

Stewardship

Beauty

of Sport Culture and Wellness

THE ARETE SCHOOL

Wellness

Virtue

Wisdom

Excellence

We envision a time when athletics will return to their rightful place of honor in the arts and humanities, and when physical education will assume a more integral and respected position in the educational enterprise. For it may well be that sport and physical education, reformed and refurbished, may provide the best possible path to personal enlightenment and social transformation in this age.

THE ARETE SCHOOL
of Sport Culture and Wellness



an educational program of the nonprofit
American Sports Institute

THIS IS ABOUT A SCHOOL. A SCHOOL UNLIKE ANY OTHER.

This School uses the positive aspects of sport culture to generate high academic scores, high health and fitness scores, and a love of learning for all students.

This School is tuition-free, privately-funded, and community-based.

This School combines the democracy of a public school with the privilege of a private school.

This School is a model for transforming America's public schools.



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WHY WE NEED IT



Those who cherish the athletic experience for its own sake know there is something special about it. For them, sport is a calling that brings meaning and fulfillment to their lives, and provides a way to make us a better people, a better community, a better nation.

When approached in this way, sport is captivating and engaging. In fact, research shows that students are most engaged when they participate in activities like sports, but, sadly, least engaged in their academic classes. This is true for high achievers and underperformers alike, and is a major reason why kids dread Monday mornings.

This low level of classroom engagement has taken its toll in California. Once considered to have one of the best public school systems in America, California's national academic ranking now languishes in the bottom 10%. Compounding this sobering academic problem is the nationwide epidemic of childhood overweight and obesity that is predisposing millions of children to diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

How can this be? If educators are supposed to be smart, why is it that they can't make academic classes and

school work as engaging, as fulfilling, and as meaningful as sport so that all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, perform at high levels academically, are healthy and fit, and love going to school?

Or maybe the question should be: If sport is so engaging and most academic classes so tedious and numbing, can we take the *positive aspects of sport culture* and use them as a foundation for transforming our public educational system so that all of school can be as engaging, meaningful, and fulfilling as sport?

Since 1989, the nonprofit American Sports Institute has been involved with educational transformation. Through its *Promoting Achievement in School through Sport* (PASS) program, the Institute has positively influenced the scholastic, physical, and personal lives of thousands of middle and high school students by exposing them to the positive aspects of sport culture in an academic setting. Researchers at the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), one of 10 research centers administered by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, say this about the PASS program:

• The students in the PASS program report high levels of motivation and their achievement is at high levels.

• PASS addresses the needs of the whole learner—intellectual needs, motivational needs, and other needs such as students' physical and social needs.

• PASS can become a model for defining those qualities of total school reform that are needed to both engage students and help them achieve high academic standards.

• PASS is a model for total school reform.

Using the principles and practices that have made the PASS program "a model for total school reform," the American Sports Institute is now in the process of creating this model school.

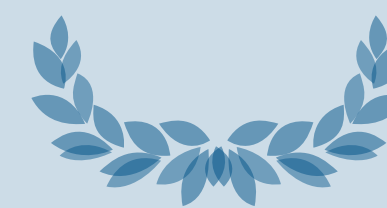


(Note: Although The Arete School is currently being developed, the following is presented as if the School is already in operation.)



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Arete School of Sport Culture and Wellness is to send forth into the world intrinsically-motivated, self-actualized citizens who care for other beings and their surroundings as much as they do themselves.



"A proper and all-around development of the mind can take place only when it proceeds pari passu with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole."

—Gandhi



The Arete School of Sport Culture and Wellness is a tuition-free, privately-funded, community-based school that acts like a public school but gets the kinds of results that are lacking in the general public school system. This hybrid public/private school values and attends to the needs of the *whole child*.

The purpose of The Arete School is to create a model for transforming our public school system in California and throughout the nation by combining curricular content that students are interested in and enjoy with a curricular context or learning methodology informed by the positive aspects of sport culture. This curricular combination creates an engaging learning environment where all students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieve at high academic and high health and fitness levels, and develop a true love of learning.

THE ARETE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Arete School curriculum is unique in its content, or what the students study, and its context, or how learning takes place.

Learning Content

The content of The Arete School curriculum consists of two themes: 1) sport culture; and 2) personal, social, and environmental wellness.

These two themes of sport culture and wellness are studied in a balanced and integrated manner through the arts, humanities, and sciences. Specifically, sport culture and the dimensions of personal, social, and environmental wellness are studied through the individual fields of study of international language, language arts, life and physical sciences, math, performing and fine arts, physical education, and social sciences.

To identify and track K-12 matriculation, and for college admission purposes, the following fields of study and (types of) courses appear on The Arete School students' transcripts relative to their grade level:

Field of Study	Courses
International Language: Language Arts:	Spanish, Mandarin Spelling, Reading, Grammar, Writing, Expository Writing, Creative Writing, Poetry, Storytelling, American and International Literature, Public Speaking
Life and Physical Sciences:	Wellness, Biology, Anatomy, Physiology, Kinesiology, Environmental Science, Physics, Astronomy
Math:	Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Decimals, Fractions, Algebra, Geometry, Precalculus

Performing and Fine Arts:	Music, Drama, Dance, Art, Electives
Physical Education:	Yoga, Tai Chi, Aikido, Capoeira, Aerobic Conditioning, Strength and Flexibility Conditioning, Electives
Social Sciences:	Government, History, Economics, Geography, World Cultures, Philosophy, Religion, Mythology, Social Issues and Relations, International Issues and Relations

Dual-Language Content — All subject matter is presented in both English and Spanish to ensure that all students are fully bilingual by the time they are eight years old.

Learning Context

The curricular context of The Arete School is based upon three integrated elements: 1) learning goals; 2) personalized learning; and 3) the positive aspects of sport culture.

Learning Goals and Personalized Learning — Athletes expect a lot of themselves. They set high-level goals, and put forth their best effort to reach these goals, no matter how long it takes them. Also, no two athletes develop at the same rate nor in the same manner.

At The Arete School, from the time students first enter as kindergartners until they graduate as high school seniors, they must meet every one of several hundred specified, high-level learning goals before they are allowed to graduate, no matter how long it takes them. At the same time, how the students realize their learning goals is individualized in order to meet the personal learning needs and modalities of each and every child.

The Positive Aspects of Sport Culture — Because they are the process through which personalized learning is manifested so that the students realize their learning goals, at the center of the learning context at The Arete School are the positive aspects of sport culture. While there certainly

"We obtain better knowledge of a person during one hour's play and games than by conversing with him for a whole year."

—Plato



are negative aspects to sport culture as it exists today, there are far more positive aspects, aspects of sport culture that have proven to be a model for engaging students at the highest levels and generating high academic and high motivation scores.

The following is a list of the positive aspects of sport culture that enable the learning goals to be realized through each student's personal learning process, including how the aspect is used effectively in sports and how it is applied at The Arete School:

• **Self-Paced Learning** — In sports, athletes are allowed to develop their skills at their own rate of learning. At The Arete School, students learn at their own pace. This means some students complete assignments and major levels of learning sooner than others, some later than others. But all assignments and levels of learning are completed by every student.

• **Mastery-Based Learning** — In sports, no athlete moves to the next level of play until he or she has mastered the skills at the current level. At The Arete School, students must master the skills and subject matter of the current assignment or learning level before moving on to the next assignment/level no matter how many times they need to rework the current assignment.

• **Relevance** — In sports, athletes know exactly why they work on particular skills. At The Arete School, students always see the relevance of what they are learning before they begin an assignment because of their interest in and enjoyment of the subject matter, and their involvement in creating the project they pursue.

• **Active Engagement** — In sports, athletes know they must be actively engaged in the learning process or they simply will not improve their skill level. At The Arete School, students are actively engaged in the learning process because of the interdisciplinary nature and project-based orientation of the curriculum.

• **Coaching Methodology** — In sports, a coach demonstrates how to do something, explains why it should be done a certain way, and then has the athlete do it over and over, with the coach stepping in when necessary to make corrections, until the athlete can perform at a high level. At The Arete School, coaching methods are used in a self-paced learning environment to guarantee mastery of the subject matter. In this context, all instructors and other staff at The Arete School are called *coaches*.

• **Performance Learning** — In sports, athletes perform in front of others when demonstrating their skill level. At The Arete School, on a regular basis, students make presentations of their projects to audiences, including family, friends, and community members.

• **Team-Oriented Learning** — In sports, athletes learn that their individual effort and their personal growth and development contribute to the overall success of the team. At The Arete School, students are responsible for the performance of their peers as well as for themselves. Structures have been put in place so students have the time and are able to help one another.

• **Character Development** — In sports, coaches know that the quality and success of a team are directly related to the character of its players. At The Arete School, character is a constant focus of student development and is studied on an ongoing basis through the *Fundamentals of Athletic Mastery* (FAMs). The FAMs include: Concentration—Balance—Relaxation—Power—Rhythm—Flexibility—Instinct—Attitude.

• **Project-Based Learning** — In sports, if players want to improve their overall performance, they must create a comprehensive project that calls upon and integrates a variety of experts and fields of study. At The Arete School, all assignments are carried out in a project-based, interdisciplinary manner that integrates at least five of the seven individual fields of study.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Just as accountability is highly regarded in sports, it is strongly emphasized and practiced at The Arete School. Accountability takes place at the School in two ways: 1) student progress; and 2) outside, independent evaluation of the School.

Student Progress — A major factor in creating student success at The Arete School is the role of the *master coach*. At the beginning of every school day, the students first report to their master coach who is fully responsible for the academic, physical, personal, and social well-being of his or her 25 students. The master coach constantly monitors the learning and development of each of his or her students, including interacting with each student's other coaches to ensure that things are going well and, if not, to find out why and make the necessary changes. In this way,

whether a student is performing well or needs help, there is one person at the School who is fully accountable for the progress of that student and is the person to whom parents and administrators can go regarding the student.

Outside, Independent School Evaluation — In order to evaluate objectively The Arete School's effectiveness, outside, independent researchers from respected institutions conduct and publish studies related to the School's operations.

THE ARETE SCHOOL STRUCTURE

School Population

The Arete School is comprised of an ethnically and socio-economically diverse group of students and families. Every year, the School adds 50 new kindergarten students. This rate of growth will continue until the School is a fully functioning pre-K—12 institution.

Tuition-Free Admission

Just like a public school, there is no tuition at The Arete School. As is done at public schools, parents of Arete School students are encouraged to support the School financially. However, this is not a precondition for admission.

The Arete School is open to any kindergarten-age student living in Marin County, no matter what the economic status is of the student's family. Students are offered admission based upon an annual, two-phase lottery system. The first lottery is for students from low-income, minority families. Approximately 40% of all students admitted each year come from this lottery. Students from middle and upper-income families are chosen from a general lottery after the first lottery has been completed.

Once a family has one student enrolled at The Arete School, this automatically grants right of first refusal to that family for enrolling any kindergarten-age siblings.

School Location and Schedules

The Arete School is based in San Rafael, California. School hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff assistants are on hand until 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, for students who wish to work on their projects into the evening. Transportation is provided for those students requiring it.

Besides being on a full-day schedule, The Arete School operates on a year-round basis. Students attend school for three intervals of 16, 12, and 12 weeks, with breaks of four, two, and six weeks in between. During these breaks, if they wish, students can come to the School to continue working on projects, hang out in a safe environment, or do volunteer work for the School.

