



**San Lorenzo Unified
School District**

East Bay Arts High School

Past, Present and Future

San Lorenzo Unified School District (SLZUSD) established East Bay Arts (EBA) High School in 2006 as a highly welcoming, arts-centered learning community to complement other interest areas served by Small Learning Communities at Arroyo and San Lorenzo high schools.

East Bay Arts is co-located on the SLzHS campus, but this fall the district's Board of Education is expected to consider options for making it a standalone school site in the near future, with the goal of attracting more students from within SLZUSD and neighboring communities. EBA would remain a high school but could evolve to serve students in grades 6-12. All of these changes would have a ripple effect on the district's middle and high schools.



East Bay Arts 2023 Summer Music Jam.

History

East Bay Arts High co-located with Royal Sunset High School in the Hayward Acres community. Enrollment steadily increased from 103 students in the first year to nearly 300 in the early 2010s, and it has fluctuated between 140 and 210 over the past decade.

As EBA's numbers dipped in 2015 amid a challenging time for district finances, the School Board considered closing it, but in light of determined support from students, staff and families, members instead recommitted to its future as a school within a school.

The board agreed to relocate EBA to the SLzHS campus starting in 2020-21, although most students were in distance learning until the start of the 2021-22 school year. The change was made to place EBA within the setting of a comprehensive high school, where students could be offered a full academic program and elective courses.

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Students in a drawing class gather for a photo.



Distinctions

As described by Principal Alex Harp, East Bay Arts is “a small, college-preparatory, arts-integrated high school” that is also a “safe and inclusive” place “where every student learns the habits of mind, body and character necessary for success.” All students are provided the opportunity to complete the “A-G” coursework required for admission to the University of California and California State University systems immediately after completing high school.

The school’s focus on anti-racism and social justice includes cross-curricular, grade-level projects in which students incorporate the arts while addressing real-world challenges. Arts programs at EBA include visual art, music (individual and ensemble) and drama, all placing greater emphasis on students’ own journeys of personal growth than on external standards of quality. The school also proudly respects and appreciates the specific experiences and contributions of LGBTQ+ students.

Said Principal Harp in a welcome letter to students and families, “We are a school where individuality and creativity are honored, where we believe in the brilliance of all students, and where students can prepare for college while advancing their talents as visual and/or performing artists.”

East Bay Arts graduates with Principal Alex Harp at the 2023 Commencement.



East Bay Arts 2022 Student Showcase.

Community Input

During the 2022-23 school year, Renee Lama, now assistant superintendent of educational services, joined with Doug Marr, director of maintenance, operations and transportation, to study possible alternatives for relocating East Bay Arts to its own campus. The focus of their work soon narrowed to two main options: either at what is now Edendale Middle School or at the Linda Vista campus, now home to the San Lorenzo Adult School and adjacent to Bohannon Middle School.

A presentation at two 90-minute town hall meetings — 5:30 p.m. on Sept. 21 in the multipurpose room at Edendale Middle School and on Sept. 26 in the multipurpose room of the San Lorenzo Adult School — will explore these alternatives and invite input from SLZUSD families and other community members. The questions, recommendations and concerns shared at the meetings will contribute to the School Board’s decision-making on EBA’s future — whether to relocate it, maintain it as a separate school within San Lorenzo High or some other option. The board plans to further discuss EBA during a study session in October and make a decision later this school year ■