
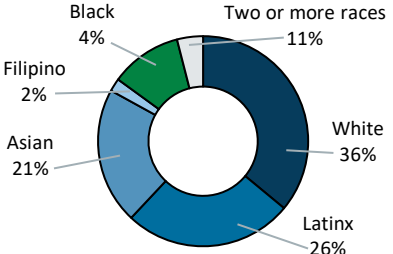
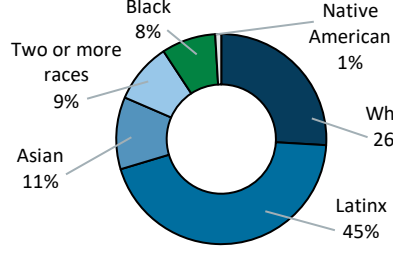




# BRIDGES COLLABORATIVE MEMBER PROFILE

## Larchmont Charter School

Organization type: Charter Management Organization

Location: Los Angeles, California	Population	
	<p><b>Larchmont</b></p> 	<p><b>Los Angeles</b></p> 
<p><b>44%</b> qualify for federal free or reduced priced lunch.<sup>1</sup></p>	<p><b>9%</b> English language learners<sup>2</sup></p>	
Size	Year Founded	
 <p>Larchmont: <b>1,620</b> students   <b>71</b> teachers Los Angeles: <b>3,822,238</b></p>	 <p><b>2004</b> “idea” formulated, <b>2005</b> school launched, <b>2016</b> first graduating senior class</p>	



### Larchmont: A “diverse-by-design” approach to school integration

Larchmont is a multi-site TK–12 charter school in Los Angeles, California. The school was launched by a group of founding parents in 2005 as a socioeconomically and racially **diverse-by-design school**, meaning that it is intentionally designed to implement targeted outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure the student population reflects the race/ethnicity and socioeconomic characteristics of the surrounding community. As The Century Foundation writes in [their report on Diverse-by-Design charter schools](#), attending schools with a racially and socioeconomically integrated student body is associated with higher test scores and graduation rates, lower rates of racial bias, and higher creativity, motivation, deeper learning, critical

#### Definition: School Integration

The creation of educational communities where students and adults of different races not only teach and learn in a shared environment, but also collaborate to advance the educational experience of the entire student body.

<sup>1</sup> California Department of Education <https://ias.cde.ca.gov/apportionment/ias.aspx?schoolyearid=2023&RptType=P1&CertType=Non>

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Education <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sdprofile/details.aspx?cds=19647330108928>

thinking, and problem-solving skills. When charter schools are intentionally designed to prioritize diversity, they can give more students access to the benefits of integrated learning environments.

To implement their diverse-by-design model, Larchmont uses a weighted lottery admissions process, with a 40% priority set aside for students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch. At the school level, Larchmont has focused on classroom practices and school systems that support whole-school integration. An essential element of this focus on integration is how schools manage their resources, both human and material, to advance their goal of creating a diverse and inclusive community. Larchmont administrators shared their thoughts on the school's approach to resource expenditure in a series of interviews that informed this spotlight member profile.



## Spotlight on resource expenditure

School leaders need to make daily decisions about limited resources, including who gets hired, what programs are funded, and how to set focus and finance priorities for the school community. For organizations seeking to create integrated communities, research suggests that resource-related decisions need to be intentionally aligned with integration goals.<sup>3</sup> Larchmont staff embed intentional school and classroom integration strategies into school systems and operations, including their approaches to staff recruitment and development. The Larchmont team also use their integration goals and vision to define which initiatives are funded, how initiatives will be funded, and who makes these types of decisions within the organization.

### Staffing

Larchmont has been intentional about including school integration priorities as part of their staffing systems at each stage, including initial outreach, the interview process, and onboarding after staff are hired. A diversity video summarizing Larchmont's integration work to date is included in each new job posting. Larchmont's deputy executive director, Myra Salinas, shared that this approach makes it clear that integration is a priority at the school. When prospective staff read about a position, they understand that integration work is essential to the school operations. The hiring and interview process also incorporates questions about integration. The school has developed questions about racial diversity at the classroom and school levels and also questions to reveal each interviewee's understanding of neurodiverse students and socioeconomic diversity within the school community. As Ms. Salinas shared, during the interview process *"we want to screen for mindsets and make sure we are hiring people on the same page as us approaching this work."* Once new staff are hired, Larchmont administrators assign mentor teachers to help with the process.

### Staff development and training

Larchmont leaders see staff development and training as a key tool in implementing and sustaining schoolwide and classroom-level work that advances integration goals. The Larchmont team partners extensively with outside experts and organizations to design and deliver staff training (Exhibit 1). The resources the school seeks from external partners range in content and approach, and staff working in

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<sup>3</sup> Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., Friedman, R., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature*. University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, National Implementation Research Network.

the classroom or in administrative roles are offered a mix of personalized coaching, self-paced online modules, and group professional learning sessions (**Exhibit 1**).

### **Exhibit 1. Integration-Focused Staff Development Partnerships**

- [Roots ConnectED](#): Training for intentionally integrated, inclusive, and anti-racist school communities.
- Dr. Tonikaa Orange, [Culture and Equity Project at UCLA Center X](#): Culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy, facilitation skills for conversations around culture and race.
- [SPLC Learning For Justice](#): Self-paced online modules focused on safe, affirming, inclusive schools.
- Ms. [Zaretta Hammond](#): “Culturally responsive education and the brain.” Social-emotional learning and anti-bias education.
- Diverse Charter Schools Coalition, [UnifiED Explorers Program](#): Preparing leaders to lead integrated schools across the country.

Larchmont uses a variety of strategies to build staff knowledge and capacity around school integration priorities. Each of these internal capacity-building efforts is focused on developing sustainable structures to share knowledge and uses frequent data analysis cycles to identify best practices. Larchmont relies on diverse data points during these monitoring and analysis cycles, including classroom observation data of specific instructional practices, stakeholder survey data, and achievement data. The following strategies are part of Larchmont’s approach to staff development:

- DEI training: Using COVID relief funding, the Larchmont team is currently working with a DEI consultant, Monique Marshall, to develop a “Training of Trainers” model in which Larchmont staff learn how to develop and share their DEI and integration strategy expertise with their colleagues.
- Staff affinity groups: Larchmont leaders also manage ongoing community of practice (COP) opportunities for staff to share best practices and learning with peers. Larchmont manages these COP opportunities as staff affinity groups.
- Expert teacher share-backs: For some emerging areas of interest for the school, Larchmont leaders or staff identify an external opportunity and send a small group of administrators and instructional staff. Attending staff are tasked with “teaching back” to their colleagues on their return, as well as sharing information about Larchmont with partners or funders during the opportunity. The decision to sponsor these external events is made collaboratively and based on the perceived learning benefits for the full Larchmont team. For example, in 2023 a group of Larchmont staff members flew to New York City to attend a training on instructional and school support strategies for neurodiverse learners.

### **Funding and fundraising**

The intentional integration work that Larchmont pursues represents a significant expense for the school. Some of this work can be folded into the regular operations of the school and the school-funding model, while other projects require additional fundraising. Larchmont is a public charter school that receives [public funding through the California state and Los Angeles city governments](#). In addition to its annual public operating budget, Larchmont has leveraged some one-time investments through the COVID relief fund, yearly federal dollars through Title II, and community-level block grants to support integration efforts. Larchmont also has a very robust fundraising program with a full-time

development director on staff who leads external fundraising work for the school. This year, the development team added a staff member to do full-time outreach and communications work. Larchmont leaders shared that this additional fundraising work supports much of Larchmont’s professional learning agenda, giving the school the flexibility to contract with external experts and send team members to offsite learning opportunities.



## Resource expenditure: Key supports and remaining challenges

### **Staff development is prioritized for all positions and connected to schoolwide integration goals.**

Within the school, the Larchmont team is focused on building staff capacity and sharing learning between staff members. Larchmont leaders highlighted that the school recently appointed a director of alignment. As part of the work, the director focuses on intentional goal setting and on aligning professional learning for all staff members, across both instructional and support roles. As they work toward their goals, staff managers ask educators and support staff to look at data to help them better understand their own strengths and areas of growth within their educational practice or school role. Larchmont staff managers use tools like professional growth charts and criteria charts to track staff goals and align development planning with the schoolwide vision and integration priorities. Throughout the year, staff attend consistent check-ins with management staff, sharing information about what they are working on and identifying any areas where they need support. Every staff member is required to set specific goals related to the school’s mission, which includes an emphasis on diversity and serving all members of the student community.

**Staff want a voice and agency within their professional growth.** Each staff member has their own professional goals. Individualizing the professional learning approach at Larchmont builds buy-in among staff and ensures that they feel like full partners in helping the school reach integration and improvement goals. Larchmont leaders stress that just as there is no single “cookie-cutter” approach to achieving a diverse and integrated school, staff learning should be approached with a focus on individuality, voice, and relationships.

### **External staff development partnerships serve as key supports for integration work at Larchmont.**

Larchmont leaders have prioritized partnerships focused on staff development and learning (see Exhibit 1). These partnerships are designed to support staff at all levels—classroom teachers, building administrators, support staff—in designing and leading classrooms and schools that are focused on principles of anti-racism, inclusive communities, and support for diverse learners. Included in this list is a key partnership with the Diverse Charter Schools Coalition (DCSC), a group of like-minded schools pursuing similar educational goals. This coalition has offered ongoing opportunities to share and learn from other charter organizations around the country.

**Staff diversity remains a challenge, but innovative approaches are yielding results** Larchmont leaders have set goals for teacher diversity to ensure that the teaching and administrative staff make-up is reflective of the student body. Larchmont administrators shared that *“it’s a challenge to get a more diverse pool of candidates for positions.”* One chosen strategy is to launch a teacher residency program this year. Another is to prioritize a specific pool of candidates—Larchmont alumni graduating from college. This year (2023–24), the first resident teacher is a Larchmont graduate who is Latina.

Larchmont leaders hope to grow the residency program over the next years with an eye toward continuing to diversify staff in classroom and operations roles.



## Lessons learned

- **There is no one “right” way to approach resource expenditure to support integration.** Integration efforts are ongoing and changing, and resource expenditure models should be flexible enough to support needed adjustments.
- **Professional growth and learning goals should be aligned with the school’s vision and goals for integration.** Staff members should be supported in their efforts to set specific professional goals and identify resources to meet those goals. The school should provide clear structures and expectations to align staff goals and development with its mission and integration priorities.
- **There is no end goal or finish line.** Achieving resource expenditure goals that advance school integration takes ongoing purposeful commitment. The human-centered support of classroom and school integration practices requires that the school’s integration goals inform every element of the daily work and decisions of its operations team.