PACIFIC POINT
ACADEMY

## Instructional Approach

Pacific Point Academy program is rooted in delivering brain-based and developmentally appropriate instruction that addresses the whole child's academic and emotional needs. Using the Brain Targeted Teaching Model (Hardiman, 2012) as a framework, we have shaped our program around 6 brain-based targets that help create an optimal learning environment for our students.

### Target One: Emotional Climate

We know that in order to learn, students must be in the right emotional state. This includes starting the day with mindfulness and yogic practices to help students ground and prepare for learning. Each class is started with a check-in and students are encouraged to use the chill zone, or other regulation strategies, to help get their minds and body ready to learn. Classroom instruction and the environment are organized around providing a safe, engaging emotional climate.

1. Teachers model and encourage a growth mindset in students.
2. Teachers model, review, and consistently reinforce school-wide procedures and expectations.
3. Teachers, with the support of the Student Support Services Team, maintain positive interactions with students and families.
4. Teachers provide students opportunities to celebrate their strengths, give input on learning activities, and allow a safe place for curiosity and mistakes.
5. All students are provided leadership opportunities through student council and have a voice in the running of the school.
6. Elective classes us art as a medium of student expression and identity formation.

### Target Two: Physical Environment

We know that students are greatly impacted by the state of their physical environment. Sound, lighting, and scent are used to create a calm learning environment.

1. Teachers maintain a clean, organized environment that students can easily navigate free of clutter.
2. Teachers use natural lighting, soft scents, and sounds to help student regulate and attend.
3. Teachers use clear, visual displays to support learning, organization, and expectations.

### Target Three: Learning Design

While many children are able to make connections implicitly, research shows that learning is optimized when thinking is made visible. It's for this reason, that we organize our units around essential questions, thematically across subjects, with overarching learning objectives and concepts. Goals and concepts are posted in the form of concept maps that show how objectives are connected to the bigger concepts. Teachers support students in making connections within units and between.

*Organization*

1. Teachers post the daily agenda and learning targets at the front of the class so students know what to expect.
2. Teachers gradually release responsibility for organization and assignment management to students.
3. Teachers use Interactive Notebooks to help students organize their thinking.
4. Teachers explicitly teach students organization, note taking, and study skills.

1. Teachers use instructional routines (e.g., lesson structure, rubrics, feedback routines, work submission and grading) that encourage students to work independently.
2. Teachers and students work together to organize big ideas, make connections, and track progress towards learning goals throughout the lesson and unit.
3. Teachers use an I do, we do, you do w/immediate feedback to support skill development.
4. Teachers use flexible grouping and projects to provide students opportunities to apply their learning.
5. Instruction strategies and scaffolds are used to support student differences in reading, writing, language, memory, and attention.
6. Students are assigned meaningful work that can be completed in a reasonable amount of time.
7. Students are provided opportunities throughout each unit to teach or present their learning to their peers.

## Target Four: Teaching for Mastery

The goal of learning is for students to build new knowledge, processes, and skills in order to better understand and navigate their world. During learning, students rely on their short-term, working, and long term memory systems to help store and retrieve information.

1. Teachers provide multiple opportunities to retrieve and manipulate prior knowledge.
2. Teachers provide opportunities to use previously learned information in novel ways across units.
3. Teachers use multisensory instruction and differentiate by process OR product.
4. Grades are used to indicate a level of mastery on learning objectives.
5. Curriculum is organized to provide the time and opportunities for students to reach mastery on learning objectives.

## Target Five: Teaching for Application

"Lifelong learning best occurs when students are able to apply content, skills, and processes to tasks that require them to engage in higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills" (Brain Targeted Teaching, 2015). Using appropriate scaffolding, teachers guide students through performance-based activities that provide real world context.

1. Teachers provide context for learning information or skills (THE WHY).
2. Teachers provide opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in real world situations (HOW).
3. Teachers provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively on assignments that push students to be innovative.

## Target Six: Evaluating Learning

"Immediate feedback strengthens learning and memory patterns" (Brain Targeted Teaching). We focus on measuring the mastery of content knowledge and skills through the use of informal and formal assessments which provide both teacher and student opportunities to reflect on learning progress (e.g., projects, performance tasks, exhibitions, graphic organizers, standardized assessments, rubrics, and portfolios).

1. Teachers and the school use assessments to create curriculum, guide instruction, and help students understand: what they know, what they need to know, and how to get there.
2. Teachers and school use summative assessments to note student's level of mastery.

3. Teachers use diagnostic feedback to help students reflect on their mistakes and learn from them.
4. Students are expected to fix mistakes and finish all assigned work.
5. Students actively track their progress by maintaining a student portfolio that reflects their growth on learning objectives and across the school year.

## Assessment & Grading

### Our Philosophy

Our goal is to use assessment that is frequent and authentic to provide feedback to students in meaningful ways. Please grade work through written feedback, rubrics, and quantitative ratios. We tend to align more with a criterion referenced grading system.

### Grades and Assessments should:

1. **Promote a growth mindset**
2. **Help students understand how to improve**
3. **Help teachers reflect and guide instruction**


### How do we assess?

***Formative Assessments*** (Case Studies and Scenarios)

1. Daily (56 examples - Edutopia)
    a. At the start - Opening questions to assess prior-knowledge
    b. During - Independent work, class discussion, partner work
    c. At the end - Exit tickets
2. Throughout a unit
    a. Pre-tests at start of a lesson
    b. Performance tasks: hands on demonstration of learning
        i. ELA examples
            1. Essays
            2. Multi-step Projects that incorporate reading and writing skills
        ii. Math examples (Mathematical assessment, Illustrative math, YouCubed Assessment ideas)
            1. Partner work
            2. Real world scenarios
            3. Multi-step problems that apply understanding of concepts
    c. Quizzes, student generated problems and questions
3. ***Feedback is provided immediately and used to guide/change instruction***

***Summative Assessment:*** End of the unit

1. NWEA (only given in MAY)
2. End of Unit Tests
3. End of Unit Projects with oral and written demonstration of learning
4. Performance task measuring multiple skills

### Grading and providing feedback

1. What do we grade?
    a. Work that was done independently & is directly tied to learning targets
    b. Quizzes, Tests, Projects, Independent work, Performance Tasks, and Homework
2. When should we grade/give feedback?

   a. Throughout the lesson
   b. As soon as possible (within a day for small assignments, within a week for large assessments)
3. What kind of feedback should I give?
   a. **GOAL: Fluency and ACCURACY**
      i. Just marking answers as correct (X out of Y possible points)
      ii. Doesn't provide feedback as to why an answer is wrong
   b. **GOAL: Helping the child understand and fix their error**
      i. Mark correct answers (X out of Y possible points)
      ii. Indicate errors in thinking
      iii. Allow students to correct their work
   c. **GOAL: Help students understand how to reach their learning goals**
      i. Don't mark answers correct or incorrect (Diagnostic)
      ii. Tell students what they did well,
      iii. Tell students what they need to continue to work on,
      iv. Create a plan for how students will work on those challenges
   d. **GOAL: Provide clear criteria and allows you to grade multiple dimensions (beyond right or wrong) - Rubrics (example rubrics)**
      i. Determine what key components you want to assess
         1. Reasoning (how did they do the work)
         2. Accuracy (what was the final product)
         3. Application (how well did they apply what they learned)
         4. Connections (how well did they connect concepts)
         5. Soft-skills (focus, perseverance, grit, etc.)

**Types of Grades Given:**

***Standards-Based***

- **M -** Mastery (80% of higher)
- **P -** Progressing (70% - 80%)
- **NY -** Not Yet (Below 70%)

***Quantitative feedback*** (e.g., 9/15, 6/10, 85/100)

- Written or Verbal feedback
- Focus on patterns of strength and confusion (keep it simple)
- Ask questions - What do you mean by? I wonder what would happen if you tried Y instead?
- Clarify - I'm confused about X, can you explain?

***Self-Assessment & Peer Feedback***

- 2 Stars and 1 Wish: Highlight 2 things they liked and 1 area for improvement
- Tied to learning target:
- Use models: of STRONG and WEAK examples for students to evaluate