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**Model Junior High School of the Evangelical School of Smyrna
School year: 2023-2024**

"Art in School as a Means of Social-Emotional Education"

The Evangelical School of Smyrna was founded in 1733 in Smyrna, Asia Minor. It became the most important school of the Greek community in Asia Minor, with distinguished professors and notable alumni. In 1922, due to the Asia Minor Catastrophe, its operation was interrupted. It was re-established in Greece, in Nea Smyrni, in 1934-35, with the same name, Evangelical School of Smyrna. In 1971, it was recognized as a model school. In 1974, it moved to a newly constructed building on Lesvou Street, where it has operated until today. With the abolition of model schools in 1982, it became an experimental school and has been operating again as a model school since 2010.

At our school, the Model Junior High School of the Evangelical School of Smyrna, we attribute a significant role to Art in our teaching and pedagogical work. On one hand, it serves as a teaching subject (music and visual arts) that we strive to teach with as much consistency and effectiveness as possible, and on the other hand, we consider it crucial for achieving the broader cognitive and socio-pedagogical goals we set. We view it as the primary means for the comprehensive development of our students' personalities, the cultivation of their aesthetics, and the formation of their social identity. Therefore, we systematically propose various artistic activities to our students, extending beyond the boundaries of teaching the respective subjects, linking Art interdisciplinarily with all other teaching subjects, and treating it as a communication language for achieving the educational process's social and other goals.

Thus, in the REIMAGINED program, "Redesigning Social-Emotional Education in Secondary Schools through Art in the Post-COVID-19 Era," presented here tonight, we recognized elements of great interest and a framework for developing related activities and participated with enthusiasm.

We will attempt to briefly present some characteristic actions of our school in recent years, indicative of the way and style of our work.

Let's start with Music. In collective student activities such as the choir, orchestra, songs during lessons and events, children, regardless of their differences, synchronize to a common rhythm, connect by following monophonic or polyphonic melodic paths, and develop an overall common harmony, a common cultural base. The emotional connection resulting from this experience brings joy, well-being, fulfillment, fosters understanding, and strengthens the sense of unity and solidarity.

During the current school year 2023-2024 and according to the New Curriculum:

-All students were taught Music through performance, listening, and creation of musical works.

-First-grade students were taught and performed vocally and instrumentally four pieces, which they presented live in an event held in our school's amphitheater on May 23, 2024, in celebration of Mother's Day.

-Second-grade students were taught and performed a traditional song related to "Herbs," with interdisciplinary approaches and collaborations among our school's teachers, as part of projects on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of ASPnet UNESCO schools.

-Third-grade students participated in the school choir during school celebrations, especially Class C1 (a group with cohesion and discipline issues) took part in school celebrations.

-A musical event with the participation of the choir, orchestra, and music club, with songs from around the world, framed the Christmas celebration.

-The choir, orchestra, and music club presented musical pieces of diverse repertoire, many of which were chosen by the students themselves, at our school's Educational Activities Festival on May 22, 2024.

-The music club composed a piece in Rondo form that musically supported a video about the circular economy and was presented at the 9th conference of connected ASPnet UNESCO Gymnasiums.

Let's continue with Visual Arts. Class discussions about art works encourage the development of critical thinking and communication among students. Encouraging them to create an image that conveys a message highlights their creativity and ability to express their ideas in various ways. Overall, participation in or observation of artistic activities creates a unified and cohesive learning framework that fosters active participation and creative thinking among students. Moreover, the importance of collaboration with colleagues and the parents' association, as well as educational visits to museums or other events, invitations to exhibitions, school events, etc., is emphasized.

Indicative examples include:

-The school's long-standing annual Visual Arts exhibition, which provides additional motivation for creation and showcases students' works, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations.

-The implementation of new curriculum programs in the Art subject for the first, second, and third grades of High School, in selected teaching units according to the instructions of the Institute of Educational Policy.

The operation of creativity and excellence clubs, such as the Visual Arts Club with themes: a) "Art Workshop: Drawing, Fine and Applied Arts" and b) Art Workshop and Art History.

-Collaboration with the Athens School of Fine Arts through student internships/mentoring as part of the collaboration of model or experimental schools with higher education institutions.

-The participation of our school in the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet) and highlighting issues concerning the school community on a global level.

-Participation in Erasmus+ programs with themes:

a) "STREAMing Through Europe," b) "Traditions of our Cultural Heritage," and

c) regarding our participation in the European program **REIMAGINED - "Redesigning Social-Emotional Education in Secondary Schools through Arts-Integrated Practices in the Post-COVID-19 Era,"** we submit the following. Firstly, it provided us with the framework for artistic activities. In the Reimagined program's activities, the students worked experientially, collaboratively, inclusively, and innovatively. They cultivated their creative thinking and imagination. Innovation and problem-solving skills were promoted.

Specifically, the following took place:

- Attendance of a 25-hour online course on Social-Emotional Education in schools through Art for program educators.
- Attendance of a workshop on Social-Emotional Education through the Arts, by first-grade students, supervised by Actionaid educator: Despina Kardogeros.

- Attendance of the online meeting on the Reimagined program's Information Day on January 31.
- Creation of a workshop on teaching and performing the song "Children Paint on the Wall," attended by first-grade students in the music workshop, supervised by educator: Mary Karali.
- Creation of a workshop on "Emotions," attended by first-grade students in the visual arts workshop, supervised by educator: Christina Papadaki.
- Participation in the Round Table discussion on May 20, 2024, as part of the Erasmus+ European Project titled "Reimagining Social and Emotional Education in Secondary Schools through Arts-Integrated Practices in the Post-COVID-19 Era."
- In the Music Club, creation of an English poem and musical composition titled "Joy will come," supervised by educators: Mary Karali – Music teacher and Christina Drakopoulou – English teacher.
- In the Visual Arts Club, creation of a mural on the theme: "Emotions," supervised by educator: Christina Papadaki – Visual Artist.
- Creation of a Digital Presentation – Animation on the theme: "Emotions," an interdisciplinary collaboration among teachers of the specialties: English Language (Christina Drakopoulou), Music (Mary Karali), and Visual Arts (Christina Papadaki).
- Presentation of the works created as part of the program at the current conference:
 - a) History of our school
 - b) Exhibition of visual art works
 - c) Presentation of an animation-video on the theme "Emotions"
 - d) Musical Performance (Piano and guitar performing a musical piece by M. Hadjidakis).