



Fireweed Academy Charter Renewal Application

KPBSD School Board · FY 2027



What sets Fireweed apart?

- Mission and Programming
- Self-Reliance | Cooperation | Creativity | Reasoning Ability | Personal Growth | Academic Achievement |
- Small Class Sizes with mixed and same grade level groupings
- Celebrating 30 Years! Established in 1997 - Thirty, Sturdy, and Thriving

Educational Differences Define Fireweed - Art and Humanities Focus

Projects and Place

Training and implementation of true
Project-Based Learning rooted in the
place we live, play, and work.

Theme Immersion

Subjects connect through meaningful
themes - Culture and Habitat

Socratic Practice

Student-led questions deepen
understanding, building skills to have
discourse respectfully

Celebrating Art

Our world needs creative thinkers.
Explicit art instruction, Violin, creativity
as a core learning outcome

Experiencing Community

Local experts, field trips, and
volunteerism make learning authentic
and connect students to their hoe

Restorative Practices

Dialogue repairs harm and builds
community

Since the Last Renewal...

- Adopted curricula such as CKLA, enVision, and PBL TEACH
- Deepened Homer-area partnerships - Schools, Homer Opus, Coastal Studies, Islands and Oceans, Bunnell Arts, Homer Council on the Arts...and many more
- Formalized “We Believe” statements
- Expanded agriculture: Community garden and student-kept chicken coop
- APC: Technology Policy, Principal Evaluation process aligned to AASB

Continue Blending Content and Themes

- Themes incorporating science and social studies in tangible ways
- Connect subjects through 'theme immersion'
- Cycle through eight themes in four years
 - Community/Roots, Communication/Conservation, Culture/Habitat, Structure/Cycles

...But WHY?

Why Art?

- Art is not a luxury!
- [Research](#) shows art integration creates well-rounded, well-prepared learners, and leaders

Why Art?

Skill Enhancement

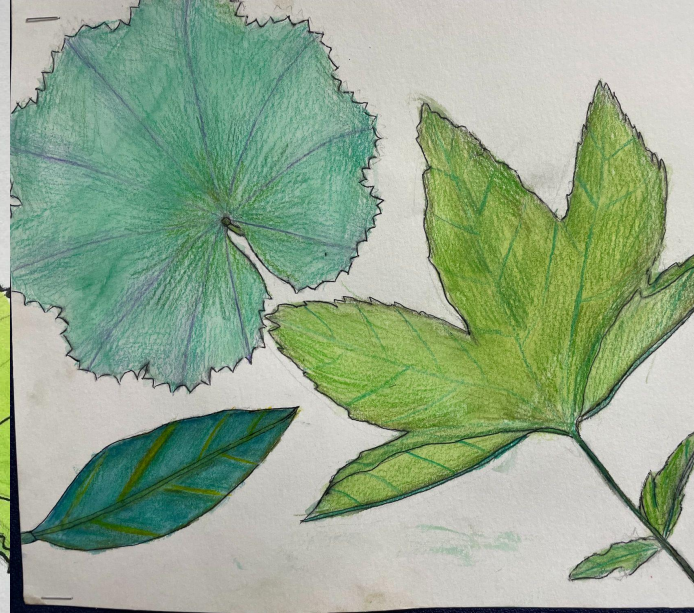
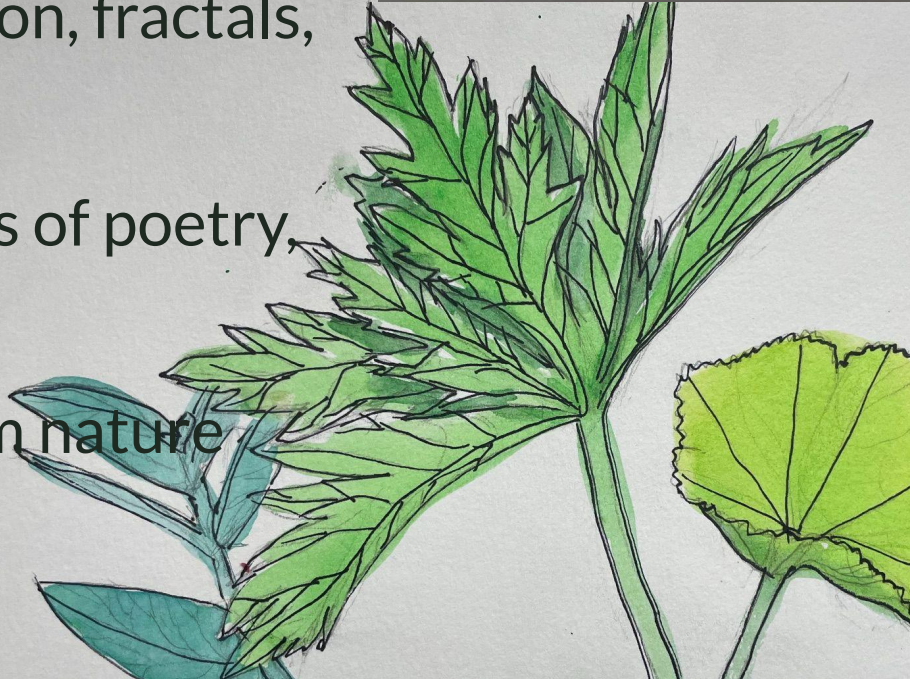
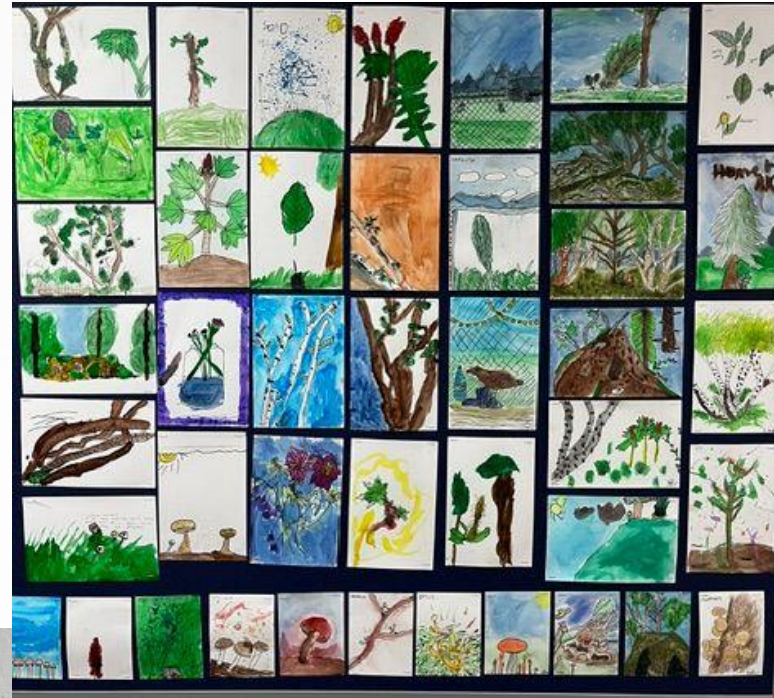
- Creative problem solving skills
- Fine Motor Work
- Spatial Awareness



Why Art?

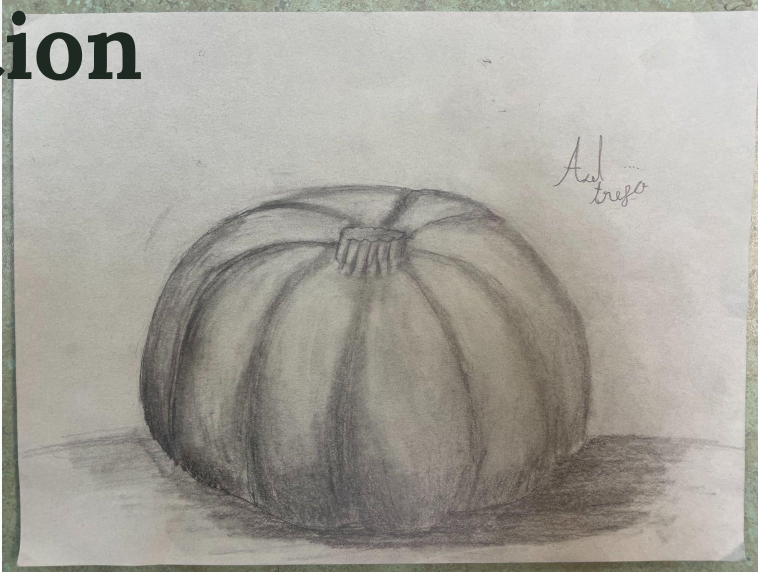
Cross-Curricular

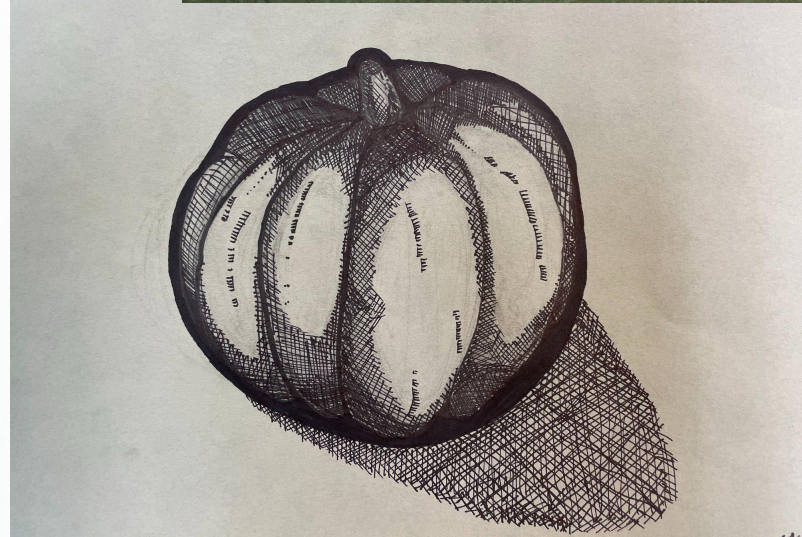
- Integrating art with other disciplines increases engagement
- Math - repetition, tessellation, fractals, geometry
- ELA - visual representations of poetry, illustrating *Don Quixote*
- Science - Observations from nature



Why Art?

Differentiation





Why Art?

Impact



Quotes from the community

Families:

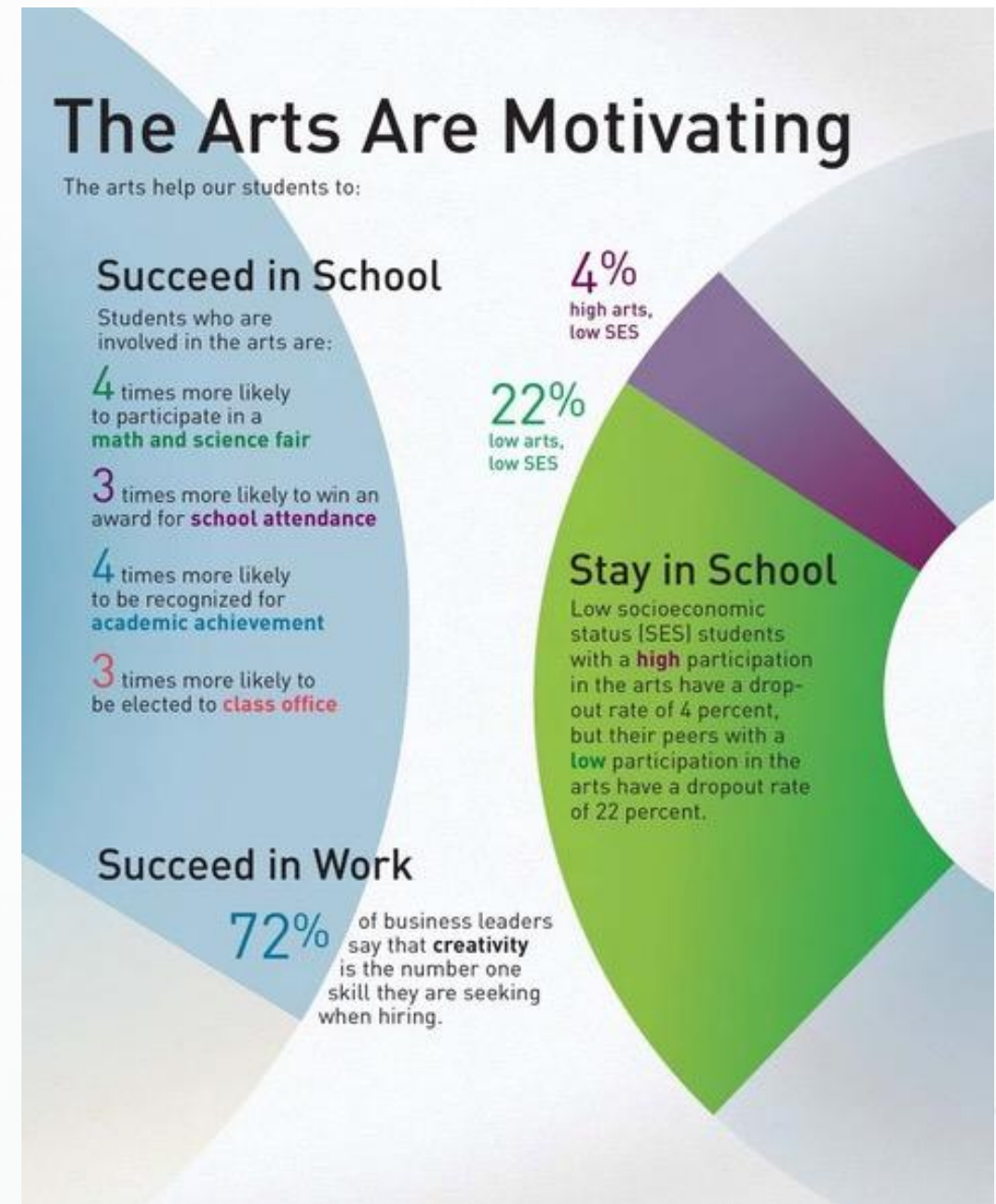
- “We wanted something different from the large, structured schools—something more creative and connected.”
- “It feels like a relief now—there’s structure, and teachers have real resources to support learning.”
- “It’s been great for kids to step into leadership roles and learn how to help younger students.”



Why Art?

Long-term Success

- Supports all learners
- Advocating for support across the district
- Shared KPBSD goals



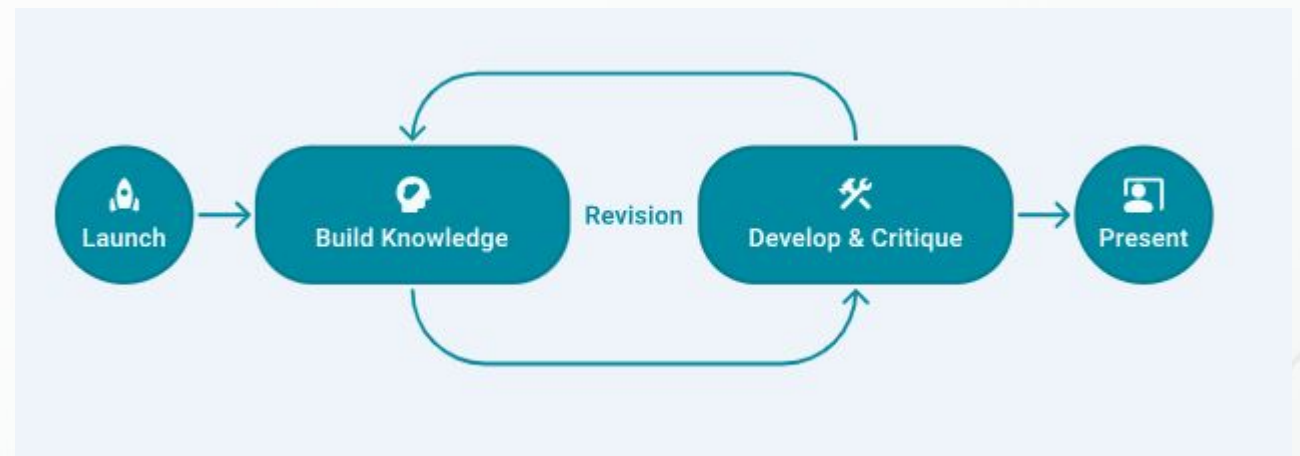
Why Humanities?

- Humanities are the broad, interlinked areas of learning which enable children to understand human lives and cultures.*
- At Fireweed, humanities include Project-Based Learning, SEL, Socratic Seminars, Increased time outdoors,
- “A child needs to learn through the whole body and all senses; through touching, and smelling, and feeling, and hearing, and seeing. Head, heart and hands; knowledge with experience. Knowledge without experience is only half the story.”

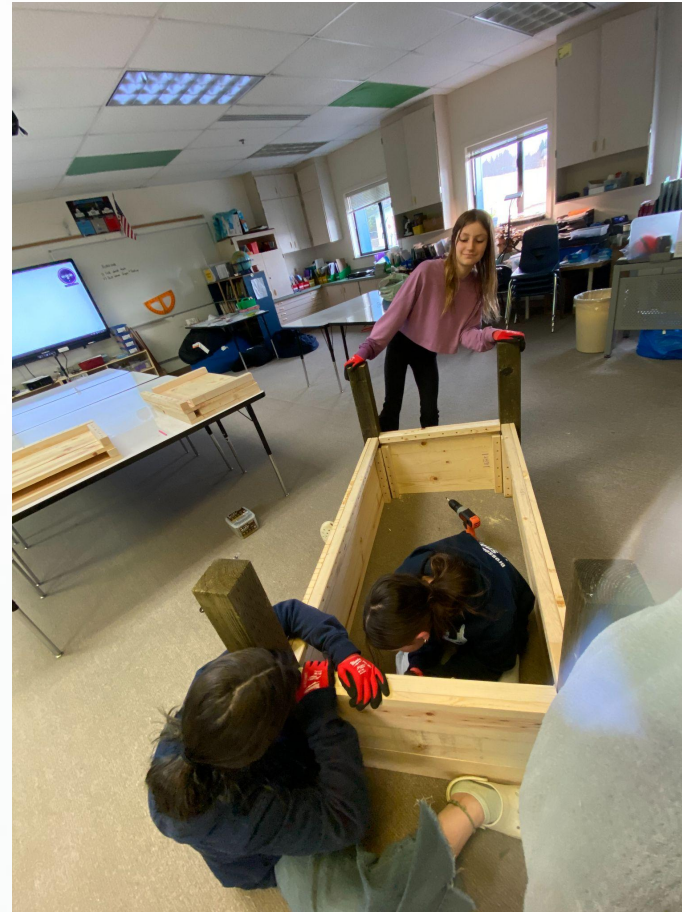
○ [Satish Kumar](#)

Why Project-Based Learning?

- Teaching Method - not an afterthought.
- Rooted in a 'Driving Question'
 - “How has our community changed over time, and why does that change matter today?”
- Kept rigorous through Milestones
- Assessing through Deliverables and Public Presentations
- Reflecting on our experience
- 1/3 of BFW instructional time is spent in projects.



Why Project-Based Learning?



Quotes from Students:

“I can think critically about a problem”

“I still don’t like presenting but I am better at it than I was”

“I can think critically about a problem”

“I can explore the internet safely and find better resources”

Quotes from Families:

“My kid is proud of the work they bring home—it feels like they’re really engaged in what they’re learning.”

“I notice my kiddo talks about PBL and themes. He feels engaged with that type of learning, and is proud to show his work when he brings it home. Feels like academically it is working too.”

“We wanted something different from the large, structured schools—something more creative and connected.”

Why Social Emotional Learning?

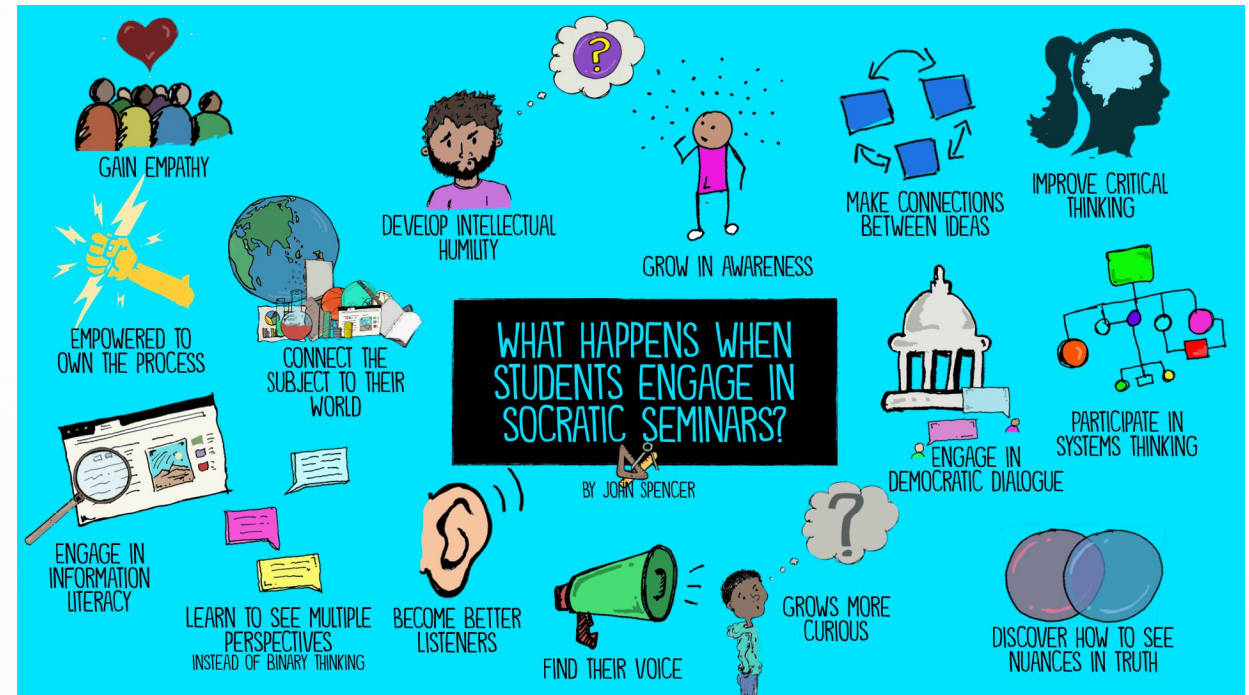
- More than just the 5 Domains
(Self-awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision Making, Social Awareness)
- Increases achievement, decreases emotional distress and problem behaviors, improves prosocial behaviors and attitudes about school/self/peers.*



*<https://casel.org/research/> | [Meta-Analysis Summary](#)

Why Socratic Seminars?

- Student Centered Discourse
- Teaching the value of different opinions, rooted in text, and sharing your perspective
- Circle Up, No Hand Raising, Cite Your Evidence, Share Respectfully
- *Peter Rabbit* and *Among the Hidden*



[More Info](#) | [Research](#)

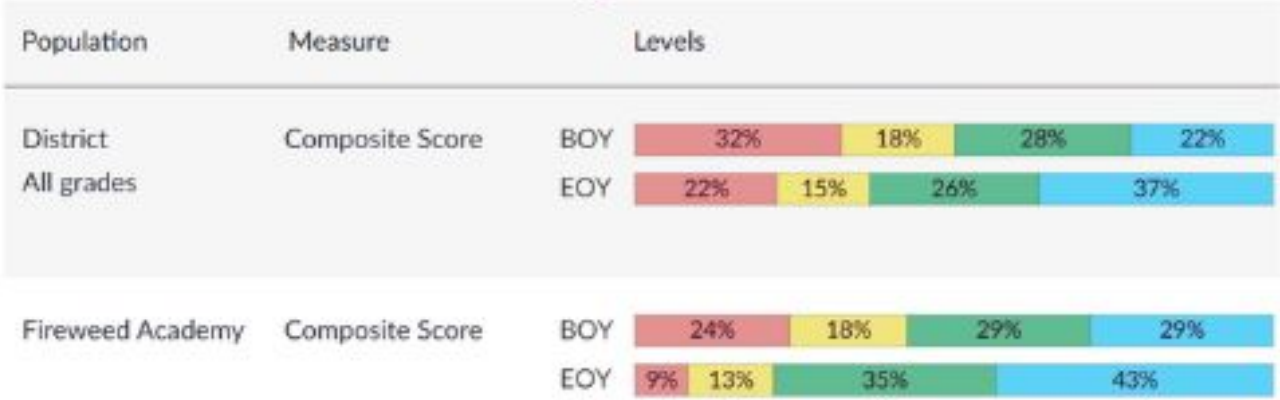
Why Spend More Time Outdoors?

- Health, Social Skills, Increased Academic Performance
- Hattie Effect Score = 0.43
- Research
- Connection with place



Data Delivered

mCLASS (Reading)



Look at that GROWTH!



Science Assessment

Alaska Department of Education
& Early Development

School Summary Report

District Name: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

School Name: Fireweed Academy

Subject: Science

Test Date: Spring 2026

Achievement Level Summary

Group	# Tested	% in Each Level			
School	15	6.7	6.7	66.7	20.0
District	1,492	31.8	24.5	31.6	12.2
State	21,123	38.4	23.9	27.4	10.3

AK Star (State Testing)



2026 School Summary Report - English Language Arts
District: KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
School: FIREWEED ACADEMY

	Students Tested	Mean Score	Median Score	% of Students by Achievement Level			
FIREWEED ACADEMY	57	1594	1597	18%	32%	37%	14%
KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,715	1594	1590	31%	31%	27%	11%
ALASKA	53,514	1589	1585	38%	29%	23%	9%

Achievement Levels

Overall scores on the AK STAR Assessments are divided into four achievement levels: Advanced, Proficient, Approaching Proficient, and Needs Support.



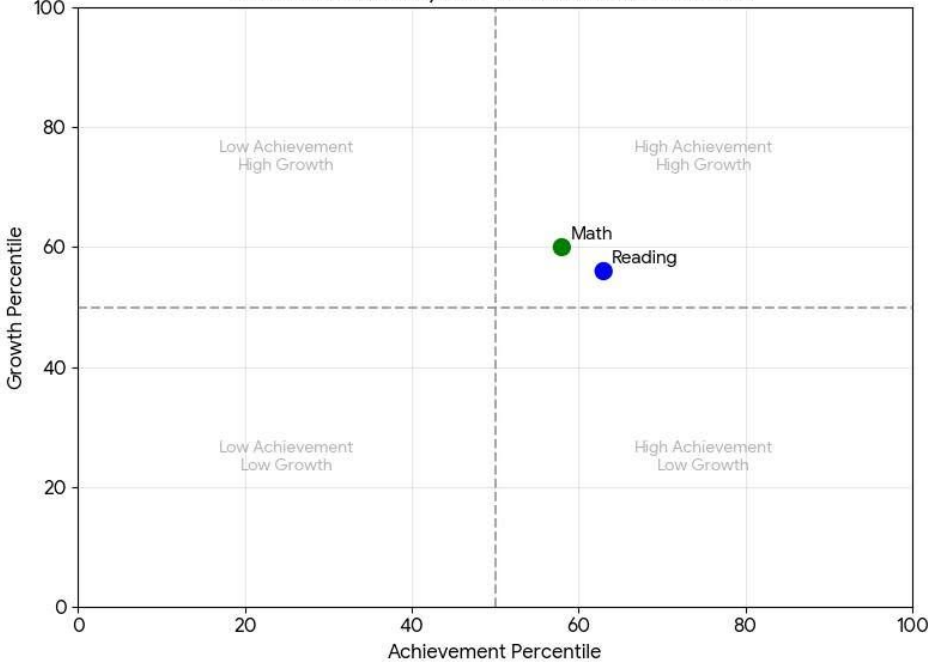
Scale Scores

The number of students and median and mean scale scores are reported at the grade level in the table below. The median is the middle score in the ordered list of all students' scale scores. The mean is the average scale score by grade.

For scale score ranges of all achievement levels, visit this page or scan the QR code:
education.alaska.gov/assessments/achievement



Fireweed Academy MAP Growth vs Achievement



Data Delivered - Climate and Culture

- “I care about my community” = 96%
- “I think it is important to participate in community service” = 92%
- “I feel safe at school” = 92%
- **“I know what I’m good at” = “100%”**
- “Students recognize and compliment others’ accomplishments” = 100%
- “I can finish tasks, even if they are tough” = 100%
- “I can find many ways around problems” = 100%

Family Quote: **“It felt comfortable right away—soft, cozy, and welcoming. More like a vibrant community than a rigid, box school.”**

**Our mission continues...thank you for
your support!**

