

ALICE FONG YU ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

PART III - SUMMARY

Alice Fong Yu (AFY) Alternative School is the nation's first Chinese immersion public school. Established in 1995, the school is nestled on a quiet hillside in the Inner Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco. We offer a rigorous Chinese language immersion instructional program from kindergarten through eighth grade. The school is named after San Francisco's first Chinese American teacher, Ms. Alice Fong Yu. Our mission is to prepare our students to be caring, responsible, and competent citizens with global perspectives and English-Chinese bilingual skills who can face the challenges of the twentyfirst century.

AFY has a strong focus on high academic achievement and student leadership. In addition, the students at AFY have the unique opportunity to acquire language proficiency in Cantonese Chinese and Mandarin Chinese, along with English, in a supportive and nurturing environment. Knowledge of more than one language and culture is important for our children's full participation in a culturally and linguistically diverse world, and immersion education is an exciting and innovative program in which children develop the ability to speak, read, and write in a second language. At AFY, the school curriculum, including math, science, and social studies, is taught primarily in Cantonese from kindergarten through third grade, with an increase in English instructional time during fourth and fifth grades. By fifth grade, children can communicate effectively in Cantonese and English and have fulfilled all requirements for promotion to middle school. In middle school, our students also start learning Mandarin, along with the continued development of their Cantonese language skills.

AFY has the distinction of being the top-ranked school among all K-5 and K-8 schools within the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) for the past ten years. Moreover, in three of the last five years, AFY ranked as the top school among all SFUSD schools, including high schools. All of our students, including the 16% who are English learners and the 32% who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, contribute to the success of our school.

Underlying the classroom practices and curriculum choices at AFY is the belief that children's social and emotional growth is as important as their academic development. Everyday we strive to instill a love of learning, to nurture self-esteem, and to foster respect of others. All of the classrooms emphasize small group, hands-on, cooperative learning activities, and students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills through student-directed projects.

At AFY, we also seek to prepare our students to be responsible stewards of the environment by making informed choices about their consumption of the earth's valuable natural resources. Our school campus features a teaching garden that includes a pond with a solar powered pump, a native plant area, copious vegetable beds, various composting systems, and a rainwater catchment cistern. Each class from kindergarten through fifth grade goes to the garden once a week for an outdoor lesson.

In order to ensure the success of all students, we provide a comprehensive tutoring program before and after school as well as support programs during the school day. We have a strong and functional Care Team which meets every week to discuss the progress of all students. We believe joyful and authentic learning is when students are actively involved in the learning process. Our teachers achieve this through lessons that foster exploration and require the students to think critically, apply learned concepts and make connections.

In addition to a strong academic program, our students are engaged in many enrichment activities such

as ceramic and visual arts, perceptual motor skills, creative movement, orchestra and band, singing, and dance. Students also have the opportunity to develop teamwork and leadership skills through participation in Student Government, Peer Mediation, as well as a Buddies Program that pairs our sixth graders with our kindergarten students. Students can also participate in a variety of team sports, including basketball, volleyball, soccer, baseball, and track.

Keeping parents informed is a priority. Families receive weekly English-Chinese bilingual bulletins and monthly newsletters. A comprehensive website provides a central source of information on all school related matters. Beginning in the year 2000, AFY implemented a multi-faceted US-China Cultural Exchange Program that enhances bilingual and bicultural exposure for our students and teachers. All eighth graders have the opportunity to participate in a two-week study tour to China, during which they use their language skills in home stays with families of our sister school in China. The exchange program includes our hosting of visiting students from China who home stay and share classes with our eighth graders. Our teachers also have the opportunity to exchange best practices with teachers from our sister school. By the time our students graduate, we have equipped them with powerful knowledge of the Chinese language and culture so that they can successfully participate in a culturally and linguistically diverse world.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

In 1997, the California legislature established the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program to assess the academic performance of all students in grades two through eleven (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/cefstar.asp>). The STAR Program for 2010-11 consists of four components:

- 1) California Standards Tests (CST) are criterion-referenced tests that assess the California content standards in English-language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and history-social science.
- 2) California Modified Assessment (CMA) is an alternative assessment to the CSTs in ELA, mathematics and science for students who have an individualized education program (IEP) and meet the CMA eligibility criteria.
- 3) California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) is an alternate performance assessment to the CSTs in ELA, mathematics, and science, and is an individually administered assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- 4) Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) are criterion-referenced tests aligned to the California content standards for reading/language arts and mathematics for students who are Spanish-speaking English learners.

STAR results are reported for students and groups using scaled scores and five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic. Performance at the proficient or advanced levels is considered acceptable.

The STAR results are used to calculate the Academic Performance Index (API), a measure of a school's academic performance and growth (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/pa/cefpsaa.asp>). The API is a number that ranges from 200 to 1000, and the California API target for all schools is 800 or higher.

The STAR results are also used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a series of annual academic performance goals for each school (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ay/cefayp.asp>). A school is determined to have met AYP if it meets or exceeds each year's goals. In California, AYP requirements

for elementary and middle schools include: 1) 95% student participation rate in STAR ELA and mathematics tests; 2) percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels in STAR ELA and mathematics tests; and 3) API growth. These requirements must be met at the school as a whole as well as by each numerically significant subgroup at the school.

Over the past five years, Alice Fong Yu has met all AYP criteria, and its API scores over this time period have well exceeded the state target of 800: 943 in 2007; 948 in 2008; 951 in 2009; 947 in 2010; and 955 in 2011. In each of the last five years, Alice Fong Yu has been ranked the top school amongst all K-5 and K-8 schools within the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD).

Alice Fong Yu has maintained high STAR results over the past five years. In CST ELA, the percentage of all students at or above proficient ranges between 84% and 88%, and in CST mathematics, the percentage ranges between 91% and 93%. About 32% of our students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. This subgroup has performed well on both CST ELA and mathematics. In 2011, 81% and 91% performed at the proficient level or above in CST ELA and mathematics, respectively. This subgroup has performed consistently high in CST mathematics over the past five years, ranging from 89% to 94%, while also demonstrating consistent growth in CST ELA, increasing from 74% in 2007 to 81% in 2011.

About 16% of our students are English learners (ELs). This subgroup has demonstrated consistent growth in both CST ELA and mathematics over the past five years. In ELA, 78% performed at the proficient level or above in 2011 compared to 55% in 2007. In mathematics, the percentage increased to 93% from 82% over the same period.

The test data tables are arranged by grade level, but it is also important to follow the performance of the same group of students as they advance through the grade levels. This perspective is particularly important for ELs. At Alice Fong Yu, ELs are reclassified to fluent English proficient (FEP) at a high rate. The 16% population of ELs is concentrated in the lower grade levels and the number of ELs becomes numerically insignificant by fourth grade. So in this case, the subgroup test scores alone do not tell the complete story. Instead, the diminishing number of ELs in the higher grade levels is also a strong indication that students who do not speak English as a first language are performing very well academically at Alice Fong Yu.

The STAR results are consistently high across grade levels, except for CST ELA in third grade. The percentage of third graders performing at the proficient level or above in CST ELA ranges from 58% to 78% over the past five years, compared to 84% to 88% school-wide over the same time period. This third grade “dip” is not unique to Alice Fong Yu, but is consistent across all SFUSD schools. In this case, it is again important to follow the performance of these third-grade students as they advance through higher grade levels. For example, in 2007-2008, 64% of the third-grade students performed at the proficient level or above in CST ELA. In 2008-2009, this same group of students as fourth graders increased their performance to 88% in CST ELA, and they have maintained this high performance level through 2010-2011 as sixth-grade students.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The assessment results from the California Standards Tests (CST) are used in multiple ways at Alice Fong Yu to improve student and school performance. First, as part of our Response to Intervention (RTI) program, we rely on individual CST results along with teacher assessments for identification of students who are not meeting expected performance levels. Teachers and staff members review the test results of each student and identify those who score at or below basic. For example, in 2011, 44

students scored at or below basic in CST English-language arts (ELA) and 26 students scored at or below basic in CST mathematics. The students who are identified as not meeting expected levels of performance are referred to our Student Success Team (SST) program. The SST is comprised of the student, the parents, teachers and staff members. Teachers meet with the parents to discuss assessment results and to identify areas for improvement. Teachers and staff members work together with the student and the parents to develop an improvement plan for the student, which may include a variety of supplemental instructional services, such as push-in and pull-out support during the school day as well as before-school and after-school tutoring. Teachers and parents continue to meet regularly to gauge the student's progress, relying on both teacher assessments and the student's CST results.

Second, every year, a team of teachers, staff members and parents reviews the school-wide CST results. The team reviews the test data sorted by groups, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and English language fluency, with the objective of identifying any target populations that may be under-performing. The team also reviews the test data over multiple years and sorted by grade level, focusing on both the yearly results within a particular grade level as well as the yearly results for the same group of students as they advance through the grade levels. The former perspective provides insight into factors related more to curriculum at a particular grade level while the latter perspective provides insight into factors related more to a particular group of students.

Third, we review the CST results as part of our curriculum alignment process. Teachers and staff members meet regularly for both horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment. The horizontal alignment process ensures that the curriculum being taught by different teachers at the same grade level is aligned between classrooms and is consistent with state standards. Teachers at the same grade level share lesson plans and student assignments, and they monitor CST results between classrooms as one metric to verify that the classrooms are indeed horizontally aligned.

The vertical alignment process ensures that the curriculum at one grade level leverages what was taught at the previous grade level without unnecessary overlap. As a part of the vertical alignment process, at the beginning of each school year, teachers at a particular grade level review the assessment results from the previous grade level. For example, at the beginning of school year 2011-2012, fifth-grade teachers review the 2010-2011 assessment results of fourth-grade students. The teachers use this information to gauge how much time should be spent reviewing curriculum from the previous grade level before proceeding with new curriculum for the current grade level. By leveraging what was taught at the previous grade level while avoiding unnecessary overlap, the teachers can maximize the learning experience for our students.

At Alice Fong Yu, we use the CST assessment results to inform the school community of individual student academic achievement as well as school-wide achievement. The assessment results from the CST for each student are mailed home to parents. Teachers review these results with parents during the parent-teacher conferences and discuss any areas for improvement. Moreover, the analysis of the school-wide assessment data is presented during a monthly School Site Council meeting, and this analysis is also posted to the school website in order to reach the wider school community.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

As the top-ranked school amongst all K-5 and K-8 schools within the San Francisco Unified School District over the last ten years and as the nation's first Chinese immersion public school, Alice Fong Yu has attracted the attention of educators locally, nationally and internationally. Our successful language immersion program has served as a model for other immersion programs around the city and state. Educators have consulted with our teachers and administrators, and have visited our school to

learn about our best practices in immersion education.

Visitors have also come to our school to observe other aspects of our curriculum, ranging from our science program to our garden program. In March 2011, educators convened in San Francisco for the National Science Teachers Association Conference. Alice Fong Yu was one of the schools featured during a one-day field trip offered to conference attendees. In September 2011, educators again convened in San Francisco for the Engaging Our Grounds: International Green Schoolyard Conference. Conference attendees stopped at Alice Fong Yu to tour our garden and to learn about our garden curriculum.

Our teachers are actively involved in professional development activities that allow them to share our best practices with others. Ms. Lisa Ernst (sixth-grade social studies and science), Ms. Elaine Tam (sixth-grade mathematics), and Mr. Marc Williams (seventh-grade science) have been collaborating with local university researchers through the Strategic Education Research Partnership. Several teachers have also participated in the Yale National Initiative, which seeks to strengthen teaching in public schools. As a part of this initiative, our teachers authored curriculum units to share with other educators around the nation. Ms. Tam contributed a teaching unit on mathematics called "Rice to Feed the World - Estimations on Rice Consumption and Production," while Ms. Ernst authored a science unit called "Building Bridges in Earthquake Country: From the Past to the Present" and a unit that combines literature with technology called "Shakespeare on the Cell Phone: Texting Romance."

Our teachers also share our best practices through contributions to education publications. Our resource specialist program teacher, Mr. Robert Ruth, contributed an article, "A Checklist Approach to Reading Interventions," to the September 2011 issue of Education Week Teacher. In this article, Mr. Ruth describes his checklist approach to learning decoding skills. Since the article's publication, Mr. Ruth has provided details of his checklist approach to many educators around the nation who have requested copies of the checklist and supporting materials.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

At Alice Fong Yu, we believe that administrators, teachers and parents are all partners in educating our children. We communicate with our families in multiple ways. We send home a weekly bulletin that provides information in both English and Chinese. We publish a monthly newsletter that highlights topics ranging from student achievements to faculty spotlights to award-winning essays written by our students. We also host a website, <http://afypa.org/portal.php>, that includes an open forum for community members to share information with each other. We encourage families to provide feedback at any time so that we can continually improve our school based on community input, and in 2011, over 160 families participated in our Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Survey.

Throughout the school year we offer many opportunities for families to engage directly with teachers and administrators. We kick off the school year with Back-to-School Night, when classroom teachers present parents with an overview of the grade-level curriculum and expectations for the upcoming school year. We also hold two parent-teacher conferences during the school year. During these conferences, teachers review with parents the academic progress of students, including standards-based report cards and assessment results from the California Standards Tests (CST). In the spring semester, we host an Open House, when families can visit the classrooms and experience firsthand a sample of the classroom activities.

Finally, we host at least one Community Meeting during the school year to provide families with additional information ranging from the school budget to updates on program design.

For students who are identified as not meeting expected levels of performance, a Student Success Team consisting of the student, the parents, teachers and staff members meet regularly to develop an improvement plan for the student as well as to monitor the student's progress. We have found that early identification of students in need of supplemental instructional services along with close collaboration between the parents and teachers have been very effective in helping students to achieve their full potential.

Finally, our school community leadership teams consisting of parents, teachers and staff members, such as the School Site Council, the Parents Association, the English Learner Advisory Committee and the Black Student Union, each meet regularly to review school issues. These meetings are also forums for administrators and teachers to share with parents the latest classroom strategies, such as restorative practices and the use of core curriculum standards.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

At Alice Fong Yu School (AFY), our instructional philosophy is to ensure that every child meets or exceeds proficiency standards in all curriculum areas. Our curriculum is aligned with the California State Standards. Moreover, many aspects of our program design are unique, strongly motivated, and highly innovative. AFY's curriculum supports college and career readiness by preparing students to be caring, responsible, competent citizens with global perspectives and English-Chinese bilingual skills. Foreign Language – AFY offers the unique opportunity for every student to be immersed in the Chinese language and culture. All students begin learning Chinese in Kindergarten with eighty percent of the instruction time in Chinese. The instruction time gradually shifts to fifty percent Chinese and fifty percent English by Fourth Grade. The middle-school students take one period in Cantonese and one period in Mandarin, and Eighth Graders participate in a two-week study tour in China.

Reading/English Language Arts (R/ELA) – The curriculum is based on Houghton Mifflin and customized based on the needs of students. Students have many opportunities to apply their skills and foster a love of reading. All students are engaged in at least sixty minutes of directed R/ELA instruction every day. English learners receive an additional thirty minutes of targeted instruction. Gifted and Talented students receive differentiated instruction and independent projects to provide additional challenges.

Mathematics – Elementary students learn Math in Chinese. Despite learning Math in a second language, our elementary students test extraordinarily well in benchmark assessments administered in English. The curriculum is based on Everyday Math and Glencoe, and we supplement these materials by requiring students to engage in problem solving, mental math exercises, and group work to apply their knowledge and skills.

Science – Our curriculum is based on FOSS. Students engage in hands-on activities in the classrooms, compiling data in journals and sharing information with peers. All students visit the school garden, an outdoor education space where students learn about the sciences and experience it with all their senses. The Seventh and Eighth Grades participate in semester-long projects where they apply the scientific method and present their projects at our annual Science Fair.

Social Studies – Our curriculum is based on California State Standards and teachers supplement the core curriculum with customized thematic units. Third Graders take monthly field trips to learn about local communities, and beginning in Fourth Grade, students can participate in the Student Council which includes electing student representatives and raising money for worthy causes.

Visual/Performing Arts – At the lower grade levels, art activities, including painting and ceramics, are incorporated into the classroom curriculum. Students develop an appreciation for music early on through field trips to the San Francisco Symphony. AFY offers a strong music program where students can participate in the orchestra, band or choir. After school, we also offer Chinese dance, percussion, zither and piano classes.

Physical Education (PE)/Health/Nutrition – At AFY, we encourage our students to lead active lifestyles and we teach our students sportsmanship and healthy eating habits. Elementary-school students participate in one hundred minutes of PE every week, and middle-school students participate in fifty minutes of PE every day. AFY advocates monthly “Healthy School” themes such as anti-tobacco. Health and nutrition are also taught in the school garden where students grow and eat their own fruits and vegetables.

Technology – Technology is integrated throughout our curriculum. Many thematic units incorporate the use of computers or other technologies. For example, one of our teachers created a unit that combines literature with technology called “Shakespeare on the Cell Phone: Texting Romance.” Students are also exposed to Green technology through our teaching garden, which features a rainwater catchment cistern and various composting systems.

2. Reading/English:

Established theory points to reading comprehension as the gateway to success in content areas. At AFY, there is a dual reading curriculum, one in English and one in Chinese. Despite the clear differences between the two languages in the ways that they are each written and read, there are also major similarities that we use to capture and enhance the students’ abilities through immersion instruction. Reading in English begins with the ability to decode. Learning to read is the focus in Kindergarten, First and Second Grades, and reading to learn is the focus for Third and above. We use the District’s adopted English reading program, Houghton Mifflin, as our foundation. The instructional methods include language experience reading, guided reading, and tiered reading strategies that focus on comprehension. Vocabulary development and content literacy are the cornerstones of the reading program in grades Five and up. Reading for meaning is essential in order for students to develop a joy for reading.

Beginning in the school year 2011-12, SFUSD implemented the Common Learning Assessments program model as a tool to measure the students’ level of achievement at a given point. Students are assessed three times per year and teachers use the results of these assessments to monitor the students’ progress and identify the areas of need for re-teaching and learning. When needed, students performing below their own grade level are assigned to a Response to Intervention (RTI) program. The Resource Specialist Program teacher manages and oversees this program to make sure that the safety net is working for all struggling students.

Furthermore, our many students performing above grade level have opportunities to pursue their interests through reading fiction and non-fiction materials in all subject areas. They can also help younger students in the peer tutoring program. Reading to younger students and helping them with English homework is an excellent way to develop student leadership skills at the same time.

At AFY, students learn how to read in Chinese as they learn how to read in English. Chinese is a non-alphabetical, tonal language with a different writing system. Reading in Chinese begins in Kindergarten from single characters (words) to simple sentences. Learning the meanings of the radicals and using

contextual clues are the key strategies in Chinese reading, in a way very similar to the reading of English.

3. Mathematics:

At AFY, we approach Mathematics with a focus on the mastery of authentic problem solving. We believe in building a solid foundation in the basic skills, but at the same time, preparing students to use math to solve practical problems found in the real world. In an immersion setting, all our elementary students learn math in Chinese.

In alignment with the immersion principles, this is another content area that our students are learning in the target language. Based on our assessment results, our students are able to transfer the concepts learned between the two languages. In addition to the District-adopted texts of Everyday Math in the elementary school, the teachers translate and create materials that are in Chinese as well. There is a correlation between the Chinese language and the common numbering systems and this might be a contributing factor to the demonstrated success of our students who learn math in Chinese. For example, the words for ten, twenty, thirty in Chinese are “two tens, three tens, three tens.”

Due to the fact that we have a K-8 grade span, we can provide opportunities for students to apply their math skills over a protracted period of their lives. At the elementary level, the students apply their math skills when they work and learn in the school garden, while working in the school store, and when they construct graphs and charts using real data. In the middle school, Seventh and Eighth Grade students participate in Science projects annually in which they need to integrate math and science concepts and skills. In the Eighth Grade, understanding and applying mathematics is an essential part of learning Physical Science.

As a K-8 school, we have the advantage of time, and the responsibility to make sure that our students are ready for high school when they leave AFY. Over 95% of our graduates are able to take courses beyond Algebra during their Freshman year in high school. Beginning this year, all SFUSD schools are involved in the implementation of Common Core Standards. We also use the Common Learning Assessments (CLA) to monitor the progress of our students. AFY is also one of the schools that are utilizing Educational Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY) as an intervention program to differentiate instruction. EPGY is an online program in which students can work at their assessed level, accessing the program both in and out of school.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Social Studies – Student Leadership and Restorative Practice: The development of student leadership is an essential part of our curriculum at AFY. Restorative practice is an approach that SFUSD has adopted since 2010 as an alternative way to resolve conflicts in school. We are using these two important tools interactively to create a productive, caring and positive school climate to achieve our mission of preparing our students to be caring, responsible and competent citizens.

Our student leadership recruitment and training begins in the Fourth Grade. It is comprised of elected student representatives to the Student Council, students who are trained as Peer Mediators, and student representatives of the Black Student Union (BSU). Each of these groups is facilitated by at least one staff advisor. There are two student councils at our school, an Elementary Council representing students in the Fourth and Fifth grades and a Middle School Council representing students in the middle school (Grades 6-8). The student councils meet once a week with an agenda focused on student activities, school issues, and service projects. Student leaders also make presentations at our weekly morning assemblies and speak at public meetings when the opportunities arise. The Peer Mediators work during

lunchtime to help resolve conflicts whenever they occur. They also meet bimonthly with the advisors for ongoing training. All student leaders attend an annual student leadership workshop in the fall where they learn their roles and responsibilities, meet each other, and share their own ideas of leadership.

We are formally implementing the restorative practice approach beginning this school year. The teachers use the circle activity to build community within the classroom. Teams of teachers are attending the centralized training to get a first-hand experience of the process. The approach centers on the concept of “repairing the harm done” by understanding the impact of the harm and how it affects all parties involved. For the past few months, teachers have commented on how the circle activity provides an avenue for students to express themselves, practice active listening, and as a result, create a better understanding in the classrooms. At AFY, in addition to providing a challenging and rigorous curriculum in academics, we strive to empower the students to help each other to create a caring learning environment for the success of all students.

5. Instructional Methods:

AFY is a Chinese immersion school serving a diverse population of students with a focus on teaching Chinese language and culture through the content areas. We have a significant number of English learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Our guiding principle is to hold high expectations for all students and provide support systems so all students can reach their individual potential. All subjects are taught in Chinese from Grades Kindergarten through Three, with eighty percent of the instructional day in Chinese and the remainder in English. For Grades Four and Five, the instructional day becomes fifty–fifty. Students continue to take two courses in Chinese in middle school, with most of the day in English. The separation of languages is crucial in the immersion classroom, with the teachers strictly adhering to and enforcing the speaking of the target language throughout the class period.

Differentiated instruction both in and out of the classrooms is central to the work of all teachers. In the classrooms, teachers provide one-on-one help as well as small group instruction. Scaffolding the learning practices so that all students can reach the intended learning objectives is key to providing equal access. Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) is integrated into the curriculum. Teachers provide differentiated instruction to GATE students via small group projects, acceleration, and a rigorous accountability standard.

At the beginning of the school year, the staff reviews data from the California Standards Tests to identify the specific gaps and needs. Using the Care Team structure (comprised of the principal, counselor, Special Education teacher and support staff), we provide ongoing monitoring for identified students. The team meets once a week to review the progress of the students and discuss appropriate intervention strategies. These strategies include the Student Success Team process, before and after school tutoring, peer tutoring, support services to families, and social skills groups. The special education teacher works closely with the classroom teachers to provide support to identified students.

In most cases, students are pulled out for a set amount of time per week in order to work on the targeted areas. Technology is also used to support instruction. For example, using computer-based learning such as Read Naturally and Education Program for Gifted Youth, students are guided to work at their level and at their own pace. Our professional development activities provide the structure for the teachers to share best practices to support student learning.

6. Professional Development:

We are all lifelong learners. Professional development at AFY is based on the formal and informal data

of student achievement, the content and performance standards of the curriculum, and the reflections of the staff. The purpose of professional development activities is to provide opportunities for teachers and staff to come together and share ideas, brainstorm possible strategies for challenging situations, and discuss lesson designs. The agendas focus on activities that stimulate dialogue and thinking among the teachers. The topics range from analyzing student writing samples, to reading relevant articles, to planning with grade-level team members.

There are two strands of onsite professional development activities. One is focused on English Language Arts, and the other is on Chinese Language Arts and Math. Meetings are scheduled six to seven times a year for each strand. The Principal and instructional team leaders mutually set the meeting agendas. At these meetings, we review the curriculum and ensure that it is aligned with academic standards at each grade level and for each subject area. The application of the knowledge learned at these meetings translates to improved student performance over time.

All our Chinese component teachers also participate in the District-wide professional development meetings in the area of Chinese language arts. One elementary and one middle school teacher make up the math common core standards training team. Three middle school teachers participate in the Stanford sponsored Strategic Education Research Program (SERP) in which university professors and teachers come together and discuss lesson and assessment designs. In the area of health and student support services, teacher representatives attend District sponsored meetings and disseminate information to the entire staff.

At AFY, we believe that teachers and staff members are part of a team that is responsible for the success of every student at our school. We view professional development as a team-building exercise where the teachers and staff members have time to build trust, align expectations, and collaborate. Through professional development, the teachers also become equipped with the competencies, tools and resources to be even more effective in the classroom. The high academic performance of our students reflects the effectiveness of our teachers and the positive impact of the professional development activities on student achievement.

7. School Leadership:

Leading a school is akin to an orchestra playing a symphony. At AFY, the principal serves as the conductor. The teachers, staff, and parents play instrumental roles. The strength of the ensemble comes from the mastery of the individual players. The music is student achievement.

Holding the baton, the principal sets the tempo by establishing reachable goals and clear expectations, provides support frameworks, and maintains accountability. The first chair consists of teams organized by grade level, content area, and support services. Within each grade-level team, the planning work is divided among the teachers to ensure consistency and alignment within a grade. For each of the grades Kindergarten through Three, there are three teachers. Each teacher is responsible for planning of one core subject. At the weekly grade-level meetings, the team shares collective and individual plans so that students across classrooms are provided the same lesson expectations and activities. For grades Four through Eight, teachers are grouped by content area. The melody builds.

Second chair is the school-wide Care Team. This team is comprised of the Principal, the School Counselor, the Elementary Advisor, the Learning Support Professional, the Special Education Teacher and the Special Education Paraprofessional. Each member is responsible for one or two grade levels, and the team is responsible for keeping track of the students' academic, social, and emotional progress. The team meets weekly to discuss support services for identified targeted students. The piece finds its

bridge.

The third chair consists of two governing bodies. One is the School Site Council (SSC) and the other is the AFY Parents Association (AFYPA). The SSC oversees the school budget and program implementation. The AFYPA supports the school mission by raising funds to supplement enrichment programs. Committees within the SSC are the English Language Advisory Committee and Black Student Union. The committees under the AFYPA include fundraising, cultural exchange program, garden, Chinese New Year parade, technology, website, and newsletter. Policies, programs, and the use of resources are first proposed and discussed at a committee level. Recommendations are then brought to the SSC or AFYPA for approval. The committees are composed of staff representatives and parents. The principal serves on the SSC and AFYPA. Each section moves in time.

At AFY, the principal, teachers and parent leaders work harmoniously, building on our practices, and focusing on supporting and inspiring all our students in reaching their full potential. The music resonates throughout our halls.