 12).

AIPCS was a charter school founded in 1996, with the explicit goal to serve the needs of the American Indian student population in Oakland. Unfortunately the school suffered from a lack of academic rigor, poor behavior management, low expectations, and low attendance. As a result of AIPCS's inability to live up to its charter's stated goals, The Oakland Unified School District threatened to shut the school down in 2000.

Fortunately, the District gave a new leader named Dr. Ben Chavis, who spent many years as a teacher and administrator in Arizona, the opportunity to try something different at AIPCS. He did. Chavis implemented AIM and transformed the nearly shuttered charter school into a major success. The test scores and attendance rates climbed year after year. (See the chart on page 12).

In 2010, AIPCS's test scores made it the #1 academic public middle school in California. In fact, in 2010 AIPCS was ranked **the highest performing public secondary school in the state of California.** This was with a student body that was 99% minority and 88% socio-economically disadvantaged.

AIPCS also received prestigious national recognition when it won a Blue Ribbon Award in 2006. It was the first public school in Oakland, California, to earn the Blue Ribbon. In 2009, the school was honored as a National Title I Distinguished School, one of only two nominees from California.

All of the Oakland schools using the American Indian Model are among the top 1% of public secondary schools in California. Since its inception, 100% of seniors at American Indian Public High School (AIPHS) have been accepted to four-year universities, including Cornell, MIT, Stanford, UC Berkeley, and Syracuse. In 2011, every AIPHS senior was accepted to a campus of the University of California, which is the highest ranked public university system in the world. AIPCS, AIPHS, and AIPCS II were all named California Distinguished Schools in 2011.

On a scale of 1,000 points called the Academic Performance Index, in which a score of 800 has been identified by the California Department of Education as on target, the Oakland schools using AIM had the following scores in 2010:

American Indian Public Charter School: 988
American Indian Public High School: 976
American Indian Public Charter School II: 974
Oakland Charter Academy: 953
Oakland Charter High School: 961

As these statistics demonstrate, AIM has been used with our target population of inner-city minority and socio-economically disadvantaged students to great academic success.

In Cato Institute's Policy Analysis #677, published on June 6, 2011, Andrew J. Coulson states: "The top-performing charter networks, like top-ranked American Indian charter schools, play a transformative role in children's educational and career prospects, and lay bare the failure of our conventional educational arrangements to fulfill each child's potential. We should indeed strive to preserve and replicate them."

Coulson further notes about California schools: "Overall, the American Indian charter schools network has more than four times as many passing AP scores per black and Hispanic student as its closest charter network competitor (Knowledge Is Power Program). In mathematics and the sciences, American Indian has more than 20 times as many passing scores per black/Hispanic student as its closest charter competitors, and six to nine times as many such scores as even the selective Lowell and Whitney high schools."

The school community of American Indian Model Schools seeks to create a middle school in Tucson (to be called Tucson AIM Middle School or Tucson AIM for short) with a strong academic emphasis on English-language arts and mathematics that would serve inner-city students from socio-economically disadvantaged families, as well as others interested in attending. It is our ethos that a strong academic background in English, mathematics, history, and science, coupled with an emphasis on structure and discipline, are the pillars of an effective academic program, which enable students to attain a higher education and become productive members in a capitalist society. This will be a collaborative effort between school, family and community.

Tucson AIM Middle School would be the newest school to employ the American Indian Model of education (AIM), and would strive to educate inner-city students in Tucson, Arizona.

Committed to academic excellence, Tucson AIM's goal would be to provide structure and foster student achievement in traditionally underserved urban students by doing the following:

1) Improving the academic achievement of all students
2) Focusing on student attendance
3) Supporting effective educators
4) Providing a structured learning environment

We are committed to achieving our goal that all students graduate as critical thinkers who are well-informed, engaged, responsible, and contributing citizens who are prepared to succeed in the high school, college and career of their choosing.

The Program of Instruction

Mission

Tucson AIM will serve 235 inner-city students in sixth through eighth grade. The focus of Tucson AIM is excellent student attendance (99%) that helps to ensure the students' academic needs are met. The school will provide students with an education to enhance their academic skills in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, science, social science, business and humanities, so they may compete in and be productive members of a free market capitalistic society. This will be a collaborative effort between school, family and community.

Educational Approach

The middle grades are formative years when students are seeking answers to fundamental questions about life and identity. They are deciding on values and standards, which will determine their successes in the future. This is a time for them to explore. Tucson AIM will provide students an opportunity to do so in a structured learning environment. Tucson AIM will instill the values of mutual respect and hard work.

AIM's self-contained classrooms, a focus on English-language arts, math, science and social studies, expectations for hard work in and out of the classroom, an extended-year calendar (of 196 instructional days including mandatory summer school for all students), family culture, and other components provide the structure, rigor, and targeted intervention necessary for ensuring that all students have the opportunity to thrive academically and behaviorally. (See the detailed schematic breakdown on AIM on p. 6-10 in this section.)

Tucson AIM will provide a rigorous, standards-based curriculum aligned with Arizona state standards and Common Core standards for language arts and math. Tucson AIM's

educational program is founded on the belief that high expectations lead to high-achieving students. Tucson AIM courses will prepare students to not just meet but exceed the Common Core and Arizona Standards for the relevant subject at each grade level. Tucson AIM believes its academic success will be based, in part, on the emphasis placed on language arts and math.

What It Means to Be an Educated Person in the 21st Century

The demands of the 21st century require that students be highly literate. As we move deeper into an information age, it is imperative that Tucson AIM students learn how to understand and critically analyze the information they encounter. One of Tucson AIM's chief goals is to furnish students with strong reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills by providing 90-120 minutes of language arts instruction each day. This not only helps students raised in households where a language other than English is spoken, but through a rigorous study of language arts, all students will acquire the ability to comprehend the written and spoken word and to transmit their ideas and insights clearly and compellingly.

The ability to understand and analyze the written word is central to all academic subjects. By focusing on language arts, Tucson AIM students will be better equipped to understand the material covered in other subjects. To be a competent member of society and to succeed in post-secondary education, students must be competent readers in the core subject areas.

To meet the demands of the 21st century, students need a rigorous curriculum in mathematics as well. Tucson AIM students will be required to take 90-120 minutes of math each day beginning in sixth grade. Since many college-bound students enrolling in science or engineering programs will be required to take calculus as a prerequisite for their majors, Tucson AIM will adequately prepare its students to accomplish this goal by preparing and requiring all eighth graders to take Algebra I. This will set them on the right academic track for advanced math in high school.

To prepare our students to be educated citizens, we will instill in them the values of hard work and self-discipline. Tucson AIM will be highly structured with a tough disciplinary system that rewards hard work and productivity. Tucson AIM students will learn to be responsible for their course work and their actions, learning to take pride in their efforts and consequent academic successes. We will have high expectations for our students, pushing them to achieve to the best of their ability and to be motivated, lifelong learners. Students will also be taught that there are consequences for being lazy and/or neglecting responsibilities.

How Learning Best Occurs

According to a study conducted by education researchers Lance T. Izumi and Harold C. Doran (2004), a structured classroom environment and a teacher-centered curricular approach proved to be the most successful framework in effectively educating urban

minority youth. We will incorporate this teacher-centered environment, which has been extremely successful at all of our AIM schools.

Socio-economically disadvantaged students who have a strong academic foundation are more likely to succeed in school and life. The key to a successful middle school is strong administrative leadership, excellent teachers, and a structured learning environment that focuses on hard work and academics. Families and community members will be continuously encouraged to participate in students' educations throughout the year. It is through a system of productive working relationships that boundaries and expectations are established. Individuals are encouraged through peer relationships and customs to work together as a family. We will incorporate the concept of working as a family into the Tucson AIM school structure.

The student per teacher ratio will average 20:1 by the third year. This will allow students and teachers to develop a productive working relationship in a small school setting. Students are expected to attend school daily and follow a prescribed schedule. Additional support and learning opportunities will happen before school begins at 8:30 AM, after school between 3:15 and 4:15 PM, and on weekends, as necessary, to ensure the success of all students.

Though small class size alone cannot guarantee academic achievement, research shows that it does often contribute to higher levels of academic success. With fewer students in a classroom, teachers can better meet their needs. At AIPCS small, self–contained classes have resulted in higher attendance rates (99%), reduced dropout rates (0%), and increased academic performance for our minority students of socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Classes at Tucson AIM will be self-contained, with each teacher responsible for instruction in math, English, history, and science. In addition, whenever possible, teachers will loop with their students in a rotation that includes sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. As outlined in *Free to Learn*, co-authored by Lance Izumi and Xiaochin Claire Yan (2006), the "'extended family' concept is one of the keys to American Indian Public Charter School's stable learning environment and its ability to maintain discipline among students. The students bond and help each other academically and encourage one another to behave."

Furthermore "looping," or the practice of students following their students from one grade level to the next, has been shown by Joan Gaustad in "Implementing Looping" (1998) to increase confidence and reduce anxiety in many children, enabling them to thrive academically and socially. Gaustad also states: "Most teachers [who used looping] find that students remain on task far longer at the end of the first year; accordingly, teachers estimate that they gain a month of learning time at the start of the second year."

Students at Tucson AIM will build productive relationships with motivated teachers who will provide them with a better chance for higher academic achievement. As a small school, Tucson AIM will be able to facilitate these interactions. Tucson AIM students

will be engaged in learning with the guidance and instruction of skilled teachers. The learning environment will be personalized. *Crazy Like a Fox: One Principal's Triumph in the Inner City* by Dr. Ben Chavis with Carey Blakely (NAL hardcover, 2009) shows that AIM schools allow students and teachers to develop more intensive, long-term relationships that enable better conditions for teaching and learning.

Tucson AIM will cultivate motivated students who are prepared to enter high school and college. The curriculum will be rigorous with instruction designed for active engagement in the academic learning process. Small classrooms and a structured learning environment with an emphasis on language arts, math, science, and social science will ensure that students build a strong academic foundation. The classroom structure incorporates a social-skills program that will create a forum for reinforcing respect among students and Tucson AIM staff.

Tucson AIM will work closely with American Indian Model Schools, Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth program, Chicanos por la Causa, and other community organizations to provide services for Tucson AIM students.

Tutorial services are mandatory for all students who test below grade level on Arizona AIMS tests, or whose grades or classroom performance suggest additional support is necessary for success.

The faculty will consist of highly qualified teachers who are well supported and trained in the American Indian Model of Education. Teachers will hold appropriate teaching certifications. Professional development, teacher planning time, and other opportunities for collaboration will be scheduled on a regular and on-going basis to support teachers throughout their career. In establishing a professional teaching environment, Tucson AIM will ensure collaborative planning time for teachers to share best practices with their colleagues, cultivate mentoring relationships with new teachers, analyze student data among all students within the grade level they teach, and plan core curriculum.

Teaching Methods

Tucson AIM's ultimate goal is to begin preparing students for the rigors of high school and college. The primary teaching method used at the top universities is direct instruction. To ensure that students develop the skills required to succeed in a lecture-based system, and because it has proven highly effective in previous years, a vast majority of the curriculum will be delivered through direct instruction. The direct teaching method used at AIM schools has proven very effective with our student population, as evidenced by the students' test results.

Differentiated Instruction: Teachers will "raise the floor" in their classrooms, teaching to the level of the highest performing students. Differentiation will take place in the classroom, but will be represented primarily by the assistance of lower-performing students who will receive additional instruction outside of regular class time. Students

who are not achieving academically will participate in small-group tutoring with their classroom teacher, a resource teacher, or a student tutor.

Student Research Projects and Scientific Inquiry/Experimentation: Students will be required to conduct research for various projects and to present their findings via a written report or oral presentation. In science classes, students will pose questions, formulate hypotheses, and test those hypotheses through experiments.

Pre-AP vertical teaming: Students will learn the analytical and critical thinking skills necessary to be successful on the Advanced Placement exams they will take as high school students. As opposed to teaching specific facts and dates, during weekly vertical teaming exercises, teachers will assess and critique the quality of student thinking and writing through critical-thinking assignments.

Below is a schematic representation of the educational philosophy and framework of the American Indian Model. Followed by that is a graph demonstrating the continuous academic improvement of our original school, AIPCS.

The American Indian Model of Education (AIM to Educate/AIM-Ed)

FAMILY CULTURE

1. Families are guaranteed if they follow and support our model, their children will be prepared to graduate from college.
2. We create an extended family with administration, teachers, staff, students, family, and selected community. Students and staff are expected to clean and take care of the school property.
3. Teachers spend multiple years with their students teaching all core academic subjects, which creates an environment of strong academics and family culture.
4. When a 6th grade student is acting up in class, he or she will be sent to sit on the floor in a 7th or 8th grade class.
5. All students are provided free tutoring in any subject before school, after school, or on Saturday. Students are employed as tutors to work with other students who need academic support in core academic subjects.
6. Former AIPCS students enrolled in college are hired to work with our current students.

7. No student has been expelled since the American Indian Model was implemented in 2000.

ACCOUNTABILITY/STRUCTURE

1. We analyze all student test results to ability group for mathematics and sports. A student's state and national test results are used to gauge the accuracy of achievement in the classroom.

2. State testing is held one week after staff and students return from Easter Break. There are no field trips until after testing. Only students who have worked hard and followed the rules may attend field trips.

3. Progress reports are sent home every three weeks for students who are failing. A "C-" is a failing grade. Report cards are distributed every nine weeks. Administrators must sign off on all student progress reports and report cards before they are sent home.

4. We retain those students not willing to work toward improving their academic or social skills to advance to the next grade level.

5. Students are informed of their academic progress and the school's academic progress continuously. Students are expected to set academic goals and work toward them.

6. We demand hard work and high academic expectations from all students and staff.

7. We hire smart administrators and teachers based on their high academic achievement and ability to follow the American Indian Model. We fire administrators and teachers who do not meet those expectations. We reward all employees who adhere to the model.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

1. Teachers provide students with 90-120 instructional minutes in language arts and 90-120 instructional minutes in mathematics each day. Teachers assign a minimum of two hours of homework each night.

2. We implement professional development where administrators and teachers train their colleagues, while students train incoming students on the culture and expectations of the American Indian Model.

3. We set forth a rigorous academic program aligned with standards-based textbooks and a uniform grading scale that all administrators and teachers must follow.

4. After-school detention and Saturday school serve as consequences for students who broke school rules.

5. We celebrate Christopher Columbus Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and other various holidays by attending school. This attendance policy was created by students and staff.

6. We follow an extended school year with an average of 196 instructional school days with mandatory summer programs that include: AIM summer school, Stanford Academic Institute of Learning (SAIL), Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY), and University of California at Berkeley's Academic Talent Development Program (ATDP).

7. Teachers finish core academic curriculum textbooks by April 5th each year. After state testing, teachers begin the next grade level's core curriculum of mathematics and language arts.

FREE MARKET CAPITALISM

1. There are clear, consistent, and high expectations in the student contract that are enforced by all employees. Student consequences (detention, Saturday School, cleaning, etc.) are given for not following school rules.

2. Families choose to enroll their children in an American Indian modeled public school. State and federal funding follow the student to the family's school of choice. This is the same funding model of vocational schools, community colleges, and universities in The United States.

3. We focus on excellent student attendance. Students and staff are given cash awards for perfect attendance, hard work, and for reinforcing the school's mission statement and credo.

4. Job descriptions are posted that cause administrator or teacher applicants to self-select out from applying for a job with our school.

5. Financial rewards are given to all employees for increased student achievement on the state tests.

6. We encourage classes to compete with each other and instill in students the values of a free market capitalistic society.

7. The administrative leadership focuses on fiscal responsibility and a superior business model. There is no fundraising by families. The school pays for student trips, the SAT, the PSAT, and other costs related to students.

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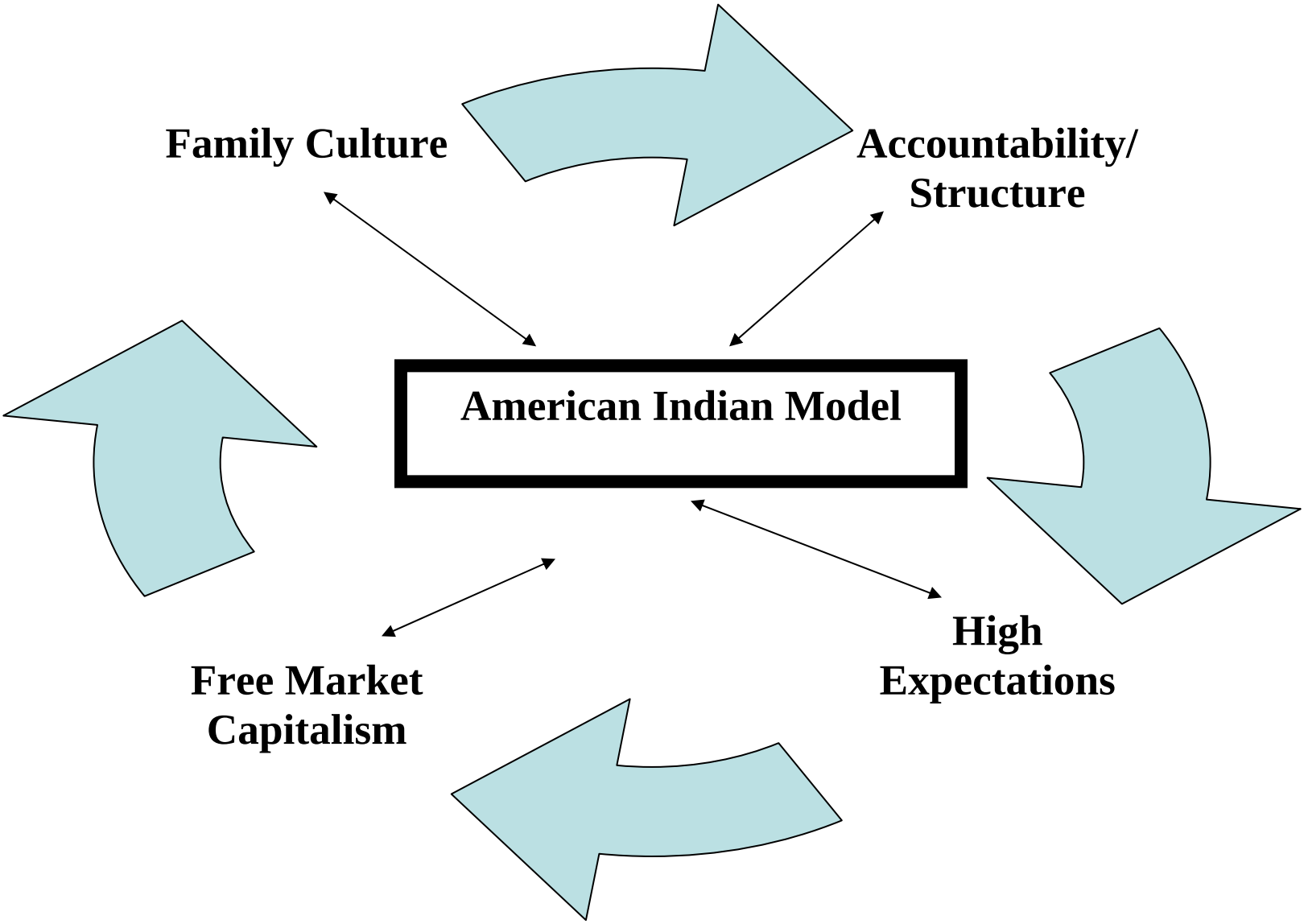
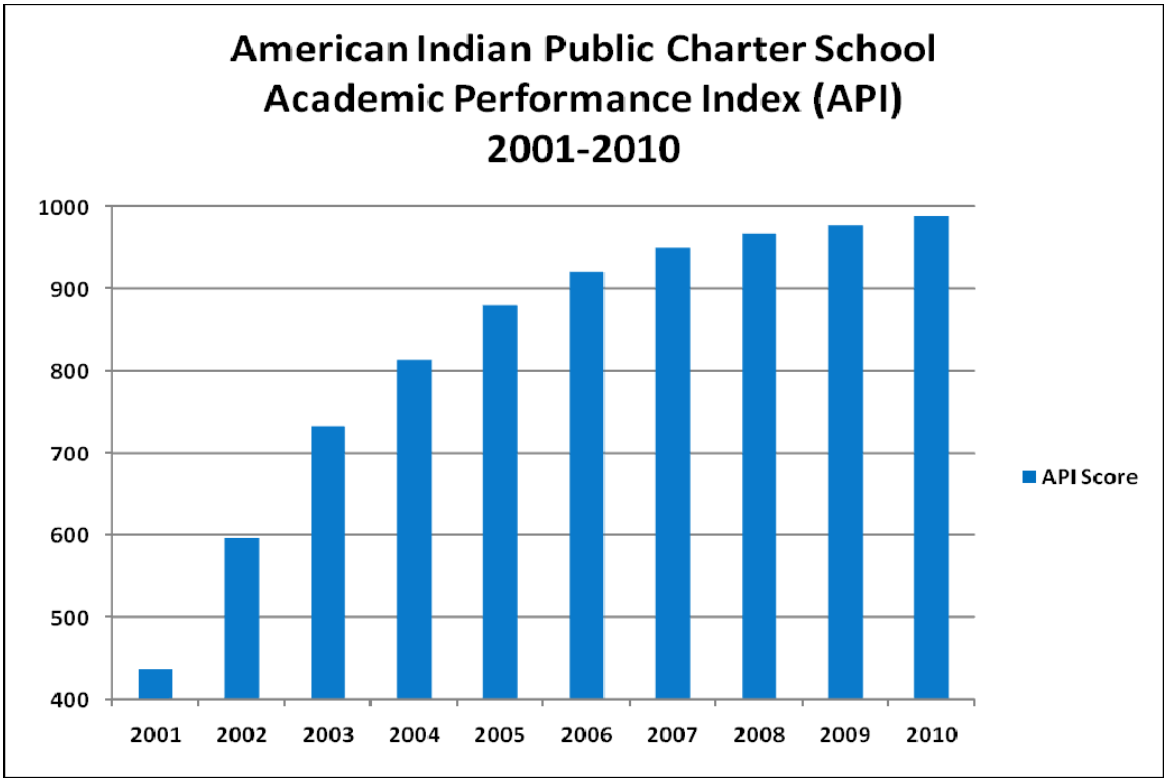

Family Culture
Accountability/
Structure
American Indian Model
High
Expectations
Free Market
Capitalism

American Indian Public Charter School

3637 Magee Avenue
Oakland, CA 94619
Phone: (510) 482-6000
www.aimschools.org



Year	API Score	Met Growth Target/NCLB
2000 - 2001	436	Yes
2001 - 2002	596	Yes
2002 - 2003	732	Yes
2003 - 2004	813	Yes
2004 - 2005	880	Yes
2005 - 2006	920	Yes
2006 - 2007	950	Yes
2007 - 2008	967	Yes
2008 - 2009	977	Yes
2009 - 2010	988	Yes

The American Indian Public Charter School (Grades 6-8) has the highest API score of any school in Oakland. AIPCS received the Blue Ribbon Award, which is given to the top 200 schools in the Nation. The students exceeded the standards set forth by the *No Child Left Behind Act* each year. Note that 88% of the students qualified for free and reduced lunch, 99% of the students were minorities, and 86% of the students spoke English as a second language in 2010.