



# Expanding School Mediation Program Using a Train-the-Trainer Model

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#### Introduction

California Lawyers for the Arts has requested a plan to expand their Youth Mediators in Schools program. The program is currently operating in two schools, and the administrators would like to add a school from a third district. Ideally, the program would expand statewide, and eventually become the model for a bullying prevention program nationwide.

Youth Mediators in Schools (YMS) is a program of California Lawyers for the Arts (CLA), a statewide nonprofit organization that has been serving the creative community since 1974 by providing education, representation, and dispute resolution. YMS is currently offered at Will Rogers Middle School and Natomas Middle School.

YMS teaches K-12 students a peaceful and productive approach to conflict resolution, offering a unique curriculum designed to train students in conflict resolution skills through role play, discussion, and artistic expression. A team of skilled mediation teachers train students in peer mediation techniques in coordination with school personnel. YMS reduces bullying and peer violence in schools and in the community at large.

The goals of the YMS program are to improve the social and emotional learning environments in Sacramento schools and communities, to reduce school violence, to teach students to resolve conflict, to provide skills to deal with bullies, to develop responsibility, courage and character, and to develop leadership, decision making and communication skills.

Preliminary research on school mediation programs shows that these programs are successful. Research shows that these programs change students' behavior and attitudes in the classroom and in the community. Models like the Capturing Kids' Hearts Campus by Design model prove that when implemented correctly, these programs can be expanded to even a national level.

Further research on expansion plans reveal that a train-the-trainer approach is a suitable model for teacher training programs. A pyramid model is a simple, yet effective way to implement such an approach, and will be used for the plan to expand YMS.



#### Objectives

The goal of this project is to outline feasible steps the administrators of the Youth Mediators in Schools program can take to expand the program into a third school district and to create a replicable model to expand to a full district.

The plan will also include additional recommendations for CLA to make YMS a stronger, more viable program. Development, marketing, and analytical advice will be shared.

#### Methods

A SWOT analysis was completed by CLA staff to determine the areas of greatest need and the opportunities to address those needs. Funding was the most significant threat. The plan would definitely need to report on funding opportunities.

The need became to develop an expansion plan that would not require additional staff, as at this point CLA does not have the funding to add an assistant position.

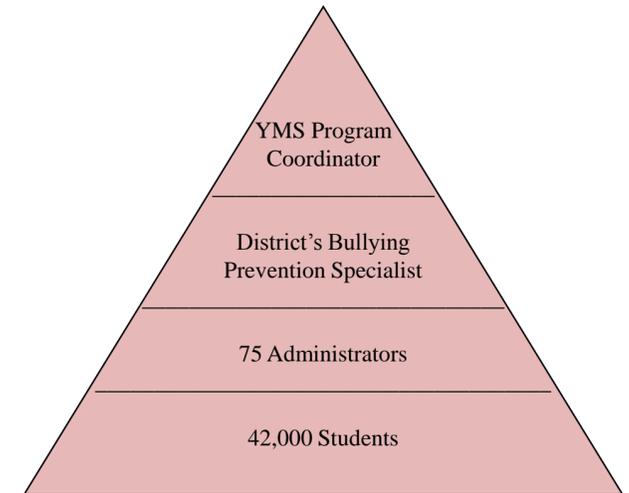
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students learn and practice positive communication &amp; leadership skills, mediation techniques, performance, writing &amp; vocab, and art.</li> <li>Allows artistic expression</li> <li>Builds student confidence</li> <li>Empowers students to make positive change</li> <li>Facilitates teamwork</li> <li>Promotes healthier school &amp; community climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliance on support of administration &amp; classroom teacher</li> <li>Lack of funding for a coordinator assistant</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program implementation in multiple schools</li> <li>Program expansion throughout the state</li> <li>Publishing copyrighted curriculum</li> <li>Additional funding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program expansion prior to adequate personnel expansion</li> <li>Withdrawal of support from school administrators</li> <li>Withdrawal of support from school district</li> <li>Lack of sufficient funding for expansion</li> <li>Reliance on grant funding</li> </ul>
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The Sacramento City Unified School District was selected as the model district for an expansion plan because of the district's dedication to anti-bullying initiatives.

Each school within the district is required to develop a bullying prevention plan that includes designating a site administrator at each campus. Currently, the plan requires staff and administrators to report bullying and to stop bullying behavior. Every two years, faculty and staff participate in a mandatory two-hour bullying intervention and prevention training program. Similar training programs are offered to parents and guardians six times throughout the school year. The plan encourages each school to develop additional strategies to teach students to respect one another. SCUSD will be a great district to target not only for implementing YMS in an additional school, but also for transitioning to a train-the-trainer model to serve the whole district.

The district's strategic plan includes several strategies for implementing bullying prevention and intervention programs in each of the schools. Strategies include the creation of the Bullying Prevention Specialist position to oversee the anti-bullying tactics throughout the district. Other strategies include creating a Youth Action Team to report on anti-bullying efforts and the school climate from a student's perspective, and creating partnerships with the community at large. YMS is a great fit for implementing these two strategies. As the goal of the program is to establish a student-run School Mediation Center at each school, there is a built-in Youth Action Team at each campus. Additionally, a partnership with California Lawyers for the Arts would benefit both parties who are dedicated to bullying prevention.

#### The Model



#### Recommendations

- Rotary clubs are always looking for speakers at their weekly meetings, and securing a speaking engagement would be a great opportunity to introduce the program to the community. CLA is encouraged to reach out to them clubs for funding and marketing prospects.
- CLA should solicit donations from its members specifically for the YMS program through direct mail campaigns. In addition to members of CLA, parents of students attending participating schools should be included in the direct mail campaigns. The appeal letters written for the fundraising campaign are the perfect opportunity to tell the story of recent successes in the current schools, and illustrate how donations will help further this work in more schools.
- With additional funding secured through fundraising efforts, CLA should develop a website for the YMS program, highlighting program details and offering resources to students. If funding cannot be secured for this purpose, websites like Weebly.com, Wix.com, and Stikingly.com offer free domains with professional, easy-to-use templates. A link to a secure online donation page should be included on the website.
- CLA may want to consider organizing a complete program evaluation for the YMS program as it currently exists. The evaluation could consist of a pre- and post-test, surveying the students' knowledge of alternative conflict resolution methods before and after participating in the program. An analysis of the resulting data could provide beneficial information about the effectiveness of the curriculum in relation to such factors as gender and age. This evaluation could also serve as proof of program success that many grants require.

#### References

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- Sayer, S., & Wetterlund, K. *Pyramid Power: A Train-the-Trainer Model to Increase Teacher Usage of the ArtsConnectEd On-Line Resource*. 2002.
- Shweky, L., Scott, Z., & Stires, S. *Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Creating Caring Schools*. Sacramento, CA. 2011.