

Oakland School for the Arts - Measure N Two-Pager 19-20

Oakland School for the Arts has experienced a significant year of growth regarding our Linked Learning Pathway development. Through our process we have received consistent feedback that some significant structural changes are needed in order to fully implement an effective Linked Learning program. Throughout the 18-19 school year we led a pathway development team of teachers, students, administrators, parents, and consultants through a self-study that resulted in such key programmatic changes. As the newly expanded development team entered the second year of our self study, we collected data from all stakeholders through a variety of surveys and gatherings to determine what specific barriers all demographics of our diverse student body may encounter in their pursuit of college and career readiness. Parents were surveyed and key subgroups were consulted more intensely through this process, including multiple gatherings with our Parents of Color (POC) group to ensure that the needs of our students at greatest risk of marginalization were held as priority. With all four pillars of Linked Learning as our focus we identified key structural changes needed to enable college and career preparation for all students through a fully integrated program of study. The identified needs were: designating our pathways and merging our offered arts programs into these pathways, introducing integrated arts courses as part of the academic day, implementing an advisory structure, updating our graduate profile, and redesigning our bell schedule to accommodate these needed changes.

As a performing and design arts school with 10 different art departments it became clear to us that we could be more efficient in our support structures if we were to merge these departments into two distinct pathways. Our Performing Arts Pathway is composed of Theater, Dance, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music. Our Design, Visual, and Media Arts Pathway is composed of Fashion Design, Visual Art, Digital Media, Production Design, and Literary Arts. The merging of our departments will allow us to create pathway courses that can be accessed by students from multiple departments, monitor WBL/internship opportunities by pathway, coordinate and monitor our CTE offerings, and allow students to access courses in multiple art departments throughout their high school experience.

We introduced Aesthetics and Business of the Arts as pathway integrated courses offered during the academic portion of our day. Each of these courses is in a pilot phase this year as electives with the consideration to eventually have one or both of these courses be required for all students as part of their program of study. The Business of the Arts class is designed to ensure students from both pathways are performance and portfolio ready. Students work on resumes, build their digital portfolios, and research professional opportunities within their pathway. Aesthetics is an Art History course designed to support students in art analysis through a critical lense.

One of the pathway development teams findings in the self study was the need to ensure that all students have a designated point person and advocate on the OSA faculty. We visited numerous schools to learn more about advisory structures and decided as a faculty and student

body to pilot our own advisory program, meeting once a week for 35 minutes. There are 50 advisories meeting simultaneously in every nook and cranny of our campus each Thursday right before lunch. The advisors are academic teachers, pathway teachers, campus supervisors, and administrators who each meet with 10-15 students in a curriculum guided program that focuses on needs identified by the advisory subcommittee last school year. In addition to the campus wide discussions that take place, advisory is also a place where advisors monitor academic progress and communicate concerns with families.

A graduate profile subcommittee was formed to analyze the relevance of our current Expected Schoolwide Learning Results and to determine any necessary update. This subcommittee concluded that though the essence of the ESLRs was relevant and reflective of OSA mission and vision, they were verbose and not palatable from the student perspective. With stakeholder input, this subcommittee proposed the acronym R.E.A.D.Y (Reflection, Engagement, Advocacy, Dedication, Your Voice/Your Journey) as the foundation for the graduate profile. This is still a work in process, with the goal to create grade level specific profiles for each of these values that outline what it means to be an OSA student and ultimately an OSA graduate.

In connection to the academic rigor pillar of Linked Learning we have implemented an Early College Credit (ECC) program that includes Statistics taught on our campus through Berkeley City College and access to and support with online city college options that students take on our campus. Online American Sign Language through Saddle Back College has been added to our world language options and has been effective in providing students with an accelerated option to fulfill language graduation requirements while receiving college credits. Our goal is to continue building this ECC program to provide all students to college credit options prior to graduation.

As each of these proposed changes impacts our current use of already limited time, a separate subcommittee was formed to analyze our use of time and propose a modified bell schedule to accommodate our identified needs. The bell schedule subcommittee considered all factors and ultimately decided on a hybrid block bell schedule with two days of block periods (85 minutes) each week. These block periods allow time for dual enrollment courses, increased project based learning including pathway integrated projects, weekly advisory meetings, access to our STEAM lab, and field trips in the immediate area.

Next steps for us in our pathway development process are to formalize our monitoring system for work based learning opportunities, design pathway course access across subpathways and pathways, implement one fully pathway integrated academic course per grade level, train teachers in strategies for using block periods, and to finalize R.E.A.D.Y as our graduate profile. We will be working with a consultant to assist us in this process and to analyze any staffing changes needed to further support the pathway development. Our school community has been incredibly supportive of this process and we look forward to continuing our Linked Learning development.