

Great Ideas for Great Public Schools

COLORADO

Teacher-led school integrates math, science, technology

The teacher-led **Math and Science Leadership Academy (MSLA)** is a product of collaboration among teachers, their union (the Denver Classroom Teachers Association), and Denver Public Schools. MSLA opened in the fall of 2009 with 12 teachers and 135 students in K-2. It now has 14 teachers and 180 students in K-3 and will eventually serve K-5 students. About 60 percent of the students are English-language learners and some 90 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The school aims to attract and retain the most accomplished educators—30 people apply for each position.

Meaningful professional development for teachers

- MSLA teachers meet with peers, analyze data, and design instruction that meets students' needs.
- Each month, teachers observe their peers, provide feedback, and share best practices.
- Teachers set their own goals before evaluation sessions.
- Two evaluators meet with each teacher. They relay findings, offer positive feedback, and discuss where improvement may be needed.

Engaging families and communities

- MSLA engages all members of the school community in all aspects of school life.
- The vision for the school includes a culture where staff engage in deliberate partnerships with parents and community groups.
- MSLA faculty and staff believe it is the school's focus, expectations, rigor, and culture that are attracting growing numbers of students and families.

Motivating students: using skills learned in the classroom in real life

- Instructional tools include MacBook laptops, which are kept in classrooms and shared by students.
- MSLA's dual-focused core academic program integrates science, technology, and mathematics at the synthesis and application levels.
- The curriculum is standards based. Students engage in hands-on learning and service-learning projects, where they use knowledge gained in the classroom to conduct real-world, community-based projects.
- MSLA instills leadership skills and civic responsibility, and continually evaluates student achievement.
- Students learn they can become scientists, mathematicians, and leaders.

For more information: Lori Nazareno, lead teacher, 720-424-1310

Denver Post: *Teachers take over at school*, <http://bit.ly/fkZVAq>

CNN: *Teacher turns 'crazy idea' into new school*, <http://bit.ly/eMdZjG>



Great Public Schools for Every Student