

How Learning Best Occurs

The founders of JLPAA understand that learning best occurs when the school has:

- " A clear and shared focus
- " High standards and expectations for all students
- " Effective school leadership
- " High levels of collaboration and communication
- " A curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards
- " Academic content integrated with the arts
- " Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching
- " Focused professional development; and
- " A high level of family and community involvement.

Learning best occurs when all stakeholders have a clear and shared focus. All stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and parents have a unity of purpose and a consensus on values, show consistency of practice in adapting particular approaches to instruction, offer academic and behavior expectations that have a positive impact on the progress of students, and enjoy a spirit of collegiality and collaboration. Staff members work to ensure student achievement, building on individual strengths and learning styles, and providing interventions where indicated to improve student learning and achievement.

Learning best occurs when all Charter School staff members have high standards and expectations for all students. This involves all staff members taking an active role in supporting and monitoring students' progress in their academic standards, communicating expectations about grade level achievement levels for all students, promoting a professional dialogue in response to evidence-based research on what works for students with learning difficulties, and directing and supporting teachers to recognize and support diversity in student learning to ensure that all students experience success in academics and meet challenging learning outcomes in academic, creative, and other pursuits.

Learning best occurs when there is effective school leadership. Effective instructional and administrative leaders must have leadership qualities and a vision consistent with the school's

mission and educational program. Effective leaders proactively nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth.

Learning best occurs when there is a high level of collaboration and communication between all stakeholders. There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. Everybody is involved and connected to each other, including parents and members of the community, to identify problems and work on solutions.

Learning best occurs when the educational program offers a curriculum, instruction, and assessments aligned with state standards. The planned and actual curriculum is aligned with the California Content Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, and **English Language Development** standards. Research-based teaching strategies and materials are used. Staff members understand the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure, and how student work is evaluated.

Learning best occurs when academic content is integrated with the arts. Research has shown that the arts can be an effective vehicle for developing skills and habits that will benefit students throughout their academic, professional, and personal lives. Arts education has been shown to improve the ability to approach all subjects more analytically and creatively, eliciting higher levels of engagement in classroom learning and therefore increased academic achievement.

Learning best occurs when all staff members use frequent monitoring of learning and teaching. Teachers monitor student progress frequently, and alter instructional methods or provide specific interventions as needed to ensure students are successful. More support and instructional time is provided, either during the school day or outside normal school hours. Assessment results are used to focus and improve instructional programs.

Learning best occurs when staff members are provided focused professional development. A strong emphasis is placed on training staff in areas of most need. Feedback from learning and teaching focuses extensive and ongoing professional development. The support is also aligned with the Charter School's vision or mission.

Learning best occurs when there is a high level of family and community involvement in the Charter School. There is a sense that all have a responsibility to educate students, not just teachers and school staff. Families, businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort. Research documents that students are successful when they are supported by caring adults and when school and homework as partners to set high expectations for student behavior and achievement (*Brandt, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990*). Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's

education. Parents and teachers are partners, nurturing each child's social, emotional, and physical well-being and development, thus empowering every child for learning success. The Charter School offers a process for parent empowerment and leadership development to ensure parents have a voice at all levels of the Charter School decision-making.