

Ararat Charter School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 19647330121079

County: Los Angeles

District (Local Educational Agency): Los Angeles Unified

School: Ararat Charter School

Demographics

Enrollment: 333 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: Yes

Type of Program: School-wide

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: Yes

Overview

Ararat Charter School is located in Van Nuys, California. The school is on a split campus. Grades K and 1 are on the initial campus which is a private facility. This beautiful facility houses six classrooms, a media center, health office, teacher's lounge, cafetorium, and a nice sized yard. The second site is a co-location on the beautiful Erwin Street Elementary School campus.

Ararat Charter is the first school to teach both Armenian and Spanish to all its students. Academic rigor is the norm, yet the arts are not pushed aside but are used to complement the core curriculum. Cultural awareness and understanding, as well as the six pillars of character are taught, emphasized, and valued at Ararat Charter School. With a dedicated teaching staff, involved parents, and enrichment and intervention programs we expect our students to Climb Towards College and Career Readiness.

The Mission at Ararat Charter School is our commitment to educate students to their maximum potential in an environment that actively engages students in rigorous and

relevant programs, promotes academic excellence and values cultural and linguistic diversity, and creative expression.

Developing and nurturing the whole child is the primary objective of all Ararat Charter School programs.

Our Children Will...

- achieve academic excellence in an environment that emphasizes critical thinking, self-inquiry, and collaboration
- engage in Fine Arts programs, such as visual and performing arts
- acquire literacy in information technology
- demonstrate positive attitudes and acquire appreciation of cultural diversity
- act with a sense of civic responsibility and demonstrate social consciousness
- practice good habits of personal fitness and well-being

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Constructivist Model

Length of Model Program/Practice: 5–8 years

Target Area(s): Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Use of Technology

Target Population(s): Hispanic, White, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners

Strategies Used: Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Professional Development, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

ACS is a dynamic and engaging learning community where students are challenged and inspired to develop as learners, leaders, and citizens of their school and community. ACS believes that each and every child can be academically successful, and that each and every student is unique. ACS continues its commitment of providing an average class size of 26. This enables teachers to provide differentiated instruction and in class interventions consistently. Teachers use meaningful assessment methods in order to meet the needs of each student. ACS also offers curriculum embedded and explicit intervention programs with focus in Language Arts. Based on ACS Benchmark

assessments, students scoring basic and below basic, participate in the intervention programs.

In addition, the highlights of our innovative features include:

Curriculum Maps: ACS has extensive Curriculum Maps that are created to help teachers stay on track and to ensure curricular continuity. The standards based curriculum and Curriculum Maps that are aligned with the common core state standards (CCSS), provide vertical and horizontal articulation, thus minimizing gaps in the student's learning. Each guide is specific to the grade-level and details when particular content standards should be taught and/or assessed. It carefully outlines the curriculum to ensure vertical and horizontal articulation.

Constructivism: ACS has created a learning environment that includes meaningful content with choices for learning: adequate time, space and materials, immediate and meaningful feedback and benchmarks of progress, enriched environment and collaborative learning opportunities. The Constructivist teaching used at ACS, emphasizes thinking, understanding, reasoning and applying knowledge while it does not neglect basic skills. It is guided by five basic elements: 1) activating prior knowledge, 2) acquiring knowledge, 3) understanding knowledge, 4) using knowledge, and 5) reflecting on knowledge (Tolman and Hardy, 1995).

Ararat Charter School's certificated evaluation processes is rigorous and provides a pathway towards the educator's incremental growth and development. This system allows teachers to set measurable goals, define strategies, and collect data that are based on student achievement. This evaluation process helps to ensure teacher feedback, reflection, growth and professional development.

Staff Development: ACS' rigorous staff development has also contributed to the success of its programs. One of the major contributing factors toward academic success is teacher training. The Charter School provides 9 days of staff development during the summer. These days are held on noncontract days as reflected in our academic calendar. Each year, the school assesses its staff development needs for the subsequent years of implementation.

World Languages: In addition to learning English, students at Ararat Charter School learn Armenian and Spanish.

Implementation and Monitoring

Ararat Charter School includes standards based summative benchmark assessments. The Ararat Charter School benchmark, also referred to as Multiple Measure Assessments (MMA), measures student progress each trimester using Criterion Referenced Tests (CRT) in English Language Arts, mathematics, science and social studies. These assessments will be administered at the end of each trimester.

In the area of writing, students in grades 1–5 are assessed on the basis of the genre identified in the California ELA/ELD framework. Student writing is assessed on a five

point rubric, which is aligned with common core state standards. Teams of teachers meet together to analyze student work to evaluate student progress towards meeting the standards.

All benchmark assessments are aligned with the standards based assessment tools provided with the adopted programs in English Language Arts, math, science and social studies.

The assessment results are reported in five performance levels: exceed, proficient, basic, below basic and far below basic. At the end of each trimester, teachers analyze the results of this summative assessment. For students scoring below basic “meeting standards”, teachers prepare individual student profiles, identify individual student needs and provide appropriate interventions. The programs includes participating in the Voyager Passport program as part of differentiated instruction, and after school and summer school programs.

All teachers consistently analyze standards based curriculum-embedded data at monthly grade level meetings and staff development sessions. Released time is also be provided on as needed basis. The staff then decides on curriculum calibration (how well the materials reflect the standards), and make instructional decisions. Teachers collaborate and design effective small group and differentiated instruction focused on specific strategies.

Results and Outcomes

Smarter Balance State Assessments Results

English Language Arts/Mathematics

EL's

Our English Learner sub group has shown a growth of 14.68% on standards met/exceeded on SBAC from 15–16 to 16–17 school year.

In the area of mathematics, our English Learners has shown an overall grown of 19.49% in standards met/exceeded

SED

Our SED (Socioeconomically Disadvantage) sub group students has shown growth in English Language Arts in standard met/exceeded by 9.42%

Our SED students meeting/exceeding standards in Mathematics increased by 17.39%

SPED

Our SPED students did not make progress in the area of English Language Arts

Although we saw a 7% decline in students meeting/exceeding standards, our SPED students nearly meeting the standards increased from 13% to 61.54%. In addition, our students not meeting the standard decreased from 80% to 38.46%.

Latino

Our Latino students had a 8.82% increase in English Language Arts

In Math, our Latino students had a 11.06% increase

Overall:

In English Language Arts, ACS students increased 7.42%

In Mathematics, ACS students had a growth of 16.57%