



Step-by-Step process for building relationships and affecting change in one district: Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD)

Santa Cruz County Alliance for Arts Education

- Alliance formed fall 2012, under the leadership of a county-wide Arts Council
- Comprised of a handful of passionate, motivated parents, Arts Ed Professionals, w/ invested interest in the long term big picture, COE VAPA and district VAPA coordinators, other Community members.
- County has a long, rich history of advocacy and support for arts education
- Culturally and Economically diverse/with a LARGE Geographic divide - 11 districts, with varying needs and levels of financial and parent support

PVUSD District Information

- A district arts plan had been developed for 2007-2012, but it was never fully realized.
- District has had a long history of challenges:
 - Majority of schools are Title 1 schools
 - Highest percentage in the county of English Language learners and students with free or reduced lunches - most elementary schools percentages being between 70%-%90.
- Roughly 20,000 students served in this district.
- District is made up of 17 elementary schools, 5 charter schools, 5 high schools, and 6 middle schools.
- To give you an idea: Before we got arts in the LCAP in 2014, out of the 17 elementary schools, there was only a .2 Full Time Equivalent credentialed arts teacher in visual art, supplemented by 2.35 FTE through Arts Council SPECTRA artists in residence in visual, theater, and dance.

Timeline of Activities

1. September 20, 2012 – Breakfast #1

School Board members and Superintendent were invited to the first breakfast and launch of the newly formed Santa Cruz County Alliance for Arts Education.

2. Both the Arts Coordinator for the County Office of Education (COE) and the Gate/VAPA Coordinator for the PVUSD join the Alliance

The Gate/VAPA Coordinator had the ear of school board members, and the COE Arts Coordinator has a very keen perspective on the history of arts education in the district as well as county wide, and had been involved in the development of the district's initial Arts Plan that was never realized.

3. May 2013 - Committee members adopt district and begin to take action

Two committee members visit a school board meeting in May, take notes, and report out to the Leadership Team, and read all monthly minutes to understand issues faced, needs, context.

4. Monday, September 9, 2013 – PVUSD district office meeting

- Called together by district Gate/VAPA Coordinator
- Participants:
 - Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent
 - Directors of Elementary and Secondary Curriculum and Instruction
 - Alliance representatives from Arts Council, Youth Symphony, Dance Company

- District Gate/VAPA Coordinator
- COE Arts Coordinator
- Asking the question: *How do we successfully integrate VAPA instruction (from the larger community and from the district) into our students' education in PVUSD?*

- 5. September 18, 2013 – follow up School Board presentation by parent Alliance member**
- 6. October 31, 2013 – Breakfast #2**
Alliance reconvened to reach out to the broader community, promote the Alliance and our mission and work, celebrate successes, recruit members, and create press opportunities
- 7. November 2014 – begin planning BIG school Board Presentation**
- 8. Alliance letters of support to the district from Joe Landon at the CAAE and Sarah Brothers at the County Arts Agency PRIOR to the school board presentation**
This help strengthen the ask and gave us more credibility
- 9. December 11, 2013 – follow up School Board presentation by parent Alliance member**

10. January 22, 2014 - BIG School Board Presentation

Gate Coordinator (and by default VAPA coordinator) for the district presented. She had 12 minutes on the agenda. Points she spoke to:

- SUCCESSES in the Arts!
- PVUSD credentialed class numbers by school in district
- Common Core Alignment/STEAM
- Time to update our District Arts Plan

After her presentation, speakers gave 'planned' public comments:

1. Teaching Artist – personal, inspiring perspective on the impact of arts on students in PVUSD, arts as FOUNDATION to education
2. Stanford Arts Ed professor with long history in district – how the arts are a bridge to literacy for English language learners and underscore connection to common core
3. Arts Specialist – personal perspective on what it is like teaching art to middle school students in PVUSD – especially when they have no prior instruction, LEVEL the playing field, opportunities for success...
4. Parent (happens to be involved with CAAE policy council too) – statewide trend to support arts education, the ask from the Alliance (i.e. update the plan -including funding to support a VAPA coordinator for the district to help oversee the process), and ask everyone in attendance who is there to support the arts to stand

We had beautiful PTA posters, Alliance fliers, LCFF fliers, and Arts are Core buttons on every seat, and when parent asked, we had a huge part of the room stand in support.

11. February 26, 2014 - Follow up School Board Presentation/Thank you

Arts Council Alliance member went to thank school board for warm reception at last month's presentation and offered the support/assistance of Alliance moving forward

- 12. March - May, 2014 – parent Alliance members attend two LCAP Town Hall meetings to voice their desire for more arts in the schools**
- 13. June 2014 - district includes 14.5 FTE VAPA release time instructors and \$5,000 for Arts Plan update in their LCAP!**



14.July 10, 2014 – Press release to acknowledge PVUSD for including Arts in the LCAP

15.July 14, 2014 – Acknowledgement letter to Assistant Superintendent for including Arts in the LCAP

Updates to LCAP this year

Over the following 2 years, the Alliance continued to support the district by organizing county-wide supplies drives for district VAPA teachers, providing PD for Arts specialists, providing input for the update of the district arts plan, and continued presence at LCAP town hall meetings. These efforts influenced the following increases in arts investments in the district this year:

- Increase to 20 FTE VAPA instructors
- Completed the update of the district Arts Plan, which included:
 - An increase of all 20 Elementary VAPA teachers to 1.0 FTE
 - Arts education for Elementary SDC students
 - The purchase of Orff instruments for Instrumental Music instruction at the Elementary level
 - Professional Development for Elementary teachers for arts integration across all content areas
 - The commitment to equitably serve students at all three High Schools with Vocal Music Instruction and Instrumental Music Instruction, adding 2 FTE high school chorus
 - Assessments which will measure key growth indicators aligned with the L.C.A.P.