

# THE BLACK PANTHER

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## Inside

• **Johnny Spain Gets 22 Years  
In Adjustment Center** PAGE 3

CHARLES GARRY FILES MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL

• **Nonvoters Expected To  
Exceed 70 Million** PAGE 5

PUBLIC APATHY IN ELECTIONS MOUNTS

• **Bleak Outlook For  
"Shuttle Diplomacy"** PAGE 7

KISSINGER INVITES HIMSELF TO MEET  
AFRICAN LEADERS

• **"Eternal Glory To  
Chairman Mao"** PAGE 13, PAGE 17

REVOLUTIONARY CHINESE LEADER DIES AT 82

## Creative Curriculum, 150 Students

# OAKLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL EXPANDS SERVICES TO YOUTH



The popular and innovative Oakland Community School, one of the most influential educational institutions in the country, began its sixth year with an expanded curriculum and an enrollment of 150 predominantly Black and poor students.

(Oakland, Calif.) — The Oakland Community School (OCS), one of the most influential educational institutions in the state of California, began its sixth year of quality, innovative education here on Monday, September 13, with an expanded curriculum designed to better serve its 150 predominantly Black and poor students.

Fresh from the three-month summer vacation, OCS students — many of whom are new to the School — are starting the year off not only with an enlarged curriculum but with a freshly painted and beautifully redecorated building, the product of long hours of hard work voluntarily donated by parents, staff members and other supporters of the popular model East Oakland school. There was a feeling of excitement and anticipation as the children settled down for what promises to be a challenging school year.

In past years, OCS students, ages 2½ to 11, were organized into eight groups. That structure has been changed this year, however, with the creation of 12 levels that allow the School to expand its curriculum into secondary education.

Providing some insight into why the curriculum has been enlarged, OCS Director Ericka Huggins explained that last year an eight-year-old boy attending the School excelled in mathematics, performing on a high school level. Since he was too young to go to high school but had the ability to do some high school work, the OCS staff began to see the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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At the OCS children of various ages are able to learn at their own rate of speed, receiving specialized instruction in areas in which they excel.

# OAKLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

need for creating a new curriculum structure to meet his needs and those of others like him.

The 12 levels—1 through 3, preschool; 4 through 6, primary, and 7-12, secondary — provide a method whereby children who excel in a particular area can receive the specialized instruction they require. Other children, then, are not pressured to perform beyond their abilities. A 10-year-old child may be in Level 11's mathematics class but in Level 8 for instruction in Language Arts.

In this way, the overall educational goal is achieved—enabling the children to learn at their own rate of speed, a situation almost totally lacking in the highly competitive atmosphere of the public school system. (See next week's issue of THE BLACK PANTHER for details on the OCS curriculum.)

## STOREFRONT BUILDING

Since it first opened in a storefront building with 25 students in January, 1971, the OCS has steadily strengthened its educational program. Today, it is a source of inspiration for educators who come from throughout the state and across the nation to view the School as well as nonprofessional people anxious to start a similar program in their own communities. The OCS is so highly respected in the community that already there is a waiting list of over 100 children.

Besides its model approach to education—focusing on teaching the children *how* to think, not *what* to think—the School provides three free meals a day, free medical care and clothing for those who need it. Classes include Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, Art, Music, Physical Education and Environmental Studies. Field trips are a vital part of the School's curriculum, in line with the OCS motto, "The World Is

The Children's Classroom."

The 35 OCS staff members—both paid and volunteers—come from all over the country, many having given up higher-paying jobs because of their commitment to the kind of education the School provides. They are more than teachers: they serve as friends and counselors to their students and totally join with the children in the learning experience, a unique experience that children everywhere deserve. □

The children of the Oakland Community School exhibit a closeness in work or at play that is seldom found in the public school system.



The youngest participants in the innovative school program offered by the OCS are the youth in Group 1.

## THIS WEEK IN BLACK HISTORY

### September 13, 1663

The first serious slave conspiracy in colonial America occurred on September 13, 1663, in Gloucester County, Virginia. The plot conceived by Black slaves and White indentured servants was eventually betrayed.

### September 12, 1787

Prince Hall, a Black Revolutionary War veteran, received a charter from the Grand Lodge of England for the first Black Masonic lodge in America, African Lodge No. 459, on September 12, 1787.

### September 17, 1861

The school which laid the foundation for Hampton Institute was established at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, on September 17, 1861, with a Black teacher, Mary Peake.

### September 18, 1895

Booker T. Washington delivered his "Atlanta Compromise" speech at the Cotton Exposition in Atlanta, Georgia, on September 18, 1895.

### September 12, 1956

Black students entered a Clay, Kentucky, elementary school under National Guard protection on September 12, 1956. They were later barred from the school on September 17.

### September 12, 1962

A fourth Black church burned down near Dawson, Georgia, on September 12, 1962. Three White men admitted to burning the church and were sentenced to seven-year prison terms for arson.

### September 15, 1963

Four young Black girls were killed in the bombing of Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church on September 15, 1963. It was revealed earlier this year that the FBI had prior knowledge of the tragic act but did nothing to prevent it.

### September 12, 1969

Robert F. Williams, who was forced to flee the U.S. due to his advocacy of Black armed self-defense, returned to the country on September 12, 1969, after eight years of exile. In radio broadcasts from Hanoi, North Vietnam, Havana, Cuba, and Peking, China, Williams called for an armed revolt in America.