



News Release

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Baldwin Park Unified Chosen for English Learner Arts Program

BALDWIN PARK – Baldwin Park will work with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) on a five-year effort to use the arts to support instruction of English learners, building on successes in a similar county program that integrates arts across all elementary curriculum.

Teaching English Learners through the Arts (TELA) aims to develop the skills of L.A. County educators, focusing on language acquisition support, academic achievement, and social and emotional learning for elementary school students with limited English skills.

The LACOE program is funded through a \$2.75 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The program will include six other school districts and a charter school.

“Baldwin Park Unified was chosen because of our past work on arts instruction and our commitment to English learners,” Baldwin Park Unified Superintendent Dr. Froilan N. Mendoza said. “We are honored to expand our partnership with LACOE in the coming five years and look forward to the benefits our students will receive.”

The district, where about 1 in 5 students is an English learner, is a pioneer in English learner instruction, including dual-language immersion programs. The TELA program will be conducted at Geddes and Heath elementary schools – both dual-language campuses where English learners represent nearly half of all students.

“The arts will be a great addition to what we are already doing,” Geddes Principal Irene Garcia said. “Research shows that discussion of the arts engages more of the brain, prompting higher-level thinking that targets what we seek in 21st century learning: collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity.”

Under the program, English Learners will have the opportunity to learn concepts in math, science, language arts and social studies that integrate visual and performing arts concepts. The intriguing topics also serve to deliver academic vocabulary to English Learners, boosting the rigor of instruction and strengthening their grasp of English.

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News Release

TELA is part of a larger effort county effort to integrate arts into core topics called Technology Enhanced Arts Learning (TEAL). Geddes and Heath piloted the program for Baldwin Park Unified. A teacher from each campus led the effort, learning from county trainers and coaching their peers in TEAL techniques; together, the two schools brought the program to 500 students in 2016-17.

For TELA, Baldwin Park Unified educators will meet with the county in the next few weeks to map out their approach to the program. A key component will be training eight teachers – four from each of the schools – in ways to mesh arts into English learner instruction, building on lessons learned during the TEAL pilot. In turn, those teachers will each coach 16 teachers at each campus.

PHOTOS

BPUSD_ART_1: Geddes Elementary fourth-grader Emily Torres stands next to her interpretation of a Chagall self-portrait displayed with a poem she wrote from the perspective of a paintbrush during an April 12 art gallery celebrating a yearlong effort to integrate arts into core curriculum at two Baldwin Park Unified elementary schools.

BPUSD_ART_2: Heath Elementary sixth-graders Damian Alcala recites a poem about a lion while partner Adrian Ortiz provides a beat at an April 12 art gallery celebrating a yearlong effort to integrate arts into core curriculum at two Baldwin Park Unified elementary schools.

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