



**California Department of Education  
2017 California Gold Ribbon Schools Program  
Middle and High School Application: Part A**



37-73551-6118137

County-District-School (CDS) Code – 14 digits

San Diego County

County Name

Carlsbad Unified School District

District Name

Aviara Oaks Middle School

School Name *(If your school is selected for honors, this school name will be engraved on the award plaque.)*

6880 Ambrosia Lane

Mailing Address

Carlsbad

City

92011

Zip Code

760-331-6100

Area Code and Phone Number

6199

Ext.

760-438-7894

Area Code and Fax Number

bbrockett@carlsbadusd.net

Principal's E-mail Address



*I certify that I have reviewed the information contained in this application and, to the best of my knowledge, it is complete and accurate. I further certify that:*

- *A data re-certification in early 2017 may disqualify my school from consideration.*
- *The Office for Civil Rights does not have any outstanding findings of civil rights statute violations by the school or district that may affect the school;*
- *There are no pending lawsuits by the Department of Justice against the district alleging that the school, or the district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clauses; and*
- *The school or district is addressing or has addressed any identified areas of noncompliance under federal or state laws and regulations.*

Dr. Bryan Brockett

Principal's Name

Principal's Signature

12/5/16

Date

Dr. Benjamin Churchill

District Superintendent's Name

Superintendent's Signature

12/5/16

Date

## School Information

1. Current school enrollment: 1,120
2. Which category best describes where your school is located?  
 Urban     Suburban     Rural
3. Does your school receive Title I funding?     Yes     No  
 If yes, indicate type of services:     School-wide     Targeted Assistance
4. What is your school calendar?  Traditional     Year-round     Modified
5. Is your school a charter school?     Yes     No
6. Number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Full-time Staff	Part-time Staff
Administrators	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>40</u>	<u>4</u>
Counselors	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Credentialed librarians	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Nurses	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Psychologists	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Technology/media specialists or technicians	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>
Campus resource officers	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Other staff ( <i>specify</i> ) <u>Library Technician, Campus Supervisors, Speech Pathologist</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Total staff	<u>47</u>	<u>14</u>

### Directions to Your School

If your school is selected as a statewide nominee, the site visit team members will need directions to your school.

San Diego County  
County

Carlsbad Unified School District  
District

Aviara Oaks Middle School  
School

6880 Ambrosia Lane	Carlsbad	92011
Street Address	City	Zip Code
Dr. Bryan Brockett	(760) 331-6100	6199
Principal	(Area Code) Phone Number	Ext.

San Diego International Airport, 3225 N. Harbor Dr., San Diego, CA 92101  
Name and Location of the Nearest Airport

Interstate 5  
Major Freeway Access

Provide detailed travel directions indicating the surface streets that lead to your school. Please do not submit directions or a map generated by an Internet Web site.

From Interstate 5, exit Poinsettia/Aviara Parkway and proceed east.  
 Turn right onto Aviara Parkway.  
 Turn left on Ambrosia Lane and make an immediate right into Aviara Oaks Schools.  
 Continue up the road past the elementary school and enter the third parking lot on the right. You may park in any available spot.

## School Overview

Located in the southern part of the city of Carlsbad, Aviara Oaks Middle School (AOMS) is a high performing school that serves 1,120 students in grades 6-8. Students primarily come from three feeder elementary schools: Aviara Oaks, Pacific Rim, and Poinsettia. Aviara Oaks Middle School is rich in teacher leadership, parent and community involvement, and high achieving students. Over the last two years, stakeholders have worked together to define and implement the school's and vision - *We are a collaborative partnership engaged in building a positive and respectful environment where students are critical, global thinkers invested in their own learning* - in an effort to reflect the meaningful practices already established at AOMS and to deepen the understanding of each partner's role and expectations. Though the school has traditionally been a high performing academic school, there is a recognition of the need to continue to deepen and improve learning outcomes for all students. The team continues to bring shape to its vision in a variety of ways, from the development of cross-curricular projects, to classroom design, to student-led conferences and mentoring. This work is ongoing and ever developing, but through reflective practices and meaningful shareholder conversations, AOMS provides a strong academic and well-rounded platform for student achievement.

Aviara Oaks Middle School exceeds both county and state averages for academic performance as measured by the CAASPP testing results. In 2016 AOMS students made gains in both English Language Arts and Mathematics, where 76 and 69 percent of students met or exceeded standards in the respective areas. Aviara Oaks Middle School is a Google Apps for Education school, utilizing Chromebook and tablet technologies in conjunction with cloud-based software in order to provide students opportunity for meaningful, real-time collaboration and the development of 21st century skills. This year, all AOMS 6th graders are participating in a 1:1 Chromebook project, where each student has an individual device for school and home use. With the expansion of this initiative next year, the school will be able to provide a 1:1 experience for all grade levels. Aviara Oaks Middle School not only provides a rigorous academic program enhanced by technology, but also serves to promote whole child engagement and excellence. AOMS offers a variety of award-winning elective opportunities including drama, band, orchestra, broadcasting, and photography.

Beyond the classroom, the team at Aviara Oaks Middle School understands that school culture is foundational in student learning, which is why the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) program was established two years ago. 8th grade students, under the guidance of teacher leaders and the counseling department, support 6th graders in their transition to middle school. WEB leaders provide tutoring and organizational assistance, teach students how to communicate with their teachers for classroom support, attend sixth grade camp as junior counselors, facilitate student connections with new students, and provide social activities to build a sense of comfort and community. These aspects - the rich academics, elective opportunities and community building - work in conjunction to promote student excellence. Overall, Aviara Oaks Middle School provides students and families a rigorous curriculum, innovative technology, and unique learning opportunities, while consistently striving to build a positive and respectful environment for all.



California Department of Education  
 2017 California Gold Ribbon Schools Program  
 Middle and High School Application: Part B



Aviara Oaks Middle School

**Model Program/Practice Summary**

1. Name of Model Program/Practice:

Interdisciplinary and project-based learning

2. How long has this Model Program/Practice been in place?

- Less than 2 years     2-4 years     5-8 years     8+ years

3. What is the Target Area? (*Choose at least one area.*)

Target Areas:

- Career Technical Education
- Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention
- Civic Education Awareness
- Closing the Achievement Gap
- Education Supports
- Nutrition and Physical Activity/Education
- Parent, Family, and Community Involvement
- Professional Development
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Use of Technology
- Visual and Performing Arts

4. What are the target populations? (*Check all that apply.*)

Race/Ethnicity Subgroups:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Filipino

*(Continued on next page)*

Aviara Oaks Middle School

- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races

Other Student Groups:

- Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
- English Learners
- Students with Disabilities
- At-Risk Students (Academic, Social, Emotional, Behavioral, or Health)
- Other (*specify*)

5. What strategies are used to implement the Model Program/Practice? (*Check all that apply.*)

Strategies:

- School Climate
- Small Learning Communities
- Parent Involvement
- Data-Driven Decision Making
- Health Support
- Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support
- Professional Development
- Other (*specify*)

6. How is your Model Program/Practice referenced in your district's LCAP? [Refer to the State Priorities listed in *Education Code* (ED) sections 52060 and 52066. Charter schools must address priorities in EC Section 5206(d).]

The Carlsbad Unified School District LCAP contains a goal to "Ensure that students demonstrate academic growth and proficiencies so they leave TK-12 ready for college/career." Among the measurable outcomes for 2016-17 will be "to implement year one (of a three year) middle school "refresh plan" to incorporate design thinking, project-based learning and/or cross-curricular learning at the middle grades."

Note: When completing the Model Program/Practice Narrative, your response needs to provide clarifying explanation on **how your implementation** of the Model Program/Practice **at your school site is distinguished** from the district's model.

## Model Program/Practice Narrative

**Model Program/Practice Name:** Interdisciplinary and project-based learning

(Model Program/Practice narrative—limit your responses to four (4) pages total)

### 1. Description of the Model

The implementation of interdisciplinary and project-based learning as a schoolwide practice at Aviara Oaks Middle School (AOMS) grew out the formulation of a vision of learning at AOMS that was articulated in the spring of 2015. The school district had recently reviewed and rewritten its mission statement – *We provide every student an extraordinary education in an inspiring environment.* In the wake of that process, a team of administrators, teachers, staff, and parents at AOMS set to work with the guiding question “What does that mean to us at AOMS?” With input from the wider school community that core working group developed a vision for AOMS: *We are a collaborative partnership engaged in building a positive and respectful environment where students are critical, global thinkers invested in their own learning.*

AOMS has a long history of high academic achievement on standardized measures. Challenges certainly exist with regard to achievement gaps for SED, EL, and Special Education students, but with the transition in standards and accountability measures (including an increase in assessment items at DOK levels 3 and 4), along with our articulated vision to develop a culture in which students showed critical thinking skill, global perspectives, and an investment in their learning, it became clear that there were potential benefits to all students through the development of interdisciplinary projects that would leverage connections between content areas, engage all students, and engage them in deeper learning.

When, in the fall of 2015, the Board of Trustees gave direction to district middle schools to examine ways to integrate project-based, research-based, and/or inquiry based learning into the curriculum, the groundwork that had already been laid at AOMS proved only to accelerate our planning and implementation efforts. During the 2015-16 school year, the team at AOMS developed a three year “refresh plan” to crystalize the work that we would undertake in the coming years in pursuit of our vision. While direction to undertake the development of the plan was given to each of the district’s three middle schools, each school was given the freedom to develop a plan unique to the school and its specific needs.

The implementation of the plan has been undertaken at AOMS in the same spirit. While there had previously been pockets of interdisciplinary work on campus (notably at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level, where coring of Math/Science and English/Social Studies was conducive to such work), reaching a goal of *all* students engaging in interdisciplinary and project-based work presented a challenge of teams of teachers working together on curriculum, with many of those teachers never having done that type of coordination. As a result, teachers were given the minimal specifications that they work together with grade level colleagues to develop at a minimum two interdisciplinary projects involving two or more subject areas at that grade level, in which all students would participate. Goals in subsequent years included the refinement of existing units of study, the development of additional units, and progress toward true “Gold Standard PBL” through additional teacher training, collaboration, and student engagement in learning. The goal is not to be a “PBL school”, but to leverage opportunities to engage students in deeper and more engaging learning.

## 2. Implementation & Monitoring of the Model

The model practice of interdisciplinary and project-based learning as a schoolwide focus at AOMS is a relatively new effort. We believe that if we want our students to learn, grow, and push themselves to do better than adults at the school must do the same. Out of that spirit has come the enthusiastic, if at times challenging, shift to a focus on deeper and more engaging learning.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, teachers were offered training through the Buck Institute for Education that focused on developing a deeper understanding of project-based learning and the development of projects to be implemented at the site. Because the focus at AOMS is on interdisciplinary work, teachers were required to seek out a grade level team to work with at the training. Seven teachers attended the three-day initial training and returned to lay the groundwork with colleagues for the work that was to come. In the fall of 2016, teachers had additional opportunities to develop understanding and build skills related to project-based learning through workshops offered during district professional development days. To set the stage for the work to come at AOMS, our first day on campus in August 2016 was dedicated to work with Jenny Pieratt of CraftED Curriculum, who had worked with our teacher group at the previous spring's training and tailored a guided work session for grade level teams to develop a vision for the projects that they would undertake as a group over the course of the year.

In addition to the time allotted at the start of the year, the professional development and meeting schedule was modified to allow grade level and project teams additional time to collaborate over the course of the year. Two additional teachers have attended the three-day project-based learning training and a cohort of teachers who have participated in that training are continuing their learning and collaboration through a year-long teacher of teacher model program for Carlsbad teachers in collaboration with the San Diego County Office of Education.

Once the grade level teams had collaborated on project ideas at the beginning of the year, those that were teaming for projects prepared proposals for their projects that would serve as a starting point for the continuing planning over the course of the year. Key to planning was communicating with colleagues in various disciplines to learn about standards in other subject areas, finding the points of intersection that the teachers wanted to leverage, and plan the timing of the work to benefit student learning and cohesively integrate the curricular areas. As mentioned, different grade levels have taken different approaches, with 8<sup>th</sup> grade integrating the four core content areas into an early year project on innovation, 7<sup>th</sup> grade bringing together Social Studies and English, Science and English, and Science, Math, and PE for three different projects over the course of the year, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade continuing to leverage the structure of cored English/Social Studies and Math/Science to help develop units of study conducive to integrating those subjects. This diversity of application has allowed teachers to find meaningful connections in the curriculum, rather than having a rigid structure that may not work in all situations.

This shift in focus for teachers and students has been accompanied by communication from administration and teachers to families and the community about the vision and rationale behind the practice. Communication has been made to increase awareness through Back to School Night, Coffee with the Principal, teacher communications, PTSA newsletters, and the School News Roll Call newspaper. Beyond communication, the practice has provided opportunities for engagement with parents and community members



in the classroom. Parents have been invited to student presentations of work and expert community members have taught students directly about the patent process, providing resources for the homeless, and research skills.

To support the efforts of the school in its “refresh plan” the district launched a 1:1 Chromebook initiative this year, with a rollout in 6<sup>th</sup> grade that provided each 6<sup>th</sup> grader with a Chromebook for school and home use. With an existing inventory of approximately 340 Chromebooks, 40 iPads, and a computer lab, all students and teachers have been able to benefit from increased accessibility to technology. AOMS has long been a district leader in the adoption and integration of technology in the classroom and the practice of interdisciplinary and project-based learning has given students and teachers the ability utilize collaborative and presentation features of Google Apps, as well as to seek out new learning and research opportunities for students.

Good project-based learning does not adhere to a recipe or a script, but rather is driven by ongoing inquiry and reflection that uncovers new pathways for learning. The implementation of this practice is being approached from the same perspective. If our vision is to develop critical, global thinkers who are invested in their learning, than we must allow ourselves to be the same as adults. If we are to be a collaborative partnership of stakeholders, then we need to create and invest in collaborative opportunities for students and adults. The purpose of this practice is to do just that, at all levels of the school community.

### 3. Results of the Model/Pupil Outcomes

Part of the goal of implementation of the practice is to encourage the school community to look beyond grades and test scores and to find other measures of student achievement that reflect depth of learning, diversity of output, and skills that our students produce. Components of the AOMS vision – collaboration, critical thinking, global thinking, student investment in learning – provide the focal points around which we will continue to evaluate our implementation and outcomes of the practice. While CAASPP scores will continue to be our most public measure of achievement and will be an important data point for evaluating academic progress, qualitative feedback and observation have revealed positive impacts of this instructional shift.

Helping students to understand the connections between disciplines leads to a greater understanding of purpose and intention in their schoolwork. Teachers have reported that engagement in projects that allow for student choice has positive impacts on student social-emotional and behavioral needs by allowing for independence and encouraging students to connect with content through their unique perspectives. Autonomy among collaborative working groups has been observed to promote more productive and cooperative groups. Teachers note that the practice “Gives the learning of content meaning and purpose. All students can create something and can use their own interests and skills. [It] appeals to students at all levels of learning, allowing them to be successful and confident” (8<sup>th</sup> grade team). In terms of meeting a vision for critical thinking and personal investment in learning, such anecdotal feedback demonstrates positive progress for our students.

Teachers also shared qualitative observations relating to developing more global perspectives in student learning. Interdisciplinary projects provide authentic, real-world experiences for students to collaborate, connect with the wider community, and produce products or ideas that are designed to impact the world. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, for example, students have undertaken a project bringing together English and Social Studies in the study of India with the guiding question “Why should I care about social issues?” Through the unit of

study, students learn about ancient and modern India, social stratification and needs in India and at home, and demonstrate learning and understanding through a culminating social impact project of their choosing. One teacher remarked that she was astounded with the quality and depth of work that students produced when giving them choice about the direction of inquiry and output and the 6<sup>th</sup> grade team noted that the practice “Gets students to think about their future as well as the future of the USA/World, not just focusing on getting a good grade on this assignment.”

In preparation of this application, teachers were asked to reflect on what a visitor to classrooms might see that would reflect a push for deeper learning at AOMS. Teachers noted essential questions and inquiry-based learning, peer-to-peer interactions and more student movement, and differentiation based on student interests and needs. They also indicated that one might see “squinty eyes and scrunchy faces” as students were pushed to think more deeply, to work independently and collaboratively, and to invest themselves in their work in a meaningful way.

The guiding statement for 2016-17 from our three year plan is: “Building Capacity – What skills do we need to go deeper with the curriculum? What skills/support do our students need to go deeper with the curriculum? Where can we have the greatest impact with cross-curricular learning? No better way to know than to jump in and try it on.” Part of the work for this year involves just that – continuing to jump in and learn, both for students and adults. More specifically, we are in the process of developing a site-specific rubric for success of the implementation and outcomes of this practice. On a broad level, yearly targets have been developed over the next three years to build toward greater capacity with students and staff in the practice, to continue to uncover key areas of intersection in the curriculum, and to continue a focus on depth of learning, engagement, and thinking. On the classroom level, teachers use and are continuing to develop rubrics to evaluate student progress and provide meaningful student feedback.

**California Department of Education  
California Gold Ribbon Schools Program  
2016-17 Exemplary Arts Education Application  
Part I**

**Cover Page**

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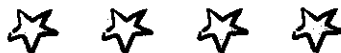
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N/A  
Winter Break (Alternate) Contact Name

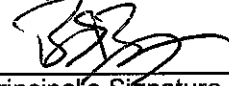
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                      12/5/16  
Principal's Signature                      Date

Dr. Benjamin Churchill  
District Superintendent's Name

                      12/5/16  
District Superintendent's Signature                      Date  
(or authorized designee)

Posted on November 8, 2016

### School Demographics

1. Total school enrollment: 1,120
2. Which category best describes where your school is located?  
 Urban       Suburban       Rural
3. What is your school calendar?       Traditional       Year-round       Modified
4. Is your school a charter school?       Yes       No
5. Number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<u>Full-time Staff</u>	<u>Part-time Staff</u>
Administrators	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
All classroom teachers	<u>40</u>	<u>4</u>
Arts (VAPA) or Career Technical Arts, Media and Entertainment (AME) teachers	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Counselors	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Credentialed librarians	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Nurses	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
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Other staff ( <i>specify</i> ) <u>Library Technician, Campus Supervisors, Speech Pathologist</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>Total staff</b>	<u><b>47</b></u>	<u><b>14</b></u>

## Arts and/or Arts, Media and Entertainment (AME) Education Demographics

1. Number of Arts/AME courses, labs, and program spaces

	<u>Number of Arts Courses</u>
Art	<u>3</u>
Dance	<u>2</u>
Music	<u>9</u>
Theatre (including Technical Theatre)	<u>5</u>
Media Arts	<u>7</u>
Total courses	<u>26</u>

2. Number of students currently enrolled in your Arts and/or AME program and schoolwide at each grade level: Complete all grade levels appropriate to your school site

	<u>Number of Students in Arts/AME</u>	<u>Number of Students Schoolwide</u>
Grade 7	<u>263</u>	<u>391</u>
Grade 8	<u>282</u>	<u>398</u>
Grade 9	_____	_____
Grade 10	_____	_____
Grade 11	_____	_____
Grade 12	_____	_____
Other (fifth-year seniors, etc.)	_____	_____
Total	<u>850</u>	<u>1120</u>

\*Totals include 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

3. Percent of students in your Arts/AME program and schoolwide by race/ethnicity based on current year data:

	<u>Percent of Students in Arts/AME Program</u>	<u>Percent of Students Schoolwide</u>
American Indian/Alaska Native	<u>3</u> %	<u>0.27</u> %
Asian	<u>13</u> %	<u>8.94</u> %
Black or African American	1 %	<u>1.35</u> %
Filipino	2 %	<u>1.44</u> %
Hispanic or Latino	14 %	<u>21.12</u> %
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	<u>1</u> %	<u>0.18</u> %
White	<u>54</u> %	<u>59.12</u> %
Two or More Races	<u>12</u> %	<u>7.58</u> %
Total	<u>100.0</u> %	<u>100.0</u> %

### Directions to Your School

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## Arts Education Synopsis

### Aviara Oaks Middle School

*The Carlsbad Unified School District recognizes the importance of a comprehensive arts education program as an integral part of every student's education. Long-range goals have been developed for all of the arts. The District uses a variety of resources to provide a wide range of educational experiences in the arts including academically integrated curriculum and teacher training. CUSD is proud of the arts alliances it has created within the community including a long and fruitful relationship with the City of Carlsbad's Arts Office, as well as other local arts associations, artists-in-residence, arts specialists and advocates that create unique arts opportunities for Carlsbad students.*

All middle schools in Carlsbad Unified School District support a comprehensive arts education program. The offerings at each school vary, but the collective Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) team work together at site and district levels to develop meaningful and unique opportunities to support student learning and provide pathways for college and career achievement. At Aviara Oaks Middle School (AOMS), the Visual and Performing Arts include Band, Orchestra, Drama, Photography, Dance, Art, and Broadcasting. Dedicated teachers, engaged students and supportive parents drive these programs.

Aviara Oaks Middle School offers Drama, Photography and Visual Art incorporated into a sixth grade exploratory wheel. Incoming students get a trimester size taste of these three courses and the opportunity to develop self-confidence, communication skills and creativity. Band and Orchestra teachers offer three performance level courses. Because of the opportunity as 6th graders to experience the arts, many continue on such pathways as 7th and 8th graders establishing unique relationships oftentimes working with a teacher for three years. Beyond just continuing coursework in the arts program in high school, graduates return to AOMS to coach small groups, support fundraisers and observe for credentialing programs. The student experience in VAPA electives is one that leaves an impression.

AOMS teachers believe that the arts provide a universal language, one that expresses feelings, emotions, desires, and fears. It is for this reason, AOMS VAPA teachers emphasize depth of character, expressing nuance, and refining skills so that students can communicate and connect with a greater audience. These elective offerings reach the high achieving population providing an outlet for their creative strengths. Such courses also reach the underperforming students, imparting a sense of pride and accomplishment, which may lack in other classes. Oftentimes from these courses, gifts and talents are discovered for the first time. The Aviara Oaks Middle School Visual and Performing Arts program is award winning. Trophies and honors fill each room, but it is not the accolades that drive these programs, it is the deep love and passion that students develop and in turn express in their work. Such passion for the Arts in conjunction with the rigorous academics, truly provide Aviara Oaks Middle School students with a comprehensive and well-rounded education.



**California Department of Education  
California Gold Ribbon Schools Program  
2016-17 Exemplary Arts Education Application  
Part II**

**School Programs and Processes**

**Theme 1 – Program Administration, Assessment, and Accountability**

Visual and performing arts are a key facet of the educational program, with more than 75% of students enrolled in Instrumental Music, Drama, Dance, Photography, Broadcasting, or Art classes. Arts programs are guided by the National Core Arts Standards. The district plan for the arts has not been updated in recent years and the site currently does not have a comprehensive plan for the arts, though the department develops goals each year specific to departmental needs and areas of focus. Through Dance and Broadcasting specifically, students address state standards in the areas of Physical Education and English Language Arts.

The school's master schedule reflects the range and diversity of VAPA offerings at AOMS. Though students can only take one elective course in their schedule, the strength of the arts programs attracts a large portion of the student body. There are currently 26 sections of the various arts programs indicated above taught by seven different teachers. Of particular note are programs in Instrumental Music (Band and Orchestra) with 340 students enrolled and Drama with 181 students enrolled.

There is a department chair for electives, who is a VAPA teacher and who oversees site programs and coordinates with district colleagues. Teachers receive departmental and course-alike collaboration time throughout the year and meet during the year with Middle School Subject Area groups, bringing together course-alike colleagues from the three middle schools in the district for collaboration. Though not specifically addressed in the district's LCAP, we believe that the arts are an important driver in the district's mission to provide an outstanding education in an inspiring environment, as well as serving to develop the bases of the core competencies in the district's graduate profile – Effective communicator and collaborator, Lifelong learner, Critical thinker, College and career ready scholar, Ethical and responsible citizen, Self-directed individual. Additionally, we believe that the arts encourage the realization of the AOMS vision of a collaborative partnership engaged in building a positive and respectful environment where students are critical, global thinkers invested in their own learning.

**Theme 2 – Curriculum and Instruction**

Curriculum in the arts is aligned with the National Core Arts Standards and CA State Standards. The offerings at AOMS include the four arts disciplines:

Music: Band and Orchestra

Visual Arts, Film, & Media Arts: Art, Photography, and Broadcasting

Theater: Drama

Dance: Dance PE

Students have opportunities through the arts courses to serve in internships with the Carlsbad Performing Arts Academy, to serve as student representatives on the Band Booster

Board, and participate in the planning and execution of fundraising performances, such as Cabaret Night (Drama) and the True Hearts Gala (Orchestra). Additionally, industry experts collaborate with teachers and students through choreography coaching (Dance/Drama) and instrumental coaching (Music). Broadcasting students have had opportunities to collaborate with local broadcast news professionals. Top students in Instrumental music have consistently been successful in applications to Honors performance groups, such as the CMEA Southern Border Section Honor Orchestra, where they have the opportunity to work with professional musicians and top performers throughout the region.

Teachers have locally developed, standards-aligned curriculum and lessons pertinent to each discipline. A variety of strategies can be observed in the classroom, from close reading strategies applied to music to improvisation to self-assessment, collaboration, and formal and informal assessments of performance. In Dance, Theater, Photography, Broadcast, and Art classes students are responsible for developing original work in various genres and performance-based assessments and feedback are the norm in each of the arts.

Each of the classes has a structured continuum of development. In Band and Orchestra, students progress from beginning through intermediate and advanced levels during their three years. Drama, Art, and Photography are offered to 6<sup>th</sup> graders as an "Exploratory Wheel", giving incoming students a chance to experience a variety of arts offerings before selecting higher-level courses in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Dance PE is open to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, who audition to determine which level of the course is appropriate. Broadcasting has two levels, which are generally open to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. For the 2016-17 school year, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students were accepted into the program if they had prior experience in the broadcast programs offered at feeder elementary schools.

One of the district's areas of focus in recent years has been the development of elective pathways from middle through high school. Due to the fact that AOMS students split evenly between the two Carlsbad USD high schools, we have identified VAPA programs as key pathways for students, who can continue their course of study in programs at either high school. AOMS teachers collaborate and communicate frequently with colleagues at the high schools and opportunities for exchange with the high school arts programs exist through performances by AOMS students at the high schools as well as visits by the high school programs to AOMS to recruit incoming students and provide demonstrations of the programs.

### **Theme 3 – Student Assessment**

Performance-based assessments are at the core of the AOMS VAPA programs. In addition to formal performances, playing tests, portfolios, and rehearsal journals are utilized to ensure student progress. Self-reflection and assessment, along with peer feedback, are commonly observed in VAPA classes. Through performance-based assessment and reflection, teachers have noted that student retention increases, as does the ability to understand how discreet skills build into greater performance at the individual and group levels.

AOMS VAPA teachers are highly qualified and invested in regular growth opportunities. With the current exception of the Art position, which is in transition this year, teachers are both highly qualified for their subject area and experienced practitioners. Teachers in each discipline have many years of experience and continuity with their programs and several current VAPA teachers either opened the school or began their program at AOMS.

One component of the evaluation process is the performance of students at external competitions. Students and in each discipline have been widely recognized for outstanding performance in recent years. For example, Orchestra has competed annually in the SCSBOA Band & Orchestra Festival earning the highest rating, Unanimous Superior, for one or more

groups each year and placed more students than any other middle school on the CMEA Southern Border Section Honor Orchestra since it was created a few years ago. Photography students have won numerous "Best in Class" recognitions at the San Diego County Fair. The teacher proudly shared that upon meeting one of the exhibition's judges she was told that the AOMS program performed better than "most of the high schools and a few of the community colleges." Other student performance recognition has come from the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC), the San Diego Shakespeare Society, the John Phillip Sousa Honor Band, Heritage Music Festival, Music in the Parks Festival, the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association (SCSBOA), and the San Diego Theater Educators Alliance (SDTEA) Festival. Broadcasting competes annually in the national Student Television Network (STN) conference and has been recognized with numerous national honors.

#### **Theme 4 – Student Support**

As noted above, VAPA programs at AOMS have been identified as pathways of study beginning in middle school and continuing through either of the Carlsbad USD high schools that students should wish to attend. Students learn of VAPA course offerings beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade through reach out from AOMS teachers and students to the elementary sites and as a core component of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade student visits to AOMS. All students are eligible to participate in VAPA courses at AOMS, though as noted above students are limited by having only one elective in their schedule. In spite of that limitation, more than 75% of students participate in VAPA courses, including all student demographic groups and students with special needs.

Students in VAPA courses have opportunities to learn about career pathways through work with industry professionals and participation in programs such as field trips to the Opera, theater, and dance performances, and Disney performing arts workshops for Drama, Dance, and Music. Additional opportunities for connection to career pathways are provided through work with coaches in the industries, professional choreographers, broadcasters, and through conferences at the STN Broadcasting competition.

Placement in courses is done in conjunction with the counselor and, where appropriate for upper level courses, through an audition process. All students have access to courses in each discipline, but placement in advanced courses for Drama, Band, Orchestra, and Dance all require auditions. Students new to AOMS also have opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on an individual basis to determine the appropriate level of placement.

#### **Theme 5 – Professional Development**

A dedicated and passionate teacher team at AOMS participates in a variety of appropriate professional development opportunities. The district's Summer Institute, the Mega Arts Conference, meetings of the Drama Teachers Association of Southern California (DTASC), the California All-State Music Educators Conference (CASMEC), the California Educational Theatre Association (CETA) Conference, the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association (SCSBOA) conferences, and the San Diego Theatre Educators Alliance (SDTEA) events are all examples of professional development opportunities and professional affiliations pursued by the AOMS team.

Additionally, teachers have participated in San Diego County Office of Education sponsored training on CCSS and the arts. They are also regular participants in school and district-wide collaboration and professional development. As noted above, teachers (as well as students) have a variety of avenues for collaboration with industry professionals. Guest speakers, connection with industry professional associations, and guest instructors all provide

ongoing connection to the wider arts community. Orchestra teacher Marina Hall is a professional in her own right, performing regularly during the summer musical season at the Moonlight Amphitheater in Vista. In Broadcasting students are taught by a credentialed English teacher who teaches technical skills, writing, storytelling, editing, and communication. That teacher has been a teacher leader in the implementation of project-based learning at AOMS and brings extensive and ongoing training and background to the Broadcast classroom.

### **Theme 6 – Community Involvement and Collaboration**

Parent and community support for VAPA programs at AOMS is exceptional. The school community clearly recognizes the value of the arts and the important role that VAPA programs play in the school community and in meeting the broader educational goals of the school. This support can be seen not only in parent attendance at events, but in their tireless work in planning, organizing, and supporting the staging of performance events, from the spring musical, to regular instrumental performances, and the dance showcase. Parents are actively and generously involved in fundraising to support the arts programs and eagerly volunteer to chaperone field trips, including the biennial Band trip to the Heritage Festival in San Francisco and the annual STN Conference in Broadcasting.

The Carlsbad Educational Foundation (CEF) has as one of its central goals the support of arts education in schools in the Carlsbad Unified School District. To that end, support has been provided to instrumental music programs to support instrument repair and instructional coaches. The CEF also sponsors opportunities for community engagement and performance, as in the annual Carols for Carlsbad holiday event at the Omni La Costa Resort and Spa and the Carlsbad Day performance at Legoland California each spring.

Information about student performances and achievements are shared with the wider community through the school website, social media, weekly newsletter, and class newsletters. Attendance at performances is very strong, particularly in Band, Orchestra, and Drama. Regular Band and Dance performances take place in the school multi-purpose room (gymnasium). Orchestra performances and the spring musical for Drama take place at the Carlsbad Arts Center (CAC), a city operated theater facility located at Carlsbad High School.

Beginning early in the school year, Broadcasting students develop production teams and as a program produce daily shows that are shown to students in Advisory classes and available on the Broadcasting website. The daily show is a rarity among middle school programs that gave AOMS students the opportunity to produce approximately 150 shows last year.

Extending beyond the classroom, teachers noted the following: “We train [the students] for so much more than our content. [They learn] professional attitude, punctuality, rehearsal preparedness, reliability, problem solving, teamwork, and accountability. This is such a huge part of our class...the ability to listen and assess, prepare confidently but then adjust to fit your part into the larger whole, constant attainment of the next level of advancement, never ‘done’ or ‘perfect’.” Teachers in the arts truly instill the kind of growth orientation that we strive for as a part of our schoolwide culture.

### **Theme 7- Resources, Facilities, and Funding**

Program offerings for VAPA courses are dictated both by available resources (e.g., teachers, classroom space, materials) and student choice. Each program is provided a site level budget at the beginning of the school year and each works with parent and community partners to raise additional funding for supplies, activities, training, and travel. The Carlsbad Educational Foundation provides additional funding for Band and Orchestra in support of

instrument maintenance and instructional coaching. AOMS owns a wide variety of instruments for Band and Orchestra and also coordinates with outside partners for the rental of instruments for interested students.

Facilities on the AOMS campus include separate dedicated Band, Orchestra, and Drama rooms, a mirrored, wood-floored Dance Studio, and classroom space for Photography and Art classes. The multi-purpose room seats in excess of 700 people and provides an elevated stage for student performances at school. The stage has dedicated stage lighting and a portable audio system provides sound for performances. Broadcasting maintains a studio set, sound and control room, and a green screen backdrop for filming.

In addition to abundant schoolwide technology access, the Photography classroom has 14 iMac computers on which students learn to use Photoshop Pro, the industry standard for digital editing. Photography students have access to 30 standard digital cameras and 10 Nikon DSLR cameras. In Broadcasting, students use Final Cut Pro and work in a classroom setting with a total of 10 iMac and MacBook computers for team projects. Students learn to use Canon DSLR model cameras, in addition to three studio cameras that they learn to operate.