

Lawton Alternative School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 38684786041339

County: San Francisco

District (Local Educational Agency): San Francisco Unified

School: Lawton Alternative School

Demographics

Enrollment: 403 students

Location Description: Urban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

Lawton Alternative School is a K–8 city-wide school. We are a combination elementary (403 students) and middle school (205 students). One sixth of the students come from our local zip code. We serve families from diverse backgrounds across the city. Approximately 25% of our students are English learners. 75% of our students come from an Asian background and over 51% of our students are Socio-Economically Disadvantaged. 6.5% of Lawton’s students are Latino, 3% African Americans, and about 7% are White. Approximately 9% receive Special Education services.

Families choose Lawton because of our strong academics, excellent arts and music enrichment, commitment to outdoor education, and our stable, experienced, and highly qualified teaching staff.

The classroom teacher provides students with a rigorous, differentiated, and supportive academic curriculum as well as physical education and social-emotional curriculum that follow district and state standards. Working with our classroom teachers, funded by both school site funds and by the district through the generous support of San Francisco

parcel-taxpayers, we have a part time physical education teacher, an art teacher and music teacher providing all grade levels enrichment by experts in their field. In addition, we have a garden teacher funded by the Parent Teacher Association, and additional visual and performing arts such as drumming, dance, and music in conjunction with the SFArtsEd foundation. The school also pays for a part-time Playworks recess coach to help train teachers, junior coaches, and students on positive use of recess time.

Mission:

Lawton K–8 Alternative School seeks to prepare each student to achieve their maximum potential academically, culturally, socially, and emotionally in an environment that fosters respect for all.

Vision:

Students at Lawton are encouraged to do their personal best, become independent critical thinkers, strive to reach their full academic potential, be joyful learners, and understand that tenacity and overcoming mistakes and setbacks are keys to long term success. We endeavor to become better citizens through adherence to our motto, "Respect, Responsibility and Compassion."

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Visual and Performing Arts

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Visual and Performing Arts

Target Population(s): American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Health Support, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Implementation of Academic Standards Basics (Teachers, Instructional Materials, Facilities)

Description

Our limited LCAP funds were used to provide academic supports directly through differentiated curriculum with the purchase of leveled libraries as well as academic intervention. With both district support and site funds, we are indirectly supporting academic achievement and access and equity by providing a rich and robust visual and performing arts program to encourage student engagement, attendance and joyful learning.

At every grade level from kindergarten to fifth grade, students partake in hands on art classes, singing at lower grades (kindergarten to second grade), instruments and singing at upper grades (3rd, 4th and 5th), dance of various cultures such as hip-hop, ballet, and contemporary.

The district Visual and Performing Arts department provides our site with funding for 1.2 FTE of instruction. The site pays for an additional .6 FTE so that we have a full time art teacher who works part time for elementary school (.8 FTE) and part time for middle school (.2 FTE) and a part time music teacher who work four days a week at our site providing music lessons for elementary school (.64 FTE) and middle school school (.16 FTE). In addition, the site pays for extended hours for the music teacher to teach band and orchestra classes four days a week during the zero period (before middle school). The art and music teachers are evaluated by the site administration along with their district coordinators.

In addition, the site contracts with the SFARTED Project, the San Francisco Ballet, and a private hip-hop teacher to provide additional classes. Kindergarten students receive dance classes, first grade students receive rhythms classes using a variety of percussion instruments, second grade students receive choral instruction, and fourth and fifth grade students receive musical theater instruction. The third grade students receive dance instruction. All elementary students also receive hip-hop instruction funded by the PTA for a 9 week period in the spring and with a culminating school wide performance with all grade levels in a school wide end of year carnival.

The SFARTSED Project solicits teacher evaluation of their programs annually. In addition, site administration regularly does walk through observations to make sure that classes are taught in an age appropriate way.

This program serves all students, both general ed and severely disabled students with access to the arts. By doing so, it achieves its aims of providing artistic outlets and joyful learning to our students. Second grade students perform in a choral concert in the spring while all elementary students perform in both a winter and spring music concert by conducted by their music teacher - all participate during the day and many perform again in the evening. By giving students an opportunity to regularly perform on stage, students build their public engagement skills and presence as well as build self-confidence.

Implementation and Monitoring

The district supports 1.2 FTE for visual and performing arts. The school site pays for an additional .6 FTE, an additional 140 extend hours for additional instrumental music at middle school to continue what was started in fourth and fifth grades, and the PTA pays for a spring hip-hop program so students can perform in front of their peers and parents during the end of year carnival.

Parents are informed of concerts and regularly attend. The performances have the added benefit of creating positive interactions with parents who have traditionally had a

negative experience with school. They see their children on stage in a joyous state of performance. Parents who resist coming to parent-teacher conferences come to see their children perform. This creates a more positive atmosphere and a sense of alliance among school staff and parents.

Parent involvement through the PTA and school site council is also important in helping solicit support for making the arts a priority in site funding.

Teachers are required to attend the sessions that are taught by SFARTSED instructors. As such, they are exposed as well to various performing arts instruction.

The district art and music teachers attend professional development meetings offered by the school district's Visual and Performing Arts department. The SFARTSED Project instructors are trained through their programs before coming to the site. New instructors through their program also work as interns with trained instructors before instructing classes on their own.

Site and district administrators monitor and evaluate the art and music teacher. The SFARTSED Project solicits annual evaluations by classroom teachers to make sure that their instructors are following district priorities.

Results and Outcomes

Teacher feedback is regularly solicited on the effectiveness of our arts enrichment program. The feedback instructs the school site council's conversations when setting funding priorities for the following academic year.

There are many factors that explain the positive data that compares our school to the district in terms of chronic absenteeism and EL progress such as office follow through with absent students, school outreach, veteran teachers, and sense of safety. There is no direct link between the following statistics and our Model Program/Practice, however, our Model Program/Practice provides a joyful outlet for all our students.

Chronic absenteeism among African American students at our school is 22.2% (down 5.6% from the year before) which compares to the district rate of 27.4% (up 4.2% from the year before). Chronic absenteeism of our EL students is 3.5% compared to the district rate of 8.3%. Chronic absenteeism among the LCAP students of focus at our school is 4% (down 2.8% from the year before) compared to the district average of 13.6%.

83.3% of English Learners are making progress as indicated on the California Dashboard at Lawton compared to the district average of 71.4%.

The data show that our site with a combination of academic rigor and joyful art enriched education provides our students with an atmosphere of joyful learning.