

## 1. OVERVIEW

- A. We are LAHSA (Los Angeles High School of the Arts).
- B. For the past twelve years we have operated as a self-contained small learning community with a focus on the performing arts. Our curriculum is designed to hold students to a high standard of academic and performance achievement. Our staff consists of ten teachers and a guidance counselor. Esther Soliman, MFA in Directing from California Institute of the Arts and MA in Educational Administration from New York University will act as principal. She has exceeded the requirements of the California Administrative Credential and won the faculty's support. The faculty agrees that in order to provide students with academic instructional excellence we will need to hire teachers for the following subjects: Special Day, ESL, Math, Chemistry and Yoga/Movement.
- C. As our focus is Performing Arts and Design, we plan to relocate to The New Arts High School at 450 N. Grand Avenue. The resources at this facility are essential in providing our students with the foundations for academic and performance based excellence. Our current site's theatre was to have \$200,000 from BB Funds dedicated to renovating the lighting system on our stage. It has been seven years and this project still has not been completed, in fact, the auditorium has been off-limits to the entire school for the past three years. We have had to rent spaces and create spaces for our past nine productions. This has created an undue burden on the students and faculty. Our students and faculty have been promised this new art school for the past decade and it is essential to the well being of our program, faculty and students.
- D. *"The future isn't something hidden in a corner. The future is something we build in the present."* --Paulo Freire

*"Theatre is a form of knowledge: it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it."*  
--Augusto Boal

LAHSA is a learning community designed for and by our students. Using the performing and technical arts as a foundation, our project-based curriculum engages and motivates students to strive for excellence. As students work toward graduation, they are challenged to make connections between their academic studies and the performing arts; in doing so, they emerge from our program prepared to meet their academic and professional goals. Most important, we expect students to have a strong sense of self, a strong voice, and the confidence to create a full life, meeting challenges with curiosity, passion, intelligence and joy.

Countless studies document how the Performing Arts help improve test scores, graduation rates and assist in keeping students off the streets. One report, "Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning", reviews research conducted by scholars from Columbia, Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, and Connecticut. They found that "arts education enhances academic achievement and reaches students on the margins of the educational system." The National Governor's Alliance review of research reveals that "when young people, both general and at-risk populations, study the arts they show heightened academic standing, a

strong capacity for self-assessment, and a secure sense of their own ability to plan and work for a positive future.” Last year, the Center for Best Practices issued a report entitled “The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation.” It reports the results of multiple studies on the effects of arts instruction on learning. The reports all found that “children who study the arts develop key competencies of cognitive growth: perception of relationships, skills in finding multiple solutions to problems, attention to nuance, adaptability, decision-making skills, visualization of goals and outcomes.”

Our faculty created a ninth grade Cultural Geography class and a companion English class because we felt the state curriculum focuses heavily on Western history, and we wanted to provide an opportunity for our students to study their own cultures and those of other Angelenos. Ninth graders study Africa with a focus on Nigeria and South Africa; Asia, with a focus on China and India; Latin America with a focus on El Salvador and Mexico and in the final unit students examine why peoples of these cultures come to Los Angeles, where they locate, how they interact with one another, and with the mainstream cultures and power structures. They read and share immigration stories of struggle and success in literature, from their own family stories, and through interviews with people in their communities. Ninth graders also take an introductory theatre class in which they study drama, dance and music. In the drama portion of the class students research and write monologues from the perspective of people from these different cultures; in dance, they learn the dances of these cultures; and in music, students learn about the instruments and music native to these countries.

Likewise, our tenth graders integrate lessons from their English and World History classes in their year long study of Power: Power and Leadership, Power and Economics, Power vs. the Individual, and Power and Technology. They also take an introductory theatre design course where they study set, sound, lighting, and costume design. Each semester they focus on one of the plays read and studied in their academic classes (*Macbeth*, for the first semester and *Oedipus Rex* for the second semester.) Students create small production groups. Within these groups, they choose a director, a production manager and a dramaturge. Each group creates a concept for the play (setting it in a different time period or place) and a justification for how and why their choice serves the play.

Over the semester, tenth grade students create mock lighting and sound design, costume creations, and a model set design. They “pitch” their designs to the “producers” (teachers). Students pour their hearts and souls into these projects. The cross curriculum experience reinforces the material they have mastered in their core-curriculum classes. An important part of this project is our “talk-back” which occurs after the presentations and at the end of each semester. Students reflect on their experiences and share their findings with the group.

It is inspiring to hear the lessons that students have learned in this group process: “I never realized how important it is to be organized,” “Working with my friends didn’t always go well. “It was hard to hold them accountable,” “I found out that yelling at people doesn’t make them work faster,” and “I never cared so much about how a project turned out before. Everyone worked so hard!” Finally, the students offer constructive criticisms and propose changes for future projects. This is one of the ways that LAHSA students have a direct hand in shaping their learning experiences.

Juniors and seniors also have integrated English and history classes that are project-based as well as opportunities to take classes in Intermediate and Advanced Drama, Dance, Chorus,

and Design Technology. All seniors write a one-act play in their Playwriting class. Three to five of these plays are chosen for production in our annual New Plays, Dance, and Music Festival. The plays are student directed, designed and acted; the dances are student choreographed; and the music is chosen and performed by students. Consistently, it is the event to which we sell the most tickets and have the most student participation. The excitement and participation are a testament to the work and commitment of our students.

Our students have performing arts opportunities in every academic class and arts class as well as three opportunities each year to participate in theatrical productions (next year, students will be required to participate in at least one). The plays we perform are chosen based upon their educational values and/or connection to our students' lives. A commitment to a production often means more than forty hours a semester of work outside the classroom. In our twelve years of productions no student has ever missed a performance and it is a rare occasion when a student must be absent from a rehearsal. Even on "strike" day, nearly every single cast and crew member will come in and spend the entire day breaking down the set and packing up. The dedication of our students to these productions is truly amazing. The fact that all of our students are working on these productions—either on or off stage—further develops the sense of investment, camaraderie and community we have established.

Advisories are another element of our school that makes our program unique. The advisories are mixed grades, which allow older students to mentor younger ones. Much more than a homeroom, the advisory is a student's daily support group. In our advisories, students are paired with a teacher and group of peers with whom they will remain for their entire LAHSA careers. Students choose advisories based on their focus. We have fifteen different advisories and next year we will have twenty-one (a ratio of 18 to 1). Our advisories add to the culture and eclectic learning environment and provide students with opportunities to be more involved in our program: website, literary magazine, photography, business and finance, alumni, parent, celebrations and ceremonies are some of our advisory concentrations.

Each student in the advisory receives a portfolio with information about high school, college and careers. We use this information to empower our students in their own education. Students learn what requirements are necessary for graduation, what classes they are required to pass, what a grade point average (GPA) means and how it translates to college acceptances. They learn to ask for the results of tests such as the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and the California Standards Test (CST), and examine and evaluate these results. They learn what the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is, how to study for it and why it is important. Progress reports, report cards, and spreadsheets that track student credits and graduation progress, are kept in the portfolios. Students select samples of their work, from their classes and community service learning projects and keep these in their portfolios to create a coherent, meaningful representation of their academic progress. They learn to set academic and personal goals, work towards reaching them, and reevaluate them periodically. The portfolios also contain information and motivational readings about college and careers. Frequent portfolio reviews and one-on-one conferences with their advisory teacher keep students focused on and accountable for their academic achievements.

Our school is also unique in that we understand the needs of our students extend beyond the typical grade-level classroom. Many of our students enter the ninth grade performing below grade level in English and math. These students are enrolled in an Essential Skills class that not only helps reinforce and re-teach these skills, but also helps the student learn organizational and study skills. Our tutoring center is open before and after-school. Parents

of low performing students will be contacted to ensure their child stays each day to receive help finishing schoolwork. We have found that very few of our students have a quiet place to study at home; this environment provides a quiet and supportive atmosphere. A community that sees to the needs of the whole child is imperative for the success of our students.

By the time our students are seniors, they truly feel that LAHSA is their second family. We hold a special graduation dinner for seniors with a candle-lit ceremony where faculty members speak about how each student has impacted the community and how the faculty has learned from them. Each senior is offered a chance to speak about her/his four years in the school. The amount of gratitude and the love that each senior shares during this ceremony is overwhelming. By evening's end, there are few dry eyes in the house. The fact that hundreds of our alumni keep in contact with us, come to see our productions and volunteer to help our community is also a tribute to the quality and uniqueness of our program.

The faculty and students of LAHSA are dedicated and compassionate individuals who work countless hours to ensure the success of this community. The results are apparent in the students' respect for one another, their willingness to help others and their commitment to enriching their academic and artistic identities. Compared to what the average citizen imagines as "inner-city" education, LAHSA is truly an exceptional anomaly.

- E. Since we are a conversion school we thought it would be more beneficial for a student to write this section. The following was written by Nadia Santamaria, one of our twelfth grade students:

A day in the life of a LAHSA student: during the 11 week academic period.

L.A.H.S.A is like a snowflake--there are no two day alike. Once I start walking towards Ms. Row's (Roughan) room, already I hear the different show tunes being played in Mr. Richardson's room, until more students arrive. Government sounds boring, but it never is. Some days, we take notes and write in our reading logs, of course with class discussions and side stories in history, notes can be fun. Then again, there are other days when I am Speaker of the House and the committees (the class) debate whether or not a bill should be passed to become a law.

Our reenactments go on until Advisory, where I just move over to the next seat, and there I am. Ms. Row is also my advisor for our Business and Finance advisory. Other advisories are peer counseling, alumni, web design, photography, and ten other kinds. Some days we are reviewing our portfolios, grades, test scores, college choices, SAT reviews, and other days we are busy, running around with announcements, fundraising for our plays, and we seniors and juniors teach the younger classmen the ropes of finance. But, during the 11-week academic period, we are frequently studying or I'm helping 10<sup>th</sup> graders Steve, Janet and Cecy on Reconco's project on analogies in *Animal Farm*, the Russian Revolution and causes of this revolution.

Second Period could start with a surprise essay, project on a play, or an assignment to interpret a poem through performance. Whatever we do, Ms. Soliman always comes in with a bright attitude, with either a Shakespearean quote for us to ponder or a Macbeth analogy which she produces from memory for any and everything in life. Today, we will practice our British accents, and our cynicism, through the land of Mr. Oscar Wilde and his world of alter egos—Ernest, my own Earnest.

Writer's seminar comes next, and mostly what we do is write, write and more writing! We write plays to poetry to short stories, and analyze short plays of all different sorts. Ms. Pearson is an intriguing character. Every time we read poetry, it's always some contemporary artist, who breaks the rules of last period's writers (Shakespeare and Wilde). Then sometimes she's very spontaneous, like the time we set up a poetry lounge, the Black Cat Café in less than two weeks. It was one of those dim lighted, serve coffee and tea, where we snap our fingers type of thing. It was really exciting setting it up, and having the class read our poetry as part of our final. Students, teachers and parents dropped in for snacks for the readings. Of course, Pearson still puts on her pop music in class, so it's not all so artsy. We all like the poetry though; it's a good change from the classics we enjoy in Soliman's class.

Then it's lunch. Lunch is funny, we're only about 390 some, but everyone still rushes towards the lunch lines. Looks like today, those in the Psychology class take the gold metal. The juniors and seniors of course walk through like the cool cats of the academy, at least sometimes. Other times, like just yesterday, when

Jerry gave me a piggy back ride, as I was singing “We are the Champions” while Ms. Row, supervising just looked at me with amusement. After we eat everyone hangs out. Here at LAHSA, we’re a friendly bunch. If you don’t like hugs, well then you will: we’re a family.

When we hear the three short bells, and see teachers come out of their rooms to talk with us it’s time for 4<sup>th</sup> period. As I pass our office I see a bunch of kids in there, some are talking with Magallon, our counselor, some are laughing with Escalante who works in our office, and others are eating with Soliman. Mr. Galan’s class is always a fun time, since there is a mix of juniors and seniors. It looks like six students just finished eating lunch with him. Here comes another hug fest, everyone after lunch is full of carbs. and energy and ready to take on those pesky derivatives. Sometimes, the AP Calculus kids get extra practice and help out our junior friends in Math Analysis.

Then we’re off to sixth, the last class of the day-drama. On my way, I try and remember the last couple of lines of my monologue, but then I run into everyone on their way to their sixth, and once again our love fest starts again. Ah the hugs, did I tell you we’re a friendly bunch? Drama, drama, drama. Every time, you walk in that room, you feel like you’ve just won something, when Mr. Richardson gives a you a welcome, and you’re name’s yelled out as if you’re royalty. He always has energy. Today, it seems like we’re in the south though. Sometimes, we start with our warm up exercises and tongue twisters and play improvisation games, other times like now, we work on monologues and accents. This class is a mix of seniors, juniors, tenth grader and freshmen. Over the semester, we have all grown close in our class and especially when we work on scenes together, at least, that’s how I got to know a lot of students—plays and productions, but that’s not until the five week elective block. Right now, we’re just here academically.

## 2. SCHOOL VISION

### **LAHSA MISSION STATEMENT**

The Los Angeles High School of the Arts fosters a rich academic and artistic community inspiring our students to be creative, artistic, cooperative young adults who can articulate their ideas, meet problems with creative solutions, and play strong roles in their communities.

### **PERFORMING ARTS AS THE FOUNDATION**

*The arts are one of humankind’s most visual and essential forms of language, and if we do not educate our children in the symbol system called the arts, we will lose not only our culture and civility but our humanity as well.* —Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Traditionally, the arts have been ancillary to standard academic curriculum; our pilot school creates curriculum that centers on the Performing Arts. Our academic core courses: English, history, science and mathematics are driven by the Performing Arts. We believe, and are supported in these beliefs by studies that prove the involvement in the arts: enhances students’ self esteem, communication skills and performance in academic disciplines; improve students’ attitudes and perceptions of other cultures; and raise students’ scores on Standard Assessment Tests. (The Scholastic Aptitude Test {SAT} results from last year indicate that the average verbal scores for students enrolled in theatre classes were forty points higher than the national average, thirty points higher in math and sixty points higher than the national average of students who were not enrolled in any performing arts classes.) We offer rigorous classes in: theatre, dance, music and technical theatre; provide opportunities for students to be involved in our season of plays, music and dance performances; and create opportunities for our students to observe and work in the professional Performing Arts Community.

## LAHSA OBJECTIVES FOR THE ARTS

Artistic Perception: Students learn the essential vocabulary of each art's discipline and gain the basic knowledge and skills necessary to communicate in each art form.

Creative Expression: Students produce artworks by creating and performing them, as well as performing the works of others.

Historical and Cultural Context: Students learn to understand the arts in the context of the time and place of their creation. They develop a broad understanding of the artists and performers, their works, the effects that their society and times had on them and the effects of their artwork on society in the past and present.

Aesthetic Valuing: Students study sensory, intellectual, emotional and philosophical bases for understanding the arts and for making judgments about their form, content, technique and purpose in order to develop aesthetic sensibilities. Through study, reflection and direct experience, students develop criteria for arriving at personal judgment. Students formulate a personal aesthetic, which is then applicable to a lifelong, fulfilling experience in the arts.

Connections: Students express and communicate competency in the arts (creation, performance, production, analysis, history, culture, technology and appreciation) within and across all curricular areas.

### 3. KEY CHARACTERISTICS

#### ***Organization and Structure***

Los Angeles High School of the Arts will be a grade nine through twelve school. For the 2007-08 year we will be housed in the Lois Massey building at Belmont High School. This allows us twenty classrooms: one for our office, which includes space for our counselor, one for a Student-Parent Media Center, one for a faculty workroom with the remaining seventeen as classrooms. We will have a total of eighteen teachers (four English, one for each grade level; one ESL; one AP English (taught by the principal), three social-studies; three math; one Spanish; two science; two Special Education; and one Yoga/Dance). During our elective period, many teachers will teach theatre or technical design electives, other teachers will offer academic assistance classes.

#### ***Calendar and Schedule***

For our opening year, 2007-08, we will follow the single-track year schedule from September 4<sup>th</sup> through June 20<sup>th</sup> as requested by LAUSD central office budget department. Their reasoning was that the new academic year begins in just a few short months, and this would not be enough time to alert all district offices of our new schedule in order to maintain full services and support for our school. We are in complete agreement with this. Next year we wish to look at the possibility of having a shorter summer vacation. We do, however, wish to have some time off in the summers so our students can participate in the many enrichment programs offered to students on a traditional calendar. We are in communication and partnership with numerous universities such as UCLA, UC Berkley, USC who offer summer academic programs to augment our work, as well as art schools such as California Institute of the Arts, where the California State Summer School for the Arts offers their

summer arts enrichment program. We have not studied enough research and data to know the relationship between the length of vacations and student achievement, but we intend to do this before next year.

This year we experimented with a non-traditional schedule. In evaluating this schedule we felt that we served the students who needed remediation, but our arts program suffered. Based on our (the entire faculty's) reflections and discussions of the positive and negative impacts of this year's schedule we created an optimum schedule, taking all the needs of our students and programs into consideration. This year we had seventy-four minute academic periods and since we have a heavily projects-based curriculum this worked better than the typical fifty-eight minute period. We wanted to extend this time further for group and project work and have students focus on no more than three academic classes per day. We also wanted the arts classes to meet daily.

Students will have four academic block classes, but meet with no more than two a day. They will also have a performing arts class for one period out of the day. Some students will have an additional academic class; some will be involved in a production class, while others will have one or two academic assistance classes (remediation).

Each morning, 8:00-8:30 Monday-Thursday, Teachers have dedicated office hours for students conferences with their advisory students. Each student will be meeting individually with their advisory teacher twice a month. This unique policy will help us bring even more individual attention to our students and their needs.

On Fridays we will have Team Planning Days. Students will meet all of their classes on this day and leave school at 1:34 so teachers can meet in their teams (grade teams or department teams or arts teams) to work on curriculum and reflect on student work and students.

**Block Day**

<u>Block/Period</u>	<u>Times</u>	<u>Minutes</u>
Teacher Office Hours	8:00-8:30	30 (non-instructional)
Block A/Period 1 or 2	8:30-10:30	120
Block B/Period 3 or 4	10:40-12:40	120
LUNCH 12:40-1:10		30
Period 5 1:15-2:18		63
Period 6 2:26-3:29		63
Period 7 (Optional Elective) 3:35-4:38		63

**Team Planning Day**

<u>Period</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Minutes</u>	
Team Planning Time		8:00-8:30	30 (non-instructional)
Period1	8:30-9:10	40	
Period 2	9:15-9:55	40	
Advisory	10:00-11:00	60	
Period 3	11:05-11:45	40	
Period 4	11:50-12:30	40	
LUNCH	12:30-1:00	30	
Period 5	1:05-1:45	40	
Period 6	1:50-2:30	40	
Team Planning Time		2:30-3:30	60 (non-instructional)

**Full Day**

<u>Period</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Minutes</u>	
Period1	8:30-9:29	59	
Period 2	9:34-10:33	59	
Period 3	10:38-11:37	59	
Period 4	11:42-12:41	59	
Lunch	12:41-1:11	30	
Period 5	1:19-2:18	59	
Period 6	2:26-3:29	63	
Period 7(Optional Elective)		3:35-4:38	63

## **Finals Schedule**

(Repeats for 3 days to cover all 6 classes.)

<u>Period</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Minutes</u>
Final 1	8:30-10:30	120
Advisory	10:35-11:05	30
Final 2	11:10-1:10	120

## **Yearly Instructional Minutes Breakdown**

Instructional Days on a Traditional Calendar = 180

(does not include holidays, pupil free days, or buy-back days)

➤ **Fall Semester – 88 total days**

69 full/block days @ 389 minutes each

(8:30 am – 3:29 pm -30 minute lunch = 389 instructional minutes per day\*\*)

**69 x 389 = 26,841 minutes**

16 team planning days @ 330 minutes each

(8:30 am – 2:30 pm -30 minute lunch = 330 instructional minutes per day\*\*)

**16 x 330 = 5,280 minutes**

3 Finals Days @ 280 minutes each

(8:30 am – 1:10 pm – early dismissal/no lunch)

**3 x 280 = 840 minutes**

**Total Fall Instructional Minutes = 32,961**

(26,841 + 5,280 + 840)

➤ **Spring Semester has 92 total days**

72 full/block days @ 389 minutes each

(8:30 am – 3:29 pm -30 minute lunch = 389 instructional minutes per day\*\*)

**72 x 389 = 28,008 minutes**

17 team planning days @ 330 minutes each

(8:30 am – 2:30 pm -30 minute lunch = 330 instructional minutes per day\*\*)

**17 x 330 = 5,610 minutes**

3 Finals Days @ 280 minutes each

(8:30 am – 1:10 pm – early dismissal/no lunch)

**3 x 280 = 840 minutes**

**Total Spring Instructional Minutes = 34,458**

(28,008 + 5,610 + 840)

## **SUMMARY**

32,961 Fall Instructional Minutes

+34,458 Spring Instructional Minutes

**67,419 Total Instructional Minutes for 2007-2008**

(exceeds state mandated minutes by 2,619 minutes)

\*\*This does not include period 7 because it is an optional elective for STUDENTS. Not all students will take a period 7 class, therefore it is not part of the instructional day.

**Sample of Semester Instructional Minutes spent in the Classroom**  
**Fall Semester (Spring offers even more minutes.)**

**Periods 1-4**

30 Block Days x 118 min =	3540
16 Team Days x 43 min =	688
<u>4 Full Days x 59 min =</u>	<u>236</u>
Total Instructional Minutes	4464
<b>Total Instructional Hours</b>	<b>74.4</b>

**Periods 5 & 6**

60 Blocks Days x 59 min =	3540
16 Team Days x 43 min =	688
<u>4 Full Days x 59 min =</u>	<u>236</u>
Total Instructional Minutes	4464
<b>Total Instructional Hours</b>	<b>74.4</b>

**Period 7 (optional elective for students)**

60 Block Days x 70 min =	4200
(Does not meet on Team Days)	
<u>4 Full Days x 59 min =</u>	<u>236</u>
Total Instructional Minutes	4536
<b>Total Instructional Hours</b>	<b>75.6*</b>

\*This class will most likely start a week late to leave time for auditions, which would reduce the official hours by approximately 5, but they would be made up during tech. and performance week.

## 2007-2008 Yearlong Schedule

Month	Weekday	Date	Sched	Description
September	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>No School--Teacher Planning</b>
	Wednesday	5	Full	1st Day--all periods
	Thursday	6	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Friday	7	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Monday	10	Full	All periods--regular dismissal
	Tuesday	11	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	12	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>No School--Teacher Planning</b>
	Friday	14	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	17	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	18	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	19	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	20	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	21	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	24	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	25	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	26	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	27	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	28	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
October	Monday	1	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	2	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	3	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	4	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	5	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	8	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	9	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	10	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	11	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	12	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	15	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	16	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	17	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	18	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	19	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	22	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	23	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	24	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	25	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	26	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	29	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	30	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	31	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
November	Thursday	1	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	2	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	5	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	6	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	7	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	8	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	9	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	<b>Monday</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>No School--Veterans Day</b>
	Tuesday	13	Full	All periods--regular dismissal
	Wednesday	14	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	15	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	16	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	19	Full	All periods--regular dismissal
	Tuesday	20	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	21	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>No School--Thanksgiving</b>
	<b>Friday</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>No School--Thanksgiving</b>
	Monday	26	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	27	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	28	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	29	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	30	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>

Month	Weekday	Date	Sched	Description
December	Monday	3	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	4	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	5	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	6	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	7	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	10	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	11	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	12	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	13	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	14	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
<b>Winter Break 12/17-1/04</b>				
January	Monday	7	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	8	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	9	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	10	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	11	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	14	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	15	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	16	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	17	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	18	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	<b>Monday</b>	<b>21</b>		<b>No School--MLKJ Day</b>
	Tuesday	22	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	23	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Thursday	24	Full	All periods--regular dismissal
	Friday	25	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	28	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6-Finals Review
	Tuesday	29	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6-Finals Review
	Wednesday	30	Finals1	Finals Schedule <b>early dismissal</b>
	Thursday	31	Finals2	Finals Schedule <b>early dismissal</b>
February	Friday	1	Finals3	Finals Schedule <b>early dismissal</b>
	<b>Monday</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>No School--Teacher Planning</b>
	Tuesday	5	Block	1st Day Spring Sem-1,3,5 & 6
	Wednesday	6	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Thursday	7	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Friday	8	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Monday	11	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	12	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	13	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	14	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	15	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	<b>Monday</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>No School--President's Day</b>
	Tuesday	19	Full	All periods--regular dismissal
	Wednesday	20	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	21	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	22	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	25	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	26	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	27	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	28	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	29	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
March	Monday	3	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	4	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	5	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	6	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	7	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	10	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	11	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	12	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	13	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	14	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
<b>Spring Break 3/17-3/21</b>				

Month	Weekday	Date	Sched	Description
March	Monday	24	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	25	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	26	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	27	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	28	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	31	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
April	Tuesday	1	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	2	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	3	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	4	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	7	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	8	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	9	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	10	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	11	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	14	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	15	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	16	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	17	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	18	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	21	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	22	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	23	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	24	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	25	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	28	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	29	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	30	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
May	Thursday	1	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	2	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	5	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	6	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	7	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	8	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	9	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	12	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	13	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	14	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	15	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	16	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	19	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	20	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	21	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	22	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	23	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	<b>Monday</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>No School--Memorial Day</b>
	Tuesday	27	Full	All periods--regular dismissal
	Wednesday	28	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	29	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	30	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
June	Monday	2	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	3	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	4	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	5	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	6	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>
	Monday	9	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Tuesday	10	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Wednesday	11	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6
	Thursday	12	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6
	Friday	13	Team	All periods-- <b>early dismissal</b>

Month	Weekday	Date	Sched	Description
June	Monday	16	Block	Periods 1, 3, 5 & 6-Finals Review
	Tuesday	17	Block	Periods 2, 4, 5 & 6-Finals Review
	Wednesday	18	Finals1	Finals Schedule <b>early dismissal</b>
	Thursday	19	Finals2	Finals Schedule <b>early dismissal</b>
	Friday	20	Finals3	Finals Schedule <b>early dismissal</b>

Meetings & Events		
Date	Time	Event
9/12/07	5-7pm	Parent Reception
10/4/07		Fall Progress Grades Due
10/9/07	5-7:30 pm	Parent Conferences (All Students)
11/5/07		Fall Mid-term Grades Due
11/14/07	5-7:30 pm	Academic Concern Parent Conference (for any student with a D or Fail; to be scheduled by Advisory Teachers)
12/10/07		Fall Progress Grades Due
1/9/08	5-7:30 pm	Academic Concern Parent Conference (for any student with a D or Fail; to be scheduled by Advisory Teachers)
2/4/08		Fall Final Semester Grades Due
2/16/08	1-3pm	Parent Bar-B-Que (Saturday)
3/6/08		Spring Progress Grades Due
3/12/08		Parent Conferences (All Students)
4/9/08		Spring Midterm Grades Due
4/15/08	5-7:30 pm	Academic Concern Parent Conference (for any student with a D or Fail; to be scheduled by Advisory Teachers)
5/9/08		Spring Progress Grades Due
5/14/08	5-7:30 pm	Academic Concern Parent Conference (for any student with a D or Fail; to be scheduled by Advisory Teachers)
6/20/08		Spring Final Grades Due

### ***Class Size and Teacher Load***

Currently, our average class size is just below that of Belmont's student/teacher ratio (27:1 vs. 30:1). This is an average across all grades. Grade nine and eleven English classes have respectively an 18:1 and 22:1 ratio. Our Algebra classes have approximately a 22:1 ratio. Our elective classes are approximately 35:1. With the freedom to control our budget that the Pilot School model offers, we will, over the next two years, reduce all academic class to a maximum of 20:1 ratio. This small class size choice has made significant positive gains in the academic success of our students and in many other programs such as the Boston pilot schools.

### ***Instructional Grouping***

Our small learning community is dedicated to providing all of our students with a rigorous curriculum that will prepare them to be successful, educated members of our society upon graduation from high school. We will accept any student who has a desire to be a part of our program. Curriculum has been designed that meets California A-G requirements, as well as the California state framework, in addition to providing a solid foundation in the field of performing and technical arts. Our English and history classes are team-taught and have an interdisciplinary, project-based focus. Math and science classes are structured to teach students concepts that they can apply to their everyday lives. Our math teachers are currently developing authentic assessment projects for each semester, where students apply what they have learned to solve real-life problems. In the next two years we will build interdisciplinary units for math and science classes so they too will be team-taught. Our new teachers, in all disciplines, have committed to creating projects and working in an interdisciplinary manner.

We have teams of teachers in each grade level. Our ESL, Spanish and Special Education teachers will work with all of the teams. We group as many of our special education students into the same English and math classes so our resource teacher can co-teach the class. This was our first year doing this and we found it to be very successful for both the special education students and the students who needed extra help in these classes.

We not only work as teams across disciplines, but we also work together across grades. Our entire learning community uses the Jane Schaffer methodology of writing. We do this so we are all using the same writing terminology to simplify and clarify the writing process for our students. We write across the curriculum, so that all students are writing essays, reports, and reflections on their learning process. (In math, for instance, students might be asked to explain how they solved an Algebraic problem.) In addition to writing, we have developed vocabulary, grammar, and technology strands that run through grades nine through twelve.

With the exception of the Theatre Appreciation and Theatre Workshop classes students from all grade levels may take any of our performing arts and production classes. Our advisories also have mixed grade levels so our younger students can be mentored, motivated and inspired by the older students.

### ***Student Support***

There is an obvious need to personalize and improve education in the Belmont Zone of Choice. Belmont High School now serves over 4,300 students on three tracks. It is a

Program Improvement Eight school, with an API of 520, and ranking of level “1”. The enormity of Belmont’s population creates a lack of personalization which is a major factor for many of Belmont’s issues: poor attendance, low grades and test scores; low motivation and self-esteem; the challenges of English language learners, economic hardship and lack of academic support at home. As a small learning community we have worked hard to address these issues and as a Pilot School we must and will continue to better serve the needs of our students. Our small learning community will reflect the demographics of the Belmont Zone of Choice.

Student success is a priority. Each teacher is responsible for the students in his or her advisory through their entire high school career. Teachers will advise, counsel, and mentor their students. Our schedule has built in teacher office hours so that teachers have time to individually meet with students and check to see if their needs are being met. Along with the advisory period, students who need additional academic help in math or language arts will be offered remediation classes that re-teach basic skills as well as offer test preparation strategies. Teachers frequently stay after school to work with students who are not achieving. We offer an after school tutoring session. Next year we will identify students who need this help and work with parents to ensure their child attends these sessions.

In order to support student achievement students must first be in regular attendance. In 2005-06 Belmont attendance rate was 87% and our SLC attendance rate was 91%. Offering challenging classes with opportunities for hands-on experiences in the performing and technical arts has motivated many of our students, as has the sense of belonging in our SLC. The better attendance rates of our SLC in comparison to the rest of the school, along with senior and alumni surveys support this. We support our students who have attendance problems by meeting with them and their parents. Our new counselor speaks frequently with students and their parents when he sees a possible attendance problem.

We are continually working to support our students and this year we are working on better communication with our parents. Through our California Partnership Grant we have hired Mrs. Martinez, a parent of two of our graduates, who works part-time with us in our tutoring room and makes calls to parents to verify absences and help expand the communication between our parents and our faculty. She is also working on developing a core of parents who will help us work with all of our parents. Too often, parents do not feel welcome or encouraged to come to the school or they are fearful of it. This year we have seen many parents walk into our office to speak with our counselor or lead teacher about concerns they have for their son/daughter. We will keep encouraging this sharing. We have parent orientation meetings twice a year. We would like to expand that to four times a year. Our counselor has met with every one of our senior, junior and sophomore parents. He is currently working to set up meetings with each of our ninth graders’ parents. Teachers also frequently visit student’s homes. Last year all of our faculty members visited ninth grade students’ homes. We know that working with parents in partnership helps to ensure student success.

Students also receive support from their peers and through community organizations and our partners. Thirty of our juniors this year had mentors through our mentoring program with Rhino Records. We want to expand our partnerships with community agencies this year so they can help us work with our families to continue to change the culture of our

school to a college-going culture. With the recent grant awarded to Alliance for a Better Community we feel this would be an opportune time to do this.

Our curriculum also supports our students' needs. Belmont students are very quiet in the classroom and reticent to ask or answer questions in class, or voice their ideas. Our students are economically, linguistically, and academically disadvantaged and their motivation and self-esteem suffer as a result. Jerry Trusty and Giacomo Loiviva in a 1994 study found that, "Self-concept is positively enhanced through the arts according to a review of 57 studies." Student involvement is a great means of overcoming low motivation and low self-esteem. We mount three productions per year and over 200 students are involved in performing, crewing, designing or writing these shows. Field trips, guest speakers, alumni talks, mentors, job shadowing, and internships are also motivators that enhance our students' self-esteem and our at-risk students.

According to Los Angeles Unified School District data, Belmont High School has over 3,010 English Language Learners. According to a study by Lawrence O'Farrell, 1993, "Drama techniques were an effective method for promoting facility in English as a second language." Our English Language Learners benefit enormously from the theatre program, study of plays, and the oral component emphasis in each of our classes. In one of our recent productions, Daniel Zamora, who had only been in this country for two years, had a lead in one of our plays.

### ***Enrollment***

We will open all four grades as a Pilot School next year. Based on our current student population and eighth grade enrollment numbers for the Belmont Zone of Choice, we anticipate an enrollment of 375-400 students for the 2007-08 school year.

## **4. Governance**

### ***Organization of Governing School Council***

The Governing School Council will be composed of the principal, Esther Soliman, faculty members, parents, students, and community stakeholders, complying with the composition of the School Site Council model. Selection on this committee will be established in the same way School Site Councils are created. The GSC will meet monthly (unless a special meeting is necessary and called for by the president) and their responsibilities are as follows: review the vision of the school, approve the annual budget, and approve the annual election-to work agreement. The GSC will also be responsible for managing the Internal Appeal Process.

### ***Decision Making & Faculty Input***

Unlike the hierarchy of most schools, the major decisions: curriculum, schedule, and day-to-day operating procedures will be made as a team—faculty, principal and student representatives (when it is appropriate). This team will also make budget recommendations to the GSC. When it is not possible for the entire faculty to meet and collaborate, day-to-day decision-making authority will fall to the principal, Esther Soliman. Team teachers will meet weekly to work on curricular issues and individual student needs; the faculty as a whole meets weekly to discuss school-wide issues as well as individual student concerns. At the end of each semester, students and teachers are

asked to fill out an End-of-Semester Reflection where they comment upon the success of the community and its programs and suggest ideas for improvement. The GSC, faculty, principal and student representatives will read and review these comments to assist the council and team in making informed decisions for the next semester and year.

### ***Title I Advisory Council Requirements***

A compensatory orientation meeting for all parents will be held at the beginning of the academic year for both our Bilingual Program and our Title I program. Parents will be invited to self-nominate for the English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC) and the Compensatory Advisory Committee (CAC). More than 50% of the members of these committees must be parents. Parents of ELAC must have a son or daughter currently attending our school. We will also invite members of the community, teachers, and students to sit on these committees. Just as in the SSC, a designee from Local District 4 will conduct the voting and certification of the members who will sit on these councils. These councils will meet monthly and provide written recommendations to the Governing Council.

## 5. Budget

### ***General Budget Organization***

While the district has not yet released the exact amount of our operating budget, the following explanation describes how we intend to organize the budget this year and how, in the future, this will be the budget recommendations to the GSC. The majority of our funds will spent working to reduce class size and to pay teachers to work after-school with students--both in tutoring and on extra-curricular projects. We believe and have witnessed how much students can improve socially and academically with more direct attention and support from adults in their life. We intend to provide as much of that as possible.

We have requested a budget that includes support staff (including SSA, Office Technician, college/career/scholarship assistant), textbook, supplementary material, and basic classroom and office supplies. We have also requested the start up budget to include a laptop for each student. We have a cart of 35 computers and we have found that these computers are a great motivator to our students. We have seen that when given the best technology and equipment, students will produce more and work harder. This will help prepare our students for the rapidly changing digital world in which we live.

We would like to use funding to pay a full-time parent representative, to not only contact parents on behalf of teachers, but also to organize parents, parent meetings, and social events. We believe this position is key to gaining more parental support. We have had this position this past year and paid for it with our California Partnership Academy grant, but it seems the grant is in danger as the state is suggesting we are no longer a school within a school, one of the grant requirements.

A portion of the budget will also be spent on curricular field-trips. We intend to take the students out of the classroom and into experiences of the vast cultures that Los Angeles has to offer. It is essential for students to connect their learning to the world outside of school. (Please see our curriculum for examples of the types of field trips we plan.)

Bringing in guest artists, who are experts in their fields, to teach workshops after school to students, will be another area of budgetary priority. We want our students to

experience the many opportunities that the field of performing arts has to offer. That means extending their learning support beyond our eighteen teachers.

Money spent on professional development will focus on pervasive, long-term plans rather than short-lived spurts of information. For example, this summer every single teacher will attend Complex-Instruction training together. Not only will the teachers learn this proven set of techniques, but they will also use their own curriculum to develop CI lesson plans. This creates continuity both horizontally and vertically in the curriculum. We will also pay teachers for weekly meetings that focus on discussions about individual student concerns.

We will examine the possibility of using Beyond the Bell funds to fund our bridge program for our incoming ninth graders and intersession program for our tenth through twelfth graders.

Once we are apprised of the exact amount of funding as well as any spending restrictions, we will be able to provide a detailed budget plan. The Governing School Council, based on the recommendations of the faculty, will prepare and submit the annual budget.

The Governing Council will be responsible for keeping the school solvent and using the budget monies in ways that support the vision of the school. Once our council is formed, they will develop a Single Plan for Student Achievement, aligned to our school's vision, and ensure money is used to support this plan. Belmont's Title I Coordinator, Dalton Cole, and the Bilingual Coordinator, Diane Tydeman have volunteered to help us when needed. Our SAA will be Lupe Nunez and she is currently Belmont's Accountant. She currently manages all the budgets, with the exceptions of Title I and Bilingual, for Belmont so she will be an invaluable resource to the Governing Council. Lupe will maintain accurate records of our school's budgets and provide monthly budget reports for the Governing Council. All budget expenditures will be transparent and readily available for review from the Governing Council, Principal, Faculty, and LAUSD.

We understand that to financially support our pilot school at the level we know is needed, we will need to look for outside funding sources. We have a California Partnership Academy annual grant of \$80,000 per year, but it seems we may lose this grant. Isabel Morales, one of our faculty members, received a \$15,000 grant this year from Best Buys to secure funding for her photography advisory and another grant for \$1,500. We have successful experience in grant writing and we will continue to look for grants. We may also hire a grant writer who will write his/her salary into the grant. The Center for Collaborative Education supports the Boston Pilot Schools and once a support arm for the pilot schools is established in Los Angeles, we hope this will also assist us in finding financial support.

## 6. Curriculum and Instruction *Student Expectations*

By graduation, we expect students to be conscientious and curious life-long learners who will have a life-long involvement in the arts. They will be goal oriented, confident problem solvers. By graduation, students will understand and be prepared to address social needs of their communities. Students will be able to communicate clearly in a variety of styles and methods dependent on the situation

at hand. They will understand the civic workings, challenges, and historical relevance of their communities and the world at large. They will be college ready.

### ***Instructional Philosophy***

Our teaching philosophy focuses on supporting students and preparing them to be productive, civic minded adults who are successful problem-solvers and leaders in their own education. To this end, our faculty meets weekly, both in instructional teams and as a whole, to constantly and consistently evaluate students' work and to modify curriculum to meet the changing needs of students. We also plan professional developments to continue to look at best practices and incorporate those we feel will most benefit our students.

### **The Interdisciplinary Approach: Coordinated Thematic Units**

Thematic units engage students in learning, capture their interest, and involve them in discussions that stir controversy, debate, and critical analysis. They are intellectually and emotionally relevant to students because they are designed with contemporary, community specific details in mind (See our curriculum, Appendix A, for specific examples).

The interdisciplinary approach to teaching envisions traditional subject classes as a unified and organic whole, rather than as compartmentalized individual pursuits. Teachers in an interdisciplinary setting work cooperatively to design, integrate, and administer curriculum that is mutually supportive and thematically linked. This emphasis on thematic units, team teaching, combined classes, and interdisciplinary projects encourages students to incorporate the various intelligences and knowledge from each of their classes and to recognize and build connections in their studies and their lives. These methods teach students to be leaders in their own education. The interdisciplinary approach also challenges our instructors to broaden their own appreciation and knowledge base of fields outside their chosen subject area.

### **The Interdisciplinary Approach: Action-Based Projects**

The basic premise of the action-based approach to curriculum integration is that successful, productive adults carry out a purposeful problem solving process at work and in other areas of their lives. By completing appropriately scaled down versions of adult action-based projects, students are both developing the capacity for success in their personal and work life and demonstrating their degree of preparedness for work or for the next level of education.

Each semester of work will culminate in an action-based project requiring students to work cooperatively on directed projects incorporating the skills and knowledge gained from their various classes. Additionally, seniors write an original one-act play. They also produce, direct, design, stage-manage, act, dance or choreograph for the annual LAHSA New Plays Festival and Dance Concert.

Through our professional development this year, which is focused on Complex Instruction, the interdisciplinary work and the project-based learning we are continually working to create opportunities for our students to be leaders in their own education. Next year for our professional development we will work with Wildwood School and create a senior portfolio process similar to the one they use. "Students build a portfolio with required assignments in core academic subject areas including Humanities,

mathematics, science, and the arts as well as documenting their personal growth and future goals. This portfolio is the foundation for the graduation exhibition that seniors must present in order to receive their diploma. The one-hour presentation includes a student's academic work, three senior projects that document an academic passion, a community involvement project and a personal challenge, and plans for college and career. An essential question frames each student's presentation. For example, senior Brendan Bigelow is asking, 'How can I use and overcome my personal qualities to develop my critical thinking, analysis and work process?' As Brendan exhibits his portfolio and speaks about his future, he will use his question to deeply examine his personal motivation and the qualities he needs to succeed in his future."

### ***Achievement Gap***

By September of 2008, we will offer a 20:1 student/teacher ratio. Our unique block schedule offers room for an additional five-credit class to help students succeed in subjects in which their skills need improvement. Beginning in July, we will offer a pre-grade 9 "bridge" program (offering classes in math, language arts and technology), to help ensure that students are prepared for the rigors of high school. Our parent representative and advisory mentors help support the students and their families beyond the classroom. Through smaller classes, additional enrichment and remediation, mentoring, parent connections, continual professional development and weekly time devoted to curriculum planning and evaluation of student work, we strongly feel that we can close the achievement gap.

### ***LAHSA Curriculum***

Please see Appendix A for our curriculum.

### ***A-G Requirements***

Please see Appendix B for our matrix of classes that includes our A-G course offerings.

### ***Literacy and Numeracy for Diverse Learners***

Writing, reading, and skill building is developed across the curriculum. Students now keep portfolios of their writing and projects throughout their four years of English classes; next year this will be expanded to all academic classes. In addition, with the assistance of our 2008-09 professional development at Wildwood School, students will be provided with time to reflect on their collective work so they may develop and create formal presentations. Students will give these presentations on their work at the tenth and twelfth grade years. Recording and reflecting on work in this way helps students to take ownership over their learning experience, and, ultimately, become better communicators.

We serve a population of students who have traditionally scored well below the national average in math on achievement tests. We are developing a uniquely blended curriculum to teach mathematics. Currently there are three major philosophies of math instruction: Integrated Math, College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM) and the traditional "drill and kill" or memorization and practice style. Using Complex Instruction, we intend to blend these three methods to address the needs of a diverse learning community. Additionally, we will be revising the curriculum of our theatrical design courses to include real-life math problems that students solve with strategies learned in their core-curriculum math

classes. As mentioned before, we are also developing integrated science and math curriculum, so that students are offered similar strategies to solve a variety of real-life problems.

### ***Community Resources to Enhance Curriculum***

Our curriculum is rich with opportunities for interaction with the community. As our ninth graders study each World Culture they take a trip to visit the cultural epicenters of that culture's Los Angeles counterpart. During the final unit on immigration, students interview people in our community who have arrived here in Los Angeles from all over the world. Our tenth graders interview community members who are of Japanese decent and visit the Japanese Museum. They interview holocaust survivors through the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, and visit the Museum of Tolerance during their unit on WWII. Recently teachers took tenth graders to a Facing History and Ourselves lecture series. They saw and heard Don Cheadle and John Prendergast discuss Darfur, the first genocide in the twenty-first century, and hopefully the last. In the eleventh grade, students attend theatrical events that connect with the historical events they study in U.S. History and American Literature. During their interdisciplinary unit on labor unions, our twelfth graders have an opportunity to hear speakers involved in the labor movement in Los Angeles. In addition, by their senior year, our students all complete a Service Learning Project, in which they research a need or problem in their local community and develop a course of action to address or improve it. This year teachers have also taken students on trips to Leadership Conferences, the most recent was a Latina Conference where our young women met and spoke with successful Latinas in the fields of politics, law, education, and entertainment.

All of our students frequently attend plays, dance and music concerts. Our elective classes have the opportunity to attend four or more theatrical events outside our campus each year (usually through the Center Theatre Group's Young Audience Program). The teachers in core-academic classes use the themes in these productions to connect to and extend the curriculum. We also bring in local professional designers and actors to perform or provide questions-answer seminars for the students.

We have partnerships with numerous arts organizations such as Shakespeare Festival LA, Will Power to Youth, RedCat Theatre, Will & Company, The Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival, and Rhino Records who provide mentorships and/or internships for our students. We also work with many individual artists, obtaining grants so they can be guest teachers and artists. For instance we wrote a city grant with Radha Carmen and she taught and directed a Kathakali Indian Theatre piece with our students. We have worked with Southwest Law School in an interview class for law students. Our students played the roles of witnesses and the law students interviewed them and received feedback from their professors. We also have partnerships with higher institutes: Los Angeles City College Theatre Academy and California Institute of the Arts and these schools have offer classes to our students, free performances and workshops. Both colleges provided an orientation day to their schools for our juniors and seniors.

Freedom over scheduling and budgeting that the Pilot School model provides will help us connect to the community even more than we already do.

### ***Diverse Learners***

Our instructional model includes offering services to students with special educational needs. RSP students are enrolled in the general education classes. We will be hiring a Resource teacher and Special Day teacher, both of whom will co-teach, collaborate with, and offer pull out services as needed to ensure that RSP and SDC students are gaining access to the general education curriculum along with their peers. Although students are identified as either RSP or SDC, the special education teachers will work collaboratively to develop a schedule that ensures all students are receiving their necessary services. Weekly faculty meetings are held to discuss individual student progress, address any concerns about students or the program, and offer strategies that can be used by individual teachers to ensure that their students are given all accommodations and modifications set forth in their Individualized Education Plan. Most of our special education students have been involved in our productions. Three special education students were in our last production, *Twelfth Night*, and five others worked on crews or in the front of the house.

In addition to the inclusion of Special Education in our program, we intend to offer additional differentiated instruction for the diverse learning population of this school. For example, besides including SDAIE methodology into each curriculum, our proposed schedule has the flexibility to offer extra academic support both as a class and after school for our English Language Learners. While the learning population is diverse in its needs, our curriculum is rigorous and requires all students, when given the appropriate support, to use critical thinking skills in order to meet the challenges of this rapid-paced, media-rich world.

We also offer AP courses in Government, U.S. History, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, and Calculus. Honors credit is offered to students through differentiated curriculum in core academic classes.

### ***Connecting Parents to Student Achievement***

Parent involvement is an area we have been able to improve on over the last few years; with the help of our California Partnership Academy grant funds, we hired the parent of two alumni to work as our parent representative. She is an immediate connection between the teachers and parents. When a student is absent, misses his or homework, has low scores, or is tardy our teachers e-mail or call Ms. Martinez. She immediately contacts the parent and reports back to the teacher with the result. The parents have one central person with whom they consistently and often connect. This system provides invaluable support to our teachers and our counselor and allows them to serve student needs more quickly and responsively with family support behind them. This has resulted in better attendance and better homework return rates, as well as more accountability among students. Due to funding limits, we can only afford to hire Ms. Martinez for a limited number of hours. We hope to expand her hours and utilize her connection to the parents to draw more parents in (beyond those that will sit on the GSC) for school-wide programs and extra-curricular support.

## **7. Student Assessment and Graduation Requirements**

The Draconian regulations and sanctions that come with No Child Left Behind are damaging to the self-esteem of communities, faculties, and students, and do not paint an accurate picture of student achievement. Standardized testing can be useful, as a small

portion of the total representation of student achievement. We do review with each student his/her test scores and work with each one to set goals for the next year's test. We provide test taking strategies and test reviews for CAHSEE and the CST because students will do better on a test when they know the format and have reviewed sample questions. This is done in the advisory classes and during a review day in the academic classes.

We do examine data that we request from our data coordinator. This is one of the means of reviewing our program. For instance, in 2006-07, we had 202 students take the English portion of the CASHEE exam with a 75% pass rate and 202 students who took the math portion of the exam with a 62% pass rate. Both of these percentages are higher than the school and district's pass rates. Last year all but two of our seniors passed the CASHEE test, and one of these students was in our special education program. This year we have five seniors who still need to pass one of these exams, and two of these students have special needs. Our goal is a 100% pass rate. In addition to classes, we work informally and individually with juniors and seniors who need to pass these exams. Despite the fact that we currently score above Belmont, the scores are still far below what they should be. When we are able to reduce class size, offer more remediation, enrichment, and study skills classes, we hope to see these scores greatly improve.

We believe a more accurate picture of student achievement is accomplished when students are given multiple styles of assessments: project-based, multiple choice, essay, posters/displays, oral presentations, power point demonstrations, recitations, reenactments, mock trials, real-world problems, service learning projects, and performances. This holistic approach allows students to use and strengthen their multiple intelligences. We continually use formative assessments that help us know what students have learned and what we need to re-teach. For instance, Mr. Reconco and Ms. Morales teach the research paper in the tenth grade. Students write a short research paper on a topic of their interest so the teachers can see what they need to re-teach—*précis* writing, synthesizing information from disparate sources, structuring, documentation, etc. before the students research and write a full research paper on World War II. When the eleventh grade teachers teach the research paper they review the research papers their students wrote in the tenth grade. This way, they build on students' knowledge and assist those who had difficulties, because they will be able to identify the difficulties ahead of time. We also use summative assessments. Teachers examine the results of these assessments to evaluate teaching methodologies and the assessments themselves. As a learning community we wish to help students develop their strengths and eradicate their weaknesses.

Students will self-assess their portfolio of work. Students will reflect on this work and on their learning process. These portfolios will be kept in their advisory class and their advisors will periodically review the work with each student.

(Please see the Appendix C for samples of our major assessments from our classes.)

Our graduation requirements will meet and exceed the state requirements. As stated in our curriculum section of this proposal, we will have "Students build a portfolio with required assignments in core academic subject areas including Humanities, mathematics, science, and the arts as well as documenting their personal growth and future goals. This portfolio is the foundation for the graduation exhibition that seniors must present in order

to receive their diploma. The one-hour presentation includes a student's academic work, three senior projects that document an academic passion, a community involvement project and a personal challenge, and plans for college and career. An essential question frames each student's presentation."

Students must pass all required classes, meet all state requirements, have been involved in one of our productions each year, and, (after 2008-09) successfully completed their sophomore review and senior projects and presentation. These students will be ready for graduation from our program and college ready. Some students may graduate in three and one-half years, others in four and still others in five or six. Parents, each individual student, the counselor, and faculty members will work collaboratively to set graduation dates and goals.

## 8. Leadership and Staffing

Our principal's thoughts about leadership follow, "A school leader is responsible for creating an environment that encourages others to bring their creative ideas, best practices and finest work to the team to share, inspire and instruct one another. The leader models the values that all educational groups should aspire to: respect for all members, excellent listening skills, reserved judgment, openness to new ideas and practices, sincere contributions and honest critiques, an ability to resolve conflict in a healthy manner, and a sense of joy and wonder for the work. The classroom, whether it is inside a building or in our natural environment, is a sacred space and the leader should create and help to maintain this understanding within the group and with others from outside the learning community."

A new vision of school leadership is one that focuses on instruction. According to Richard F. Elmore, "Leadership is guidance and direction of instructional improvement." This kind of leadership acknowledges that a leader does not manage the people who will cause the improvement rather the leader will remove all obstacles to these individuals finding within themselves the tools necessary to improve instruction. Leaders provide time for the process of self-reflection and engagement necessary to bring a staff together to focus on the needs of the students. Our school leadership will not be "compliance driven" but rather it will be "idealism driven."

Rather than a hierarchical leadership style our school will have a more democratic model. The principal, Esther Soliman, will handle day-to-day decision making, while the faculty—in teams and collectively—will become the leadership body for most curricular issues.

Student involvement in our leadership structure is vital. Not only will students have seat(s) on the GSC, but there will also be a student leadership class that is made up of at least one representative from each of the advisories in order to provide a voice for the entire student body in the decision-making process.

Parents and community members will also have seats on the GSC and provide valuable input into the operations and instruction of our program.

Our school must truly embrace the notion of “life-long learners” and apply it to our leadership. If leaders are not learning, they cannot inspire that desire in others, if they are not change agents, then they certainly cannot motivate those under their care to be such. Furthermore, learning must not be done in isolation for anyone, thus learning becomes a social activity for adults as well as students. This in turn leads to distributive leadership, for no one holds all the skills, talents and information necessary to lead a school community. A strong leadership model reflects all the members of the learning community: students; teachers; parents; clerical; custodial; community members; business, art, and higher education partners and encourages active participation from all of these members of the learning community.

### ***Evaluation process***

“New systems that include evaluation as an authentic part of teachers' everyday practice, with supports for regular reflection, are naturally taking root, as hierarchical controlling structures give way to environments that sustain collegial interactions.” (Sclan, 1994)

The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future (NCTAF), which created a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellence in all of America's schools, recommends that the NBPTS's standards become the cornerstone for teacher evaluation (Darling-Hammond, 1996; NCTAF, 1996). The NBPTS's assessments help teachers reflect and learn from their practice.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (Please see Appendix D) will be our cornerstone for teacher evaluations. A set of model performance-based licensing standards for "new teachers" that are compatible with the NBPTS's certification standards has been developed by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers and we will use these with our new teachers. (Please see the Appendix for the INTASC standards for new teachers.)

All eligible teachers will be encouraged to apply for National Board Certification. Over the summer we will work as a team to develop a collaborative teacher evaluation system based on the NBPTS and the INTASC standards. This system will include multiple visits by the principal and by other teachers, videotaping of classes, reflective conferences, discussions and evaluations of curriculum, assessments and student work. Student evaluations will also be included in our system.

### ***Staffing Plan***

Our 2007-08 budget, developed with the current norm charts and from the “road show” allows us eighteen teachers, one counselor and one principal. Next year when we are not straddling the old system of budgeting and the pilot school model, we intend to increase our teaching staff. This year we will have: four English, one ESL, two Special Ed, three Math, three Social-Science, two science, one Spanish, and one and one-half P.E./Dance Instructor. Our support staff will consist of one SSA, office technician, one part-time data Coordinator and one college/scholarship/career advisor. Depending on our projected Title One, Bilingual and Carl Perkins Grant monies, we hope to hire one person to coordinate all of these areas for our small population of students. We wish to hire people who are willing to be flexible and work collaboratively to ensure the needs of our students in the LAHSA community are met. Too often, the comprehensive model of

staffing and administration keeps people isolated in their work areas (both physically and mentally) so that people are unaware how they and their work are connected to a whole. The nature of that kind of a system nurtures apathy and invites frustration. When everyone feels connected to a whole, they become active stakeholders, accountable to the entire community.

### ***Recruitment & Selection***

For the 2007-08 year, seven members of our design team volunteered to be on our interview committee. We will continue to have a staffing committee who oversees recruitment and selection, and this will be on a voluntary basis. Currently we are using the Virtual Interviews, the TEP and Teach LA UCLA teacher training programs, as well as LAUSD job fairs to recruit teachers. In the future, we hope to build on more community partners to help us advertise and recruit faculty, staff, and additional guest teaching artists.

### ***Staffing for Special Ed and ESL Instruction***

We intend to keep at least one ESL instructor and two Special Ed instructors as part of the staff based on current percentages of students needing ESL and Special Ed instruction in the Belmont area. Each year, part of our data collection will include the demographics of our population and the consequent need for change in our staffing of these positions. The size of our community and the control we have over budgeting will help us quickly and effectively meet these changing needs.

## 9. Elect-to-Work Agreement

### ***The Agreement***

As a faculty member of Los Angeles High School of the Arts (LAHSA), I understand I am asked to put students needs first at all times. When planning the curriculum, I agree to work creatively to meet the diverse learning styles and needs of our student population. I have read and agree with the LAHSA mission statement and intend to use project-based, constructive learning whenever possible in my curriculum. In order to do this, I agree to teach, plan, and reflect collaboratively. My lessons and curriculum will be developed by my teaching team, which will include my grade-level team teachers as well as other content specific teachers. I know that LAHSA aims to have interdisciplinary curriculum that works horizontally at grade-level and that builds vertically throughout a student's four-year education with us. In order to plan and implement this kind of curriculum I agree to use my assigned team planning time to meet with my teaching team in order to assess student needs, reflect on student work, and to revise and develop curriculum.

On a team planning days, classes are shortened and I am expected to stay from 1:34 until 3:26 and work collaboratively with my colleagues on curriculum planning and student assessments. In addition to team planning, I agree to meet for five days of professional development, for our Complex Instruction training from July 30—August 3, 2007. I will meet with my team members during the vacation until we have satisfactorily reviewed and revised all curriculum for the year. I will also attend a weekly two hour meeting after school to collaborate with the entire faculty. Whenever grant and district money permits, I will be paid for this time, although I understand that LAHSA is not able to pay me for all time spent working with students and faculty outside of the school day.

I know that the focus of this school is the performing arts. I agree to support the arts within my curriculum and teaching methodology. I will attend LAHSA events whenever

possible to support the students; to this end, I agree to at least attend all major performances, usually three a year. In addition to attending extra-curricular events, I agree to help supervise or to lend my support to at least one extra-curricular event each semester. (For example, some of our faculty members are design advisors for the productions, some direct, some organize concessions for events, others do marketing for events.)

I will attend all parent meetings and conferences, ninth grade orientation, and, whenever possible, other meetings that are essential to the well being of our learning community.

I know that teaching our population of students means being open-minded, flexible, creative, and compassionate. I will consistently demonstrate these qualities while interacting with the students and fellow faculty members.

In keeping with the spirit of creative flexibility, I agree to the daily and annual schedule proposed in the RFP, which will in the future be ratified by the Governing School Council. I know this schedule offers our students opportunities for more credits and additional remediation, not to mention that it prioritizes academics while giving ample time for elective work that does not conflict with academic work.

I understand that as need arises, I will be asked to take on duties beyond my daily teaching to support students and to build our community.

### ***Internal Appeals Process for Faculty Concerns***

LAHSA will use the Internal Appeals Process (IAP) that appears in the memo of understanding between LAUSD and UTLA. (Please see Appendix E for the full text of the IAP.)

## 10. Professional Development

Our professional development will be relevant, meaningful and directly related to student achievement. Our professional development will have clear goals and continuity. We will be accountable for incorporating what we learn into our practice. For instance, the entire faculty has been trained and uses the Jane Schaffer method of writing. This has been extremely helpful in teaching our students structure in their writing. Using one set of writing terms simplifies and clarifies the writing process for our students. In Ms. Soliman's AP English class, for example, before students were gathered into academies she would have students who did not even know what a thesis statement was. Now she starts the academic years months ahead of where she used to start because her students have been trained in structuring an essay and there has been vertical as well as horizontal continuity in this practice. Our new teachers will also be trained in this process.

This year, as a faculty, we decided to focus on Complex Instruction for our professional development. "This goal of this instruction is to provide academic access and success for all students in heterogeneous classrooms. Complex Instruction (CI) has three major components: 1) Multiple ability curricula are designed to foster the development of higher-order thinking skills through group work activities organized around a central concept or big idea. The tasks are open-ended, requiring students to work interdependently to solve problems. Most importantly, the tasks require a wide array of

intellectual abilities so that students from diverse backgrounds and different levels of academic proficiency can make meaningful contributions to the group task. Research has documented significant achievement gains in classrooms using such curricula. 2) Using special instructional strategies, the teacher trains the students to use cooperative norms and specific roles to manage their own groups. The teacher is free to observe groups carefully, to provide specific feedback, and to treat status problems that cause unequal participation among group members. 3) To ensure equal access to learning, teachers learn to recognize and treat status problems. Sociological research demonstrates that in CI, the more that students talk and work together, the more they learn. However, students who are social isolates or students who are seen as lacking academic skills often fail to participate and thus learn less than they would if they were more active in the groups. In CI, teachers use status treatments to broaden students' perceptions of what it means to be smart, and to convince students that they each have important intellectual contributions to make to the multiple-ability task.” This methodology evolved from over twenty years of research at the Stanford School of Education.

Some of our faculty members have had training in this instruction, but not the full five-day training that is recommended. Some of the faculty has used this instruction and although they feel they are in the early stages of working with it, they see how valuable it will be for students. Complex Instruction will help us to be successful in our mission to ensure our students become “creative, artistic, cooperative young adults who can articulate their ideas, meet problems with creative solutions, and play strong roles in their communities.”

Glenn West, a CI trainer, will be coming to our school for the full five-day training: July 30-June 3, and all faculty members, as it is stated in our elect to work agreement, will be present for this training. All faculty members have agreed to develop one CI unit per semester. We will stagger the teaching of these units as part of our agreement with Glenn so he will be able to make six visits per class, videotape two classes per teacher, and conduct six after class conferences with each teacher. He will also schedule a time with each teacher to review and respond to the CI unit prior to its being taught. Teachers have also agreed to continue each year to teach one CI unit per semester.

In 2008-09 the focus of our professional development will be the creation and implementation of a version of the Wildwood portfolios and presentations for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

## 11. Student Support

When we became a small learning community our philosophy was that we wanted to put students' needs first. Our curriculum and schedule were geared towards maximizing student achievement. With that in mind we have established an Advisory Period and a Period Six Essential Skills class. During Advisory students may seek help from their teachers if they need it—academic and/or personal. During Sixth Period, students are given the time to complete homework, read ahead, or prepare for upcoming tests. When a student is having trouble in a particular class, that student may meet with the teacher who teaches that class during Sixth Period. All ninth grade teachers have a conference Period Six. During Sixth Period, those students who are all caught up with their regular work are encouraged to practice for the CAHSEE.

As for English language learners we are fortunate to have all our faculty members hold certificates for working with English language learners. Our staff uses ELD and SDAIE methodology to teach their curriculum. As a bonus, ten of our fourteen teachers are fluent Spanish speakers.

For our special education students we will have a special education teacher who rotates from class to class to help each individual student. During Sixth Period these students will have access to the special education teacher so they can receive an hour of help with homework or ask any questions they may have from that day's lessons.

To further help our students succeed, every teacher in our school has agreed to make themselves available either before or after school for one-on-one tutoring sessions.

For those students who find it difficult to come to school and or remain in class, help will be provided according to the student's situation. First we will find out why students are missing school and or skipping class and address those issues to help the student commit to coming and staying in class. If the problem persists, we will bring in their parents so that together the parents, the students and we can come up with a solution to alleviate the situation. If students continue to ditch and miss school entirely, further measures will be taken, such as involving community services, the district attorney's office, or even Rampart's Boot Camp. What actions we take will be made on a case-by-case basis.

As we have done in recent years we will continue to work with outreach programs like Gateways, MALDEF and SALEF. These programs help students with mental health issues, attendance issues, low grades, lack of motivation and personal and legal issues that students may be confronting. MALDEF and SALEF have also helped our students with scholarships, assistance with college applications, tutoring, mentoring, counseling and internships. Through the pilot school meetings we have started talking with CARECEN and ABC (Alliance for a Better Community) and we wish to pursue working relationships with both of these organizations in our endeavor to give students the maximum opportunities for success.

## 12. Family and Community Engagement

Throughout this application we have written about our extensive engagement with our families.

As we have done in the past we intend to invite parents, community members, local business owners, local colleges and universities to help us help our students. It is our goal to provide each of our students with an opportunity for a mentorship and/or internship. For the last five years we have enjoyed a partnership with Youth Mentoring Connection and Rhino Records. Each year they take up to 30 students (juniors) and offer each one of them the opportunity to have a mentor. Both YMC and Rhino Records have been gracious to provide many of our students with guidance and an opportunity to see options in life they do not have access to in their community. We will continue these partnerships and challenge other big businesses to step in and offer these opportunities to the kids who may one day be part of their work force.

We intend to continue our partnership with LACC by continuing to send our students there to take college level courses for high school and college credit. We invite universities from the UC and CSU systems, and private schools to come to our campus to recruit and promote their schools to our juniors and seniors. We will invite schools such as Cal State LA and UCLA to send their students to our campus and help our juniors and seniors prepare for SAT's and Advanced Placement Tests. We also have a partnership with California Institute of the Arts.

(Please refer to Section Six to review the community and artistic support for our school. We have included, in Appendix F, letters indicating the support we have from our larger community.)

### 13. A Safe and Secure Campus

For our students to feel safe they must know and understand what steps are being taken to ensure their safety. All students in our school will be made aware of and be introduced to the security staff. If the security staff is familiar with all our students they will know who belongs on the campus. We are located in a modular building that holds twenty classrooms and we will have a security guard on duty throughout the entire school day. It is a very small space that she/he will be guarding and therefore his/her presence will be constantly visible.

Communication with our student body is necessary for ensuring a safe campus. We want our students to be aware of the dangers that exist in and around our school. At the beginning of each semester we will meet with all our students and parents and one topic we will address is our school policy for safety. We will also introduce our security guard. We feel that if our students know the person who is here to protect them it will be easier for them to come forward when problems arise.

Our campus is safe, however, the surrounding area of the campus is not. In the last few months two of our students were held up and robbed. Local and school police, were notified, but often very little is done about this situation. We will continue to work with school police and LAPD to provide a safe passage home for our students.

The issues of conflict resolution and appreciation for diversity will be addressed in our advisory period. At the start of the school year, our students are given a choice to be part of one of our advisories. Each advisory has a particular focus and Ms. Vargas's advisory addresses the issues of conflict resolution and appreciation for diversity. She has provided us with activities and games that require students to listen to each other, become tolerant of each others' likes and dislikes, and respect diversity. The faculty models conflict resolution and appreciation for diversity. When issues in class arise concerning these two topics teachers use these moments for teaching and learning.

Our curriculum is embedded with respecting and accepting those who are different from us. (See Appendix A, Curriculum) From the first day our students enter our classrooms they are engaged in group activities. Students get to work with students they know and those they don't know so that by the end of our first semester, everyone knows each other. The bonds our students and faculty build through their Advisory classes encourages students to communicate and be open with each other. These traits help increase our student's abilities for conflict resolution and most important it helps them diminish the chances for conflicts with the student body and with our school's faculty.

## 14. Design Team Profile and Planning Process

Design Team Members:

Charlie Boodman	9 <sup>th</sup> grade English
Edwin Galan	Geometry, Math Analysis, AP Calculus
Rigoberto Magallon	Counselor
Elizabeth Mora	9 <sup>th</sup> grade Cultural Geography
Isabel Morales	10 <sup>th</sup> & 12 <sup>th</sup> grade History
Tara Pearson	12 <sup>th</sup> grade English, acting, directing, set design
Andres Reconco	10 <sup>th</sup> grade English, lighting design
Robert Richardson	AP English, acting, directing
Trish Roughan	11 <sup>th</sup> grade History, AP US History, dance
Esther Soliman	11 <sup>th</sup> grade English, acting, directing, Lead Teacher
Stella Tran	Algebra I, Algebra II

(Please refer to Section Six to review the community and artistic support for our school. We have included, in Appendix F, letters indicating the support we have from our larger community.)

Please see Appendix G for the Design Team's resumes.

### **Data Notes:**

In 2005-06 Belmont attendance rate was 87% and our SLC attendance rate was 91%.

In 2003, the school average GPA was 1.88 and our SLC GPA was 2.17. This was also the highest GPA for any of the academies in the school. Our 2005 average GPA was 2.18. (Although requested months ago, we have not yet received more up-to-date information on Belmont's GPA.)

On the 2006 Verbal CST results for Belmont students 12% scored at or above Proficient, whereas 17% of LAHSA students scored at or above Proficient. (Belmont's statistics include our students; therefore, their rates are inflated by our numbers.)

On the 2006 Math CST results for Belmont students, 19% scored at or above Basic, and 20% of LAHSA students scored at or above Proficient. (Belmont's statistics include our students; therefore, their rates are inflated by our numbers.)

On the English portion of the CASHEE exam we had a 75% pass rate. LAUSD English CAHSEE pass rate for 2006 was 55%, Belmont High School's CAHSEE 2006 pass rate 39% ([cahsee.cde.ca.gov/reports.asp](http://cahsee.cde.ca.gov/reports.asp)), the state pass rate was 61%.

In 2006, on the math portion of the exam we had a 62% pass rate. LAUSD Math pass rate was 50%, Belmont was 39%, and the state pass rate was 61%.