

# OREGON **Small Schools** INITIATIVE

## Academy of Arts and Academics

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<http://www.athree.org>  
Director: Michael Fisher

### Springfield's vision

The decision to launch the Academy of Arts and Academics (A3) was the direct result of recommendations made in the 2004 Springfield Quality Education Model, a comprehensive community engagement process that involved over 1,000 local educators, parents, students and employers. Two themes emerged as central to Springfield's vision for a quality education: to maintain a strong commitment to the arts in educational programs, and to use innovative, researched-based delivery models to engage students in their education. A3 was implemented to meet both of these recommendations while reaching out to students who do not succeed in the traditional high school environment.

### A3's vision

A3 opened its doors in September 2006 with 85 students in grades 9 and 10. A3 will add a grade and expand its enrollment until 2008, when it will have around 220 students in grades 9 through 12. The school is headquartered in a renovated building in downtown Springfield and is within walking distance of local arts organizations, many of which provide internships and other hands-on learning experiences for students.

A3 combines a full college preparatory course load with professional-level media and theatre arts experiences to prepare students for a range of post-secondary options. Language arts, humanities, math and science are taught in integrated blocks in grades 9/10 and 11/12. Through project-based learning students tackle rigorous academic content while exploring issues that are relevant to their lives and the community. In their first two years, students are exposed to a variety of theater, video and visual arts experiences. Then, as juniors and seniors, they choose an art focus in which to specialize. In their senior year, students embark on a unique capstone experience by writing a grant proposal to fund an independent community outreach arts project. Guest artists help teach core arts classes and work with students on community-based arts projects and events.

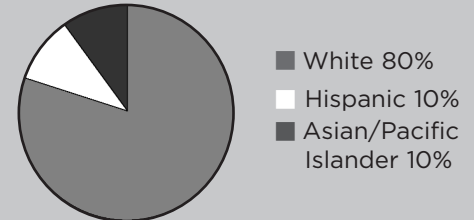
A3 students must complete an application and interview/audition process to be admitted to the school. The process is "blind," meaning students' past academic performance and artistic accomplishments are not factors for admission. Instead A3 targets students who have a passion for the arts and a demonstrated commitment to learning in a challenging, personalized environment.

### 2006-2007

Total enrollment 89

### Student Diversity

Low-income students 60%  
English language learners 2%



Academy of Arts and Academics opened in September 2006. State assessment scores and drop-out rates are not available.

Source: Academy of Arts and Academics

