

DRAFT

# **AUTONOMY EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE FINDINGS REPORT**

**MAY 2008**

**LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY FAMILY OF SCHOOLS  
WESTCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL · ORVILLE WRIGHT MIDDLE SCHOOL ·  
KENTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL · WESTPORT HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL · COWAN AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**WITH SUPPORT FROM LAUSD'S INNOVATION DIVISION**

**PURPOSE AND OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE AEC**  
**BY JAN LANDON, ORVILLE WRIGHT TEACHER AND AEC MEMBER,**  
**WITH DREW FUREDI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LMU FAMILY OF SCHOOLS**

The Autonomy Exploratory Committee was created for the purpose of investigating schools similar to ours (demographically, organizationally, etc) that achieved success, particularly with student groups that have faced the greatest challenges within the Westchester School Cluster in LAUSD. Each school that voted into iDivision organically assembled a committee composed of administrators, classroom teachers, classified staff, parents and community members. We compiled a list of schools that had programs of interest based upon the research of committee members and from recommendations from the Innovation Division (iDivision) of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and Loyola Marymount University Family of Schools (LMU FoS). We visited several schools in the Oakland area, locally in Los Angeles, and in San Diego. To guide our research, we developed a list of questions related to governance, operations, budget, human resources, curriculum and instruction, discipline, extracurricular activities, and parent and community involvement.

From what we observed, these schools, some high-achieving and others on the path to becoming high-achieving, held some common practices: a positive atmosphere of learning where all individual students were known well by their teachers and staff, a cohesive belief system amongst staff and a commitment to serve all children and their families. Some of this was achieved through agreed-upon principles, the use of advisory structures to provide individualized attention to students, class size limits, looping of teachers across grade levels, coring and multi-subject teaching through the high school years, and regular and consistent times for staff to meet and confer about student achievement. In some places, sacrifices were made in course offerings that included limits on PE, and electives. Several programs found ways to incorporate those subject areas into the core curriculum. The middle and high schools we visited tended towards project-based learning structures with many opportunities for real-world application. They all had very high expectations for all children. The amount of parent involvement varied from a required forty hours of volunteering each year to none at all. Community support varied within the spectrum as well.

This report is a compilation of observations, notes, and document reviews from the many visits taken by the Autonomy Exploratory Committees at Westchester High School, Wright Middle School, Westport Heights Elementary, and Kentwood Elementary school (Cowan Elementary is just beginning the AEC process, so their notes are not included in this report. A separate report will be produced at the end of their exploration, and will include additional notes from the newly formed Westport Heights committee.). As this is not exhaustive, we encourage anyone interested in the items in this report or in obtaining clarification or more information from any school referenced to contact them directly. As this report is a reflection of the volunteer AEC members' notes and visits, please excuse any misstatements. We have made every attempt to maintain accuracy in our reporting. As there is much left to study and discuss, we are intentionally labeling this report a draft, to allow for continuous improvement and additions.

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# ANIMO INGLEWOOD

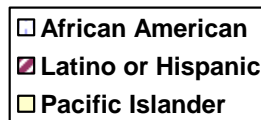
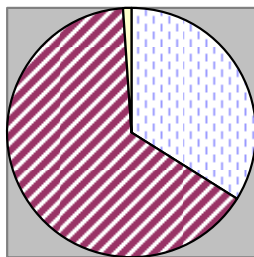
ADDRESS: 3425 MANCHESTER BLVD  
INGLEWOOD, CA 90305

WEB SITE : [WWW.GREENDOT.ORG/INGLEWOOD/](http://WWW.GREENDOT.ORG/INGLEWOOD/)

SCHOOL TYPE: Charter

GRADES SERVED: 9 - 12

TOTAL POPULATION: 525



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 67%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 9%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 26

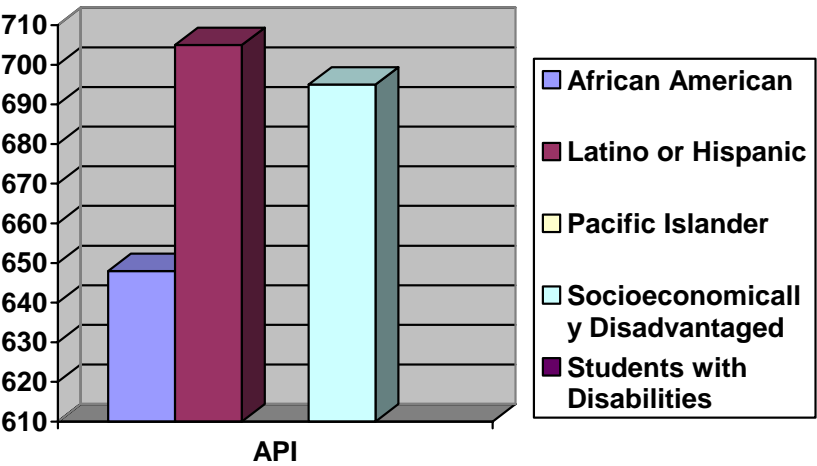
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 1

TOTAL BUDGET: Not available.

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: \$6,612 (UNRESTRICTED ONLY)

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 687



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: 648

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 705

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 695

TYPE OF SCHEDULE: Block

DROPOUT RATE: 0.9%

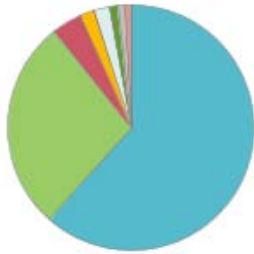
# COLLIN POWELL ACADEMY FOR SUCCESS

150 VICTORIA ST.  
 LONG BEACH, CA 90805  
[WWW.LBUSD.K12.CA.US/POWELL/INDEX.HTM](http://WWW.LBUSD.K12.CA.US/POWELL/INDEX.HTM)

SCHOOL TYPE: PUBLIC

GRADES SERVED: K- 8

TOTAL POPULATION: 1,436



Ethnicity	This School	State Average
Hispanic or Latino	62%	48%
African American, not Hispanic	28%	8%
Multiple or No Response	4%	3%
Pacific Islander	2%	<1%
White, not Hispanic	2%	29%
Filipino	1%	3%
Asian	<1%	8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	

Source: CA Dept. of Education, 2006-2007

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 92%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 30%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 6.5%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 72

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WITH MASTERS/DOCTORATE DEGREES: 13

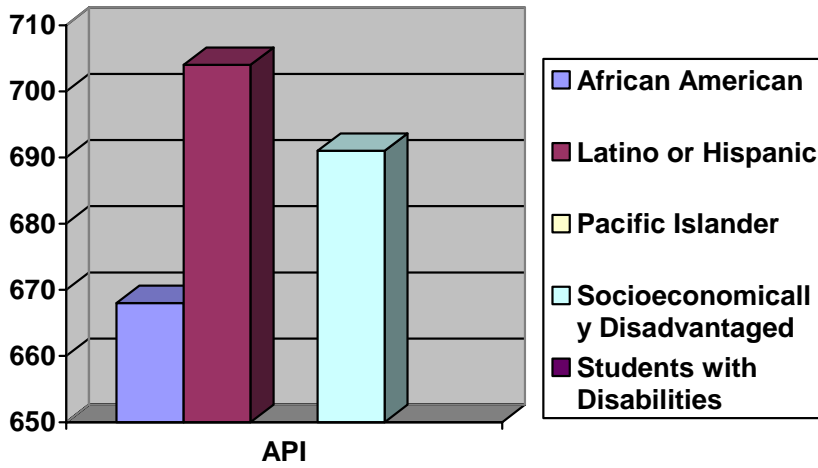
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 3

TOTAL BUDGET: Not available.

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: Not available.

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 698



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: 668

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 704

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 691

TYPE OF SCHEDULE:

K-(9:00am-12:20pm) extended K (9:00am-2:30pm)

1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> (9:00am-3:30pm different lunches and recess times)

6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> (9:00am-3:30pm) middle school classes are on a daily rotating period schedule

# HIGH TECH HIGH SCHOOL

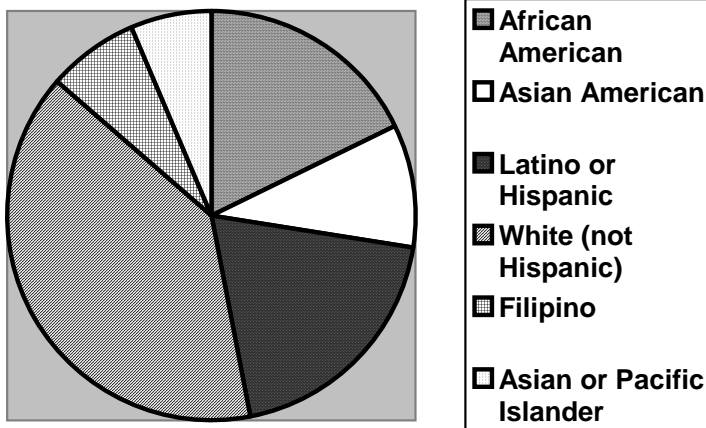
2861 WOMBLE ROAD,  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92106-6025  
WEB SITE: WWW.HTH.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: CHARTER

GRADES SERVED: 9-12

TOTAL POPULATION: 520

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2000



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 20%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 1.3%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 7.5%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: APROX. 27

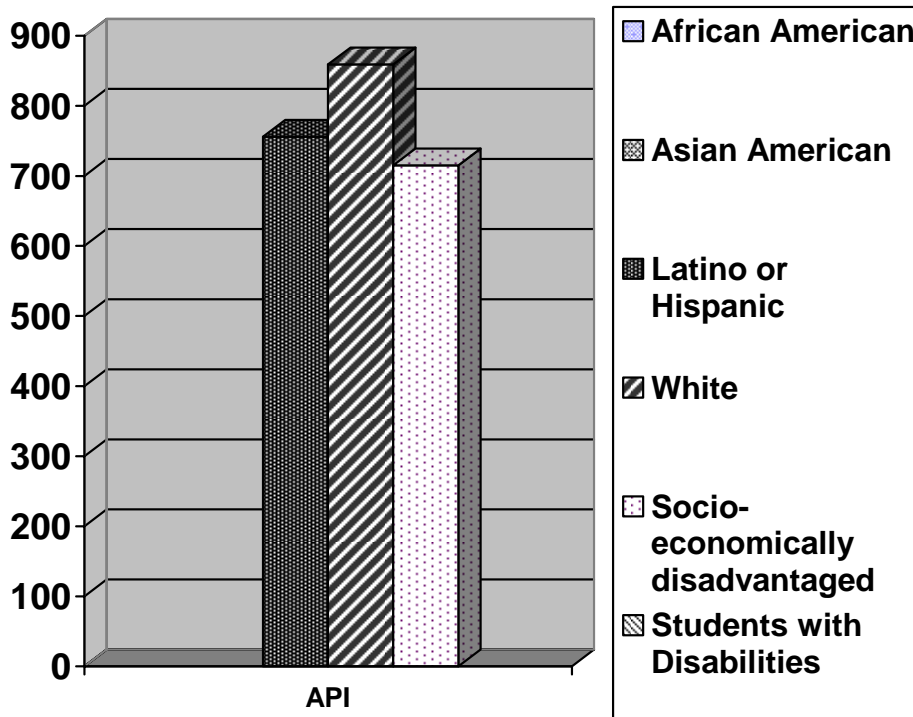
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 4

TOTAL BUDGET: Not available

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: \$7776 (unrestricted sources only)

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 807



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 756

API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: 859

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 715

API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: Not numerically significant.

TYPE OF SCHEDULE: 5 periods a day, with two double-blocks for humanities, math and science.

DROPOUT RATE: 1% (05-06)

# HIGH TECH MIDDLE SCHOOL

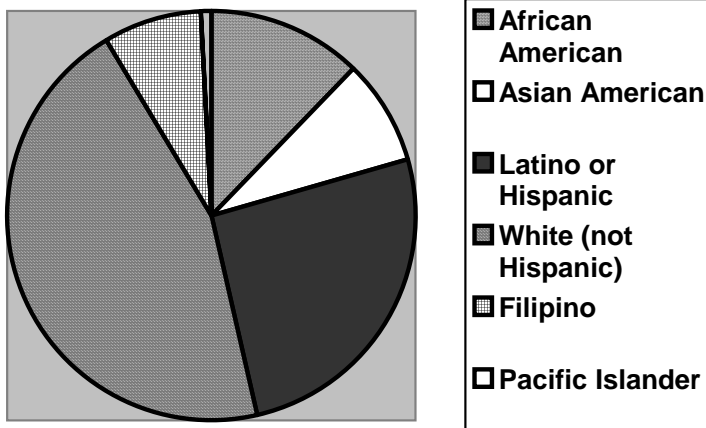
2230 TRUXTUN ROAD  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92106-6025  
WEB SITE: WWW.HTH.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: CHARTER

GRADES SERVED: 6 - 8

TOTAL POPULATION: 299

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2005



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 17.8%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 4.3%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 6.0%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 15

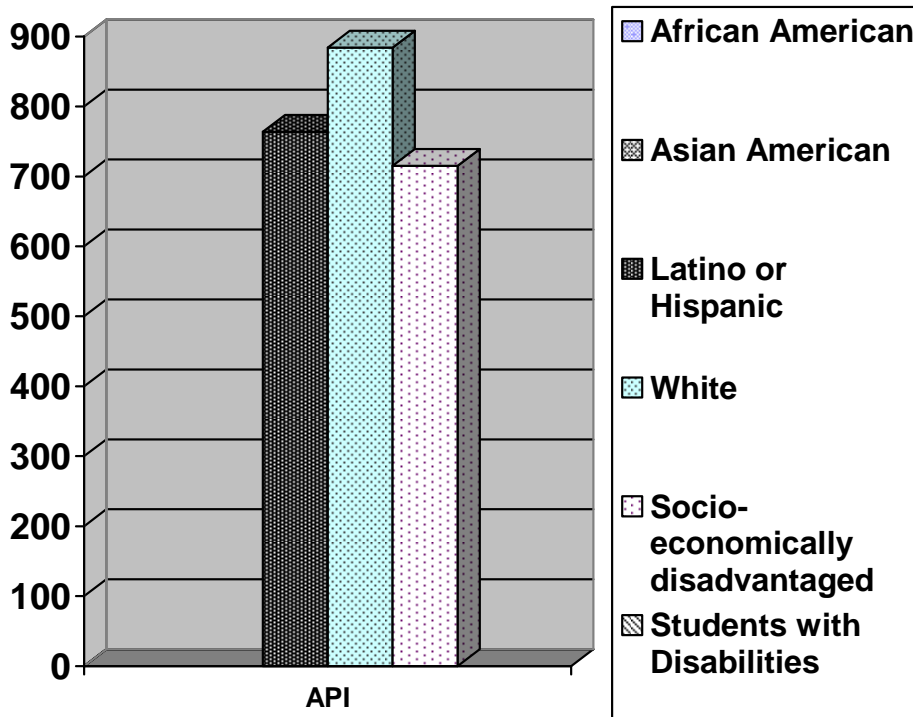
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 1

TOTAL BUDGET: Not available

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: \$7776 (unrestricted sources only)

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 847



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 764

API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: 884

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 799

API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: Not numerically significant.

TYPE OF SCHEDULE: 5 periods a day, with two double-blocks for humanities, math and science.

# HIGH TECH EXPLORER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

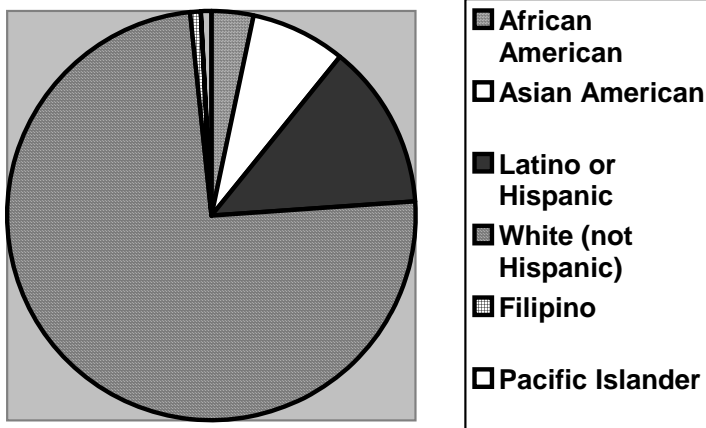
2230 TRUXTUN ROAD  
SAN DIEGO, CA 92106-6025  
WEB SITE: WWW.HTH.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: CHARTER

GRADES SERVED: K - 5

TOTAL POPULATION: 294

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2000



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 0%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 0.3%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 0%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 22

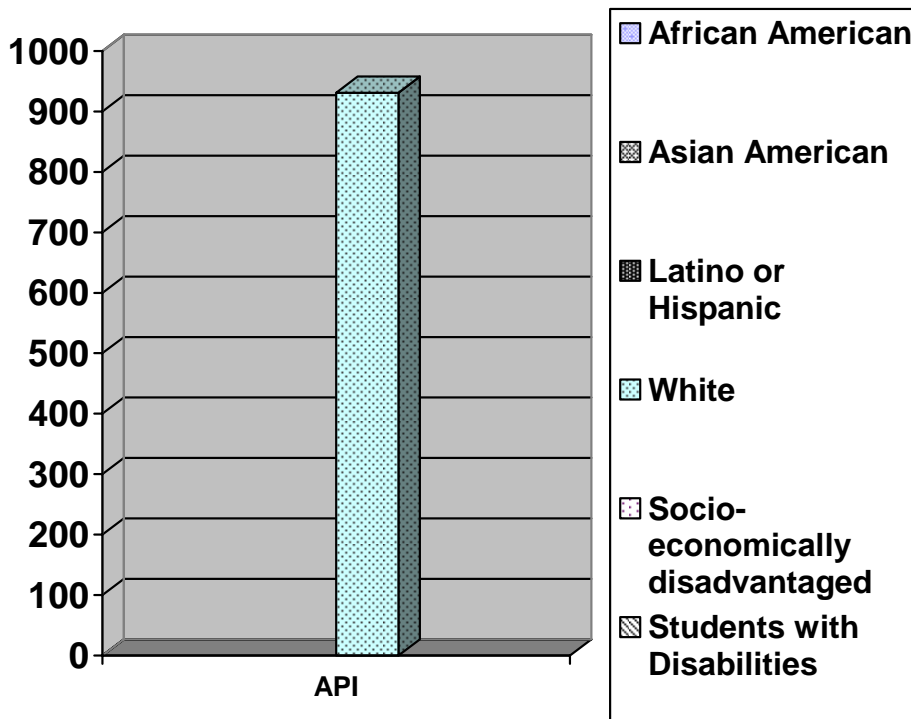
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 3

TOTAL BUDGET: Not available

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: \$7776 (unrestricted sources only)

TITLE I: NO

TOTAL API: 925



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: 925

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: Not numerically significant.

# HILLSDALE ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

3115 Del Monte St.

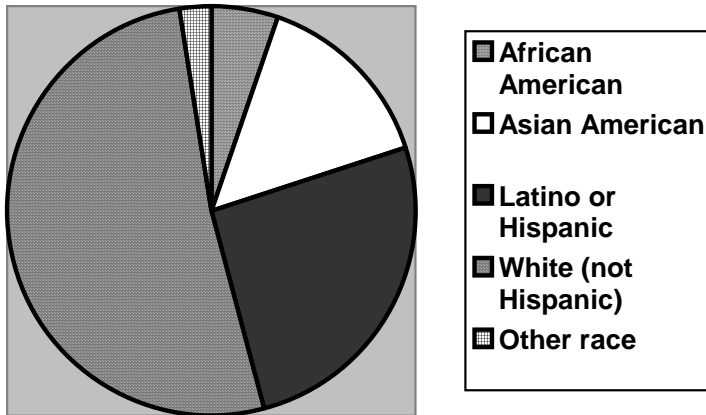
San Mateo, CA 94403-3800

WEB SITE: [WWW.HILLSDALEHIGH.COM](http://WWW.HILLSDALEHIGH.COM)

SCHOOL TYPE: CHARTER

GRADES SERVED: 9-12

TOTAL POPULATION: 1,186



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 11.4%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 11%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 13%

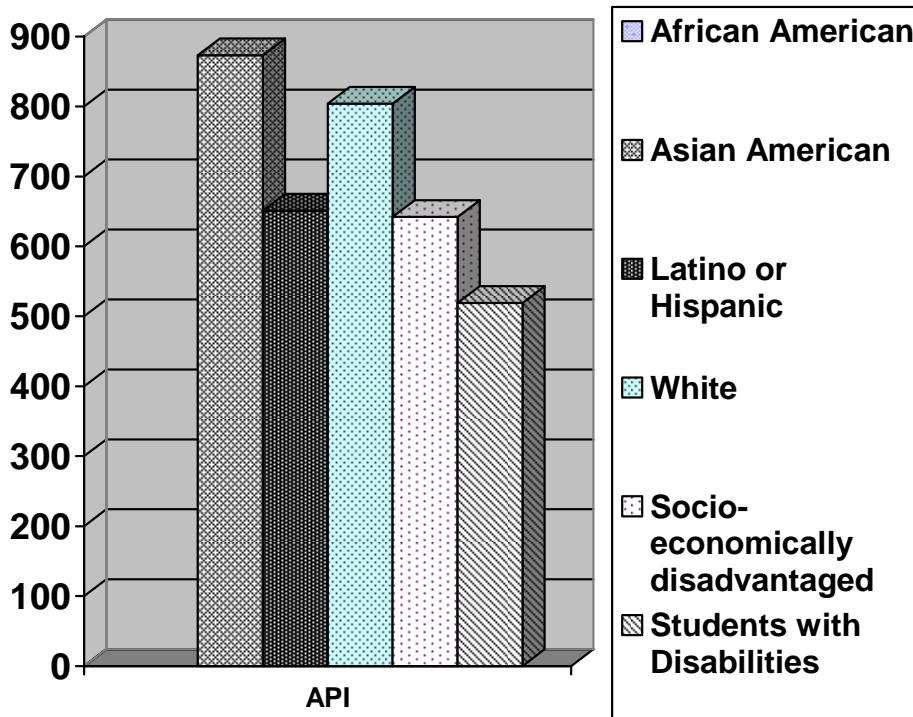
NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 66

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 3

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: \$8500

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 774



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: Not numerically significant.

API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: 873

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 651

API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: 804

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 642

API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: 519

TYPE OF SCHEDULE: 7-period alternates with 5-period block days.

DROPOUT RATE: 1.0%

# LOS ANGELES CENTER FOR ENRICHED STUDIES (LACES)

5931 West 18th St.

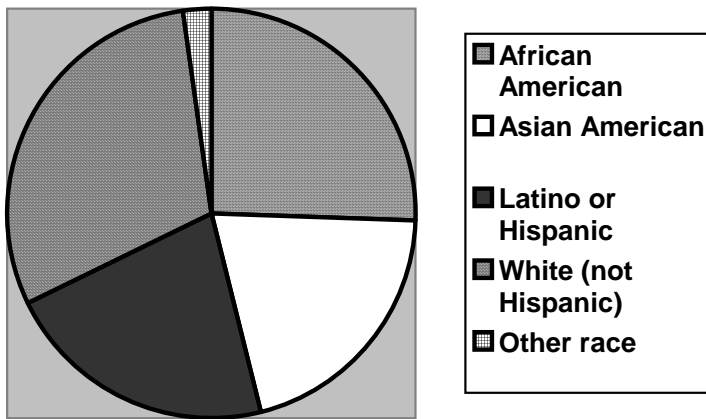
Los Angeles, CA 90035-4656

WEB SITE: WWW.LACESMAGNETSCHOOL.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: MAGNET

GRADES SERVED: 6 - 12

TOTAL POPULATION: 1,607



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 41%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 1%

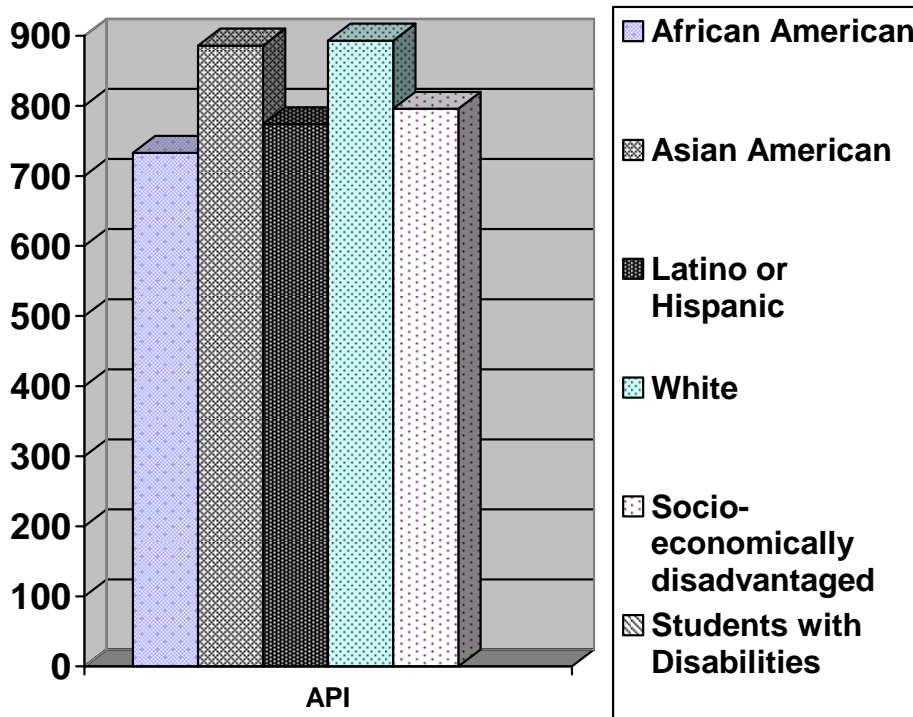
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 2.8%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 64

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 7

TITLE I: NO

TOTAL API: 824



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: 733.

API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: 886

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 774

API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: 893

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 796

API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: NOT NUMERICALLY SIGNIFICANT

TYPE OF SCHEDULE: 4-block schedule every day except Wednesday, when they have a 5-block schedule.

DROPOUT RATE: 1.0%

# MONARCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (ASPIRE)

1445 101<sup>ST</sup> AVE.,  
OAKLAND, CA 94603

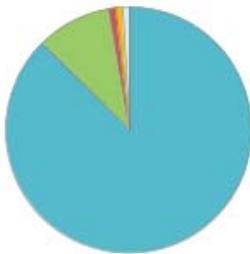
WWW.ASIREPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG/MONARCH

SCHOOL TYPE: CHARTER

GRADES SERVED: K- 5

TOTAL POPULATION: 355

## Student Ethnicity



Ethnicity	This School	State Average
Hispanic or Latino	89%	48%
African American, not Hispanic	10%	8%
Multiple or No Response	<1%	3%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
Filipino	<1%	3%

Source: CA Dept. of Education, 2006-2007

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 93%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 78.4%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 0%

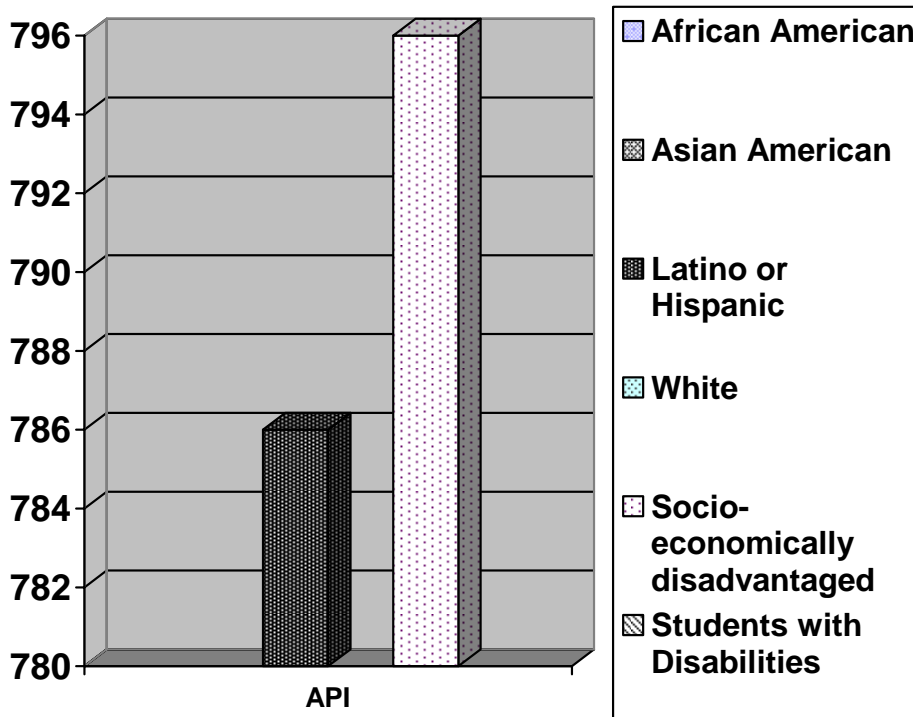
NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 15

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WITH MASTERS DEGREES: 5

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 2

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 795



API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS:786

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 789

(All other groups not numerically significant)

INTERVENTIONS AVAILABLE: after school programs include Extreme Learning, Read 180, Mad Science, Tutoring and homework help.

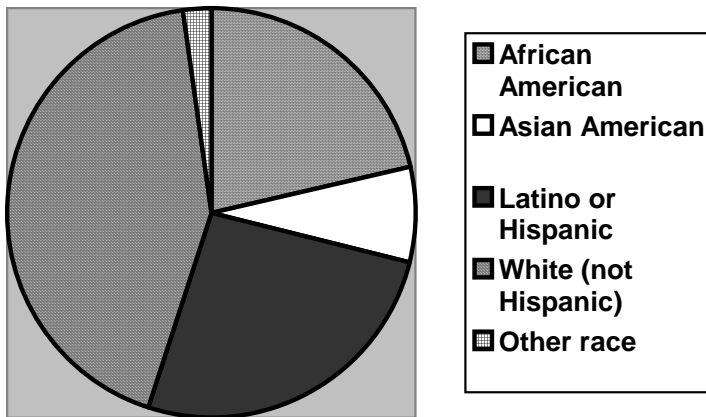
# PALISADES CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

15777 BOWDOIN STREET  
PACIFIC PALISADES, CA 90272  
WWW.PALIHIGH.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: CHARTER

GRADES SERVED: 9-12

TOTAL POPULATION: 2710



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 21%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 6%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 12%

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS LIVING WITHIN 5 MILES OF THE SCHOOL: 30%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 90

NUMBER OF TEACHERS WITH MASTERS/DOCTORATE DEGREES: 50%

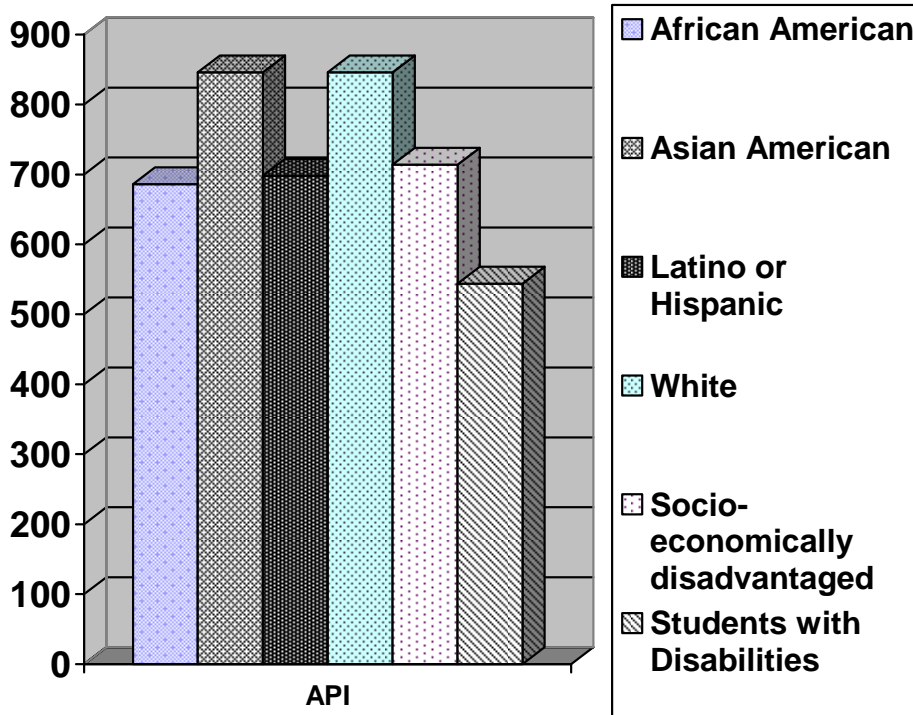
NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 7

TOTAL BUDGET:

DOLLARS SPENT PER STUDENT: \$8500

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 781



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: 686

API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: 846

API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 698

API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: 846

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 714

API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: 544

TYPE OF SCHEDULE: 5 BLOCK

DROPOUT RATE: 17.2 (05-06)

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO ATTEND 2 OR 4 YEAR COLLEGES: 95%

NUMBER OF CAREER-PREP CLASSES AVAILABLE: WORK EXPERIENCE

NUMBER OF AP CLASSES AVAILABLE: 21

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING 3 OR BETTER ON ALL AP TESTS: 72%

INTERVENTIONS AVAILABLE: ACADEMIC WATCH, MATH ESSENTIALS,  
TUTORING, SUMMER SCHOOL, CAHSEE MATH/LANG. ARTS, INTENSIVE  
READING REMEDIATION, DOLPHIN DAYS-SUMMER BRIDGE

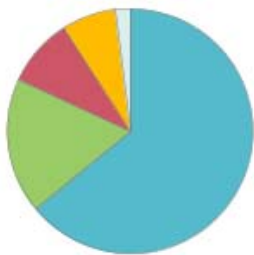
**THINK COLLEGE NOW**  
**ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

2825 INTERNATIONAL BLVD  
 OAKLAND, CA 94601  
 WWW.THINKCOLLEGENOW.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: PUBLIC

GRADES SERVED: K - 4

TOTAL POPULATION: 255



Ethnicity	This School	State Average
Hispanic or Latino	64%	48%
African American, not Hispanic	18%	8%
Multiple or No Response	9%	3%
Asian	7%	8%
Filipino	2%	

Source: CA Dept. of Education, 2006-2007

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 91%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 56%

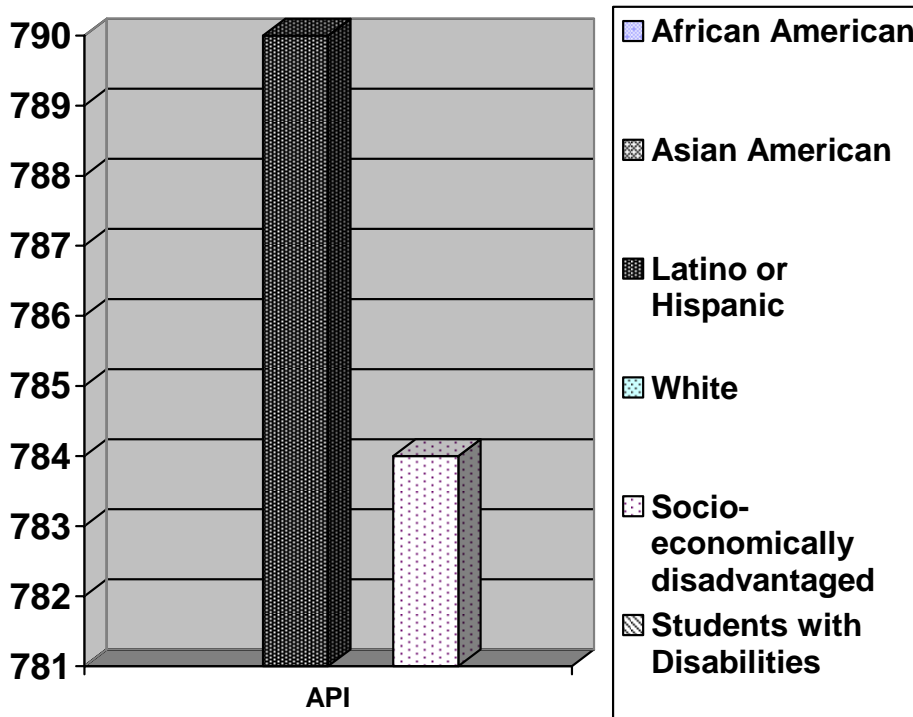
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 15

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 2

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 789



API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 790

API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 784

(All other groups not numerically significant)

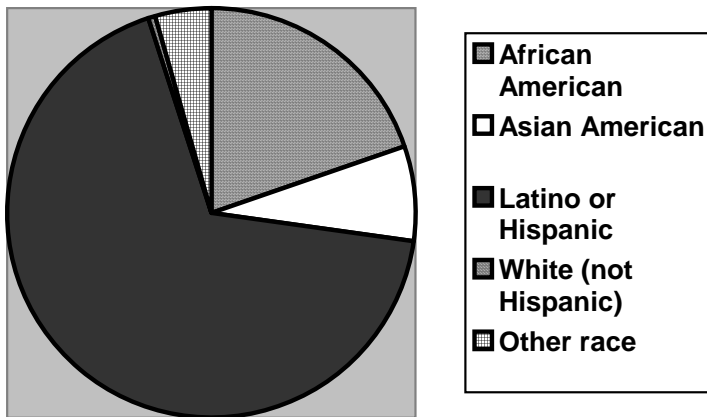
# UNITED FOR SUCCESS

2101 35TH AVENUE  
OAKLAND, CA 94601  
WWW.UNITEDFORSUCCESS.ORG

SCHOOL TYPE: PUBLIC

GRADES SERVED: 6 – 7 (8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE ADDED THIS YEAR)

TOTAL POPULATION: 197



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ON FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH: 92.4%

PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: 38.6%

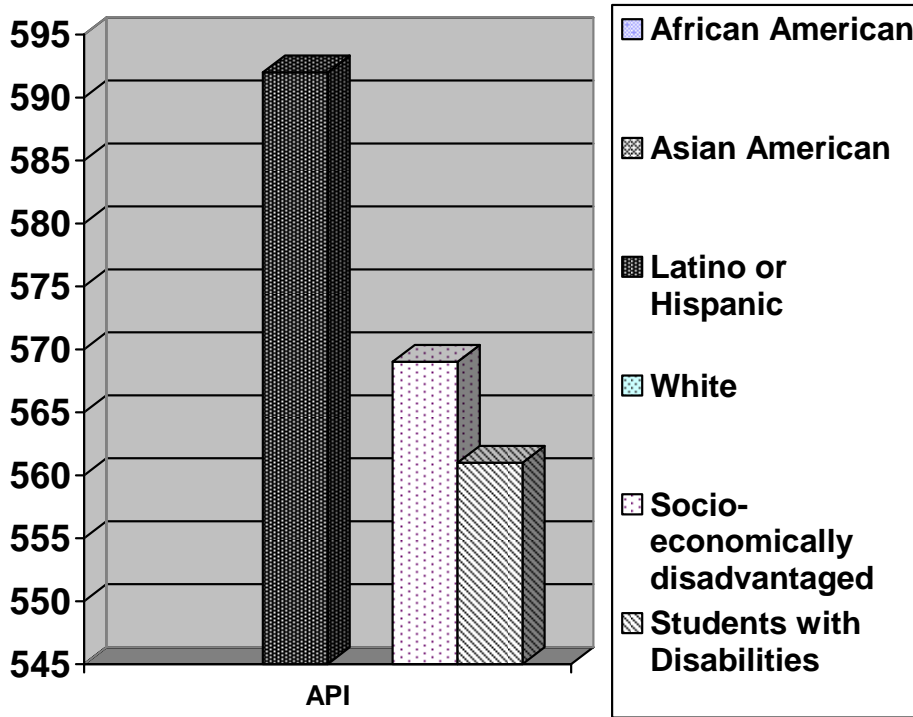
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: 12%

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 9

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 1

TITLE I: YES

TOTAL API: 573



API FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: NOT NUMERICALLY SIGNIFICANT.  
API FOR ASIAN STUDENTS: NOT NUMERICALLY SIGNIFICANT.  
API FOR LATINO OR HISPANIC STUDENTS: 592  
API FOR WHITE (NOT OF HISPANIC ORIGIN) STUDENTS: NOT NUMERICALLY SIGNIFICANT.  
API FOR SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS: 569  
API FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITES: NOT NUMERICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

# **WEST ADAMS PREP HIGH SCHOOL**

1500 W. WASHINGTON BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90007  
[WWW.WESTADAMSPREP.ORG](http://WWW.WESTADAMSPREP.ORG)

SCHOOL TYPE: PUBLIC

GRADES SERVED: 9-12

TOTAL POPULATION: APPROX. 2000

\*BECAUSE THIS IS THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION, NO DEMOGRAPHIC OR TESTING INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE. PLEASE VISIT THE WEST ADAMS PREP WEB SITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## GOVERNANCE

- The governing board is made up of four parents, four students, one assistant principal and the principal. (Animo Inglewood)
- The school has recommended policies that they can use or choose not to use. If they choose not to follow the policy, the principal and the governing board must justify that decision to the central administration. (Animo Inglewood)
- When a topic is raised for evaluation, staff breaks into groups of 5-6 to discuss the subject. They then write an action proposal reflecting their beliefs. A four-finger vote is taken on each proposal. No proposal can pass if anyone person gives it a one finger. Once the vote is taken there can be discussion in an effort to persuade. (High Tech High)
- The school has standard district-mandated governing bodies -- school-site council, shared decision making council, and school based management. Each consists of 10-12 elected persons that includes parents, students, administrators according to the by laws set by the district. (LACES)
- There was the recognition of the barriers that LAUSD can present and the need for creative, problem solving and asking permission after the fact. (LACES)
- The executive director oversees the business manager and the director of instruction. This executive director also reports to the governing board, which has full rights and responsibilities of a non-profit corporation board, and is made up of 11 members who are elected by the groups they represent (Palisades Charter HS):
  - The executive director
  - Three credentialed teachers
  - Three parents with at least one member representing traveling parents
  - Three non-parent community representatives
  - One member of the classified staff
- The school also has standing committees which are designed to act as initial points of contact for parents, teachers, students and school staff so they may bring up issues before it goes to the governing board. At least half of each committee must be made up of teachers. (Palisades Charter HS)
- LAUSD operational procedures must be followed. (West Adams Prep)

## OPERATIONS

- Students are accepted into the school through a lottery system. This year they have 350 on waiting list for only 150 spots. The maximum capacity is 525. (Animo Inglewood)
- Students are accepted into the school through a lottery system with preference given to siblings. They do not accept applications of students who have failed core courses. (High Tech High)
- Start times for all schools are staggered. (High Tech High)
- Professional Development is held in the mornings. Students come to school at 9. (Colin Powell K-8)
- Late start Wednesdays are in place for professional development for teachers and creates more time for office hours (after school time for students to talk to teachers). (Animo Inglewood)
- The school stops enrollment three weeks into the school year. (LACES)
- The school is on a Copernican schedule that alternates between “A Weeks” and “B Weeks.” (LACES)
- United for Success operates within the Oakland Unified School District. (United for Success)
- Governing Board has ability to contract with any vendor it chooses independent of LAUSD. (Palisades Charter HS)
- West Adams Prep is a new school on a new school site. They are a neighborhood school, and have a waiting list. They started with grades 9-11, and next year will be their first graduating class. (West Adams Prep)
- They use a partnership model with Mentor LA (MLA). They are trying to create a “hybrid”— a charter-like, innovative, college prep neighborhood public school. MLA has been careful to take responsibility for the performance of the students, while maintaining independence from LAUSD. (West Adams Prep)

## **BUDGET**

- The annual operating budget is \$18 million dollars. (High Tech High)
- A financial manager handles all business operations for the school. (High Tech High)
- The annual operating budget is 1.5 million dollars (Think College Now Academy)
- During the first year they became charter, they were able to contract out with a company in Santa Monica called ExEd that specializes in school finance. They received a community grant to pay for this service. (Palisades Charter High School)
- A financial manager handles all the business aspects of the school. (Palisades Charter High School)
- As an independent charter school, 97% of ADA money and 100% of grants and other funds are available to the Governing Board to operate the school. (Palisades Charter HS)
- Budget managed pursuant to LAUSD policy although MLA brings in some additional independent funding. (West Adams Prep)
- MLA raised \$4 million (Some from an Amgen grant) and has been savvy in doing their own development work to support the school. (West Adams Prep)

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- Teachers are on a one-year renewable contract and are paid more than the San Diego Unified teachers. (High Tech High)
- Teachers have to have multiple credentials to teach math-science blocks or English-history blocks. (High Tech High)
- The school does not hire substitutes. Either current teachers sub in, or they let students work independently. (High Tech High)
- Experienced teachers partner with newer teachers. (High Tech High)
- Teachers are evaluated and hired based on the principles laid out in the overall school vision. (High Tech High)
- The principal is a strong leader. She built relationships with parents, community, students, and teachers. The principal has high expectations for students. (Colin Powell K-8)
- Staffing is key. Principal worked with teachers who were not the best fit for the school to find them other assignments in the district. The principal expects all staff members to go above and beyond. Principal does all the hiring. All teacher credentials were posted in their classroom window. (Colin Powell K-8)
- The principal is an instructional leader and does not focus on the financing. She is in the classroom and teaches lessons in every classroom. (Watts Learning Center)
- Teachers are not paid more for the extra classes they teach. (LACES)
- The director of instruction helps deal with classroom issues. (Palisades Charter High School)
- There are seven counselors including a college counselor; they have various crisis teams and a school psychologist. The nurse is trained in crisis management as well. (Palisades Charter High School)
- Every adult is a Palisades employee with the exceptions of the school psychologist, special education specialists, custodians and maintenance workers. (Palisades Charter High School)
- In the college center, there are 5 people paid by PCHS. One person is full time, and the rest are part-time. Before they became a charter, they were in no position to fund the programs that take place in the college center. (Palisades Charter High School)

- Hiring and firing of personnel is the responsibility of the Governing Board. (Palisades).
- Mentor LA provides an Associate Director (site based) for every Assistant Principal at the school. This person builds the capacity of the AP's, organizes much of the relationship with community partners/organizations, and allows the AP's to teach one class a day. (West Adams Prep)
- Principal reports to LAUSD Local District office, but works cooperatively with Mentor LA Director. This relationship between the Principal and the MLA Director goes back 6-7 years, when they worked together at Manual Arts HS. (West Adams Prep)
- They are a new school and were consequently able to hire personnel that fit their vision. They have been successful at working with UTLA to have staff who didn't share the vision transferred to different sites. (West Adams Prep)
- They have a high proportion of brand new teachers. Principal was hired and began work 1 ½ years before school opened with their non-profit partner (MLA). (West Adams Prep)

# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

## *Professional Development*

- Experienced teachers mentor new teachers. (Animo Inglewood)
- There are five professional development days in the summer along with a summer retreat away from campus. (Animo Inglewood)
- Point Loma Nazarene University and UCSD partner with teachers to ensure that teaching methods and practices are grounded in best practices. (Explorer – High Tech High Elementary School)
- Teachers are organized into teams, and use those structures to plan and teach classes. (High Tech High Explorer Elementary School)
- Teachers meet daily for one hour before school starts to collaborate and reflect on classroom issues. (High Tech High Explorer ES)
- Teachers had professional development every other week. Once a month, they have team meetings and they are also given a monthly free week to work on whatever they needed to focus on for their classroom. (Monarch ES)
- Teachers work in vertical teams. (Colin Powell K – 8)
- Principals participating in the new small schools initiative receive New Leaders for New Schools training. (United for Success)

## *Class Structure*

- The middle school has two core teachers for their core curriculum schedules. (High Tech High Middle School)
- There are advisory periods (with student- teacher ratios of 15-18 to 1) that meet once a week for 45 minutes. (High Tech High)
- Teachers visit the homes of each child in their advisory and keep the same students in their advisory periods for the entire time the students are at the school. (High Tech High)
- Social-emotional literacy program is integrated into academic program. (Explorer – High Tech High Elementary School)

- Second Step program for emotions/empathy/impulse control/problem and solving/anger management. (High Tech High Explorer Elementary School)
- Big emphasis on project-based learning, less so in younger grades where basic skills were being taught. (Present K-12 in the High Tech High system)
- Textbooks not the focus of instruction -- rather choices were made based on standards, needs assessments and term end goals. (High Tech High Explorer Elementary School)
- Teachers create the curriculum. (High Tech High)
- Class size is 25:1. (High Tech High)
- Students do not take PE classes. (High Tech High)
- There is an Art, PE, Music, Second Step, Spanish, and Science teacher. Teachers are relieved for planning during the time the students attend the aforementioned programs. (High Tech High Explorer ES)
- Students have a digital portfolio and individually present end of term projects at exhibitions at the school and in public places. The school is focused on providing students with the opportunity to make real-world connections in their work. (High Tech High)
- College Counselors are brought in part-time as teachers support the college process with students during the advisory period. (High Tech High)
- One-hundred percent of graduates have been accepted to college, 80% to four-year institutions. (High Tech High)
- All students take a full core of classes (English, History, Science and Math) all four years of high school. (High Tech High)
- School-wide focus on state testing – test scores were posted throughout the school. (Think College Now Academy ES)
- In the classroom, teachers reviewed test taking strategies and why testing was important. The school also used test prep software called EduSoft, which is aligned to the standards. They encouraged students to beat their own score, not just to meet benchmark which was the ultimate goal. (Think College Now Academy ES)
- There was a big push for reading fluency in every classroom. Students had fluency folders and there were fluency tools throughout the classrooms. (Think College Now Academy ES)

- The school has a strong focus on going to college. (Monarch ES)
- Teachers work with the same students for two years (looping). (Monarch ES)
- The school has a full time credentialed music teacher that works with each class twice a week for 30- 45 minutes. During this time, content-area teachers are given time to prep for their classes. (Monarch ES)
- The students used guided reading for language arts with the phonics piece from Open Court. The students have three benchmark tests a year using EduSoft to assess progress. All teachers are sent to training, and work with all teachers in their loop. (Meaning all K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 teachers work together to plan and analyze data.) (Monarch ES)
- All fifth grade students had to the Right of Passage Experience Service (ROPES). This project requires students to complete eight hours of community service or job shadowing. They have 3 months to complete the project, and then have to write a structured paper on their experience. They then have to present it in front of a panel to receive a grade. All fifth graders need to complete in order to culminate. (Monarch ES)
- There is a full time music teacher and PE teacher twice a week. (Colin Powell K-8)
- Assessment data for Open Court and Quarterly Math Assessments are posted in each room. (Colin Powell K-8)
- Even though they access Open Court, teachers are given the freedom to create their own curriculums, and many opt for rigorous, standards-aligned and project-based practices. (Watts Learning Center)
- Incoming six graders must attend a summer orientation, where they take a math placement test, discuss school culture, and receive required summer reading lists. (LACES)
- Peer tutoring is provided for all students. (LACES)
- Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders are assessed over the summer to gauge English and Math levels. (Palisades Charter High)
- Santa Monica College offers free college courses with dual enrollment and credit. (Animo Inglewood)
- All students are in an A-G course sequence. (West Adams Prep)
- All students have an advisory period. (West Adams Prep)

- They are broken into six small schools and use the 4x4 schedule. The 4x4 schedule allows them to offer elective courses tailored to their “small schools”, but they are still working through the scheduling hurdles this creates in relation to the CST testing in May. (West Adams Prep)
- Students have a thirty minute advisory period every day, where teachers stay with the same students all four years. There are three pillars of instruction, but a lot of teacher flexibility in how they approach the curriculum.(West Adams Prep)
- Students have an advisory period where they learn life skills and study skills. (United for Success)
- Students share their portfolios with their parents in semi-annual student-led parent conferences. (United for Success)
- The school holds big expositions to display student work. During these “expos,” the parents use rubrics to evaluate their student’s work. (United for Success)
- Master scheduling begins in late April and continues through August. Students are scheduled into classes based on preferences and needs. (Palisades Charter HS)
- All decisions about curriculum and textbooks are made locally by the Governing Board based on committee recommendations. (Palisades Charter HS)

### ***Special Education and Gifted Education***

- All Special Education and Gifted students are mainstreamed (in classes with the rest of the population.) (High Tech High)
- The teachers use the California Association for the Gifted (CAG) symbols for teaching. The curriculum is teacher designed with the dimensions of depth and complexity icons. They do a lot of higher level thinking and reasoning. (High Tech High Explorer ES)
- There are no specific AP classes, but students can take AP tests at the end of the year. (High Tech High)
- There are two special education teachers that teach academic success classes. In ninth grade, students are pulled out of electives and meet with their special education teacher, and they continue to receive support from this teacher throughout their four years. (Animo Inglewood)
- There is no special day class for students with disabilities. (Think College Now Academy ES)

- There is no formal special education program. There is a resource teacher, but no special day class. There is a push in, and pull out program for those students who have an IEP. There are no special education paraprofessionals. (Monarch ES)
- There are two special day classes, one 3-5, and one 6-8. There are also two resource classes, one primary and one secondary. (Colin Powell K-8)

### ***Intervention***

- In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, history is an elective, so if students are not ready or don't have the skills they necessary to excel in high school, they are enrolled in Read 180 or math intervention. (Animo Inglewood)
- Students attend a mandatory summer bridge program that is five weeks during summer school for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders. This consists of preparation of what it means to be at Animo, the mission statement, school culture as well as having to take an English and Math class. (Animo Inglewood)
- Retired teachers come into the classroom to provide students needing intervention with one-on-one attention. (Monarch ES)
- There was tutoring before and after school for students who needed the assistance. If student is scoring Far Below Basic or Below Basic they had to go to before or after school tutoring. (Colin Powell K-8)
- They have a strong Principal who came in with a vision and forced more experienced teachers to teach students with the greatest need. (LACES)
- If students obtain two D's or two F's they are placed on academic watch. Every Thursday and Friday students have to get progress reports from their teachers. If their grades improve after 15 weeks, they can be released from academic watch. (Palisades Charter High)
- AVID program starts in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade to prepare students with C grades to be college-ready. (Palisades Charter High)
- If students do not pass Algebra 1 with a C or better in their first semester, they are required to take Math essentials in their second semester so that they can become proficient. (Palisades Charter High)
- The "Homework Center" is a mandatory homework help center for students who do not complete their work. (United for Success)
- The "7 to 7" program allows students to take extra classes before and after school. (West Adams Prep)

## **DISCIPLINE**

- There is a dress code but no uniform. (High Tech High)
- The school rules were CARES – Cooperation, Assertiveness, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control. (Monarch ES)
- If a student is tardy then they make up the time after school. There are also no excuses during testing, and all students will be on time even if the principal has to pick up the students herself. (Colin Powell K - 8)
- Students can be suspended for violating discipline standards. (LACES)
- Uniform policy combats gang issues. (West Adams Prep)
- They have negotiated discounts with businesses to provide discounted attire to their students. (West Adams Prep)
- Uniforms are mandatory and enforced. (United for Success MS)
- They have a student team to handle conflict resolution. (United for Success MS)
- All decisions regarding discipline are made at the school site by the Governing Board subject to California law. (Palisades Charter HS)

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

- Students are aware that it's a college prep school so this limits extracurricular options. (Animo Inglewood)
- Athletics are an intervention for the male population. There is a strict sports requirement student must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA without any F's. (Animo Inglewood)
- Athletics director is shared with other campuses. (Animo Inglewood)
- Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors can participate in college tours that are organized during their two-week spring break. (Animo Inglewood)
- There are no organized sports, but there are a lot of clubs. (High Tech High)
- They participate in regular district organized sports. (LACES)
- All of the academic and sports programs are similar to those of a large, comprehensive high school. (Palisades Charter HS)
- As a result of participation by Mentor LA and other outside entities, there is a higher level of contact with businesses and colleges. (West Adams)

## **PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- Parents are required to do 35 hours of service a year. (Animo Inglewood)
- The annual fundraising goal this past year was \$10,000. (Animo Inglewood)
- Weekly parenting classes are taught by trained professionals and child psychologists. (Explorer – High Tech High Elementary School)
- There is support from the business community for the schools and their board of directors is made up of people from the business community. (High Tech High)
- Parents had to attend mandatory meetings to learn testing strategies they could use help their child prepare. This meeting was held three times in one day to make sure all parents could attend. (Think College Now Academy ES)
- Parent participation is mandatory. There was a parent center with assistance for all parents. There were three employees, one from each ethnicity, who were charged with getting parents involved. They helped the parents with everything from childcare to food to rides to the school. Parents were given the assistance they needed so that there were no excuses not to be involved in their child's education. (Think College Now Academy ES)
- Parents are mandated to do 30 hours of participation per school year. Parent representatives keep track of the hours. There are 3 family activities per year focusing on various cultures. (Monarch ES)
- A community social worker looked into things that might be affecting the students at the school, and gave suggestions to the principal on how to provide resources to the students. (Colin Powell K-8)
- Parent involvement was not mandatory, but highly encouraged. However, there were mandatory parent classes for parents of children who were scoring in the Far Below Basic, Below Basic or Basic level. There were also family programs once a month that the school coordinator put together. (Colin Powell K-8)
- There is a paid parent empowerment coordinator. This person assists in getting the parents involved. There is a mandatory 30 hours a year, and every parent has to sign a contract to this effect. (Watts Learning Center)
- There is a parent review board in place. They help with chronic tardiness, students being out of uniform, parents not completing their hours, parents forgetting to sign students in and out, students not turning in their homework, and parents not attending parent-teacher conferences. They feel that parent communication is key,

and they work outside the box to get the parents involved. (Watts Learning Center)

- All parent conferences are student-led. (Watts Learning Center)
- Parents must attend student lead conferences or the conference will come to them. (United for Success)
- A group called Friends of LACES raises \$20,000 per year for the school. (LACES)
- They have a variety of active parent groupings. They all meet separately due to issues of language, identity and interests, but come together to work on issues of common concern. (LACES)
- Principal takes her “show on the road” and goes to neighborhoods that the school draws from to do parent forums. She also provides buses for parents to come into the school for various meetings. (LACES)
- The parent and community center holds classes at night. This center is run by three paid employees. (West Adams Prep)
- Parent involvement was successful because of an intense outreach effort, however there is no self-sustaining parent leadership. They are hiring a parent coordinator to mitigate this need. (United for Success MS)
- Because the local community holds seats on the Governing Board equal to those held by teachers and current parents, there is a heightened level of interest, participation and resource contribution by the community. (Palisades Charter HS)
- Mentor LA’s philosophy is to know the local community and build a school that serves the local community. (West Adams)
- Parents can take a variety of classes on campus, including a healthy cooking class. (West Adams Prep)
- They have an average of 15-20 parents on campus every day, some carrying radios. A few are paid 3-4 hours a day. They have parent representation on all committees and they put parents in real, meaningful, high-profile leadership roles. (West Adams Prep)

## **AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

AEC members expressed interest in doing additional visits to gather further information about:

- Special Education programs
- Budget process and training
- Collective creation of the school visit and strategic plan
- Impact of leadership on school culture and teacher engagement
- Effective fundraising strategies
- Making a 4x4 block schedule work with testing schedules

If you'd like to add something to the list, please tell your principal or send an email to [amy.orringer@lausd.net](mailto:amy.orringer@lausd.net).

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