

ANNUAL REPORT FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2005-06 (SARC)

I. General Information

Contact Information

RENAISSANCE ARTS ACADEMY
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Co-directors: PK Candaux and Sidnie Myrick

School Description and Mission Statement

RENAISSANCE ARTS ACADEMY is a California Charter School, a public school of choice operating under the terms of a charter granted by the Board of Education of the Los Angeles Unified School District on May 27, 2003 and approved by the California State Board of Education on July 10, 2003. The Academy is incorporated as a California Public Benefit Corporation with tax-exempt determination under IRS code 501(c) (3) and the California State Franchise Tax Board.

RENAISSANCE ARTS ACADEMY is nonsectarian in admission policies, programs, employment practices, and all other operations; does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other basis; and does not charge tuition. Applications are available at the school office and at www.renarts.org. Admission is by lottery.

MISSION

RENAISSANCE ARTS ACADEMY is a small Music and Performing Arts school providing an integrated classical education for middle and high school students from all backgrounds. Through rigorous academic inquiry, collaborative small-group instruction, and professionally-guided artistic exploration, Academy scholars prepare to become 21st century Renaissance citizens who can synthesize artistic discipline, intellectual curiosity, and autonomous scholarship to help build a balanced, tolerant and hopeful future for all.

GOALS

- To utilize music and theater arts disciplines as alternative gateways to powerful literacy and academic excellence in all subjects.
- To develop an integrated arts, sciences, mathematics and humanities curriculum that is diversely accessible and engages both teachers and students in a process of ongoing intellectual inquiry.
- To implement a school-wide, multi-age, small-group instructional design based on dialectic reasoning, in-depth study of classical texts, and rigorous independent analysis.
- To generate an organizationally supportive learning environment that prepares students to

recognize options and make informed choices concerning art and ideas, self and others, college and career, and the daily creation of a fulfilling and effective life.

- To bring together a cross-section of L.A.'s diverse ethnic, economic and cultural populations in an inter-dependent, arts-focused setting that both models and demands mutual respect, teamwork, personal commitment, academic accountability, and ethical behavior.
- To nurture whole-family participation in the learning/teaching continuum by including parents as participants in the Academy's process of educational inquiry, and providing support as they become effective intellectual mentors and artistic coaches to their children.
- To help students build self-motivation, discipline, and personal responsibility through the development of ensemble performing skills, and learn to apply these skills to all aspects of their lives.
- To allow students to discover, through service, that dedication to the performing arts is more than a means of individual expression – it is a call to generosity of spirit and a commitment to community involvement.
- To celebrate the Los Angeles area's rich and varied cultural heritage by promoting collaborative relationships among district schools, neighborhood associations, arts organizations, business coalitions, and college and university campuses.
- To develop a community of professional artist-advisors to work alongside traditionally credentialed teachers in a partnership dedicated to mentoring Southern California's next generation of civic-minded intellectual and creative leaders.

Parental Involvement

One of the primary benefits to limiting student population is that it ensures that every student and parent/guardian is individually known by the school directors and advisors. There are no anonymous children at RenArts and no parents without a direct voice in their own child's education. RenArts encourages frequent, open and unmediated communication between parents and administration. Each family participates in regularly scheduled parent-student meetings with staff, and has equal access to the co-directors by scheduling individual and/or joint family meetings. All parents have direct access to individual teachers via e-mail and to the school Trustees at RenArts Board meetings. A Parent Committee works with the administration to support the school's academic and artistic goals.

CONFERENCES AND PERFORMANCES

Formally scheduled parent involvement includes:

- Annual Parent-Student Compact Meetings in which individual artistic and academic learning goals are explored, enumerated and committed to.
- Twice-yearly Student-led Parent Conferences in which student portfolio and narrative teacher assessments of academic and artistic progress are presented individually by students to their parents or guardians.
- Annual Winter and Spring performances by the RenArts music and theater arts programs.
- Outside music and theater performances. As part of their arts requirement, all students must attend at least four outside performances with their parent or guardian. We both host performers at RenArts and keep families informed about great opportunities in the community, many of them free.

SCHOOL VISITS

We welcome parents at school at any time. Parents are always welcome to participate in lessons, activities, discussions, and performances. When visiting we ask that parents:

- Sign in with the office as soon as you arrive so we have a record of who is in the building.
- Join the student group as a participant in the discussion or project currently underway.
- If you wish to speak with an advisor, you may schedule an appointment through the office.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips to cultural and arts events scheduled during the school day are an integral part of the RenArts program. Since our Field Trips are focused on learning and developing a sense of artistic and scholarly community, we arrange for tickets for parents and family members to accompany their children and act as mentors to the students they chaperone. Field Trips provide an opportunity for students spend time with adults they care about, discuss ideas and events with the larger RenArts community, and learn through example how to be appreciative and responsible audience members.

PARENT-ADVISOR SYMPOSIA

RenArts parents and administration have instituted a series of Parent-Advisor symposia as a way to deepen the community's discussion regarding the content and methodology utilized in the RenArts curricula.

PARENT COMMITTEE

The RenArts Parent Committee has come together to support the school's academic and artistic mission and goals. The Parent Committee has organized annual Pledge Drive events, volunteer work days, candy sales, etc. We encourage all families to get involved. EMAIL: parentcommittee@renarts.org or leave a message in the school office. A parent rep will contact you.

II. Demographic Information

Student Enrollment – Grade Level 2005-06

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
74	70	72	39	17	6	4

Student Enrollment – Racial and Ethnic Subgroups 2005-06

African American	American Indian	Asian/Pacific Islander	Caucasian	Filipino	Latino
9.2%	.7%	.7%	30.9%	3.5%	52.5%

III. School Safety and Climate for Learning

School Safety Plan

School safety plan including emergency procedures, student release protocol, guidelines for administration of medications, and requirements for background and safety checks of employees and volunteers are discussed with staff during professional development prior to the school year and included in the Parent and Student Handbook distributed to all families.

Academy procedures in the case of an emergency are designed to:

- Provide for action that will minimize injuries and loss of life of students and personnel if an emergency occurs during school hours;
- Provide for maximum use of school personnel and school facilities;
- Ensure the safety and protection of students and personnel immediately following a disaster;
- Arrange for a calm and efficient plan for parents to retrieve students from school, should it be necessary, following a disaster.

To help ensure student safety, fire drills are held at least once per semester, with the school

evacuated according to the guidelines of the local fire department; and earthquake procedures are explained to students during the first month of the school year and reviewed each semester.

Programs and Practices That Promote a Positive Learning Environment

As a small school of choice offering a classical academic and performing arts-centered course of study, RenArts does not incorporate many of the options available in a large comprehensive school. RenArts takes seriously the charter school mandate to create an educational program that offers an alternative to the current secondary school choices available to students and parents. At RenArts, the commitment to provide an arts-rich curriculum rooted in the classics determines both the scope of educational opportunities offered and the program limitations. All RenArts students participate in accelerated academic programs, mixed-age instructional groups, school-wide curriculum, and disciplined arts training. There are no 'optional' classes offered, including AP courses, and no mountains of nightly homework assignments that preclude students from spending time with family and focusing on those activities that nurture their individual interests.

In order to provide parents and students a true alternative to the currently available school cultures as well, RenArts purposely does not attempt to duplicate the extra-curricular activities and attendant social rituals prevalent in traditional middle and high schools, including sports teams, cheerleaders, pep rallies, proms, homecoming queens, and grad-night parties. While families are free to arrange whatever activities they feel are beneficial for their children, RenArts does not provide any auxiliary social functions. This is not an oversight; it is a component of the program design. Just as the RenArts open-classroom is not simply a lack of walls, the development of a school culture based on shared intellectual inquiry and artistic discipline is aided by the purposeful exclusion of certain conventional adolescent measures of achievement and popularity.

By enrolling at RenArts, families are choosing an alternative educational experience. Although there is no audition process or prior training required for admission, the performing arts portion of the RenArts program is not optional. Every student must choose a music or drama focus and commit to working toward specific program goals. Admission is by lottery and the school maintains an active waitlist of student applications.

Suspensions and Expulsions

RENARTS			
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Number of Suspensions	0	0	2
Rate of Suspensions	0	0	-
Number of Expulsions	0	0	0
Rate of Expulsions	0	0	0

IV. School Facilities

Facilities Information

Renaissance Arts Academy has an E-1 Certificate of Occupancy for facilities fully compliant with all Los Angeles Building and Safety Code standards and requirements for the operation of a full-time K-12 school building. All infrastructure, including plumbing, electrical, HVAC and fire-life-safety equipment is brand new and maintained in fully operational condition. School is inspected annually by the LA Fire Marshall.

The school facility is located in a renovated department store building with 14,510 square feet in an open, street-level space with a mezzanine area along the eastern end. Renovation process included obtaining City Planning Permits for a building change of use, Department of Building and Safety Permits for necessary upgrades, and Environmental Impact Assessments including

Department of Transportation traffic studies and Design Review Board approval. The scope of required construction included:

- Structural seismic reinforcement;
- Installation of all plumbing and electrical infrastructure and fixtures;
- Installation of heating and air-conditioning ducts, equipment, and operating systems;
- Installation of complete fire-life-safety system including building-wide sprinklers, on-site and central station fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire-rated doors with panic hardware, battery-powered back-up lighting fixtures and emergency signage, plus construction of firewalls, roof breaks, and enclosed fire-exit staircase from mezzanine;
- Installation of code-compliant railings for open staircases and mezzanine;
- Construction of enclosed dance studio, theater lab, music instruction rooms and individual student practice rooms, plus office, administrative and conference areas;
- Modifications to improve building accessibility, including installation of ramps, rails, restroom accommodations, and elevator to mezzanine in accordance with federal and state Americans with Disabilities Act guideline

V. Academic Data

Academic Performance Index

The Academic Performance Index (API) is an annual measure of the academic performance and progress of schools in California. API scores range from 200 to 1,000, with a statewide target of 800. Detailed information about the API can be found at the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>.

API Ranks – Three-Year Comparison

The statewide API rank ranges from 1 to 10, with a score of 10 being highest.

RenArts API Rank	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Statewide	n/a	9*	8
Similar Schools	n/a	n/a	10

*NOTE: RenArts did not open until September 2003, so no API data is available for comparison to prior year. RenArts had 90 students in its first year. Similar Schools Rankings are not assigned to schools with fewer than 100 students.

API by Student Group – Three-Year Comparison

Group	API Score		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
All Students at the School	749	787	773
African American	n/a	n/a	n/a
American Indian or Alaska Native	n/a	n/a	n/a
Asian	n/a	n/a	n/a
Filipino	n/a	n/a	n/a
Hispanic or Latino	n/a	738	717
Pacific Islander	n/a	n/a	n/a
White (not Hispanic)	n/a	885	863
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	n/a	743	744
English Learners	---	---	n/a
Students with Disabilities	---	---	n/a

*NOTE: RenArts had fewer than 100 students in 2003-04 its first year of operation. No subgroups were large enough to be given an API Growth Score or Target prior to 2005. Subgroups with fewer than 50 students are not assigned API scores.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

AYP Criteria	2005	2006
Overall	Met 16 out of 16	Met 17 out of 18
Participation Rate - English-Language Arts	YES	YES
Participation Rate - Mathematics	YES	YES
Percent Proficient - English-Language Arts	YES	YES
Percent Proficient - Mathematics	YES	NO
API	YES	YES
Graduation Rate	YES	YES

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires that all schools and districts meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. To comply with NCLB, California adopted AYP criteria that were approved by the U.S. Department of Education in June 2003. To make AYP, schools and districts are required each year to meet or exceed specific criteria in each of the following:

- Requirement 1: Participation rate on the state's standards-based assessments
- Requirement 2: Percent proficient on the state's standards-based assessments
- Requirement 3: API as an additional indicator
- Requirement 4: Graduation rate (for secondary schools)

Detailed information about AYP, including participation rates and percent proficient results by student group, can be found at the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/>

AYP – All Students

Data reported are the percent of RenArts students achieving at the Proficient or Advanced level.

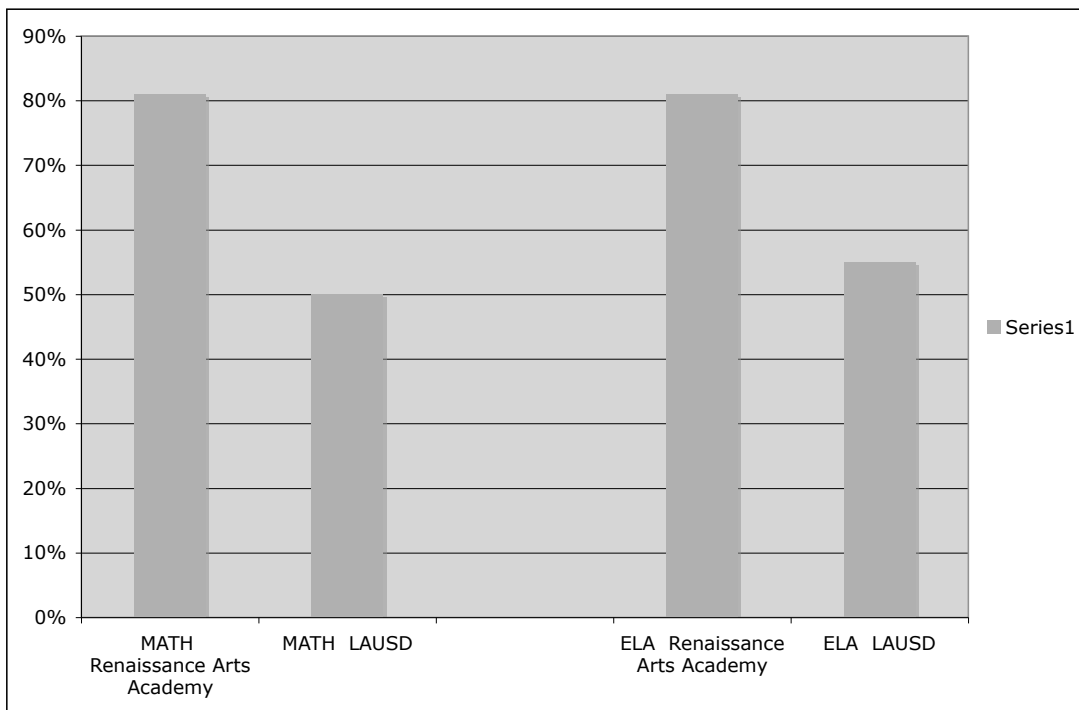
Subject	2004	2005	2006
	English-Language Arts	52.2%	61.7%
Mathematics	23.8%	31.9%	35.2%

California Physical Fitness Test

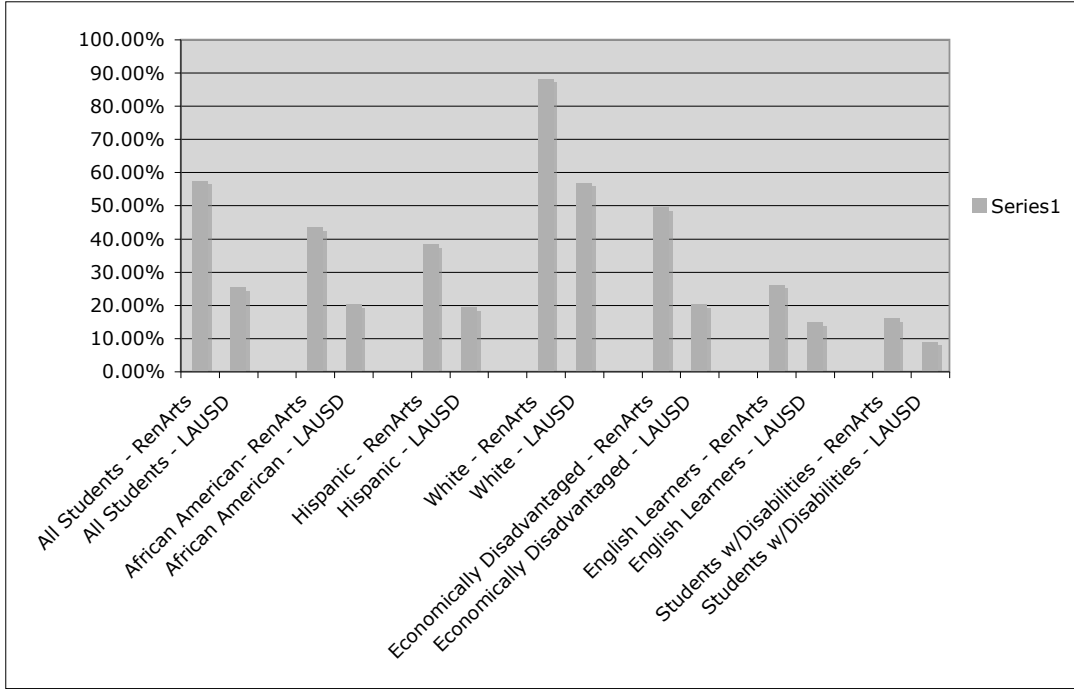
The California Physical Fitness Test is administered to RenArts students in grades 7 and 9 only. Detailed information may be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pf/>.

Number of Fitness Standards Achieved	2005		2006	
	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 7	Grade 9
6 of 6 Standards	11.5%	7.4%	13.8%	18.2%
5 of 6 Standards	37.7%	44.4%	36.9%	51.5%
4 of 6 Standards	23.0%	25.9%	32.3%	24.2%
3 of 6 Standards	23.0%	3.7%	13.8%	6.1%
2 of 6 Standards	4.9%	3.7%	1.5%	0
1 of 6 Standards	0	11.1%	1.5%	0
0 of 6 Standards	0	3.7%	0	0
Total Number of Students Tested	61	27	65	33

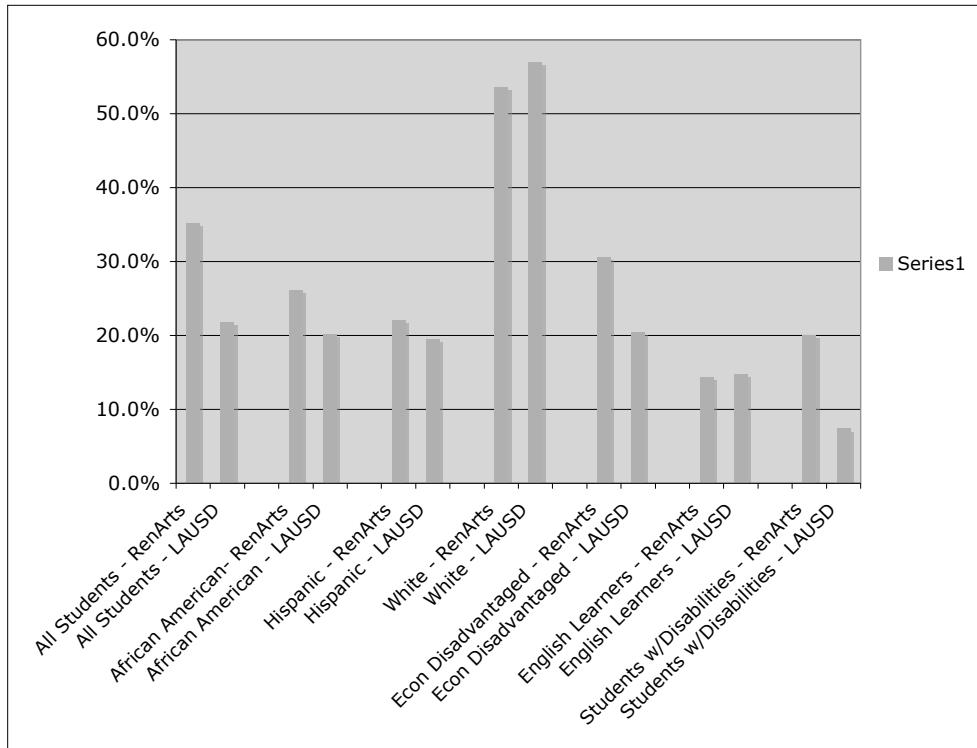
California High School Exit Exam
2006
All Grades



2006 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
 Percent Proficient or Above
 Grade Span 6-8
 English Language Arts



2006 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
 Percent Proficient or Above
 Grade Span 6-8
 Mathematics



VI. School Completion

California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

Subject	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
	English-Language Arts	100%	95%
Mathematics	100%	100%	81%

Dropout Rate and Graduation Rate

School	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
	Enrollment (9-12)	44	57
Number of Dropouts	0	0	0
Dropout Rate (1-year)	0	0	0
Graduation Rate	n/a	100%	100%

Courses for University of California and/or California State University Admission

Indicator	Percent
Students Enrolled in Courses Required for UC/CSU Admission	100%
Graduates Who Completed All Courses Required for UC/CSU Admission	100%

VII. Class Size

Average Teaching Load and Teaching Load Distribution

Subject	2003-04				2004-05				2005-06			
	Avg. Class Size	# of Classes			Avg. Class Size	# of Classes			Avg. Class Size	# of Classes		
		1-22	23-32	33+		1-22	23-32	33+		1-22	23-32	33+
Humanities	13	8	0	0	13	16	0	0	13	16	0	0
Mathematics	13	8	0	0	13	16	0	0	13	16	0	0
Science	13	8	0	0	26	0	8	0	26	0	8	0

VIII. Teacher and Staff Information

Core Academic Courses Taught by NCLB Compliant Teachers

100%

Teacher Credentials

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Total Teachers	2	5	7
Teachers with Full Credential	1	2	4
Teachers with University Intern Credential	0	3	3
Teachers with Emergency Permit	1	0	0

Teacher Education Level

	2004-05	2005-06
Doctorate	1	1
Master's Degree plus 30 or more semester hours	1	1
Master's Degree	1	2
Bachelor's Degree plus 30 or more semester hours	2	3
Bachelor's Degree	0	0
Less than Bachelor's Degree	0	0

Vacant Teacher Positions

	2004	2005	2006
Vacant Teacher Positions	0	0	0

Teacher Evaluations

Staff performance is monitored by peer review and overseen by the Academic Director through ongoing evaluation and support, and annual review. Performance criteria are aligned with internal Professional Development standards outlined below.

IX. Curriculum and Instruction

Instructional Minutes

Grade Level	2005-06	
	Instructional Minutes Offered at RenArts	Instructional Minutes Required by State
Grade 6	67,500	54,000
Grade 7	67,500	54,000
Grade 8	67,500	54,000
Grade 9	67,500	64,800
Grade 10	67,500	64,800
Grade 11	67,500	64,800
Grade 12	67,500	64,800

Instructional Design

Renaissance Arts Academy's program is structured to capitalize on the best aspects of self-contained, multiage and collaborative classroom instruction. We believe that students who experience a shared discourse with fellow students and teachers more easily apprentice the intellectual practices and inquiry that teachers, more experienced peers, community experts and mentors model. The open classroom, whole-school curriculum, rigorous arts and academic requirements, small-group instruction and mandatory elective coursework are designed to actively shape the school culture and create a dynamic learning community that challenges both students and faculty.

RenArts' instructional program is rooted in the belief that all students, including those at educational disadvantage, learn best from instruction that is accelerated rather than remediative, reflecting high-level thinking and content for learners at all levels. Our instructional objective is 'powerful literacy' in all subjects, as set forth by Patrick J. Finn in *Literacy With an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest*. By encouraging students' innate tendency to question, developing their ability to reason critically, and educating them to communicate through explicit, context-independent language, RenArts provides all learners with access to the linguistic, intellectual, and creative skills needed to be full participants in the communities of academic, artistic and political discourse.

The instructional design is influenced by "discovery learning," first described in John Dewey's work with the Chicago laboratory school. Although constructivist in nature, the RenArts approach for middle and high school learners takes into account more recent learning theories that support students' development as active, purposeful, and strategic learners—what Ann L. Brown calls "guided discovery." Teachers and mentors guide student discovery through Reciprocal Teaching—reinforcing what individual students know and instructing them on what they need to learn next while gradually helping students assume more and more responsibility for their own learning and for contributing to the knowledge-making of the intellectual community. In Reciprocal Teaching students engage in a Cognitive Apprenticeship with the intellectual models around them, observing, practicing, mastering, and then assuming the role of model for other students and learning-community members.

At Renaissance Arts Academy students are grouped first by their approximate experience with the target material as determined by standardized reading comprehension assessments, math assessments, and writing samples. Additional factors such as learning style, social maturation,

and independence are considered secondarily. Groups are limited to 10-12 students so that opportunities for in-depth discussion, clarification, and knowledge advancement are maximized. All groupings are flexible and students move from one group to another as observation, interest, motivation and assessment warrant.

To accommodate grouping that caters to students' instructional needs rather than age or grade level, we require course material that supports global, conceptual, thematic learning rather than topical learning. Global, conceptual, thematic teaching can meet objectives for various grade-levels within a common curricular framework. This instructional orientation establishes a 'Knowledge Forum Classroom' as described by Carl Bereiter, et al. in *Rethinking Learning*, in D. O. and N. Torrance (Eds.), *Handbook of Education and Human Development: New Models of Learning, Teaching and Schooling*". In the 'Knowledge Forum Classroom' students engage in creating and adding value to knowledge in the same way that valuable employees of successful businesses contribute to the organization's knowledge resources.

Between grades 6 and 12, RenArts students progress through two whole-school, three-year curriculum cycles connected by a common historical framework. Along with exploring the same concepts through several different intellectual perspectives, students observe and then practice the dynamic cross-disciplinary and cross-expertise conversations that take place when an entire school community engages with a common knowledge base. As Barbara Rogoff asserts in *Social Interaction as Apprenticeship in Thinking: Guidance and Participation in Spatial Planning*, the facilitation of learning through joint productive activity and dialog among teachers and learners develops the highest level of academic achievement for At-Risk learners. Through the discourse about shared intellectual work, students of different backgrounds create a common context for connecting schooled or scientific ideas with everyday concepts. And through the shared pursuit of focused development in music and theater under the guidance of professional artists, students create a common artistic language and cohesive communal investment in the value of both individual and collaborative practice and performance discipline. This shared sense of discipline can provide a strongly supported point of entry into all academic subjects for students who might not otherwise thrive in a school setting, as proposed by the Harvard Project Zero study *Reviewing Education and the Arts Project (REAP)*.

Classical Arts and Academic Curricula

Central to student success in realizing Academy learning goals is focused engagement with performing arts disciplines and the study of classical texts. Through the exploration of both arts and academic Classics as foundational materials, the Academy program meets the standards of significant scholarship that will prepare students to create knowledge, refine the interaction between individual and community, and enrich human perceptions about the past, engagement with the contemporary world, and investment in possible futures which offer hope for all. Mastery of classical arts and literature provide students with an exacting logic, a growing sense of the richness of language, and the basis for a true appreciation of profound intellectual work and problem solving. Through the systematic development of intellectual and creative discipline, the Academy aspires to nurture the habits of mind and spirit that lead to both discerning citizenship and valuable individual expression.

Through collaborative examination of seminal sources of the Western artistic and intellectual tradition, students gain a sense of ownership and agency that further informs their analyses and expressions of their own unique cultural backgrounds and individual experiences. Thus, 'powerful literacy' supports individual identity by connecting it to deeply rooted human thought and experience as expressed through the rich texts that undergird the academic, political and artistic discourse in the contemporary world that we all share. A close reading of the Classics offers students the opportunity to discover self while affirming membership in a community defined by shared intellectual experiences over time.

As St. John's College affirms, its classical curriculum "seeks to free students from the tyrannies of unexamined opinions and inherited prejudices. It endeavors to enable them to make intelligent, free choices concerning the ends and means of both public and private life." Renaissance Arts

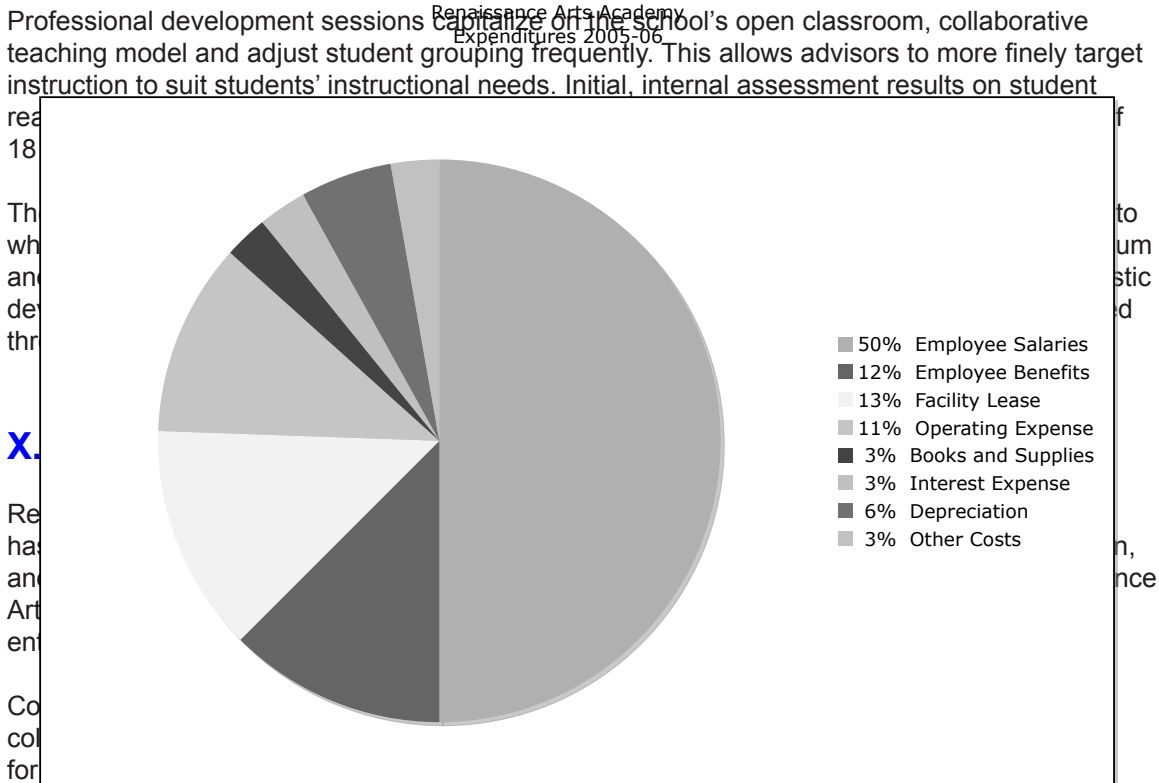
Academy shares that commitment to the value of classical studies for all students.

Professional Development

Renaissance Arts Academy has carefully recruited core academic advisors with demonstrated content area expertise (i.e. holding advance degrees), and teaching experience. In order to capitalize on content area expertise RenArts has implemented a professional development plan that helps core academic advisors pursue a clear credential through intern programs. Currently core academic advisors are enrolled in CalStateTEACH, CSUN’s Tech to Teach Program, and the University of Phoenix Masters in Education Intern Program. The Academy has budgeted professional development monies to help fund Advisors’ intern programs. The RenArts Academic Director coordinates on-site professional development sessions with intern program requirements, readings, and activities. In addition, the collaborative teaching model at Renaissance Arts Academy places intern advisors in teams with fully credentialed master advisors. The teams operate within a “cognitive coaching” framework as described by Arthur Costa and Robert Garmston in *Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools*. Norwood, Mass.: Christopher-Gordon. Master advisors support intern advisors as they develop an effective repertoire of instructional strategies, and reflectively apply and examine those strategies.

Whole staff professional development activities focus on establishing strong, long-term teacher-student relationships and designing coherent standards-based curricula. The school year begins with a two-week intensive professional development seminar in which the entire faculty engages in study and discussion regarding current research on best practices. Ongoing professional development sessions begin with student case studies, reviewing student progress academically, artistically, and developmentally. The case study discussions inform consequent curriculum design and lesson planning. Advisory group structure and make-up is discussed at each session in light of the most recent student assessments.

Professional development sessions capitalize on the school’s open classroom, collaborative teaching model and adjust student grouping frequently. This allows advisors to more finely target instruction to suit students’ instructional needs. Initial, internal assessment results on student



students include:

- Mandatory college-focused lunch meetings every other Friday.
- Discussions in Parent-Student Compact meetings regarding viable college options.
- SAT tutoring after school.