

Project Arts for Learning (Project A4L) Annual Program Evaluation (EOY1)

Section 1: Background

Military-connected students experience frequent relocations and this mobility often has real implications in both academic achievement and intrinsic motivation. When military-connected students arrive new to Coronado Unified School District (CUSD), teachers have limited knowledge and understanding of what these students know and are able to do, and this limited understanding may hamper their efforts to provide precise instructional support for these students. Furthermore, relocation is a primary stressor for military-connected students. Many may lack the intrinsic motivation necessary to succeed in school as a result of the anxiety encountered due to frequent moves. To overcome these and other challenges, CUSD has designed the Project Arts for Learning (Project A4L) program so that teachers better understand what students' needs are based on the results of a diagnostic assessment along with providing highly engaging lessons that both boost their intrinsic motivation to learn and do well in school as well as their academic achievement. The primary goal of Project A4L is to improve academic achievement in English Language Arts as well as school engagement by providing high quality arts-integrated instruction.

Project Objectives and Activities

The main objective of Project A4L is to provide high-quality arts integrated lessons that address common skills gaps in English Language Arts (ELA). By determining common weaknesses in ELA skills, Project A4L can accurately target these areas with high-quality arts integrated lessons and move students' learning forward in ELA. By reassessing students in the spring, project staff are able to determine the extent to which these lessons impact student learning. In addition to academic achievement, the grant also assesses students' level of engagement in ELA and the extent to which these arts integrated activities increase their motivation and engagement. To achieve these important objectives, the following Project A4L activities have occurred:

Table 1. Project activities and current status.

Activity	Status
Hired Project Director (PD)	January
Coordinated project goals with Arts for Learning San Diego; developed professional development; calendars developed for teaching artists and classroom teachers; Steering committee formed	January
Held steering committee meetings to discuss project goals and activities.	Ongoing (3 completed)
Provided professional development in arts integration for classroom teachers	Completed April through June
Developed curriculum lessons/units for arts-integrated classrooms	Ongoing
Assess students' skills using Northwest Educational Association's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium's (SBAC) summative assessments	Completed May to June

Section 2: Evaluation Study Questions

Project Goals and Expected Outcomes

The main goal of Project A4L for elementary students is *Improve academic achievement of military-dependent students in English Language Arts*. This results from the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Provide classroom teachers with a teaching artist to work as a team to develop, instruct, and assess the Arts and English Language Arts integrated instruction.

Strategy 2: Providing extracurricular learning opportunities in the Arts.

Project A4L uses the following interim indicators to know whether it is meeting annual benchmarks:

By June 2017, **78%** of military-connected students in grades 3-8 and 11 will meet or exceed standards on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in English Language Arts, an increase of 1% over 2015 baseline (77%).

The second goal of Project A4L is to *improve academic engagement and motivation in military-connected students*. This goal results from deploying the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Deliver integrated lessons that connect ELA content standards with Visual and Performing Arts standards

Strategy 2: Provide opportunities for students to exhibit and perform arts-related learning to parent and community members.

By June 2017, military-connected students in grades 3-8 will self-report engagement and motivation in school.

Evaluation Questions

1. Have all Project A4L activities been implemented according to plan?
2. To what extent are the activities reaching the targeted audience? Are the activities occurring frequently enough?
3. Did Project A4L meet its interim goals?

Section 3: Evaluation Methodology

The evaluator will deploy a mixed methods approach to evaluate Project A4L outcomes. A mixed methods approach allows for quantitative analysis of student achievement comparing the performance of Project A4L students in Year 2 (and beyond) to their performance in the planning year (where the treatment was absent). To do so, the evaluator will compare military-connected student performance each subsequent year to their performance the prior year on ELA scores from the MAP and SBAC assessments. These comparisons will also be compared to the scores of students who are not military connected. For the planning year, the evaluator will report out on only the student scores and whether these scores achieved the targets identified in the grant. Additionally, the evaluator will analyze student engagement and motivation over time. A survey of intrinsic motivation and engagement will serve as the principal data collection tool. Project A4L theory suggests that the more arts integrated lessons students are exposed to, the greater the change in student achievement and engagement. A longitudinal comparison over the life of the grant will determine the accuracy of that theory.

In addition to outcomes, the evaluator will answer questions regarding fidelity of implementation and process monitoring. For the fidelity of implementation, the PD and evaluator have been and will continue to collect data to answer the question: “Have all the Project A4L strategies been implemented according to plan?” Data collection include sign-in logs, NWEA MAP reports, progress reports, and feedback forms, Arts for Learning San Diego documents, and others. As soon as project activities occur in the classroom, both the PD and the evaluator will make regular classroom observations and take scripted notes to validate that what they observed in instruction was congruent with what teachers learned in professional development.

For process monitoring, the primary question the PD and evaluator will monitor project activities to determine the extent to which they are reaching the intended audience at the level of frequency needed. For the process measures, the PD and evaluator focus on project documentation, professional development records, curriculum units, student information system records, classroom walkthrough evidence, and others.

Section 4: Data Analysis and Findings

Study Demographics

In the 2016-17 school year, approximately 3,202 students enrolled in Coronado Unified School District (CUSD). Of those 3,202, 1,244 or 39% were enrolled in Coronado High School (CHS), 737 or 23% at Coronado Middle School (CMS), 355 or 11% at Silver Strand Elementary, and 866 or 27% at Village Elementary. Student enrollment by grade level is arrayed in the table below.

Table 2. Total student enrollment by grade level.

Grade	Number of Students Enrolled	Percent of Students Enrolled
TK	37	1.2%
KN	171	5.3%
1	190	5.9%
2	178	5.6%
3	198	6.2%
4	233	7.3%
5	214	6.7%
6	235	7.3%
7	255	8.0%
8	247	7.7%
9	301	9.4%
10	321	10.0%
11	326	10.2%
12	296	9.2%

Of the 3,202 students enrolled in CUSD, 1,113 or 34.8% are military-connected students. Of those 1,113, 252 or 23% were enrolled at CHS, 264 or 24% at CMS, 256 or 23% at Silver Strand Elementary, and 341 or 31% at Village Elementary. Student enrollment by grade level is arrayed in the table below.

Furthermore, about 12% of CUSD student's transition in and out of Coronado during the school year.

Approximately, 387 of the 3,202 students exited CUSD in 2016-17. About 198 students or 51% of those exiting were military-connected.

Table 3. Military-connected student enrollment by grade level.

Grade	Number of Students Enrolled	Percent of Students Enrolled
TK	22	1.9%
KN	90	8.0%
1	93	8.3%
2	91	8.1%
3	88	7.9%
4	110	9.8%
5	103	9.2%
6	76	6.8%
7	100	9.0%
8	88	7.9%
9	54	4.9%
10	69	6.2%
11	56	5.0%
12	73	6.6%

Fidelity of Implementation (Have we implemented what we said we would do?)

For fidelity data, the PD and evaluator answered the question of whether or not grant actions were delivered. To do so, they created a matrix (below) to validate whether strategies were being implemented.

Table 4. Project activities occurring as planned.

Item	Y/N	Evidence
1. Has the project hired a Project Director?	Y	.5 FTE
2. Have meetings occurred between Arts for Learning San Diego and CUSD to coordinate project efforts	Y	Project Director meeting notes and calendar
3. Has a steering committee been formed and is it representative of the district?	Y	Steering committee agendas
4. Have professional development events on arts integration been offered?	Y	Professional development documents and surveys
5. Are classroom teachers and teaching artists writing curriculum lessons and units?	N	Teachers identified the units of ELA content around which curriculum will be developed. Writing of curriculum to occur in September 2017
6. Have students been assessed on MAP and SBAC?	Y	SBAC/MAP results

Process Monitoring of Ongoing Implementation:

The most important action during the planning year was coordinating all the activities that occur between the classroom teacher and the teaching artists (as the grant moves into year 2). Multiple meetings were held between the Project Director and Arts for Learning San Diego to develop the scope of services, teaching artist calendars, curriculum topics, and others.

Furthermore, a steering committee of 12 people from across the district along with representatives from Arts for Learning San Diego formed in order to guide the work of this project over the next 5 years. This group will be responsible for the direction of the actions along with project data and decision making.

In addition to the steering committee, 9 professional development events were held. 66 teachers attended these events. This number represents 99% of the teachers who work within the scope of Project A4L.

In the planning year, 66 classroom teachers and the project director planned for curriculum units by analyzing student assessment results. Areas of weakness are arrayed in Table 7. This number of classroom teachers represents 99% of the classroom teachers working in Project A4L.

Finally, 1,588 students were assessed on the MAP assessment. Approximately 611 of those students were military-connected, which represents about 56% of the total military-connected student population in the district. Additionally, 1,540 students were also assessed on the SBAC assessment. Approximately 541 of those students were military-connected, which represents about 53% of the total military-connected student population in the district. It is important to note here that only students in grades 3-8 and 11 are tested on SBAC..

Interim Goals

Because the first year of the grant is a planning year, this report on the interim goals is more baseline data than outcome data. Most of the planning year was devoted to putting the strategies into action versus determining the impact of those actions.

As depicted in the table, the Smarter Balanced Assessments in ELA were administered to 1,540 students in grades 3-8 and 11. Of the 1,540 students, 541 were military-connected and 999 were not. The Smarter Balanced Assessments in mathematics has four cut points: Not Meeting Standards, Nearly Meeting Standards, Meeting Standards, and Exceeding Standards. We examined the performance of students performing at the Meeting and Exceeding Standards thresholds. Of the 541 military-connected students assessed, 412 (or 76%) met or exceeded standards in 2016-17. Our June 2017 goal was 78%. We were below our initial goal by 2% and below our 2016 baseline (77%). Military-connected students performed similarly to nonmilitary-connected students.

Table 5. Military-connected and nonmilitary-connected student performance on SBAC.

Students	N	% Meeting/Exceeding	Target	Met (Yes/No)
Military-connected	541	76%	78%	No
Nonmilitary-connected	999	76%		
Total	1540	76%		

The next table indicates the results of the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment in grades 3-8. The MAP assessment is used primarily to determine whether students are performing at grade level in reading in addition to determining what areas of weakness exist within reading. A reading score is comprised of literature, vocabulary, and informational texts.

Of the 1,382 students in the district in grades 3-8, 1,055 were assessed in the spring of 2017, which represents about 76% of students in those grade levels. Students were not assessed in grade 8 this year. Below the average scores from each grade level are arrayed along with the grade level norm and the extent to which a grade level achieved the norm.

Table 6. Student performance on NWEA MAP Spring 2017 administration.

Grade	N	Average Score	Grade Level Norm	% Achieved
3	179	206	198	104%
4	215	211	206	102%
5	201	218	212	103%
6	223	225	216	104%
7	237	230	218	105%
Total	1055			

Using both the MAP and SBAC assessments, the project director and steering committee identified the following skills as areas of weakness and will ultimately serve as a starting point for curriculum writing and arts-integrated lessons.

Table 7. Military-connected students' areas of weakness on MAP and SBAC.

Grade Level	Area of Weakness (Skills)	
	SBAC	MAP
3	Reading	Informational text, vocabulary
4	Reading, Writing, Listening, Research	Literature, informational text
5	Reading, Writing, Listening, Research	Literature, vocabulary, informational text
6	Reading, Research	Literature
7	Reading	--
8	--	--
11	Reading, Writing, Listening, Research	--

Finally, we administered a student engagement survey to get a baseline reading with regard to how engaged students are in school currently. Results for the student engagement survey for students in grades 3-8 are arrayed below. Student answered 28 questions on student engagement by selecting from responses ranging from “not at all true” (1), “a little bit true” (2) somewhat true” (3), “fairly true” (4) to “totally true” (5).

To facilitate comparisons over time, as well as between groups of students within CUSD, each engagement item is expressed on a 100-point scale. Computing the total score involves two steps.

First, all items that contribute to a total scores are converted to a 100-point scale. For example, items with five response options are recoded with values of 0, 25, 50, 75, and 100. Thus a total score of zero means that a student chose the lowest response option for every item in that indicator, while a score of 100 means that a student chose the highest response to every item. Second, recoded values for each component item are averaged together.

Table 8. Total engagement scores for military-connected and nonmilitary-connected students.

Students	N	Average Rating	Target	Met (Yes/No)
Military-connected	311	56	53	Yes
Nonmilitary-connected	400	55		
Total	711	56	53	

We administered a student engagement survey during May of 2017 to all students in grades 3-8. Of the 1,382 students enrolled in those grade levels, 711 students completed the survey. Approximately 311 were military-connected and 400 were not. These 711 students represent 52% of the student population. A 52% response rate is congruent with response rates for other types of online surveys.

Additionally, the 52% are representative of the school district in terms of proportions of students from elementary and middle school, along with demographics such as English learner and special education.

Military-connected students' perceptions of engagement averaged 56 compared to nonmilitary-connected students, who averaged 55. It is not yet possible to determine a trend with only one piece of data. Future administrations will allow the evaluator and project director to know if any changes in engagement are related to arts-integrated lessons. This data serves as our baseline.

Section 5 & 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Current Challenges

One of the greatest challenges is the limited time Coronado teachers have for professional development. The grant pays teachers an hourly rate for attending professional development outside the teaching day. Because the professional development is not built into the school day, the professional development must occur over a longer period of time and more frequently in order to accommodate every teacher.

It is my conclusion, however, that Project A4L has taken full advantage of its planning year to address the most critical element to achieving the goals of Project A4L. The logistical pieces are in place to get these curriculum units embedded in ELA instruction, teaching artists and classroom teachers are collaborating with one another, and integrated lessons have been scheduled.

Furthermore, most districts in the county were flat with regard to achievement on the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments. CUSD was similar in that student performance declined about 1% from the previous year.

My recommendations as we move forward into our first full year of implementation are as follows:

1. Develop a repository for arts integrated lessons so that all classroom teachers have access to these documents in addition to preserving them for sustainability purposes.
2. Develop a mechanism that allows the project director and evaluator to know how effectively the classroom teacher and teaching artist are working together.
3. Develop a mechanism that allows the project director and evaluator to know how effective these arts integrated lessons are at improving academic achievement and engagement in real time (versus waiting for summative assessments to occur). The products of these integrated lessons should be evaluated and compared to expectations developed by the classroom teacher and teaching artist. Student engagement in these lessons should be assessed in order to know how motivated students are during these lessons/units.