

## **Dr. Theodore T. Alexander, Jr. Science Center School Overview**

**Grades Served:** Kindergarten – Grade 5

**Number of Students:** 606

**Location Address:** 3737 South Figueroa St., Los Angeles, CA 90007

### **Description of Philosophy**

Science Center-Style Learning moves fluidly between providing students with opportunities for informal, interest-based learning experiences and more formal activities that are teacher-directed and content specific. By combining best practices from both the informal and formal learning paradigms, students will engage in a rigorous, standards-based educational program emphasizing projects to encourage curiosity, inquiry, and anchor knowledge to real world contexts. Technology and social skills essential for collaboration and teamwork are integrated into student learning experiences, and students learn to communicate clearly, think creatively, and self manage as they prepare for the secondary stage of their educational career.

The Alexander Science Center School emphasizes:

- the study of science and mathematics as the school's curricular foundation
- the use of technology
- learner-centered and activity- and inquiry-based learning throughout all instruction
- the construction of exhibits, projects and experiments as an important tool for learning
- its role as an experimental school
- the professional development of teachers and teachers-in-training
- developing parent training programs to encourage participation in the school and to reinforce habits of life long learning in their children

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the school will be to educate students to be productively involved in a highly technical society by creating a neighborhood school where students learn through active participation in an integrated curriculum that focuses on science, mathematics and the use of technology. The partnership between the California Science Center and the Los Angeles Unified School District will create a model for excellence through the:

- Creation of a unique learning environment for a culturally diverse population that integrates both formal and informal learning and builds the interconnection between classroom experiences and students' view of the world and life-long learning.
- Involvement of family, community business and industry, and professional organizations to create a comprehensive and integrated system of support for students that build a heightened sense of discovery and nurtures self-esteem. Parents will be equipped to provide mentorship, guidance and academic intervention.

## **Progress**

The Alexander Science Center School has had notable success in working toward achieving its vision as outlined in the initial 5 year charter. We have developed a nine member Governance and Operating Committee made up of three Science Center personnel, three District personnel, a parent representative, a classified staff and a UTLA representative. This Committee provides oversight for the School's development, instructional program and overall direction. While we continue a rigorous process of data-based self-reflection in partnership with the LAUSD charter division office to continue our progress, we are proud of what we have achieved in our first 5 years.

A unique asset of the Alexander Science Center School is its access to some of the best resources for science education in the Nation. The partnership between the Alexander Science Center School and the California Science Center provides exceptional opportunities for both students and faculty. Alexander Science Center School teachers work with the California Science Center's curatorial staff, expert education staff, and District teachers-in-residence to develop standards and researched-based curriculum and programs for implementation in the classroom. On-going professional development opportunities work toward an understanding of best practice in science education and other ways to access Exposition Park resources to improve opportunities for student learning.

Students expand their classroom based instructional program in their use of the Science Center facilities (e.g., the Big Lab and the California Science Center Exhibit Halls). The California Science Center has also worked to facilitate science learning trips to Catalina Island and the Santa Monica Mountains for all Science Center Students at designated grade levels in order to broaden student exposure.

An original intent of the Alexander Science Center School is to become a model of collaborative engagement between families, teachers, and community-based organizations. Toward this goal, Science Center families have access to activities and resources provided by the California Science Center aimed at extending student learning opportunities beyond the school day. Families receive free membership to the California Science Center and are able to participate in a myriad of Science Center programs and activities in the Science Center Exhibit Halls and the Big Lab. As we continue to develop this aspect of our program, we look forward to continuing our family educational programs and providing even better opportunities for parent input and engagement in their child[ren]'s education.

The Alexander Science Center School will continue to nurture and develop its partnerships with the University of Southern California and other Exposition Park entities in its next charter term as these partnerships pertain to the accomplishment of the School's mission and vision statements.