



**Measure G1
Charter Pilot Grant
Application 2017-18
SUMMER REVISE
Draft Due August 4, 2017**

Please note: This application serves as a proposal for **IF** funds are allocated in 2017-18. This is not a guarantee of funds being distributed in 2017-18. Allocation decisions for 2017-18 will be made by the Measure G1 Commission on August 14, 2017.

School:	Aspire Lionel Wilson College Prep Academy	Principal	Michelle Cortez
School Address	400 105th Ave. Oakland, CA 94603	Principal Email:	Michelle.Cortez@aspirepublicschools.org
School Phone	510-635-7737	Principal Phone:	415-694-2300
2017-18 Enrollment (6-8)	225	Possible Grant Allocation Amounts*	50% Allocation: \$50,220 100% Allocation: \$100,440

*Grants will be distributed based on site projected enrollment at the time that the grant is due. Final distribution of funds will be based on the 6-8 actual enrollment in fall (exact date TBD) and final tax revenue generated in spring 2018. The actual allocation percentage for 2017-18 will be determined at the Measure G1 Commission Meeting, August 14, 2017.

School Demographics

Male	Female	% LCFF	% SPED	% English Learners	% Oakland Residents
n=108, 48%	n=117, 52%	89%	11%	31%	93%

Student Body Ethnic Composition

African-American	American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian	Hispanic/Latino	Filipino	Pacific/Islander	Caucasian	Multiracial	Not Specified
6.2%	0%	0%	86.2%	0%	.9%	0%	0%	6.7%

Measure G1 Lead Team (can be a pre-existing team such as Instructional Leadership Team)

Name	Role
Michelle Cortez	Principal
Chrissy Greer	6th grade Lead Teacher, History Teacher
Eva Kellogg	Assistant Principal of Middle School Instruction
Cristina Gurrola	7th grade English Teacher

School Vision:

Our school mission statement describes the way we intend to work together and reads:
 At Wilson Prep, we define our personal paths. We engage deeply in the world around us in a way that is personally meaningful, joyful, and real. We collaborate, communicate, problem solve, and critically think through rigorous learning experiences. We challenge ourselves to realize our full potential so that we can experience all that life has to offer and to become responsible members of our community. We all work tenaciously together to become transformational agents of change in our own lives, our families, and our diverse communities.

The Aspire Bay Area vision statement articulates our ambitious goal:
 All students should thrive and graduate critically literate and free to choose their college, career, and life pathway.

Middle School Measure G1 Self- Assessment:

Please insert score based on the completed Measure G1 Initial Self-Assessment. Site should engage Site Leadership Team (i.e. ILT) and Community (i.e. School Governance Body, PTA/PTSA) in the self-assessment process using the self-assessment rubric and score their school prior to completing the Budget Justification and Narrative Section below.

Music (Rubric Score)		Art (Visual Arts, Theater, and Dance)	
Access and Equitable Opportunity	N/A = not offered	Access and Equitable Opportunity	Entry for Visual Arts Entry for Dance
Instructional Program	N/A	Instructional Program	Entry for Visual Arts Entry for Dance
Staffing	N/A	Staffing	Basic for Visual Arts Entry for Dance
Facilities	N/A	Facilities	Basic for Visual Arts Basic for Dance
Equipment and Materials	N/A	Equipment and Materials	Quality for Visual Arts Entry for Dance
Teacher Professional Learning	N/A	Teacher Professional Learning	Basic for Visual Arts Entry for Dance
World Language (Rubric)			
Content and Course Offerings	Emerging		
Communication	Emerging		
Real world learning and Global competence	Emerging		

Measure G1 Data Analysis

5th - 6th Grade Enrollment/Retention (Culture Data/Site Plan Data/Enrollment)		Safe and Positive School Culture	
2016-17 Enrollment Data (projection vs. actual)	98 projected (6th grade) 98 actual (6th grade)	Culture data - Suspension	1.7% (grades 6-8)

<p>Elementary School (ES) Outreach Strategy Actions</p>	<p>Once a week literacy mentors with opportunities for site visits.</p> <p>Aspire recruiting campaigns x2</p> <p>Ladybug Club</p>	<p>Culture data - Chronic Absence</p>	<p>17/231= 7% (grades 6-8)</p>
<p>Programs to support ES students transition to MS</p>	<p>Developed Ladybug Club to introduce positive middle school role models and develop social, emotional, and academic skills and supports to 5th grade girls for a successful transition to middle school</p> <p>Introduced Baby Black Student Union to build a space and partnership to celebrate the accomplishments and partnerships between elementary and middle school African American students</p>	<p>Survey data - families, students, teachers</p>	<p><u>15/16 Families (6 - 12th gr data)</u></p> <p>91% My child is getting a good education</p> <p>89% The adults at the school truly care about my child</p> <p><u>June 2016 Student (MS)</u></p> <p>76.6% There is an adult I feel supported by on campus</p> <p>63% I have done activities in and out of class that help me try out different career opportunities and find out what interests me</p> <p>87% I believe LWP is a family</p> <p><u>Staff(15-16 EOY)</u></p> <p>100% I understand and embrace the vision and mission of our organization</p> <p>87%I have positive working relationships with my teammate at my site/department.</p>

Please make sure to provide meeting agenda and minutes of the engagement meetings with this application.

Community Engagement Meeting(s)	
Community Group	Date
<p>Parent Advisory Committee - the family leadership group previewed the Family University Meeting slide deck and provided feedback. See slides 35 and 48.</p>	<p>March 20, 2017</p>
<p>Family University Meeting - full deck presented to 50 families attending monthly meeting. See slides 35 and 48.</p>	<p>March 22, 2017</p>

Staff Engagement Meeting(s)	
Staff Group	Date
Measure G Subcommittee Meeting to review goals and complete self assessment	March 21, 2017
Whole Staff Professional Development - deck attached	March 24, 2017

Budget Justification and Narrative

In the following sections, please review the self assessment and reflect on your team’s plan to:

1. Identify the team (i.e. ILT function, community; school governance body, PTA) to engage in self-assessments and generate a design plan for electives, 5th - 6th grade retention, and school culture . This Team will create the Implementation Plan to address the following:

The Goals of the Measure

- Increase access to courses in arts, music, and world languages in grades 6-8
- Improve student retention during the transition from elementary to middle school
- Create a more positive and safe middle school learning environment

2. You **MUST** describe the current programmatic narrative for **EACH** section of the budget narrative based on the Measure G1 Initial Self-assessment and data analysis.
3. Please explain how you plan on using the Measure G1 funds to develop strategic changes that meet the goals of the measure and that will lead to improved student outcomes.
4. Add additional lines if you would like to add additional budget items.
5. All budget items should total up to the total grant amount based on projected enrollment for 2017-18. Please list all budget items in order of priority, in the event that a portion of the allocation is approved (as opposed to the full 100%).

1. Music Program

Programmatic Narrative Based on Rubric		
LWP does not have a music program and will not develop one for 2017/2018.		
Budget	2017-18 Activities	Anticipated Outcome
N/A	N/A	N/A

2. Art Program

Programmatic Narrative Based on Rubric

[Dr Michael Posner's research on arts and cognition](#) suggests that training in the arts strengthens the brain's attention which in turn generally improves cognition. Important factors in improving cognition include frequent practice and true engagement.

In the 2016-2017 school year, LWP began offering electives to middle school students including Art and Drama as a one year pilot for a year with some staffing excesses. Our intention was to narrow down offerings to successful extracurricular offerings that would foster the factors for improved cognition - frequent practice and true engagement. In order to meet the conditions of frequent practice, we looked at our facility capacity and historical experiences serving our high school students and initially tried an art program that included an introductory visual arts course and a drama course to middle school students. Visual arts classes provide students with exposure to basic art techniques and movements and the opportunities to create works of art inspired by their learning. Additionally, in the 16/17 school year, we offered drama as a trial elective. Our drama program was designed to build students' comfort with performance techniques and experiences, with an emphasis on verbal expression, enunciation, and projection while characterizing brief scenes. Of the art program offerings, the visual art program was most requested and successful leading to frequent practice and true engagement. Students were not as interested in drama extracurricular offerings. When surveyed and given opportunities after school, students requested and participated in weekend dance offerings. In the 16/17 school year, we responded to the requests for dance classes by offering extracurricular bi-monthly trips to a dance studio on Saturdays, cheerleading, and we also programmed dance performances during assemblies which also increased interest. With funding flat and the need to reallocate funds toward History and Science middle school teachers, we planned to keep the visual arts offerings and continue to offer dance after school only.

The addition of Measure G funds allow us to improve access to and engagement through the arts and meet Measure G expected outcomes by augmenting the popular visual art offerings with new robust school day dance instruction. We intend to hire a dedicated and credentialed full time dance instructor.

Our facilities allow room for an adequate dance experience. We have a stage, curtain, and basic lighting. All support all electives teachers in meeting at least twice per month with a peer teacher leader to collaboratively design instruction, reflect on student progress, and align strategies for building positive learning environments. Among the possible G1 priorities, we chose to invest in dance in response to the demand for dance learning opportunities demonstrated by students. As our self-assessment reveals, our dance programming is at the entry level, but we have proven interest on the part students, and facilities that can support a dance program, and success in our visual arts program that we can leverage to build the dance program. We aim to hire and retain credentialed teachers. All students will have the opportunity to select elective classes twice yearly. As we develop our program, we are eager to offer a more diverse range of arts classes based on student experiences and skill levels and to provide our teachers with additional opportunities to engage students within and outside the regular school day so that all students have access to experiences that are aligned with their personal interests, cultural backgrounds, and long-term goals. The dance teacher will contribute to a positive and safe environment by coordinating performances and fostering positive image and confidence. 60% of the full time dance teacher salary will be paid from Measure G1 funds. The other 40% is previously allocated general funds which would have paid for part time instruction after school.

Budget	2017-18 Activities	Anticipated Outcome
<p>Priority 2 For Funding \$27,000 1.0 FTE beginning in 2nd semester \$12,204 benefits</p>	<p>Offer dance classes; hire full time dance teacher for 2nd semester; provide frequent practice and performance opportunities</p>	<p>Number of dance courses offered to students in grades 6-8: from 0 in 16/17 to 6 sections of dance that meet twice a week in Spring 2018 Expected number of 6th-8th grade students enrolled in dance courses: from 0 in 16/17 to an expected 120 middle school students in Spring 2018</p>

		Maintain retention data Student Survey responses to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I have done activities in and out of class that help me try out different career opportunities and find out what interests me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ from 58.3% in Dec17 ○ to expected 75% in June18

3. *World Language Program*

Programmatic Narrative Based on Rubric

Our middle school program added a world languages component during the 2016-2017 school year, offering students the choice of a Spanish elective class that helps them to build their Spanish vocabulary and learn about Hispanic cultures around the world. All Spanish language courses were differentiated to provide leveled instruction depending on students' entry level skills, which ranged from native speakers to entry-level speakers, but only one language course was offered per grade. Through quarterly "Showcases," students were able to share their learning experiences with peers and teachers, including what students learned about Latin American cultures. With our largely Spanish-speaking population, the goal was for students to practice their developing language skills in social settings and apply their learning in and out of the classroom. Based on surveys, course requests, observations, and progress monitoring, we have learned that students want electives that explore new passions that are not academically oriented. Students will take Spanish courses to meet UC A-G "e" requirements in high school.

Budget	2017-18 Activities	Anticipated Outcome
N/A	no funding will be applied toward World Language Programming	N/A

4. *5th to 6th Grade Enrollment Retention*

Programmatic Narrative Based on Data Analysis

LWP enrollment in 2015 was 96% Latino and 3% African American. Based on family and elementary student listening groups, we heard that 5th grade students and families were concerned about the transition between 5th grade and 6th grade and they wanted quality extracurricular offerings both during the school day and after school. This sentiment was amplified by African American students and families considering options for middle schools and retention throughout all three years of our middle school. In Fall 2016, we piloted the addition of extracurricular offerings which helped us meet the goal of increasing our African American student population

We believe adding visual art and dance elective offerings will help us maintain full attendance and enrollment goals. Adding these electives increases student and family perceptions of the school as a positive and safe place for all middle school students to build their social emotional and academic sense of belonging and confidence. The dance teacher partially funded through Measure G will support our existing enrollment and retention efforts currently listed in the budget in other areas.

Budget	2017-18 Activity	Anticipated Outcome

5. Safe and Positive School Culture

Programmatic Narrative Based on Data Analysis

In the past few years, we have worked with families, students, and staff to revitalize our school culture so that it is more inclusive of our diverse students' cultures, interests, assets, and goals. [Studies](#) show that middle school students with strong sociability self concept feel more confident and safe at school. Our efforts to increase "voice" and "choice" have led to a greater sense of positivity for and engagement with the school community, however we believe that more work can be done to coordinate advocacy and school pride events especially among middle schoolers.

With Measure G1 resources, we will dedicate a staff member to increasing middle school opportunities for social engagement and school pride. We previously had several Wilson Prep alumni who worked part-time in our after school program. These teammate had and observable positive impact on school culture by running small groups, developed community partnerships to support interests, and promoted positive relationships among students. This funding will allow us to create a new full time Student Activities Coordinator position aligned to Measure G goals and outcomes, and hire one alumna to fill the position.

If we are awarded a grant at the 50% level, funding this position is our priority. We would resource the difference between the cost of the new Student Activities Coordinator and the G1 grant with our school's general purpose funds.

The responsibilities of our middle school Student Activities Coordinator are to

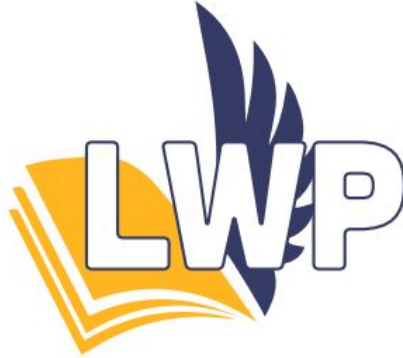
- Supporting the development of middle school student culture and middle school student life in a strong College for Certain culture including: supporting school norms and rituals such as middle school Town Halls, Student Retreat, Latino History Month, African-American History Celebration, and Exhibitions (including coordinating external evaluators for Exhibitions)
- Coordinating activities related to middle school student life
- Coordinating extracurricular activities, school student-sponsored events such as middle school dances and fundraisers, promotion, and promotion trips
- Assisting the Assistant Principal with setting, implementing policies related to student participation in extracurricular activities
- Serving as the sponsor of middle school Student Leadership activities and supporting mentorship programs between high school and middle school leadership mentors
- Collaborating with the Wrap Around team to represent the middle school team and to build an effective school community.
- Working with parents to better support their child/children's academic, behavioral, and social development
- Garnering support from community groups and leaders
- Developing positive relationships with external partnerships
- Expanding middle school opportunities to build clubs including affinity based clubs, visual arts, dance, drama and music clubs by developing partnerships with community organizations and collaborating with the After School Director and Saturday School Administrator.

Budget	2017-18 Activity	Anticipated Outcome
Priority 1 For Funding	Create new Student Activities Coordinator position with responsibilities around middle school self advocacy,	Student Survey responses indicate increase in positive responses to:

<p>\$37,498, salary, 1.0 FTE, 42 weeks \$17,009, benefits</p>	<p>sociability, and school pride. Hire Wilson Prep alumna to fill position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I believe LWP is a family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ from 33.3% in Dec16 ○ expected 65% in June18 <p>Increase number of middle school clubs from 1 to 5 by June 2018</p> <p>Increase number of middle school students participating in student government from 4 in 2016/17 to 10 in 2017/2018</p>

Please submit this application by Friday, August 4 to Mark Triplett, at mark.triplett@ousd.org and Cc linda.pulido@ousd.org.

Aspire Lionel Wilson Prep Family Meeting



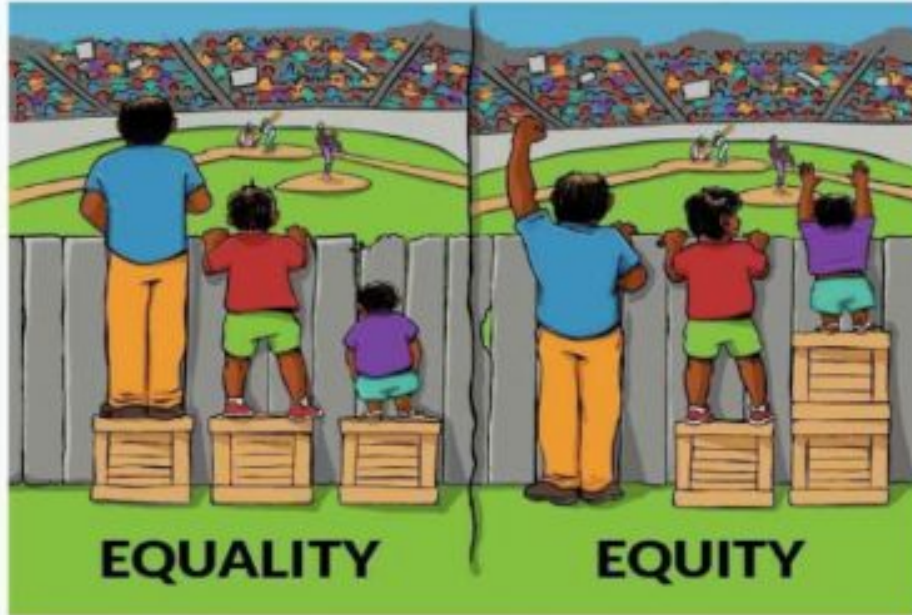
March 22, 2017

Equity

IGUALDAD

Igualdad = Lo mismo

Igualdad provee las mismas cosas para todos. Esto solo funciona cuando todos comienzan en el mismo lugar, historia y circunstancias



Equality = Sameness

Equality provides the same thing for everyone. This only works when people start from the same place, history and set of circumstances.

Equity = Justice

Equity is about fairness, and providing people with the resources and opportunities they need, given their history and set of circumstances.

EQUIDAD

Equidad = Justicia

Equidad se trata de ser justos y de proveer a las personas con los recursos y oportunidades que necesitan de acuerdo a su historia y circunstancias

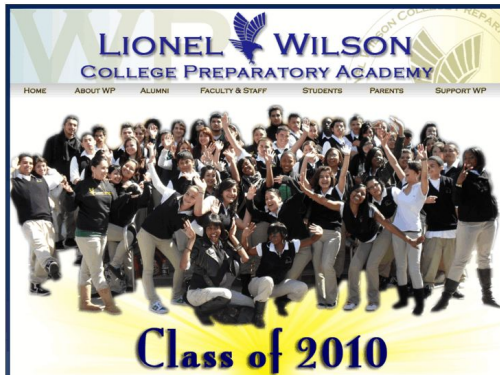
What do you notice? *Que notaste?*



Change along the way *cambiar a lo largo del camino*

Qualities of a Social Entrepreneur:

- Personal Responsibility
- Social Responsibility
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Application of Knowledge
- Effective Communication



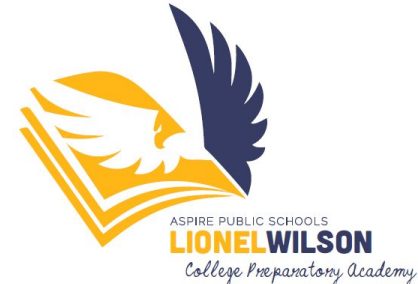
College for Certain

- Think You Can
- Work Hard
- Get Smart
- Give Back

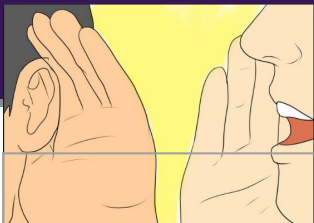
Universidad por Cierta!

- Piensas que puedes
- Trabaja duro
- Crecer inteligente
- Devolver

*All students should thrive and graduate **critically literate** and free to choose their **college, career, and life pathway***

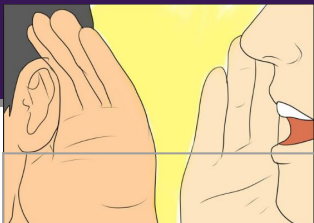


Todos los estudiantes deben prosperar y **graduarse críticamente alfabetizados** y libres para elegir su **carrera universitaria, carrera y vida**



Better Communication!

What we hear	What we'll talk about
Alumni told us that they were not as prepared as they wanted to be successful after high school	Academic Goals we set Progress we have made so far on academics Celebrations DRAFT next steps
Families want more information about how the school is doing and input on the culture and climate of the school	Budget trends Progress we have made on culture/climate Input on schedule Input on uniforms/safety Input on facilities
Our community is still working on being the diverse and inclusive place we want to be	Equity Purpose of affinity groups Input on plan for family involvement next year



Mejor Comunicacion!

Lo que hemos escuchado

De que hablaremos esta noche

Los alumnos nos dijeron que no estaban tan preparados como querían tener éxito después de la secundaria

Objetivos académicos que establecemos
 El progreso que hemos este ano
 Celebraciones
 PROYECTO de pasos siguientes

Families want more information about how the school is doing and input on the culture and climate of the school

Tendencias presupuestarias
 Avances que hemos hecho en la cultura / clima
 Entrada en horario
 Entrada sobre los uniformes / seguridad
 Entrada en las instalaciones

Our community is still working on being the diverse and inclusive place we want to be

Equidad
 Propósito de los grupos de afinidad
 Contribución al plan para la participación de la familia el próximo año

Objectives

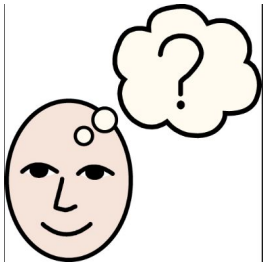


20 min: Academic Goals we set; Progress we have made so far; **Celebrations**; DRAFT next steps

Objetivos Académicos que establecemos; El progreso que hemos hecho hasta ahora; Celebraciones; PROYECTO de pasos siguientes

✓ **40 min: Budget**; Progress on culture and climate; **Input on schedule, uniforms, facilities, staffing**

Presupuesto; El progreso que hemos para cultura; sus ideas y opiniones de horario, uniformes, instalaciones, personal



✓ **20 min: Equity**; Input on family involvement

Equidad; sus ideas y opinions sobre la participation de familias ano proximo

✓ **5 min: Close**

*All students should thrive and **graduate critically literate** and free to choose their **college, career, and life pathway.***



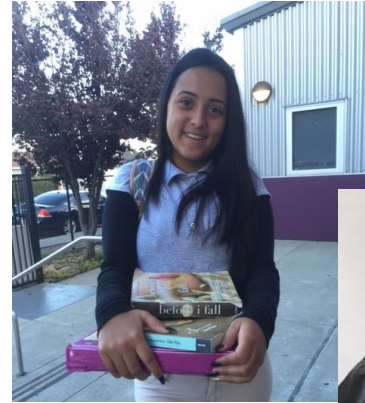
Todos los estudiantes deben prosperar y graduarse críticamente alfabetizados y libres para elegir su universidad, carrera y su camino en la vida

Theory of Action **Accion en teoria**

LWP is working on a three prong approach to meet vision:

Para cumplir nuestra mision estamos:

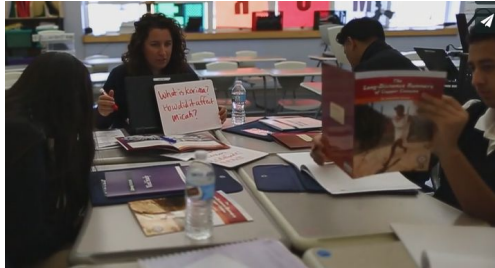
1. **Prioritize Literacy**
Priorizando lectura
2. **New Curriculum and use of Technology**
Nuevo Currículo y uso de tecnologia
3. **Choices for college and career pathways**
Opciones para universidades y carreras



Prioritize Literacy Priorizar la Lectura

Literacy Intervention 2016-17 Progress

Progreso de la intervencion de lectura 2016-2017



- Extensive Library expansion based on culturally relevant texts, high-interest books, and teacher/student choice
- **Amplia expansion de la biblioteca en base a textos, libros y eleccion de los estudiantes basado en su cultura**
- Hiring of full-time literacy specialist
- **Contratar a un especialista de lectura a tiempo completo**
- School wide implementation of Wilson Reads Reading Block and Leveled Literacy Intervention groups
- **Implementar un segmento de lectura y grupos de intervencion a nivel escolar**
- Content specific literacy strategies across grade levels
- **Un curriculo especifico de lectura para cada grado**
- On-going literacy observation, coaching, and professional development
- **Hacer observaciones, entrenar y proveer apoyo en lectura**
- Monthly students literacy celebrations and family literacy nights
- **Noches de celebracion mensuales para los estudiantes y sus avances en literatura**

Link to LWP Literacy [video](#)

Prioritize Literacy Priorizar la Lectura

Spotlight on our Literacy Specialist

Nuestra Especialista en Literatura

Carrie Berg

- Assists the principal, instructional coaches, and department leads to design and implement literacy RTI and content based strategy implementation
- Provee apoyo a la directora, entrenadores instruccionales y jefes de departamentos a disenar e implementar RTI de lectura e implementacion de curriculum.
- Observes and coaches Wilson Reads and LLI
- Observa a los estrendaores durante Wilson Reads y LLI
- Plans and facilitates professional development and family literacy events
- Planea y facilita entrenamiento de desarrollo profesional y enventos familiares de lectura
- Coordinates and trains team of student librarians and HS WeRead Mentors
- Coordina y entrena a equipos de estudiantes y mentores de High School
- Facilitates literacy data collection and analysis
- Analiza y colecciona data de literatura



Impact so far **Impacto Actual**

Literacy **Literatura**

% of students at or above grade level:

**% de estudiantes a nivel de grado o
mas arriba de nivel de grado:**

Aug 2016: 15%

Oct/Nov 2016: 21%

Just took March test



Growth from Q1 to Q2 (2016)

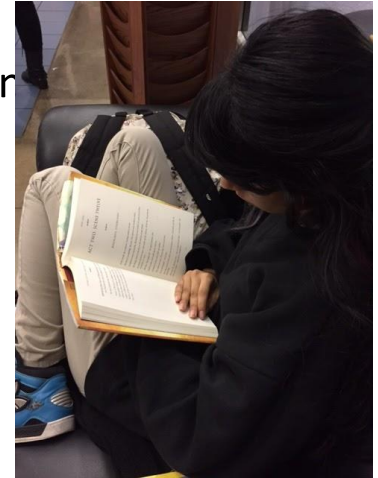
Crecimiento de Q1 a Q2 (2016)

Average schoolwide: 0.5 yrs in

Male: 0.51 yrs increase

Female: 0.47 yrs increase

IEP: 0.54 yrs increase



Teaching and Learning **Ensenando y Aprendiendo**

New Curriculum and Technology - 2016-17 Progress

Nuevo Currículo y Teconologia – Progreso 2016-17

- Master Schedule designed for block classes
- **Horario escolar diseñado en bloques**
- HS - Pathways aligned electives and college classes/MS - pilot of elective offerings
- HS - “Los caminos” **clases universitarias y opcionales/** - ofrece de classes optional
- Adoption of comprehensive ELA Curriculum
- **Implementar un curriculo completo de ELA**
- Additional staff members hired to allow for grade level content specialization
- **Contratar personal adicional para proveer especializacion en cada grado**
- Increased access to computers (6:7 ratio)
- **Incrementar el acceso a computadoras (proporcion 6:7)**
- Use of integrated platforms (Hapara, Google Classroom) and supplemental support programs (Math Navigate, Khan Academy, No Red Ink)
- ~~Usar plataformas (Hapara, Google Classroom) y programs de apoyo (Math Navigate, Khan Academi, No Red Ink)~~

Period	Time	11A (TTh)	11B (MW)	11B (TTh)	12A (MW)	12A (TTh)
Period 0	7:25 - 8:20					
Period 1	8:25 - 8:50	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom	Homeroom
Period 2	8:50 - 9:35	Wilson Reads	Wilson Reads	Wilson Reads	Wilson Reads	Wilson Reads
Period 3	9:40 - 11:00	Algebra 2	US History	English 3	College Readiness (H)	Econ (S2)
Lunch	11:05 - 11:35					
Period 4	11:40 - 1:00	English 3	Algebra 2	Physics	Calculus	Calculus
Period 5	1:05 - 2:25	US History	English 3	Algebra 2	ERWC	ERWC
Passing	2:25 - 2:35					
Period 6	2:35 - 3:55	EL Support (carrie)	Math Intervention (11th)	Intro to Business (College class)	Law and Democracy (College class)	Sci Internships Elective

Choice through Pathways

College and Career Pathways - 2016-17 Progress



**COLLEGE
+ CAREER
PATHWAYS**

ASPIREPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

- Early College Pathway program materials
- Pathways aligned electives, extracurricular activities and college classes
- Sequence of Pathway Intro Activities
- Partnership with iMentor (11th grade)
- College Real Talks Family Event with speakers aligned to pathways
- Updated senior portfolio project with coaching
- Purchase of van for small career related field trips aligned to pathways

COLLEGE + CAREER PATHWAYS

ASPIREPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG



1. Community Change



- **COA Courses** - Community Violence and Prevention, Intercultural Communication, Ethnic Studies
- **Electives** - Social Justice, Student Government
- **Extracurriculars** - BAUDL, IGNITE, Youth Speaks, Men of Wilson Prep, Student Voice, Global Glimpse
- **Guest Speakers** - Social Worker, politicians, lawyers



COLLEGE + CAREER PATHWAYS

ASPIREPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

2. Business and Marketing



- **COA Courses** - Intro to Business, Intro to Technology, Public Speaking
- **Electives** - BUILD, Statistics
- **Extracurriculars** - BUILD, i-Mentor
- **Guest Speakers** - mentor partnerships



COLLEGE + CAREER PATHWAYS

ASPIREPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG



3. STEAM



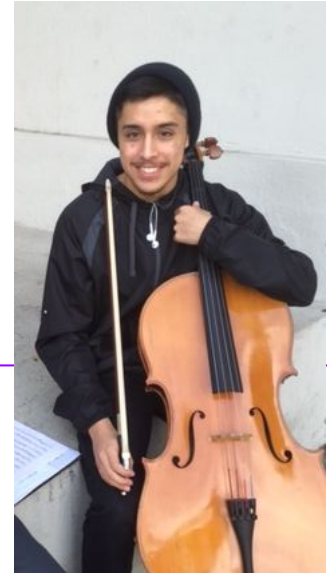
- **COA Courses** - Statistics, Intro to Painting
- **Electives** - AP Calculus, Anatomy and Physiology, 9th grade Forensics, Alameda County Science Fair, Yearbook
- **Extracurriculars** - SMASH, PiE, Athletics
- **Guests Speakers** - Mechanical Engineer, Civil Engineer, Marketing Executive, Medical Technician, Nursing Student

COLLEGE + CAREER PATHWAYS

ASPIREPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG



4. Liberal Arts



- **COA Courses** - Intro to Business, Law and Democracy
- **Electives** - BUILD, Creative Writing, Film Studies
- **Extracurriculars** - BUILD, Film Club, SMASH, music club
- **Guest Speakers** - performer Brandon Brown, teachers

Student Testimonials

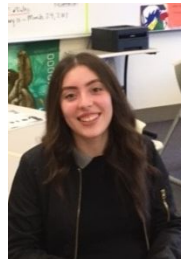
Alexis Delgado

- 11th Grader
- Participating in **iMentor** program
- Building excitement around a pathway that aligns to his career goals



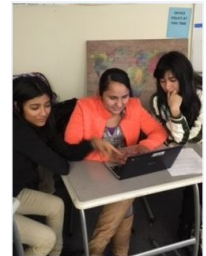
Yvette Pena

- 10th Grader
- Very involved in extracurricular activities at LWP and elsewhere
- **Exploring** multiple pathways



Adamari Duran

- 12th Grader
- Career ambitions are clear and **“declared”**
- Aligned college classes and extracurricular experiences



Data

College Class Completion

COURSE	# of sessions	students enrolled	T# passed w/C	total % passed	# females	% females passed	# males	% males passed
CIS-Technology	3	73	46	63%	39	64%	34	62%
Intercultural Communication	1	32	18	56%	18	66%	14	43%
Law and Democracy	1	17	15	88%	5	100%	12	83%
Art	1	34	34	100%	23	100%	11	100%
Violence and Prevention	1	24	24	100%	13	92%	11	100%
Intro to Business	1	30	30	100%	18	100%	12	100%
Career Counseling	1	14	14	100%	8	100%	6	100%
Intro to Stats	2	40	28	70%	24	63%	16	81%
Algebra in Practical Context	1	18	14	77%	10	100%	8	50%
Withdrew		6						
totals		288	223	84%	158	87%	124	80%

Overall Pass Rate	84%
% Passing -Female	87%
% Passing -Male	80%
SPED Pass Rate	57%

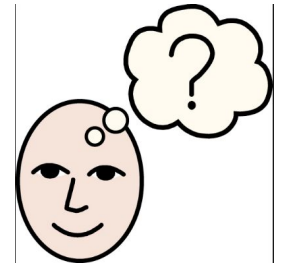
Data - HS

Pathways

Grade Level	"Exploring"		"Declaring"	
9th	43	63%	25	37%
10th	38	66%	20	34%
11th	36	75%	12	25%
12th	37	52%	34	48%



Pathway	"Exploring"		"Declaring"	
Community Change	24	9.80%	7	2.90%
Business/Marketing	26	10.60%	23	9.40%
STEAM	77	31.40%	50	20.40%
Liberal Arts	27	11%	11	4.50%



Data - MS

Middle School students should choose electives that they love, can practice frequently, and develop talents. What electives do you prefer?

	6th	7th	8th
Visual Art	31	28	33
Drama	8	6	3
Spanish	3	4	6
Dance	45	22	19
ComputerArts/ Programming	5	4	3



Data

Pathways

Business and Marketing DECLARING

I'm interested in pursuing a career in marketing because I have some experience with it since I'm in BUILD and so far I enjoy every second of it. I want to keep learning more about this pathway and joining a business class will help me.

STEAM DECLARING

I want to be a marine biologist and science is my main focus and what I am good at. I also like working hands on with what I am doing.



Data

Pathways



Community Change DECLARING

I care about my community and would like to expand my knowledge and prepare myself so I can come back and help our people.

Liberal Arts EXPLORING

I chose liberal arts because ever since I was small I would always like to be involved with art and I still enjoy sketching, drawing, and painting but I never had a class to learn more about it so I'm currently exploring it. Also, I'm exploring the Community change pathway because I want to be a counselor, therapist, or psychologist.

Celebrations

Successful Charter Renewals 2010, 2016



For the second year in a row, the Bay Area is doing worse than the rest of state in educating low-income Latino and African American students.

Here's a look at the dozens of local schools proving it doesn't have to be that way.

Recognition of the Wilson Prep effect



Innovate
Public Schools

A World-Class Public School for Every Student

Celebraciones

Carta
renovada
con éxito
2010, 2016



Por segundo año consecutivo, el Área de la Bahía obtuvo resultados por debajo del resto del estado en cuanto a la educación de estudiantes latinos y afroamericanos de bajos ingresos.

Conozca aquí las docenas de escuelas locales demostrando que esto no tiene que ser así.

Reconocimiento
del impacto de
Wilson Prep



Innovate
Public Schools

A World-Class Public School for Every Student

Math 2016



Innovate
Public Schools

A World-Class Public School for Every Student

[Download Our Latest Reports](#)

Show entries

Search:

Rank ↕	School Name ↕	% Proficient in Math ↕	<95% Students Tested ↕	District Name ↕	Charter School Network ↕	% Low-income Latino Enrollment ↕
9	Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy (Charter)	37		Oakland Unified	Aspire Public Schools	86.4
11	Aspire Richmond Ca. College Preparatory Academy (Charter)	31		West Contra Costa Unified	Aspire Public Schools	53.4
14	Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy (Charter)	26		Oakland Unified	Aspire Public Schools	71.8

English 2016



[Download Our Latest Reports](#)

High School

Show 10 entries

Search:

Rank	School Name	% Proficient in English	<95% Students Tested	District Name	Charter School Network	% Low-income Latino Enrollment
15	Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy (Charter)	58		Oakland Unified	Aspire Public Schools	86.4
17	Aspire Richmond Ca. College Preparatory Academy (Charter)	54		West Contra Costa Unified	Aspire Public Schools	53.4
21	Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy (Charter)	51		Oakland Unified	Aspire Public Schools	71.8

67%

#8 in 2015

Strengths and Challenges

	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	Next step
Prioritizing Literacy	Targeted literacy intervention engages traditionally most underserved students Accelerated growth	Inconsistent at home reading Holding literacy time sacred	Continue literacy Increase EL supports
Teaching and Learning	Complex grade level texts in all classes; rigorous tasks One dedicated ELA and Math teacher increases feedback and supports	Need to differentiate instead of scaffolds for all Math curriculum for MS	Math curriculum for MS Staff with more time to plan & grade
College and Career Pathways	Provides choice and rigor Explore vs Declare progress monitoring	Pathways not yet fully built out and institutionalized Staff to coordinate internships	9 th grade College and Career class Internships

Integrated mentors for 75% of students*

Objectives

20 min: Academic Goals we set; Progress we have made so far; Celebrations; DRAFT next steps

Objetivos Académicos que establecemos; El progreso que hemos hecho hasta ahora; Celebraciones; PROYECTO de pasos siguientes

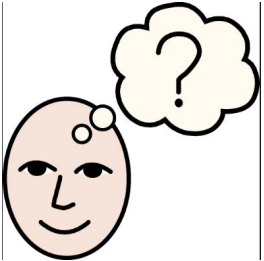
✓ **40 min: Progress on culture and climate; Budget; Input on schedule, uniforms, facilities, staffing**

El progreso que hemos para cultura; Presupuesto; sus ideas y opiniones de horario, uniformes, instalaciones, personal

✓ **20 min: Equity; Input on family involvement**

Equidad; sus ideas y opinions sobre la participation de familias ano proximo

✓ **5 min: Close**



Culture Glows



28+ Town Hall and Grade Level Community Meetings to date

4 peer mentoring groups
4 adult mentoring partners

6 MS sports teams
MS cheerleaders
MS dance
4 HS sports teams
10+ field trips



Budget Theory of Action

In order to meet students needs, we need to focus our budget on

1. Increasing student support*
2. Keeping and supporting teachers*
3. Continue investing in choice and JOY*



Teoria presupuestaria de la accion

Para satisfacer las necesidades de los estudiantes, necesitamos concentrar nuestro presupuesto en

1. **Aumentar el apoyo estudiantil**
2. **Mantener y apoyar a los maestros***
3. **Seguir invirtiendo en la eleccion y la alegria***



New Investments



X 12
(400+computers)



New Investments

Middle School Elective Program

- 3 choices offered to all MS students each semester: Spanish, Art, Drama
- Quarterly showcases for peers and teachers
- Smaller class sizes



NEXT STEPS for your input

- Incorporate dance and emphasize visual arts due to student demand
- Emphasize frequent practice and full engagement for cognitive growth

Culture Challenges

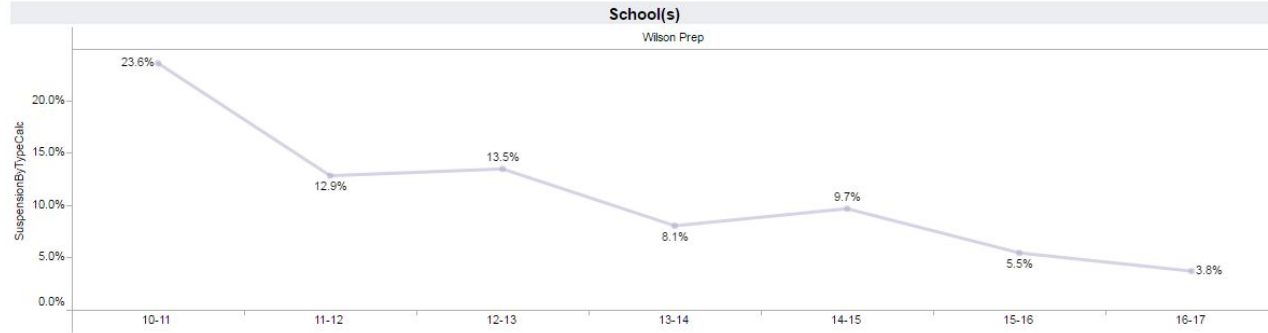
Behavior

Expectations

- Reduced suspension rate
- Restorative practices (which takes more staff!)
- A few students and teachers struggling with boundaries
- Counseling and increased supports

Attendance

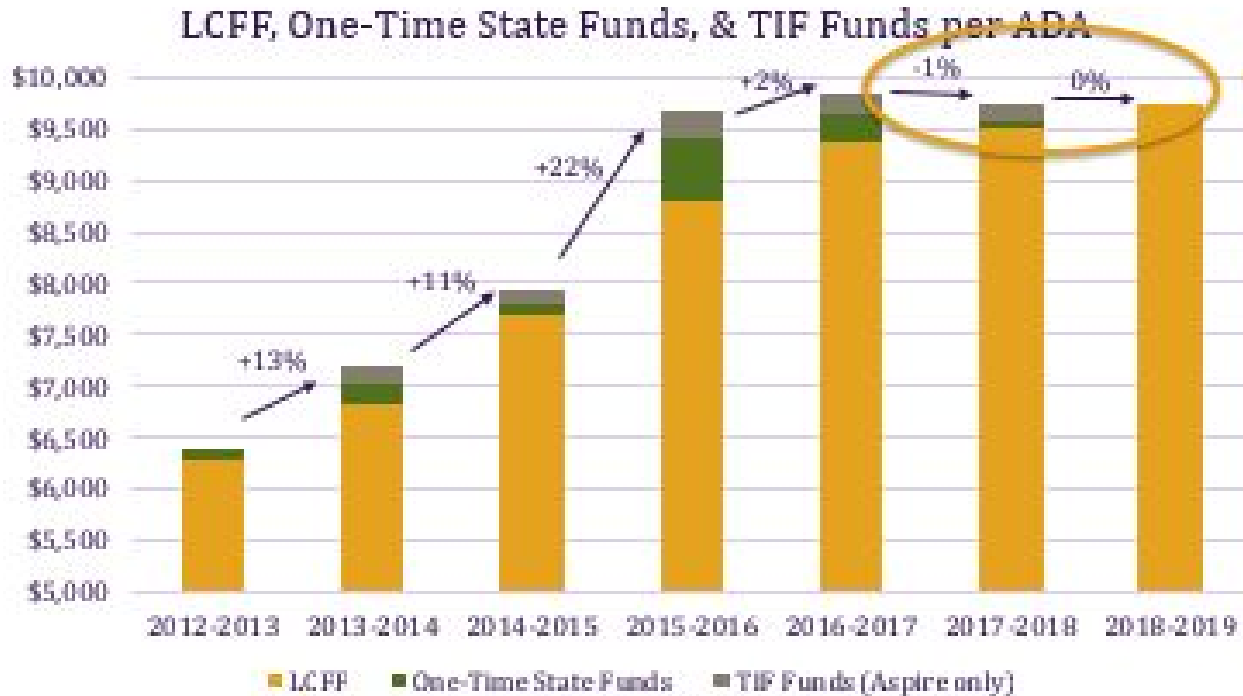
Family Partnerships



Average Daily Rate of Attendance (LWP)

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017
Percent Daily Attendance - Av.	95.81%	95.49%	95.79%
Daily Attendance - Average	463.3	453.6	489.8
Daily Enrollment - Average	483.6	475.0	511.3

School Funding



Revenue and Input – your ideas and opinions

Category	\$ per Student
LCFF	\$10,312
Title I/II/III	\$439
Lottery	\$181
Mandate Grant	
ASES Grant	
Measure N (Oakland 9-12 only if funded)	\$880
Measure G1 (Oakland Only if funded)	\$200
Measure G (Oakland 6 - 8 only if funded)	\$100

Basics:

20 teachers + 3 SPED+ PE (24)
8 Admin + Support staff
(\$2m)

Operations
(\$1.5m)

Books and Supplies
(\$500k)

Where should we spend our money?



Your opinions *Su opiniones*

Discipline is helping a child solve a problem. Punishment is making a child suffer for having a problem. To raise problem solvers, focus on solutions not retribution. - L. R. Knost

Disciplina es ayudar a un niño a resolver un problema. Castigo es hacer sufrir a un niño por tener un problema. Para plantear solucionadores de problemas, concentrarse en las soluciones no represalia

Uniform Policy

Politica uniforme

Cell Phone Policy

Politica de telefono celular

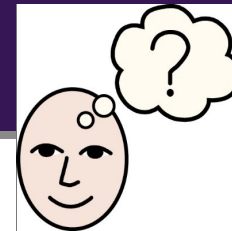
Family Support for students with behavior challenges

Apoyo familiar para estudiantes con Desafíos de comportamiento

More support staff?

Mas personal de apoyo

Your input on discretionary budget



A. Increase # of teachers (to 30)

1. 23 teachers + 4 SPED + 3 electives
2. Offer MS electives
3. Decrease class size (25 in 6th)
4. Teacher sustainability

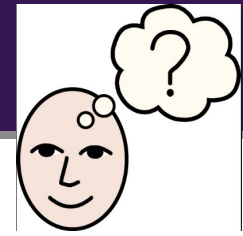
B. Increase SUPPORTS for students

1. Continue Literacy Coach
2. Add Math Interventions and support
3. Add HS support staff
4. Add MS support staff
5. Continue partnerships

C. Increase CHOICE and JOY

1. Continue 6-10 college classes on campus each semester
2. Increase 1:1 mentoring through i-Mentor (11th and 12th grade)
3. Increase clubs and student government opportunities
4. Add college and career field trips for every student at every grade level
5. Add STEAM lab and Science options

Su opinion sobre presupuesto



A. Aumentar # de estudiantes (a 30)

1. 23 profesores + 4 SPED + 3 asignaturas optativas
2. Ofrecer electivas
3. Reducir el tamaño de la clase (25 en 6)
4. Sostenibilidad del profesor

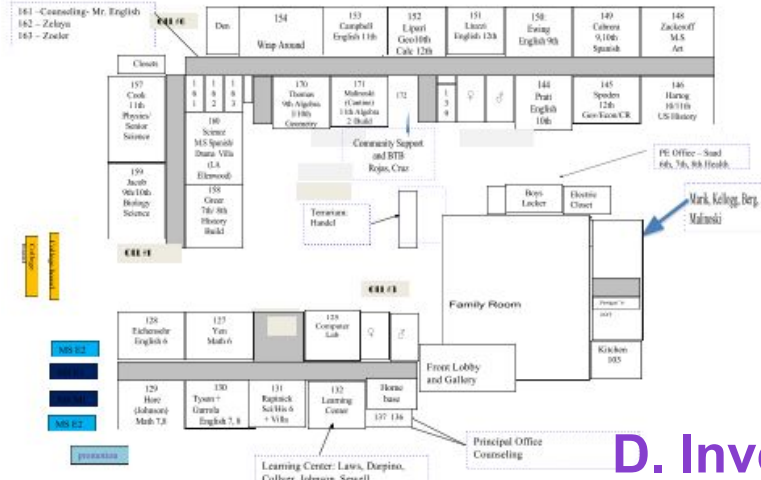
B. Aumentar APOYOS para estudiantes

1. Continuar el curso de alfabetizacion
2. Aregar intervenciones matematicas
3. Aregar personal de apoyo de HS
4. Aregar personal de apoyo de MS
5. Continuar las asociaciones

C. Aumentar la eleccion y alegria

1. Continuar 6-10 clases de collegio aqui cada semestre
2. Aumentar la tutorial de 1:1 mentoring a traves de i-Mentor (11th y 12th grado)
3. Aumentar los clubes y las o oportunidades del goviero estudiantil
4. Viajes al campo para cada estudiante a cada level de grado
5. Anadir opciones de ciencia y STEAM

Facilities



D. Invest in space \$\$

1. Additional Classroom (1-2)
2. Built out sports/play spaces

Objectives



20 min: Academic Goals we set; Progress we have made so far; **Celebrations**; DRAFT next steps

Objetivos Académicos que establecemos; El progreso que hemos hecho hasta ahora; Celebraciones; PROYECTO de pasos siguientes

✓ **40 min: Budget**; Progress on culture and climate; **Input on schedule, uniforms, staffing, facilities**

Presupuesto; El progreso que hemos para cultura; sus ideas y opiniones de horario, uniformes, personal, instalaciones

✓ **20 min: Equity**; Input on family involvement

Equidad; sus ideas y opinions sobre la participation de familias ano proximo

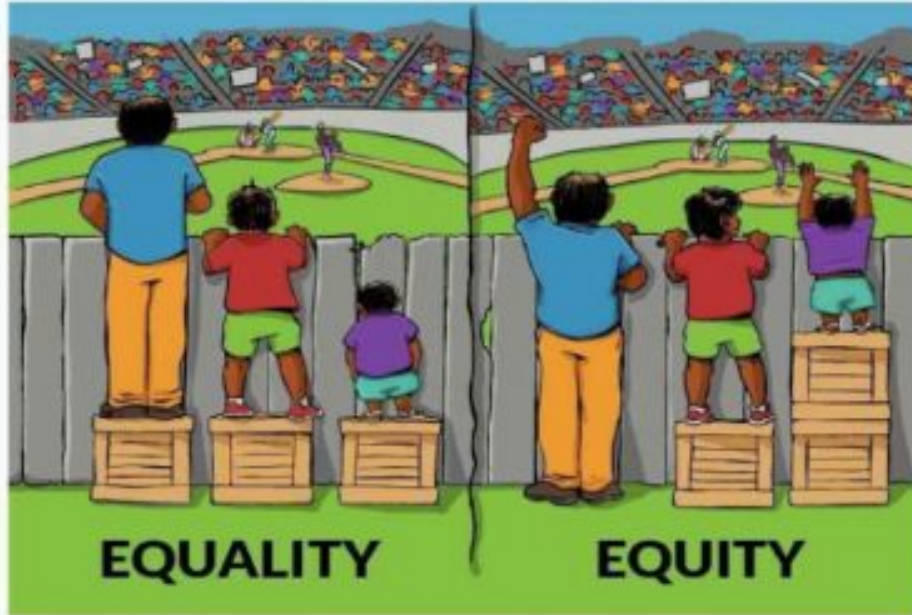
✓ **5 min: Close**

Equity

IGUALDAD

Igualdad = Lo mismo

Igualdad prove las mismas Cosas para todos.
Esto solo funciona cuando todos comienzan en el mismo lugar, historia y Circunstancias



Equality = Sameness

Equality provides the same thing for everyone. This only works when people start from the same place, history and set of circumstances.

Equity = Justice

Equity is about fairness, and providing people with the resources and opportunities they need, given their history and set of circumstances.

EQUIDAD

Equidad = Justicia

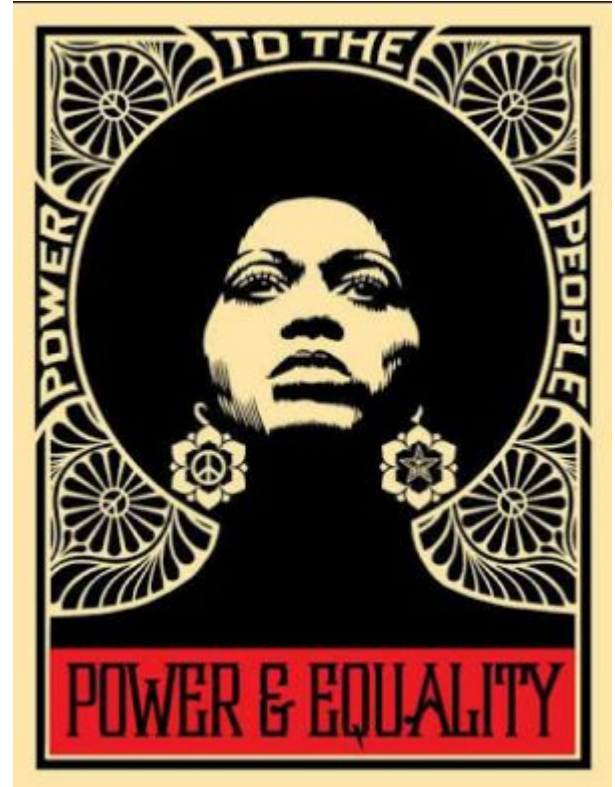
Equidad se trata de ser justos y de proveer a las personas con los recursos y oportunidades que necesitan de acuerdo a su historia y circunstancias

Equity – different supports



Latino History Month Sept
Day Without Immigrants
DACA/Immigration meetings
Aspire board policy
Family Immigration letters
Translation services
Latinx staff affinity groups

Black History Month - Feb
Black Student Union
African American Family Unity
Meetings
Black Educators affinity group



Your ideas: Family Input



In what ways should our staff and families work together to support students and each other?

Should we continue?	Should we start. . . .
Weekly Parent Square parent emails	Require ALL teachers to send out regular class updates?
Monthly Family Universities	Format of monthly meetings – by grade level, topic, whole?
SLC after quarter 1 and 3?	Add a semester 1 conference?
	Tracked hours?

Closure/Feedback for Wednesday

Take-aways:

MS - agree to FT Dance and Student Activities/Safety Coordinator

HS - continue Pathways

HS - request support for senior offsite college classes

Admin will send notes from input sheet

"You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read.

You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride.

You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore."

-Cesar Chavez
Born March 31, 1927



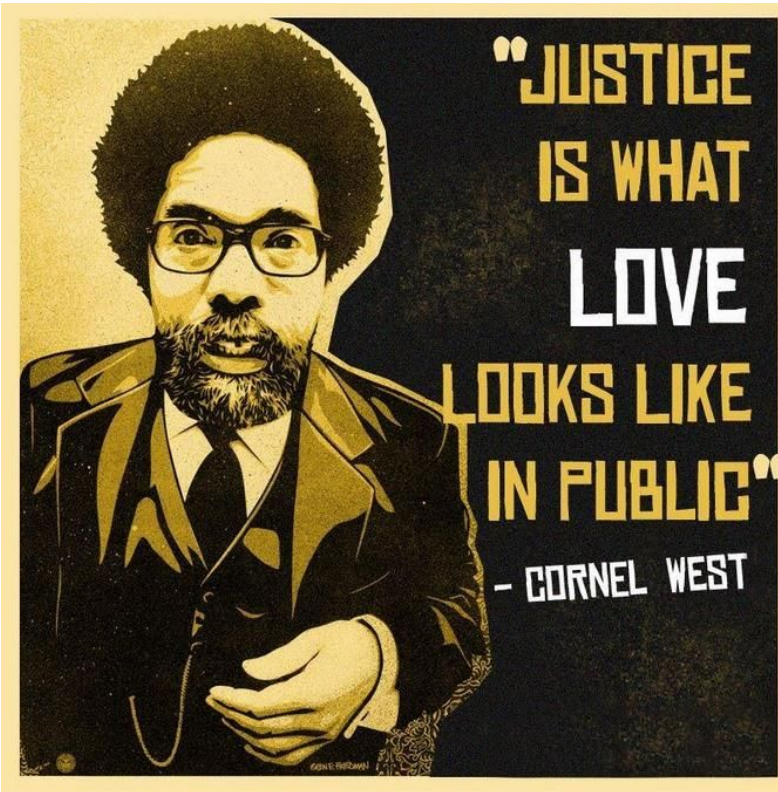
Professional Development

3/24/17

Community Agreements

1. **Keep our students at the center of our work.** Focus on the impact rather than the intention. Embrace the complexity of each individual student and their family in order to better honor and serve their needs.
2. **Develop trust and more equitable outcomes by considering multiple perspectives.** Use honesty, empathy, and self-inquiry as tools to explore the complexity of multiple perspectives. Recognize and value the unique assets of every stakeholder.
3. **Share ownership of our success and failure.** Follow through with commitments and support all teammates to do the same.
4. **Push yourself to reach your full potential through embracing challenge and leaning into discomfort.** Stay present and curious in moments of difficulty so they can become moments of growth.
5. **Amplify moments of joy and achievement.** Celebrate the individuality of each person and situation in order to become a more positive, inclusive community.

Dyad time



Dyad Prompt Offerings:

What do you need to let go of in order to make the most of spring break's opportunity to restore and rejuvenate yourself?

Today's PD Agenda

- 1:35-1:45 - Opening/Announcements
- 1:45-2:30 - SLC Prep #2
- 2:30-3:00 - Measure N/G Staff Input
- 3:00-3:50 - Department Meetings
- 3:55-4:10 - Closing & Appreciations

Today's SLC Prep Session

Today's Goals:

TWBAT:

- Collaborate with grade level team to design criteria for success for students' SLC presentations
- Begin designing instruction that prepares students to create SLC presentations that meet your grade level criteria

Deliverable: Model PPT/template for each grade level

Today's Agenda:

1. Framing (5)
2. Work Time (50)
3. Closing (5)

Today's SLC Prep Task

Every grade level team will design a model SLC PPT that is responsive to the needs of their grade level.

All presentations MUST include:

- Reading progress reflection (can NOT be adapted)
- Interim reflections/math & English progress reflections
- SBAC goals (6-8, 11)
- Promotion/graduation requirements & current status
- Goals & action plans for Q4
- **Schoolwide messaging**

Presentations may also include things like history and science progress analysis, citizenship & work habits reflections, in-depth grade analysis, community service reflection, extracurricular & community involvement discussion, college goals & career pathways planning, writing sample reflection, etc.

FUTURE PD:

- ❑ **3/24** - Grade level collaboration time to plan SLC lessons
- ❑ **4/10** - Grade level collaboration time to solidify SLC lessons & align across classrooms
- ❑ **4/14** - Homeroom advisor collaboration time to prepare for individual conferences

Grade Level Teams

Grade Level Planning & Facilitation Teams

6 th Grade	7 th Grade	8 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
Yen Eichensehr Villa Zackeroff	Johnson Ellenwood Gurrola Laws	Hare Tyson Greer Saad Bradford	Thomas Fyson Ewing Cabrera Darpino Barrios	Pratt Lipari Hartog Zavala Loewy	Maafi Campbell Cantine Colyer Walker Franco	Handel Liuzzi Spoden

Things to Consider:

- How will families hear the information being presented? What additional information might families need?
- How will students make sense of their progress in a meaningful way? What kind of data points and reflections will be the highest leverage?
- What practices will help students develop self-monitoring skills and become more reflective overall?

Grade Level Work: Your Steps

1. **Make a copy** of the MS or HS master model PPT and save it to the Spring 2017 SLC Folder in Drive with the name: __th Grade Model PPT
2. **Review** the master model and **discuss** with your grade level team how you will adapt it to target the needs of your grade level.
3. **Modify/add/remove slides** to reflect the ideal presentation your students will create. Be sure to maintain all school-wide requirements.

Student Led Conference Eva Kellogg



April 2017
8th Grade



REQUIREMENTS:

- Reading progress reflection (can NOT be adapted)
- Interim reflections/math & English progress reflections
- SBAC goals (6-8, 11)
- Promotion/graduation requirements & current status
- Goals & action plans for Q4
- **Schoolwide messaging**

Today's Measure N and G Input Session

Today's Goals:

TWBAT:

- Articulate goals of Measure N and Measure G1 and updates from Committee
- Provide input on current progress and potential next steps drafted by Early College/Measure N committee and MS Measure G1 committee

Deliverable: Committees to use input for first drafts of grants saved in Goals folder

Today's Agenda:

1. Framing (2)
2. **Chalk Talk for Input (25)**
3. **Take Aways (3)**

Measure N

Year 1 Roll Out

- New curriculum adoption in ELA, Science, and History.
 - Increase rigor and CCSS/NGSS alignment.
 - Increase teacher capacity to respond to students and create more meaningful experiences rather than pouring so much energy into material creation.
 - New curricula designed to be more supportive of a project based approach.
- Year 1 of curriculum adoption focused on developing teacher capacity with the curriculum and adopting with fidelity.
- Continued trend toward project based learning encouraged, but not the focus area.
- Continued use of PBL structures for end of year exhibitions.
- Encouragement for second PBL based exhibition at the end of Sem 1.

Year 2 Roll Out - focus on PBL and integrating pathways into all

Measure G

The Goals of the Measure

- Increase access to courses in arts, music, and world languages in grades 6-8
- Improve student retention during the transition from elementary to middle school
- Create a more positive and safe middle school learning environment

See Committee completed self assessment rubrics

Measure N - data from students

Middle School students should choose electives that they love, can practice frequently, and develop talents. What electives do you prefer?

	6th	7th	8th
Visual Art	31	28	33
Drama	8	6	3
Spanish	3	4	6
Dance	45	22	19
ComputerArts/ Programming	5	4	3



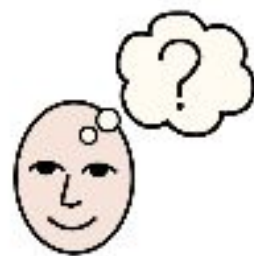
Data - HS

Pathways



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STEAM	77	31.40%	50	20.40%
Liberal Arts	27	11%	11	4.50%



Measure N

Notes/Take aways from today's session:

- Students love new pathway choices - great way to think about “empowered” and literate life
- Could use intro to pathways earlier - 9th grade course for all to take?
- Is Liberal Arts really a pathway? Maybe more attention to 3 rather than this one
- Teachers want to integrate work based learning into classroom projects and expectations - may need dedicated coordinator
- Partnerships with industry could use more focus - leverage iMentor volunteers?
- Advisory videos working - could use more accompanying materials

Measure G1

Notes/Take-Aways from today's session:

- Students crave more choice and different modalities
- Infractions and referrals from too much seat time
- Dance club equally popular with students with high intervention needs AND higher academic performance
- We are not fully utilizing our facilities - easy to create fully functioning dance rehearsal and performance space in the mornings and the afternoon (not during lunches)
- More case management for students to feel connected - will address lower survey scores for LWP is a family

Department Meetings

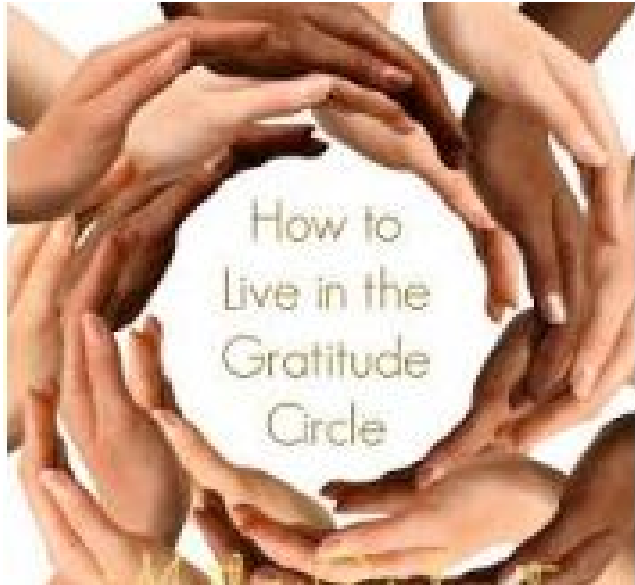
End @ 3:50

Begin again as a whole staff at 3:55

Announcements

- There are many school-wide events (SLCs, testing, Exhibitions, etc) that may **impact your instructional calendar for Q4**. Check out the draft calendar to begin wrapping your head around all the considerations.
- The afternoon of **April 10th is Regional PD**. You will have an opportunity to choose your own lunch and session. Michelle sent the e-mail this afternoon. NOTE: Grade Level Chairs & Instructional Team Leads will be part of the Lead Retreat. Choices must be made TODAY.
- **Interim scores** must be entered into Illuminate by TODAY.
- **Q4 unit plans** are due by Sunday, April 9th. You will have time in your department meeting today or next Friday to begin your plans. Reach out to your Instructional Lead or AP for help!
- **Q3 grades** are due by midnight on Sunday, April 9th. Make sure that your grades are complete and accurate. If you come across any problems, reach out IMMEDIATELY.
- **Break school** will happen on campus March 27-29. We are collecting teacher recommendations for high school candidates. Middle school break school arrangements will be dependent upon teacher participation. Talk to your AP if you have questions.
- **Campus will be open during break...**

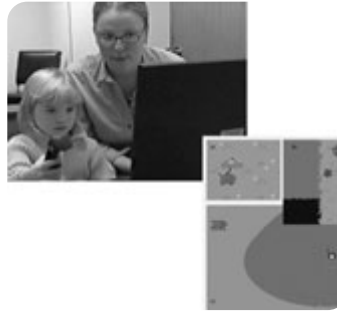
Closing with Gratitude. . . and feedback



How Arts Training Improves Attention and Cognition

By: [Michael I. Posner, Ph.D.](#), and [Brenda Patoine](#)

Sustained training in music, dance or other arts strengthens the brain's attention system, which in turn may improve cognition more generally. Evidence for such cognitive "transfer" is accumulating.



A researcher watches a 4-year-old participate in an attention training program, which includes the exercises shown in the inset. The children learn to control a cat to keep it out of the rain (upper left), to go to the grass rather than to the mud (upper right) and to catch a duck that swims in a pond. (Image courtesy of Michael I. Posner)

Does education in the arts transfer to seemingly unrelated cognitive abilities? Researchers are finding evidence that it does. Michael Posner argues that when children find an art form that sustains their interest, the subsequent strengthening of their brains' attention networks can improve cognition more broadly.

If there were a surefire way to improve your brain, would you try it? Judging by the abundance of products, programs and pills that claim to offer "cognitive enhancement," many people are lining up for just such quick brain fixes. Recent research offers a possibility with much better, science-based support: that focused training in any of the arts—such as music, dance or theater—strengthens the brain's attention system, which in turn can improve cognition more generally. Furthermore, this strengthening likely helps explain the effects of arts training on the brain and cognitive performance that have been reported in several scientific studies, such as those presented in May 2009 at a neuroeducation summit at Johns Hopkins University (co-sponsored by the Dana Foundation).

We know that the brain has a system of neural pathways dedicated to attention. We know that training these attention networks improves general measures of intelligence. And we can be fairly sure that focusing our attention on learning and performing an art—if we practice frequently and are truly engaged—activates these same attention networks. We

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therefore would expect focused training in the arts to improve cognition generally.

Some may construe this argument as a bold associative leap, but it's grounded in solid science. The linchpin in this equation is the attention system. Attention plays a crucial role in learning and memory, and its

learn something, pay attention. We all know this intuitively, and plenty of strong scientific data back it up.

The idea that training in the arts improves cognition generally really is not so bold within the context of what we call activity-dependent plasticity, a basic tenet of brain function. It means that the brain changes in response to what you do. Put another way, behavior shapes and sculpts brain networks: What you do in your day-to-day life is reflected in the wiring patterns of your brain and the efficiency of your brain's networks. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in your attention networks.¹

For most of us, if we find an art that “works” for us—that incites our passion and engages us wholeheartedly—and we stick with it, we should notice improvements in other cognitive areas in which attention is important, such as learning and memory, as well as improving cognition in general.

Solid Data Begin to Emerge

If our hypothesis is true, why have scientists been unable to nail down a cause-and-effect relationship between arts education and cognition—for example, “[X] amount of training in art form [Y] leads to a [Z] percent increase in IQ scores”? Such a relationship is difficult to confirm scientifically because there are so many variables at work; scientists have only begun to look at this relationship in a systematic, rigorous fashion.

Early tests of the idea that the arts can boost brainpower focused on the so-called “Mozart effect.” A letter published in 1993 in the journal *Nature* held that college students exposed to classical music had improved spatial reasoning skills,² which are important to success in math and science. This observation set off a wave of marketing hype that continues to this day. Despite numerous efforts, however, scientists have not reliably replicated the phenomenon. Nonetheless, these studies have involved only brief periods of *exposure* to music, rather than explicit musical training or practice.

More recent attempts to link arts training with general improvements in cognition have relied on a different approach. Researchers have focused on longer periods of engaged participation and practice in arts training rather than simple exposure to music. For example, in 2004, E. Glenn Schellenberg of the University of Toronto at Mississauga published results from a randomized, controlled study showing that the IQ scores of 72 children who were enrolled in a yearlong music training program increased

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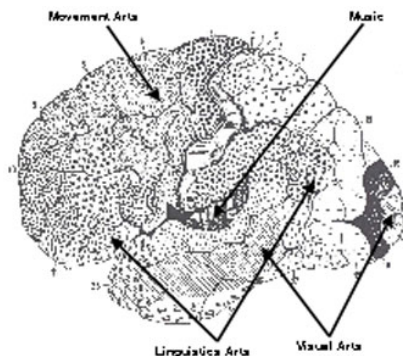
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significantly compared with 36 children who received no training and 36 children who took drama lessons. (The IQ scores of children taking drama lessons did not increase, but these children did improve more than the other groups on ratings of selected social skills.)³

In a study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* in March 2009, researchers Ellen Winner of Boston College, Gottfried Schlaug of Harvard University and their colleagues at McGill University used neuroimaging scans to examine brain changes in young children who underwent a four-year-long music training program, compared with a control group of children who did not receive music training.⁴ In the first round of testing, after 15 months, the researchers found structural changes in brain circuits involved in music processing in the children who received training. They did not find the same changes in the control group. The scientists also found improvements in musically relevant motor and auditory skills, a phenomenon called near transfer. In this case, the improvements did not transfer to measures of cognition less related to music—termed far transfer. We do not know why far transfer to IQ, for example was found in the Schellenberg study and not in this one.

Taken as a whole, the findings to date tell us that music training can indeed change brain circuitry and, in at least some circumstances, can improve general cognition. But they leave unsettled the question of under what circumstances training in one cognitive area reliably transfers to improvements in other cognitive skills. From our perspective, the key to transfer is diligence: Practicing for long periods of time and in an absorbed way can cause changes in more than the specific brain network related to the skill. Sustained focus can also produce stronger and more efficient attention networks, and these key networks in turn affect cognitive skills more generally.

Fig. 1. The practice of various art forms involves different sensory and motor areas in the brain. (Courtesy of M. Posner.)



Practicing a skill, either in the arts or in other areas, builds a rich repertoire of information related to the skill. Scientists conducting neuroimaging studies of many human tasks have identified networks of widely scattered neural structures that act together to perform a given skill, which may involve sensory, motor, attentional, emotional and language processes. The arts are no exception: Specific brain networks underlie specific art

forms, as illustrated in Figure 1. As we practice a task, its underlying network becomes more efficient, and connections among brain areas that perform different aspects of the task become more tightly integrated.

This process is analogous to an orchestra playing a symphony. The music that results from the integration of orchestral sections is likely to sound more fluid the hundredth time they play a piece than the first time.

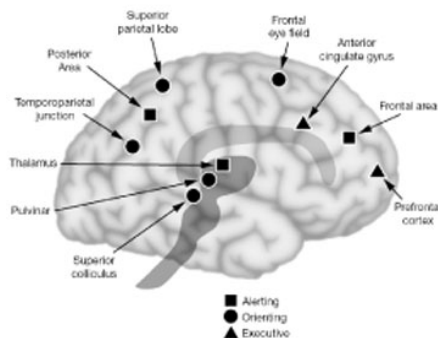
Training Attention Networks

A large body of scientific evidence shows that repeated activation of the brain's attention networks increases their efficiency. Neuroimaging studies have also proved that the following specialized neural networks underlie various aspects of attention¹ (see Figure 2):

- the *alerting* network, which enables the brain to achieve and maintain an alert state;
- the *orienting* network, which keeps the brain attuned to external events in our environment;
- the *executive attention* network, which helps us control our emotions and choose among conflicting thoughts in order to focus on goals over long periods of time.

I have been particularly interested in the executive attention network. Executive attention skills, especially the abilities to control emotions and to focus thoughts (sometimes called cognitive control), are critical aspects of social and academic success throughout childhood. Empathy toward others, the ability to control reward-motivated impulses and even control of the propensity to cheat or lie have been linked scientifically to aspects of executive attention.⁵ Researchers also have shown that measures of this network's efficiency are related to school performance.⁶

Fig. 2. Brain networks that underlie different aspects of attention include the alerting network, the orienting network and the executive attention network. Arts learning may contribute to improved cognition by improving the efficiency of the executive attention network. (Courtesy of M. Posner.)



Given the importance of the executive attention network, my colleagues and I wondered what might improve its efficiency. To find out, we adapted a series of exercises, originally designed to train monkeys for space travel, to investigate the effects of attention-training exercises in 4- to 6-year-old children. We randomly assigned the children to either a control condition (which involved watching and responding to interactive videos) or training on joystick-operated computer exercises designed to engage attention

networks through motivation and reward (see the image at top right). After the children who did the computer exercises participated in five days of training for about 30 minutes per day, we placed noninvasive electrodes on the children's scalp to look at their brain activity; we found evidence of increased efficiency in the executive attention network. The experimental group's network performance, in contrast to the control group's, resembled performance in adults. Importantly, this improvement transferred to higher scores on IQ tests designed for young children.

These data suggest that increasing the efficiency of the executive attention network also improves general cognition as measured by IQ.⁷ M. Rosario Rueda of the University of Granada, Spain, and colleagues subsequently replicated this key finding in an as yet unpublished study of Spanish children. Rueda found that attention training improved the children's abilities to delay reward, and the improvements persisted for at least two months after training.

In recent years, various approaches to training children to pay attention have been carried out in many different settings. The results show that tasks specifically designed to exercise the underlying networks can indeed improve attention, and that this kind of training can translate to better general cognition. In one of the strongest studies to support this finding, measures of cognitive control significantly improved in preschoolers enrolled in a yearlong training program that incorporated different activities designed to sharpen executive functions.⁸ We expect that this training will positively affect the children's future academic performance, but this remains to be shown.

For many children, interest in a particular art form leads to sustained attention when practicing that art form. Moreover, engaging in art often involves resolving conflicts among competing possible responses, such as when choosing the correct note to play at a given moment. The ability to resolve conflict among competing responses is also a crucial aspect of attention training. For example, if you are to respond to a target arrow by pressing a key in the direction in which the arrowhead points, the addition of surrounding arrows pointing in the opposite direction will increase your reaction time and activate parts of the executive attention network.⁸ We expect, therefore, that arts training should exercise the executive attention network and, therefore, also should improve cognition generally.

One Size Doesn't Fit All

It seems unlikely that training in the arts will *always* improve general cognition, however, since so many factors are at play. No single art form is interesting to all people, and some people may never warm up to any type of art. Individual differences in relevant brain networks, which are probably genetically influenced to some degree, help explain this variability in both appreciation of and ability to create art. For example, one person may have an auditory system that easily discriminates between tones and a motor

system optimized for fine finger control, which may predispose her to playing a musical instrument. Someone with agility, coordination and a good ability to imitate motions of others, on the other hand, might naturally gravitate toward dance or sports. These differences may also help explain why people are passionate about one type of art but not others.

The efficacy of arts training also depends on a child's temperament or personality. For example, openness, which affects behavior, may be a prerequisite to effective training, and may in part be genetically derived. We have found, for instance, that a gene that regulates the transmission of the chemical dopamine from one brain cell to another appears to modulate children's openness to parental influence. Our studies show that children with one form of this gene (the dopamine-4 receptor gene) show abnormally high sensation-seeking behavior if their parents show poor parenting skills, but not if their parents show good parenting skills.^{9,10}

An increasing body of evidence indicates that the brain's attention networks are also under some degree of genetic control. For example, certain genes seem to modulate an individual's ability to perform attention-related tasks, such as quickly responding to a warning signal or shifting attention from one external event to another. These genetic influences underscore individual differences in responses to training, and they may explain contradictory results in scientific studies investigating the links between arts training and cognition.

Apart from these caveats, exposure to the "right" art form can fully engage children's attention and can be highly rewarding for them. They may get so involved in learning the art that they lose track of time or even "lose themselves" while practicing it. I believe that few other school subjects can produce such strong and sustained attention that is at once rewarding and motivating. That is why arts training is particularly appealing as a potential means for improving cognition. Other engaging subjects might be useful as well, but the arts may be unique in that so many children have a strong interest in them.

With advances in neuroscience that are providing important new tools for studying cognition, it is important for researchers to work with educators to design and carry out studies that build upon the findings that arts training provides near-transfer effects, and determine whether this training also results in—and causes—far-transfer cognitive benefits. As we have seen, recent studies have transcended the failed paradigm of simply exposing people to the arts, and now concentrate on the effects of arts training over months and years. We need more studies like these to determine whether, beyond strong correlation, causation occurs. Arts training may influence cognition through other brain processes as well. Because arts training strengthens the brain network related to the art being practiced, other tasks that rely on the same brain circuitry or pieces of it presumably would be affected. For example, if music training influences the auditory system,

we might also expect to see improvement in nonmusical tasks involving pitch. In fact, Brian Wandell and his colleagues at Stanford University recently demonstrated that children who train in music or the visual arts showed improved phonological awareness, the ability to manipulate speech sounds, which is strongly tied to reading fluency. Moreover, the more music training they had, the better their reading fluency.¹¹

In addition, parts of the music network lie adjacent to brain areas involved in processing numbers, which might explain anecdotal reports of improvements in mathematics after music training. For instance, Elizabeth Spelke of Harvard University has found that school-age children engaged in intensive music training had improved performance in abstract geometry tasks.¹² Wandell and his team also reported preliminary data connecting experience in the visual arts with children's math calculation abilities.¹³ Future studies will need to examine these possibilities in more detail.

Another interesting aspect of the performing arts is that artists often prepare for their work by consciously entering a state of mind that they believe will elevate their performance, for example, via deep breathing, picturing the moment or other meditative techniques. Yi-Yuan Tang, a visiting professor at the University of Oregon from Dalian Medical University in China, recently reported that some forms of meditation can produce changes in the connection between the brain and the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system and, after just a few days of training, can lead to improvements in the same aspects of executive attention that are trained by specifically exercising this network.¹⁴ This "attention state" also correlates with improved mood and resistance to stress. Our data suggest that meditation may contribute to generalized cognitive improvements in those who practice it.

The growing body of scientific work that suggests arts training can improve cognitive function—including our view, which identifies stronger attention networks as the mechanism—opens a new avenue of study for cognitive researchers. The new research findings also give parents and educators one more reason to encourage young people to find an art form they love and to pursue it with passion. Continuing research in this area can also help inform ongoing debates about the value of arts education, which has important policy implications given budgetary pressures to cut arts programs from school curricula.

From our perspective, it is increasingly clear that with enough focused attention, training in the arts likely yields cognitive benefits that go beyond "art for art's sake." Or, to put it another way, the art form that you truly love to learn may also lead to improvements in other brain functions.

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The Role of Sociability Self-Concept in the Relationship between Exposure to and Concern about Aggression in Middle School

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Abstract

This study examined middle grades students' sociability self-concept and their perceptions about feeling safe at school. Participants' ($N = 420$) exposure to school aggression and concern about the potential for violence at school were measured across four critical areas: fighting, bullying, stealing, and seeing weapons. Results indicated a limited exposure to school aggression for these young adolescents. However, students who did report seeing more aggression at school also tended to be more concerned about aggressive incidents occurring. The prediction of concern by exposure was stronger among students low in sociability self-concept and weaker for those high in sociability self-concept. Sociability self-concept, thus, appeared to be a protective factor, in that sociability self-concept buffered the effect of exposure to aggression on concern about violence at school. These results highlight the importance of attending to sociability self-concept during early adolescence in our efforts to reduce concern about aggression in the middle grades school environment.

School violence appears to be on the decline. Mayer (2010) reported that violent incidents have leveled off, while the Centers for Disease Control data from the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* revealed a significant decrease in school violence from 1993 to 2005 (Dinkes, Kemp, & Braum, 2009). These reports indicate that schools have become safer places in which school crime is relatively stable (DeVoe, Peter, Noonan, Snyder, & Baum, 2005), and students can focus on their academic endeavors. However, while students are currently less likely to be directly exposed to school violence, safety and security remain pressing issues (Mayer & Furlong, 2010).

Student exposure to violence and harm at school can include direct victimization as well as witnessing the victimization of others; both greatly affect school climate. Further, research indicates that students who experience vicarious or low-level aggression, such as intimidation, also suffer harmful psychosocial effects (Nasel et al., 2001). The *Indicators of School Crime*

and Safety (Dinkes, Kemp, & Braum, 2009) indicated that less aggressive acts were more prevalent than more severe violence at school. This report, based on a variety of independent data sources, also noted the types of aggression students most likely encounter in the school environment: fighting, bullying, stealing, and seeing weapons. Thus, educators wishing to reduce aggression at school might focus on these four critical areas.

According to The U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics (2006), student aggression toward others is often identified in elementary school, with exposure becoming more frequent and severe during the middle grades. For example, in a large sample of middle grades students, Flannery, Wester, and Singer (2004) reported that 79% of the students had witnessed fighting, with 81% indicating they saw peers being threatened at school. It is not surprising that dealing with school violence is ranked as a top concern among adolescents (Burnham, 2009).

Adolescence has long been recognized as a transitional time (Eccles et al., 1993) full of opportunity and vulnerability, in which youngsters are confronted with rapid developmental changes and social role redefinition. Social functioning becomes very important, as bonds with parents are transformed and relations with peers take on new meaning (Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Perry, 2003). Conception of self is very much in focus (Ybrandt, 2008) as young people self-examine to determine who they really are (Steinberg & Morris, 2001) and how they fit into their world. The development of the socially integrated perceptions of self typically occur during adolescence (Sebastian, Burnett, & Blakemore, 2008), and an abundance of research has focused on social contextual factors believed to affect middle level students who deal with aggression at school. For example, Tarrant, MacKenzie, and Hewitt (2006) applied a social identity perspective when studying adolescent friendship group association within the context of self-concept. They discussed the potential benefits of understanding adolescents' subjective perceptions of peer relationships, as they relate to aggression. Harvey (2007) advocated the development of positive peer relationships and prosocial behaviors at school to promote resiliency to school violence. Malecki, Demaray, and Davidson (2008) expanded the notion of peer support to social support, which included support from parents, teachers, classmates, friends, and the school. Following this line, social support

has played a mediating role in the victimization-to-personal adjustment relationship (Malecki & Demaray, 2004) and served as a moderator between adolescent victimization and distress (Davidson & Demaray, 2007). These studies highlight the importance of the social support given to middle graders by significant others. However, the salience of such support may depend on the sociability self-concept of that adolescent.

Sociability Self-Concept

Global self-concept refers to the overall extent to which one values oneself; however, individuals may also hold more differentiated beliefs in specific domains of functioning (Harter, 1996). For example, a student's self-evaluation in the academic domain may differ from a self-evaluation in the social domain. Whereas global conceptions of self remain fairly stable (Shavelson & Bolus, 1982), domain-specific conceptions can be influenced by contextual experiences and by significant others. Prior research has noted young adolescents' self-concepts in the areas of social skills are particularly fluid and receptive to both positive and negative influences (Rice & Dolgin, 2005). Indeed, young adolescents are particularly vulnerable to changes in self-concept (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002); thus, sociability self-concept is an important construct that should be addressed. In general, sociability is a preference for being in the company of others versus being alone (Cheek & Buss, 1981) and is based on the extent to which a student prefers to have many social relationships (Mounts, Valentine, Anderson, & Boswell, 2009). Even within the context of adolescence, when peer relations become increasingly important, sociability self-concept appears to vary across individuals (Bokhorst, Sumter, & Westenberg, 2010). In this study, sociability self-concept refers to a student's social predisposition. Thus, a student low in sociability self-concept would prefer more social distance, while a student high in sociability self-concept would tend to seek and encourage many close social interactions.

The current study was designed to determine the relation between middle level students' exposure to school aggression and concern about violence in the four previously noted critical areas. The data were analyzed with exposure to aggression as a predictor of concern about violence occurring, with student sociability self-concept moderating this relationship. That is, the effect of exposure on concern at differing levels of sociability self-concept was considered within

a regression framework. The research addressed two questions: (1) Is exposure to school aggression significantly related to concern about the potential for violence in the four noted areas? and (2) If exposure influences concern, is that effect contingent on students' perceptions of sociability self-concept?

Method

Participants and Procedure

Study participants included seventh ($n = 225$) and eighth ($n = 195$) grade students attending one Midwestern public middle school. The rate and types of violence reported at this school were unknown, with educators seeking this information. Given the suburban nature of the community, the risk of exposure to aggression was presumed to be lower than in urban communities (Katz & Lang, 2003). The 204 females and 216 males were predominantly white and middle class. All students enrolled in the general education homeroom period were invited to participate. Teachers distributed parent/guardian participation consent forms in class for the students to take home. This form specified the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of all responses. Participants responded anonymously to questionnaires assessing perceived sociability self-concept and school safety during their regularly scheduled first period class. In all, 420 of the 518 eligible students participated; the remaining did not have parental permission to participate or were unavailable or unwilling to take part in the study.

Measures

The *SSSQ: School Safety and Security Questionnaire* (Miller & Nickell, 2008) is a tool for assessing student perceptions in the middle grades school environment. This measure provides educators with a tool to gather school-specific information, which can serve as a guide for educational practitioners in developing appropriate programs and interventions to deal with safety and security issues at the local level. The questionnaire has undergone extensive modifications (Miller & Nickell, 2007) and easily can be personalized for use in site-specific applications. The psychometric properties of the measure have been evaluated, with Miller and Nickell (2008) providing strong support for the reliability and validity of student scores on the measure. The factor structure clearly reflected the theoretical conceptual structure, which is related to important aspects of school safety research and practice.

The *SSSQ* includes items that ask students to “rate your level of concern regarding incidents that could occur at your school” in the specific areas of fighting, stealing, bullying, and seeing weapons. The survey also asks students to report actual occurrences of aggression in these four critical areas. All items were rated along Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 to 5, where higher scores indicated greater student concern with, and actual exposure to, aggression at school. The reliability of the scores was assessed for this student sample, and the obtained coefficients supported internal consistency reliability for the scores from these item sets; concern $\alpha = .81$, experience $\alpha = .71$. A continuous “exposure” and “concern” variable score for each student was computed by summing individual item scores across the four types of aggression, with scores ranging from 4 to 20.

Sociability self-concept was measured with the *MTS: Multidimensional Test of Self-Concept* (Lathrop, 1988), developed to tap an individual's perceptions of their current state of self-concept in three domains (sociability, competence, and dependability). This instrument was specifically designed to assess nonacademic self-concept, in contrast to many self-concept measures that stress overall or academic self-concept. The scales, based on social influence processes in counseling, were designed to measure dimensions of self-concept that have direct clinical relevance. The scales were standardized on junior and high school students, college students, working adults, and retirees (Lathrop, 1986).

Given the importance of peer relations during adolescence, the current study used only the sociability subscale. The instrument was developed to allow for the use of the individual subscales. As such, the reliability and validity of the sociability self-concept scale has been supported. This six-item scale is reported to have good reliability, as noted through generalizability (.863) and internal consistency (.843) alpha coefficients (Lathrop, 1987). In addition, Lathrop (1987) reported an adequate test-retest stability coefficient (.66) with a three-month delay. Confirmatory factor analyses using LISREL statistical software and correlations with other established self-concept measures have been cited in support of the construct validity of the sociability self-concept subscale.

Students responded to six *MTS* items using a 7-point graphic rating scale, with half the items reverse-scored. Students were instructed to “Please rate yourself as you really are,” with two adjectives

anchoring the end points of each bipolar item. Summed responses could range from 6 to 42 with higher scores indicating greater sociability self-concept. The coefficient alpha calculated with the middle school data in the current study was .74, suggesting acceptable internal consistency reliability for the scores from this student sample.

Results

Preliminary Analyses:

Exposure-to-Concern Relationship

With respect to student exposure to, and concern about, school aggression, ANOVAs (see Table 1) yielded non-significant sex and grade differences. Table 2 presents the supporting exposure and concern means and standard deviations for girls and boys by grade. Overall, the exposure mean was 6.46, while the average concern reported by students was 10.63. As shown in the table, the standard deviation values for concern were larger, which suggests a greater variability in the student concern ratings relative to the exposure ratings.

Given the non-significant sex and grade differences, the analyses proceeded with the full student sample. Table 3 presents item-level descriptive statistics for the three variables of interest. Pearson correlation coefficients indicated that, though the relationship between sociability and exposure reached statistical significance ($r = -.122, p = .024$), the relationship between sociability and concern did not ($r = -.061, ns$).

The exposure-to-concern association ($r = .621, p < .001$) suggested that, overall, students who tended to report more exposure to school aggression also tended to voice serious concern about violence at school. On the whole, personal experience with violence shared about 39% of the variability in concern about aggressive incidents occurring at school. Exposure-to-concern bivariate correlations were also computed in each of the four critical areas. Each of the r values reached statistical significance, fighting = .20, stealing = .33, bullying = .33, weapons = .19, each with $p < .001$. In every area, students encountering more aggression at school expressed higher levels of concern about the potential for school violence, with shared variance averaging about 7%.

Table 1
ANOVA Summary Tables for Concern and Exposure with Sex, Grade, and Interaction

Source	Concern					Source	Exposure				
	SS	df	MS	F	sig		SS	df	MS	F	sig
Sex	10.02	1	10.02	0.66	.419	Sex	2.33	1	2.33	0.32	.573
Grade	2.22	1	2.22	0.15	.704	Grade	20.79	1	20.79	2.88	.090
S * G	6.38	1	6.38	0.42	.519	S * G	13.59	1	13.59	1.88	.173
Error	6308.04	416	15.16			Error	3009.07	416	7.23		
Total	6326.66	419				Total	3045.78	419			

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics by Sex and Grade

	Male				Female			
	7th (n=111)		8th (n=105)		7th (n=114)		8th (n=90)	
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)
Exposure	5.92	(2.58)	6.70	(2.65)	6.55	(2.68)	6.69	(2.74)
Concern	10.59	(3.77)	11.26	(4.66)	10.50	(4.14)	10.42	(4.07)

Table 3
Item-level Descriptive Statistics for Sociability Self-concept, Exposure, and Concern

Sociability self-concept		
Please rate yourself as you really are		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
unfriendly –friendly	6.28	1.17
close – distant	2.68	1.56
depressed – cheerful	5.40	1.48
enthusiastic – indifferent	2.38	1.52
incompatible – compatible	5.65	1.48
sociable – unsociable	2.05	1.33

Exposure		
This school year, how often have you		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
been in fights at school?	2.46	1.18
had money or belongings stolen from you?	2.83	1.16
been threatened by a bully?	2.50	1.21
seen others carrying weapons?	2.85	1.35

Concern		
Please rate your level of concern regarding incidents that could occur at your school		
	Mean	Standard Deviation
fighting	1.47	.90
stealing	1.85	1.09
bullying	1.72	1.09
seeing weapons	1.60	1.03

Exposure on Concern Moderated by Sociability

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted, with concern about violence serving as the outcome variable. The predictor variable (exposure to aggression) and the moderator variable (sociability self-concept) were centered based on procedures recommended by Aiken and West (1991) and Jaccard, Turrisi, and Wan (1990). As a set, the R^2 indicated that these predictors accounted for about 10% of the variance in student concern, $F(2,417) = 24.30$, $p < .001$, with only exposure reaching statistical significance, $t(417) = 6.87$, $p < .001$. A second multiple regression analysis was conducted, which added the centered exposure-sociability interaction term. The R^2 indicated that this model accounted for about 12% of the variance in student concern, $F(3,416) = 18.20$, $p < .001$. Exposure was statistically significant, $t(416) = 6.89$, $p < .001$, as was the two-way interaction, $t(416) = 2.34$, $p = .020$. Table 4 presents the regression results.

Experts have noted the difficulty in detecting an interaction effect within a regression framework (Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991; Wampold & Freund, 1987). Champoux and Peters (1987) and Chaplin (1991) reported that interactions in moderated regressions typically account for about 1% to 3% of the variance, which is consistent with the 2% uncovered in the current study. The statistical significance of the interaction coefficient noted here revealed that the relationship between concern and exposure varied across the range of sociability values. Without the interaction, it might have been concluded that sociability self-concept did not significantly influence student concern about aggression at school. After all, sociability self-concept failed to reach significance in both regression analyses.

Table 4
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Concern, N = 420

Variables	b	SE	Standardized β	t	sig
Block 1:					
Sociability	-.016	.034	-.022	-.46	.643
Exposure	.501	.073	.320	6.87	.000
Block 2:					
Sociability	-.019	.034	-.026	-.56	.573
Exposure	.500	.073	.319	6.89	.000
Interaction	.027	.011	.108	2.34	.020

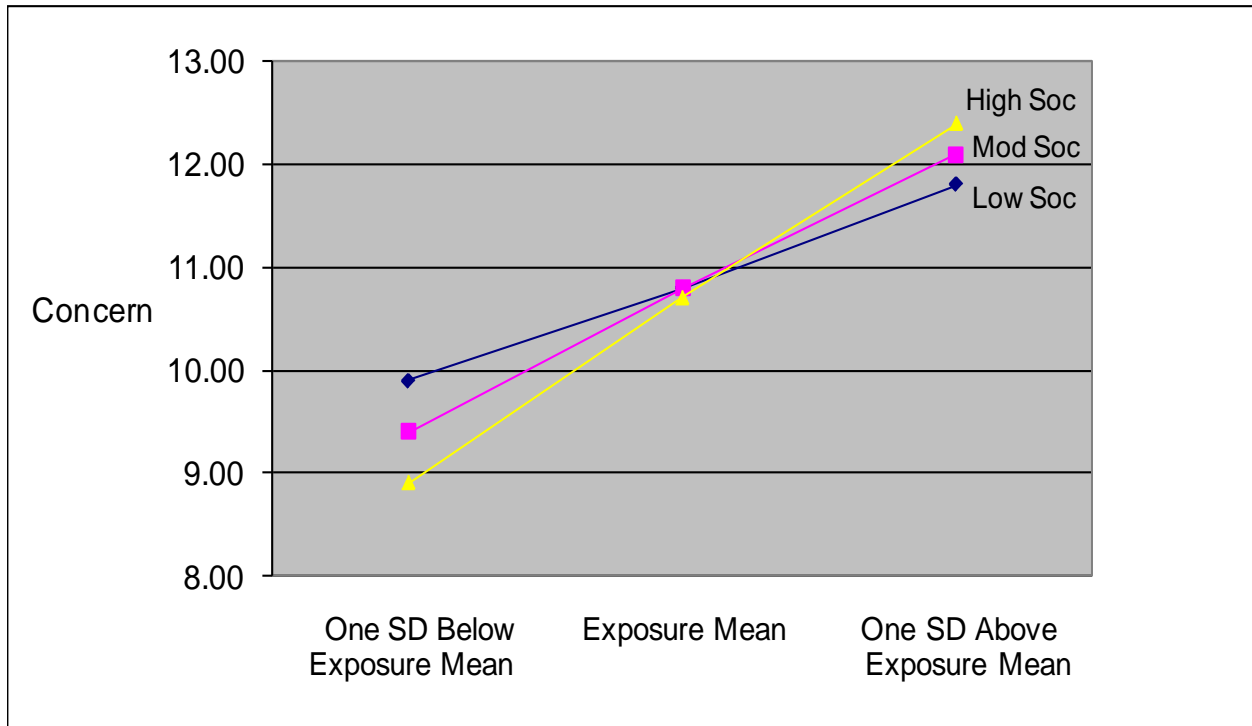


Figure 1 *Sociability self-concept by exposure to aggression interaction*

Following Cohen and Cohen (1983) and Aiken and West (1991), the nature of the interaction of sociability self-concept and exposure was explored by plotting the results. Specifically, a series of simple regression equations measuring the relationship between concern and exposure were generated at fixed sociability values: one standard deviation above the mean, at the mean, and one standard deviation below the mean (see Figure 1). Significance tests indicated the simple slopes significantly differed from zero among students with a high level of sociability self-concept, $b = 0.65, \beta = .42, p < .001$; for those at an average sociability level, $b = 0.50, \beta = .31, p < .01$; and for those at a low level of sociability, $b = 0.35, \beta = .22, p < .001$. This pattern of results suggests that as sociability self-concept increased, the relationship between exposure and concern tended to decrease. That is, the prediction of concern by exposure tended to be stronger when sociability self-concept was low and weaker when sociability self-concept was high. This is shown in Figure 1, where exposure to aggression had a strong effect on concern at low sociability, as indicated by the steep regression line. This effect was lessened somewhat at the average level of sociability, as indicated by the moderately increasing regression line. Finally, there was a weaker prediction of concern by exposure when sociability self-concept was high, as indicated by the regression line showing less slope.

Discussion

These adolescents tended to report low levels of exposure to aggression at school, a finding that is consistent with recent research (Mayer & Furlong, 2010). Evidently, this middle school was perceived as basically safe by these young adolescents, which mirrors trend data indicating that school crime and disruption is on the decline (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009). Also in line with other published data (e.g., Walcott, Upton, Bolen, & Brown, 2008), sex did not appear to significantly influence aggression. While there is wide consensus that boys are involved in serious violence more often than girls, the role of sex in less serious forms of aggression still needs to be fully explored (Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker, 2010). Adding grade further complicates this situation. Victimization has been related to grade level in the past (Rooney et al., 2006); however, grade-specific differences in reported exposure to or concern about aggression were not found in this study. Although the restricted age range may have limited the effect of grade, these findings may provide potentially useful insights into young adolescents' perceptions of safety at school. Having an enhanced understanding of the importance of sociability self-concept can help inform those responsible for school-based preventative interventions. More specifically, programming aimed at reducing concern about violence at school

might not need to differentiate students by sex or by grade. If this is the case, educators could incorporate modules to strengthen sociability self-concept into interventions that would be appropriate for both girls and boys in this age range.

As anticipated, exposure and concern were related; adolescents with higher levels of exposure to aggression were inclined to report more concern about aggression occurring, and those with less exposure reported less concern. This was particularly true for stealing and bullying, which have been noted as prevalent in school settings (Mayer & Furlong, 2010). The wide gap between the overall average exposure (6.46) and concern (10.69) ratings in the current study revealed that, although these adolescents did not experience much aggression at school, they did report being concerned about the potential for aggressive incidents to occur. This finding suggests that these adolescents may have held unrealistic perceptions of risk. Burnham's (2009) research indicates that adolescents' fears have changed over time. Current concerns about school violence may be due, in part, to the extensive media coverage of events such as school shootings and bully-based suicide. Television, radio, and Internet coverage of such events may have sensitized youth to violence and compromised their feelings of safety at school. Indeed, research indicates that students who are concerned about aggressive incidents at school tend to hold lower safety perceptions (Boxer, Edwards-Leeper, Goldstein, Musher-Elizenman, & Dubow, 2003). As suggested by the cumulative stress hypothesis (Sameroff, 2001), continual sensationalized media coverage may amplify students' fears, with consequences that can affect learning and the enjoyment of school.

The central finding of the study was that the influence of exposure on concern was moderated by sociability self-concept. That is, the prediction of concern by exposure was stronger among students with low sociability self-concept and weaker for those reporting high sociability. Sociability self-concept, thus, appeared to be a protective factor, in that exposure was less predictive of concern for those with high sociability self-concept. This finding parallels research focusing on social support. For example, Malecki and Demaray (2004) identified social support as a buffer against negative outcomes for student victims of bullying. They further demonstrated a strong link between perceptions of self and the frequency and importance of social support (Demaray, Malecki, Ruegar, Brown, &

Summers, 2009). The resilience literature indicates that resiliency results from many positive social relationships (Harvey, 2007) and that stressful situations are tempered for those with many strong perceptions of social support (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). In this study, sociability self-concept also appeared to serve as a protective factor, as the concern of students reporting a strong sociability self-concept was less likely influenced by exposure to aggression. This highlights the importance of attending to adolescents' sociability self-concept, particularly during early adolescence when social skills are fluid and open to both positive and negative influences (Rice & Dolgin, 2005; Schunk, 2000). Teachers could enable adolescents to interrelate more effectively by modeling and encouraging social behaviors such as cooperation, responsibility, and self-control. Teacher support has been positively associated with student social skill adjustment, even for high-risk children (Brophy-Herb et al., 2007), and curricula are available to teachers who wish to improve middle grades students' social competence (Consortium on the School-based Promotion of Social Competence, 1996). In addition, school counselors could intervene with adolescents to assist them in enhancing their social skills while creating an environment of support for all students.

There is consensus that constructs involving "self" should be clearly operationalized (Demaray et al., 2009). Domain-specific self-concepts have been linked to crucial school outcomes, such as motivation and achievement (Schunk, 2000), and now to perceptions of school aggression. These results add to the growing body of literature highlighting the need to clarify self-concept constructs while highlighting the need to expand our understanding of how sociability self-concept relates to other self mechanisms within the school setting.

Limitations

Several limitations should be noted. First, this study was conducted in a single suburban middle school, and although the results are consistent with other studies of peer aggression, replication with a diverse sample of middle grades students would strengthen the findings reported here. Further, similar to many investigations of adolescents, this research relied on anonymous self-administered surveys. Although self-report measures do tap the perceptions of those being studied, these young adolescents reported their perceptions, which may or may not concur with what the adults in this educational setting would have reported. Future research might include reports of

aggressive behavior and disorder as noted by adults or from official school records or police calls for service.

Another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data; conclusions are limited to temporal associations, with causal inferences remaining beyond the scope of this study. Finally, given the nature of the variables under study, students may have responded inaccurately, for example to impress others with their exposure or to hide concern. If this was the case, social desirability bias may have confounded the results presented here.

Conclusion

This study provides one step toward developing an understanding of the influence of sociability self-concept on adolescents' perceptions of school safety. Compared with other groups, adolescents are especially susceptible to fluctuations in self-concept (Parker, 2010). This developmental stage is characterized by multiple biological and social changes (Eccles et al., 1993), and educators may misjudge the effect of exposure on concern about aggression by not considering sociability self-concept. Social self-concept is a key construct, as it influences middle grades students' interactions with teachers, peers, and others in the school environment and the students' approach to conflict resolution (Peetsma, Hasher, van der Veen, & Roede, 2005). The current study examined sociability self-concept as a factor that can be targeted through school-based interventions to reduce the risk of concern about aggression in suburban middle schools. Many types of violence prevention programs currently exist for middle grades students (Farrell, 2009). However, implementing supportive programs that include sociability self-concept could eliminate the need for school personnel to identify or potentially stigmatize young adolescents with high levels of exposure to school aggression.

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