

Students Study “Missing” King Ideas

By _____

Some students at _____ High say next year’s celebration of Martin Luther King’s birthday will be like none other seen or heard before in Oakland public schools.

“All I ever heard each year around his birthday was that he had a dream,” said _____. “I didn’t have a clue about many of his ideas that went much further than what we always hear. It’s almost as if someone thought many of King’s ideas were too dangerous for us to know about.”

To make sure their fellow students learn about the full range of ideas King taught, they plan to hold a teach-in next year on the slain leader and the freedom struggles of the 1950s and 1960s.

Here are some of the ideas and words the students want others to hear:

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_____, an _____th grader at _____, now thinks it is “weird that every assembly and every news report I’ve seen on King repeats one speech of his over and over and over, as if that’s all he ever said.”

“It’s as if he were frozen in time and we’re not allowed to see how he developed and went deeper and became even more radical in his last four years of life.”

“For example,” _____ said, “King talked about _____ and he said, ‘_____.’”

“_____ thinks he/she knows why most Americans never hear about this side of Dr. King. _____,” s/he said.

S/he went on to explain why s/he agrees/disagrees with some of King’s lesser-known ideas. _____,” s/he said.

_____ said that she/he understands the connection between the problems of African Americans and similar issues faced by other people of color and many whites in the U.S. and by people around the world. Some of these common problems King addressed are, “_____” s/he said.

_____ said King’s view of what it takes to get societies to solve these problems are usually ignored in their textbooks and in the media generally. For example, s/he pointed out that King called for _____. S/he explained why s/he agreed/disagreed with that view. “_____”

_____ said that what s/he discovered about King’s ideas was so interesting that s/he already has ideas about issues s/he’d like to study in his/her U.S. History class during the rest of the school year. For example, s/he wants to investigate this question: _____?