

Pacific Law Academy Model Programs and Practices

Model Programs and Practices: Response to Intervention, Multi-tier Support System with Pacific Academic Work Session (PAWS)

How long has this program been in place? 2-4 years

What are the target areas? Closing the achievement gap
Education supports
Career Technical Education (CTE)
Chronic absenteeism and dropout prevention

What are the target populations? Hispanic or Latino
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
English Learners

Strategies used to implement the Model Programs and Practices:

School climate
Data-driven decision making
Implementation on academic standards basics

Pacific Law Academy (PLA) is a dependent Charter high school chartered by Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) and established in the fall of 2011. PLA houses a population of 218 students and 11 teachers. PLA provides students with a rigorous instructional program that reflects high expectations and focuses on mastery for all students. PLA students are prepared for college by taking pre-AP classes beginning in grade 9. Through their four years at PLA, students will complete between five and seven Advanced Placement classes with thematic instruction in law. Besides being offered a law pathway with courses in Law and Society, Administration of Justice, and Mock Trial, students learn forensics in their Anatomy and Physiology class and are offered a course in Psychology. All courses offered at PLA are a-g approved by UC Doorways and meet University of California and California State University entrance requirements. Students are also offered the opportunity to take dual-enrollment classes through San Joaquin Delta College and earn college credits while attending high school.

PLA is a Title I school based on a high percentage (42%) of Socioeconomic Disadvantaged student population. Although PLA has very few English Language Learners, approximately 65% of PLA's population is Hispanic/ Latino, and a large percentage of those students have been reclassified and speak Spanish at home. Therefore, it's important to utilize a variety of

strategies in the classroom, including Direct Instruction, AVID, Best Practices, Visible Learning, and differentiated instruction. Title I funds are primarily used for professional development and to fund a math summer session for incoming 9th graders as well as an intervention for current students. PLA offers Algebra Support, Algebra and Geometry during the summer to prepare students for math from where they are academically and properly place students in the fall.

Teachers are keenly aware of the academic challenges and instructional needs of PLA's diverse student population. Consequently, academic safety nets have been created to decrease the failure rate and prepare students for their core classes as well as State summative assessments such as CAASPP, PSAT, SAT, and AP testing. PLA budgets for math tutors from The University of the Pacific during the school day and after school. Unfortunately, tutors were not available from UOP during the 2018-2019 school-year. However, PLA teachers are compensated to provide after school tutoring, and students are offered an APEX class for grade improvement as needed. Finally, PLA faculty have collaborated on a class designed for strategic, targeted intervention for students struggling in one or more content areas, elective, or CTE class. The idea for this program was borne out of PLA faculty attendance at a Solution Tree Professional Learning Conference during the summer of 2012.

Pacific Academic Work Sessions (PAWS) is a Response to Intervention (Rti) model targeted to those students who are not meeting mastery in math, ELA, science and social science. PAWS is offered 90 minutes each week during the school day as a pass/ fail class. The class has gone through modifications since its inception. Currently, students meet Mondays with their class Advisors and work on common lessons by grade level to build school culture, provide college awareness, provide test preparation, and help students with organizational skills, self-assessment and self-monitoring strategies, and build student self-esteem, social skills and confidence.

Students are then "drafted" by faculty on Wednesdays and Thursdays, for 30 minutes each day, based on their academic needs. Students' assignments are posted on a Google spreadsheet and shared with the staff. Students move to their advisory period for attendance then transition into their assigned PAWS classroom, where teachers offer targeted intervention based on individual student needs. Students work independently or in small groups to provide each other the academic support necessary for them to succeed. All students are drafted into a PAWS class; therefore, students who have demonstrated mastery in all core subjects are provided academic enrichment activities, and the Mock Trial team may be drafted for final preparation before competition.

There are minimal additional funds required for materials and support of a PAWS program. All PLA students are provided with a yearly planner to organize assignments and to remind students about test dates and other significant school events. Additional tutors through UOP are consulted after the first quarter and through the end-of-year finals to enhance the intervention, and professional development is essential at initiation of PAWS and moving forward.

PAWS benefits all students with extra time during the school day to focus on areas of instruction in which students may find difficult as a result of low math skills or reading comprehension. Teachers and tutors are available to mentor students and focus on their individual educational needs to decrease the achievement gap in a safe learning environment. Faculty collaborate in grade level and department teams collecting data and discussing common strategies and student skill levels in order to offer the appropriate level of differentiated instruction and monitoring of assignments.

Students who are habitually truant or chronically absent are given the opportunity to catch up on missed assignments, note-taking on essential standards, and quizzes during PAWS. PLA has been fortunate in the fact that suspensions have remained low throughout the life of the school, and there have been no expulsions as a result of behavior.

The Pacific Law Academy Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), Goal 1, targets student achievement, indicating the importance of instruction and academics to PLA faculty, parents and all stakeholders. The PLA LCAP, Goal 1, reads:

Pacific Law Academy (PLA) will provide all students with a well-rounded educational experience, the delivery of high-quality instruction, and exposure to rigorous and relevant curriculum to become life-long learners.

PLA especially recognizes the need to assist 9th grade students in transitioning to the academic rigor and organizational skills in order to be successful in their first year of high school. PLA offers math tutoring during school hours provided by UOP students, after school tutoring provided by staff, and AVID tutorials provided in cooperation between AVID tutors and PLA faculty. Pacific Academic Work Sessions provide additional support to all PLA students grades 9 through 12, but especially 9th graders as they acclimate to a rigorous, college prep high school learning environment, to compliment exposure to academic challenges and enrichment activities.

PAWS has had a positive contribution to PLA's low failure rate and near 100% graduation rate. Nearly 60% of our student population graduate a-g compliant and college and career ready. English Language Arts CAASPP scores have decreased from 80% to 75% from 2017 to 2018, but math scores have increased from 35% to 43%. In school-year 2017-2018, 80% of English Language Learners (4 of 5 students) were reclassified English proficient. However, PLA faculty, parents and administration understand that there is more work to be done. PLA has committed to professional development in John Hattie's Visible Learning strategies, beginning in school-year 2018-2019 with an emphasis on reciprocal teaching, vocabulary and feedback.

PLA's stakeholders agree that PAWS is what distinguishes Pacific Law Academy from other Stockton Unified School District high schools, and this model program and practice, along with continual professional development, will sustain PLA's academic success.

Implementation and Monitoring of Model Program/ Practice

PLA administration has consistently addressed the need and established an expectation that teachers keep in contact with parents and embrace parents as partners in their students' education. Teachers are compensated and are contractually bound to engage in 9 hours of parent contact throughout the year.

PLA implemented, in school-year 2018-2019, a tool for 9th graders to retain their PAWS assignments and work from their core classes as directed by faculty. All 9th graders were provided binders that they keep in their Advisory classroom. Teachers should monitor student work, address work to place in the binder and introduce this binder as evidence of student work during student-led conferences or parent-teacher meetings.

Teachers were introduced to student-led conferences during the PLA 2018 Summer Retreat and professional development days prior to school beginning the 2018-2019 school-year; however, teachers will receive further professional development on how to facilitate student-led conferences during the 2019-2020 school-year.

Students who fall below a C should be closely monitored and scheduled for targeted intervention in that subject through PAWS. Any over-lap when students are struggling in multiple classes should be discussed among those teachers during collaboration. Teachers are expected to draft students before Monday PAWS for the Wednesday and Thursday sessions. Faculty shares an excel file on Google Docs to assign classrooms. Students will be notified Monday as to their assigned PAWS rooms for the week. Teachers use the PAWS sessions to assess student progress then monitor grades as evidence of effectiveness. Teachers work with

students through PAWS as many times as needed using differentiated instruction, re-teaching, and multiple strategies to make a positive change in students' grades.

Results of the Model Program/ Practice

Pacific Academic work Sessions is a tier 1 practice within Pacific Law Academy's Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS). All students participate in PAWS for 90 minutes each week for intervention, grade improvement, or enrichment. There have been some modifications to the PAWS program over the last two years. PLA moved from an AVID-based classroom, as a result of teacher retention challenges and not all teachers being AVID trained, to a grade-level based curriculum adopted from Newington High School, Connecticut, and adapted for PLA, embracing climate and culture building, goal development and college and career preparation. As a result, we have seen an increase in student engagement in the classrooms and a decrease in D and F grades over the span of the school-year. Seldom are students referred to the Counselor or Administrator for academic intervention or support through a Site Study Team (SST) meeting, both tier 2 MTSS interventions.

Data is collected prior to teachers collaborating within their Professional Learning Communities (PLC) using a document created by administration and modified with faculty input. Student work is collected and placed in student binders or retained by teachers as evidence of progress. Data is further collected through formative and summative assessments, local assessments such as Measures of Adequate Progress Assessment (MAP), and standards testing such as CAASPP, PSAT, and Advanced Placement tests.

Since the 2015-2016 school-year, CAASPP growth in math has gone from 40% to 43%, and ELA has increased from 60% to 75%. Forty-eight PLA students in grades 9 through 11 scored over 1000 on their PSAT test in 2018, a watershed score indicating college readiness. However, of all students qualified to take an AP test in 2017-2018, 92% of students tested, but only 7% passed with a score of 3 or better, down from 14% in 2017-2018. This data is concerning for PLA faculty and administration. As a result, more emphasis will be placed on AP preparation and test-taking strategies beginning in school-year 2018-2019 and moving forward.

PLA will continue to monitor student growth and modify the PAWS program as needed. In school-year 2019-2020, all students in grades 9 through 12 will begin the year with hard binders which will transition into digital portfolios in school-year 2020-2021. Faculty will be trained in student-led conferences in the fall of 2019 and continue with Visible Learning training. Class sizes during PAWS will be meaningfully arranged for effectiveness and efficiency to facilitate an appropriate intervention and enrichment learning environment. Faculty will continue to collaborate on approaches in developing plans for differentiated instruction, increased parent

communications and increased student involvement in their own learning. PLA will sustain a 100% graduation rate and a-g rate surpassing 60% in a challenging and rigorous culture of learning with the support of an appropriate Rti model, preparing all students for college, career and community, with the proper safety nets in place, so that all students can succeed.