

## ELARA (Urban Planning and Design) Application: **Executive Summary**

### 1. **Executive Summary**

#### a. **Assurances**

- i. ELARA is a district school proposed by a team of Garfield High School teachers and members of the Garfield/Torres community.
- ii. ELARA will enroll the requisite number of students, including students with disabilities, from the designated attendance area. See Appendix A for signed statement.
- iii. ELARA agrees that its student composition will be reflective of the community its campus is intended to serve. Mechanisms to ensure retention and student composition will be developed with the district in collaboration with other schools serving the same community. See Appendix A for signed statement.
- iv. ELARA is not an outside provider.
- v. ELARA agrees to adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the Modified Consent Decree and other court orders imposed upon the district pertaining to Special Education. ELARA agrees to use the District's Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual, its Integrated Student Information System ("ISIS"), and Welligent. See Appendix A for signed statement.

#### b. **Student Population**

The Esteban Torres campus, where ELARA will be situated, is intended primarily to relieve James A. Garfield High School. The Garfield student population is predominantly Latino/a, low-income, and with a high percentage of English Language Learners (see Appendix B for details). The faculty of ELARA, which will be drawn almost entirely from current Garfield faculty, knows these students well and, by making this proposal, shows their continuing commitment to them (see also Appendix D for sample results of ELARA design team members with the Garfield population: see also section 10a for details on our experience with this population).

#### c. **Vision, Mission and Philosophy**

##### **Vision:**

ELARA will be a center of community life and learning, whose students see themselves as architects of their own, and their community's, future. The college-ready graduates of ELARA will have the broad-based knowledge, collaborative skills, and personal confidence to become innovators and leaders in their communities and professions.

##### **Mission:**

ELARA will create a vibrant community of scholarship and rigorous interdisciplinary studies in order to provide our community's diverse learning population with an integrated, research-based curriculum that prepares students for, and inspires them to, leadership roles in the 21st century. ELARA will, through its focus on Urban Planning and Design, generate direct connections between the academic program and the present and future environments of its students. The faculty and its university and community partners will work collaboratively and engage regularly in focused professional development to maintain an environment responsive to all of its students' needs, interests, and aspirations.

##### **Philosophy:**

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The students in the East LA community feel a deep connection to their neighborhoods. ELARA's Urban Planning and Design focus will allow its students to venture outside the boundaries of their community, in order to gather ideas, experience and expertise to bring back to their home community. ELARA will be, in both its academic focus and its community outreach, an incubator for the future of East Los Angeles.

ELARA hopes to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the opening of a new campus to rewire the relationship between school and community. One of our partners, Los Angeles Education Partnership, is working to establish the Torres campus as a "community school," open for many hours more than the school day, providing services beyond the core instructional mission (see sections 1e and 8a, b, and c, below). The ELARA design team believes that this would powerfully support our vision by more thoroughly embedding the school in the life of the community.

To be successful in their futures, to make a difference to the future of their community and beyond, ELARA's students will need to be equipped not only with strong content knowledge, but with the so-called 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, the ability to apply knowledge to novel situations, and the ability to work in teams. The practical aspects of ELARA's curriculum design -- interdisciplinary, project-based and inquiry-based -- are derived from proven Humanitas models that embed mastery of content within critical-skills development. Research on how the brain learns has established that content is most readily retained when it comes embedded in practical, meaningful contexts. Such contexts are provided by interdisciplinary project-based strategies, and also by curriculum connected to career focuses, such as ELARA's Urban Planning and Design program.

ELARA will open with grades 9-11, and add grade 12 in its second year. Full implementation of the goals outlined above, plus incorporation of career pathways and other desirables, will unfold over five years, giving each element time to cohere and allowing the developing school community to inform the future shape of the school.

### **A Day in the Life of an ELARA Student**

On a day halfway into his first term as a Freshman, Jaime arrives in a state of eagerness and a little nervousness: today, he and the other members of his team will present and defend their Utopian Project. For the last several weeks, he and the other four 9th graders in his work group have been collaborating on the project in their English, Geography, and Biology classes (the project is a culminating activity for all three classes). In English class they had discussed how to construct a society that would produce moral behavior in its citizens, then read excerpts from Utopian novels and revised their initial ideas. After deciding what sort of Utopia they would design, each work group used knowledge and research from their geography and biology classes to determine the best location for an ecologically sound society. And today was the day that each group would make a multimedia presentation in front of a group of older students and parents. He knew that the audience would be attentive: parents are just like that, and the older students had to write essays assessing the various projects presented.

The project had seemed overwhelming to Jaime at first: so much to ask of a struggling

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student with a learning disability! But with the help of his team members, five teachers (counting his Advisory period and Study Skills teacher), and a Special Education aide, he had discovered that even though the science was a challenge for him, as was some of the reading and writing, he was good at imagining how things would fit together and seeing how one thing could cause another, and these talents allowed him to make sense of the other stuff while contributing his full share to the project.

The presentations took most of the day, and Jaime found that watching the other presentations eased his fears: other students looked nervous, too, but they still said and showed interesting things. He found himself asking lots of questions and even engaging in debate. By the time he and his team gave their presentation, and an 11th grader challenged one of his ideas, he argued his case eagerly, without any sense of doubt or pressure.

Jaime's only other class that day (he had four classes to attend each day) would be Algebra. Tomorrow, he would have the other half of his schedule: PE, Spanish, English Language Skills, and Study Skills, along with his Advisory period. No big projects in those classes right now, but he felt a renewed eagerness to work on his academic skills: when the next big interdisciplinary project came at the end of the semester, he wanted to do even better than he had today.

Of course, Jaime's school day doesn't end with his last class. Today, he was due to start training, with Inner City Struggle's outreach director, for a service learning project he was excited to get started on. This would involve conducting a community needs assessment survey in preparation for the redesign of a park in his neighborhood. This was one of the things he liked best about his new high school: what he was learning in school helped him to play a role in the life of his community; a small role, now, but he knew that, as years went by and he pursued his education into college and beyond, there would be no limit to the contributions he would have the knowledge and skills to make.

### **d. Education Plan**

ELARA relies on three established pedagogies to provide our community's diverse learning population with a curriculum that challenges, engages, and inspires. These are:

*Humanitas*, the Los Angeles Education Partnership's thematic interdisciplinary, project-based, writing-assessed curricular approach, which has a two-decade record of success in LAUSD;

*Design-Based Learning*, developed at the Art Center College of Design and Cal State Poly Pomona, which embeds interdisciplinary learning in problem-solving scenarios and has been successfully used at public, private, and charter schools throughout California; and

*Shared Inquiry*, a widely-used method of learning, developed by the Great Books Foundation, in which participants search for answers to the fundamental questions raised by a text.

The Urban Planning and Design focus, which ELARA's design team is developing with our partners at UCLA's School of Public Affairs, Department of Urban Planning, and Art

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Center College of Design, harnesses these pedagogies to real-world, career-oriented scenarios. The UPD's program focus is on finding solutions to everyday problems, on developing plans for equitable and sustainable communities of the future, and on empowering individuals to take control of their surroundings; ELARA's pedagogical approaches are highly-suited to support these focuses, as they encourage student independence and put equal emphasis on research (Shared Inquiry), problem-solving (Design-Based Learning), and communication of findings and solutions (Humanitas).

ELARA intends to consistently exceed, to a statistically significant degree, California state averages for four-year graduation rates, first time and total CAHSEE pass rates, and CST proficient/advanced scores. (See section 4a and its appendix for projections forward.) We believe this is achievable through implementation of the Humanitas model, coupled with data-driven interventions in core subjects. Students in Humanitas programs in LAUSD have consistently outperformed their peers on the above measures; at Garfield High School, Humanitas students -- demographically indistinguishable from the school at large -- have outperformed the rest of the school on most measures. (See Appendix C.) Accordingly, we believe that a fully implemented Humanitas methodology, incorporating Design-Based Learning techniques into the project-based aspects of the program, and Shared Inquiry into the writing-based components, will provide an exceptionally powerful platform for a rigorously standards-based curriculum. Where students are struggling to meet expectations, we will employ RTI techniques.

All ELARA faculty will participate in the Professional Development workshops provided by the above partners and collaborate in grade-level interdisciplinary teams to produce coherent instructional units that give to content knowledge the genuine sense and meaning required for retention and utilization in novel contexts. Some members of the proposed faculty have current experience in Humanitas and Shared Inquiry techniques; others will receive training in these and Design-Based Learning techniques; full implementation of pedagogical and career pathway elements will take five years to attain, pending training of all faculty.

Faculty members at each grade level will form teams to set achievement goals per course, ensure vertical integration, and establish grade-level achievement benchmarks. Annual presentation of projects or portfolios will be used to assess achievement of benchmarks. Advisory period teachers will monitor each student's progress through the benchmarks, and help establish, in conjunction with the counselor, specific strategies to support and extend that progress.

The Governing Council, which includes parents and students, will be involved in setting standards-aligned grade-level themes and unit themes in order to ensure ongoing conformity to ELARA's Vision and Mission. The board will also work with Planning and Design Industry educators and professionals to assure the continuing utility of the curriculum to career-pathway students, while guaranteeing that the non-career-pathway students benefit from the problem-solving nature of the field.

### **e. Community Impact and Involvement**

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This proposal arises from the community to be served and ELARA's mission emerges from the experience of teachers and students in the community, and in response to expressed goals and desires of members of the East Los Angeles community.

Along with helping area students develop Urban Planning and Design skills that can foster genuine community empowerment, ELARA will also exercise students' sense of civic responsibility by meeting local community-defined needs via Service Learning projects, in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District.

ELARA is affiliated with LAEP in proposing that the Torres campus be organized as a Community School; section 8, below, provides extensive detail.

### **f. Leadership/Governance**

ELARA's leadership team will consist of a principal teacher, teaching staff, parents, students, and community members and partners (initially from Inner City Struggle and UCLA, with others to be added as partnerships solidify). Formally, there will be a School Site Council, on the LAUSD model (principal, teachers, other staff, parents and students) to handle those matters reserved by law and policy to SSCs, particularly budget approvals and single plan. An extended version of the SSC, the Governing Council, which will include community partners, will be responsible for maintaining and advancing ELARA's vision and mission. The Governing Council will oversee hiring, staffing, and evaluations.

The Design Team, which will be the core of the initial leadership team, is made up of Garfield teachers, with a wealth of experience in, and connections to, the community. These teachers have served in a variety of other capacities, including literacy coach, department chair, SLC lead teacher, SLC coordinator, TUPE coordinator, leadership advisor, and AVID coordinator.

### **g. Fiscal Plan**

As a District School, funding is on a per-pupil basis. Funding priorities are classroom personnel, professional development/planning time, and classroom technology.

*Classroom personnel:* the research is clear that the primary determinant of classroom outcomes is the pupil-teacher relationship. All ELARA spending decisions will be guided by that principle. To the fullest extent possible, all personnel will be classroom personnel who take on additional responsibilities for a portion of the day.

*Professional development and planning time:* the collaborative emphasis of ELARA's pedagogical approaches, the need to evaluate data regularly, and the need to monitor student progress all require time for teachers to work together.

*Classroom technology:* the character of the 21st century workplace, the nature of project-based learning, and the need for equitable access to off-campus resources, all argue for a fully wired, interconnected school.

## 2. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

### a. Curriculum Map and Summary

ELARA will open with grades 9 through 11, with grade 12 added in the 2nd year, after WASC accreditation. Appendix D provides a more detailed outline of intended courses (all aligned with state standards) and planned sequencing; what follows here is an overview keyed to the A-G requirements of the UC and CSU systems, plus state mandates.

Note that ELARA will operate on a blocked 2x8 schedule, allowing students to earn up to 80 units of credit per year, against the 55 needed to matriculate to the next grade. This allows time for during-the-school day Response to Intervention and Instruction, and credit recovery, as well creating space for off-campus electives and internships in the Senior year. Due to the limitations on the number of faculty imposed by a school of 450-500 students, as will be the case on the Torres campus, a full range of elective opportunities cannot be provided by the school itself, thus the importance of partnerships, especially those provided through ELARA's affiliation with Los Angeles Education Partnership.

*History/Social Science:* ELARA will expand the 2 year "A" requirement to 4 years, with the following annual sequence: Geography, World History, American History, Economics/Principles of American Democracy.

*English:* ELARA will offer 4 years of core English classes, as per the "B" requirement. Intervention students in 9th and 10th grade will receive an additional period of English. All students will also take a Humanities class focusing on Greco-Roman and Norse mythology, the Bible as Literature, and Western Philosophy. Students will take this elective (which fulfills the "G" requirement) in either 9th or 10th grade, depending on remediation and credit recovery needs.

*Math:* ELARA students will take the UC/CSU-recommended 4 years of math ("C" requirement is 3 years). For all students this will include Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, with the 4th course, dependent on student need and interest, selected from the following: Integrated Math, Trigonometry, or Calculus. The latter two courses will probably be provided by East Los Angeles College, and provided on the Torres campus if LAEP's community school proposal is approved. Additional intervention courses will be available for 9th and 10th graders.

*Laboratory Science:* ELARA students will take the UC/CSU-recommended 3 years of science (the "D" requirement is 2): Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Career pathway students will be encouraged to take an appropriate 4th year with one of our partners.

*Language other than English:* ELARA students will fulfill the 2-year "E" requirement with Spanish.

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*Visual and Performing Arts:* ELARA students will take a 1 year Art History course (Honors or AP) or a 1 year Visual Communications course to fulfill the "F" requirement. Lack of studio art facilities in the Torres classroom buildings necessitates that students interested in studio art will take courses with our partners.

*College-Prep Electives:* ELARA students will have various options for fulfilling the G requirement, including the Humanities course described above, a third LOTE year, arts courses from one of our partners, and/or career pathway courses. It should be noted that restrictions in facilities and staffing will require that we rely on partnerships, particularly with ELAC, Art Center College of Design, and East Los Angeles Classical Theater, for instruction in visual and performing arts.

In addition, ELARA students will take two years of Physical Education, as per state requirements.

Students will have access to the library on Torres campus and, via internet, the Los Angeles County Library. Under the Community School model being proposed by our partners in LAEP, the library would be open into the evening, with enrichment opportunities (not restricted to students) offered by a variety of other partners. On-line database services to assist students discover, use and build upon a wide range of content in trusted digital archives will also be available.

To help offset the shock of an eight class workload for students coming out of middle school, 9th graders who are not receiving extra periods of English or Math support will take a Study Skills class in which they will have the opportunity to work with students from the 12th grade Mentorship class on course assignments as well as general work habit development. Students from the Mentorship class will also work with students during select Advisory periods.

In line with California's Career Technical Education requirements, ELARA will also offer a sequence of three courses (Introductory, Concentration, and Capstone) that train students in practical skills suitable to Urban Planning and Design. Courses will be offered for the Architectural and Structural Engineering CTE pathway; pending finalization of plans with the providing partner, the sequence is likely to be Introduction to Design Drafting, Architectural Design, and Advanced Architectural Design. In the second or third year of operation, a second CTE pathway, Environmental and Natural Science Engineering will be offered, with the sequence, Essentials of Environmental Engineering, Drafting and Computer-Assisted Design, and Environmental Science and Technology.

Similarly, ELARA will offer two career pathways oriented more towards university work, in Urban & Regional Planning and Infrastructure Design. Detailed plans remain to be worked out with partners.

Finally, it bears restating that these courses and pathways will all operate within the Humanitas framework of shared themes across all grade levels, with those themes in turn being articulations of the school's Urban Planning and Design focus. The course sequence

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laid out in the Appendix incorporates provisional shared themes, based on previous work by design team members. Since the Humanitas model calls for faculty-generated themes, these are likely to change after a full faculty is in place.

The next four sections describe the track record of the primary curricular approach, plans for special populations, and overarching instructional strategies.

### **b. Track Record of Proposed Curriculum**

As noted in section 1d, ELARA will rely on three primary pedagogical approaches, along with several career pathway contexts, to shape its curriculum:

*Humanitas inter-disciplinary teaching:* this approach, with which ELARA's core faculty is experienced, has been shown to have positive results at the schools from whose population ELARA students will be drawn, when practiced without administrative interference (see Appendix C).

Research strongly supports teacher collaboration as a source of significant impact on student achievement (Newman & Wehlag; Corcoran & Silander; DuFour & Eaker; DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour), and the Humanitas model of collaboration is built on the widely-attested backwards planning model, which builds from standards to assessment to unit and lesson planning. Humanitas also relies on extensive, rigorous writing curriculum which, in a study of Humanitas programs around LAUSD, has been shown to produce writing that "was higher in quality and revealed greater conceptual understanding" than that produced by LAUSD students generally (Corcoran & Silander from: Aschbacher).

*Design Based Learning:* studies of approaches based on problem solving, such as DBL, produce authentic learning (Newman & Wehlag; Hertzog) and are particularly successful at engaging ELL and Gifted students (Waxman & Teller; Herzog).

*Critical Inquiry:* research shows that instructional techniques that raise questions rather than giving answers improve student achievement in mathematics, English, science, and social science (Newmann & Wehlag; Corcoran & Silander).

*Multiple career pathways (Urban Planning and Design):* research shows that connecting instruction to real-world contexts increases motivation, and is especially effective with at-risk males (Kemple).

Of special concern is the effectiveness of ELARA's proposed curriculum for students with disabilities, who will be mainstreamed to the greatest extent that is suitable for them. Student grouping, of the sort typical to Humanitas projects, has been shown to be of particular value to students with disabilities (Johnson & Johnson), and problem-based learning, such as DBL, has also been shown to assist students with disabilities (and, Glazwick, & Ertmer). The flexibility of the 2x8 schedule also allows students with disabilities to mix mainstream and resource classes as best suits their needs, as reflected in their IEPs.



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ELARA's curricular plan was written with an eye towards meeting the requirements for WASC accreditation by the end of the first academic year, as evidenced by: the flexibility in scheduling that allows all students to meet requirements by senior year, use of methods which encourage students to use higher order thinking skills, and the use of authentic project-based units and interdisciplinary essays to assess the success of any given standards-based, interdisciplinary unit.

Prior to its first academic year, ELARA will also apply to the UCOP for course approval and to the College Board for a College Board number. As curriculum is modified in subsequent years, courses will be updated and submitted for UC-approval.

### **c. Addressing the Needs of All Students**

Specific strategies, by group, are listed in Appendix E. What needs to be noted here is that an interdisciplinary, project-based approach provides a curriculum inherently responsive to variations in student need.

There are two, sometimes contradictory, goals when it comes to addressing the needs of special populations: *inclusion* and *differentiation*. In a standard classroom setting, differentiated assignments and instructions tend to "single out" individuals and sub-groups, weakening inclusion; mainstreaming students into core classrooms, on the other hand, can rob students of special attentions to which their needs entitle them.

Interdisciplinary, collaborative, problem-solving, and design-based approaches, such as ELARA will be using, and which are essential elements of our Urban Planning and Design focus, all share two advantages, at least, for *differentiating with inclusiveness*. These advantages are:

*an inherent reliance on variety* within curricular units and activities. That is to say that students have a variety of access points to the content and standards, whether through a preferred discipline, learning modality, or skill, and that they can contribute to projects from their own particular strengths and not feel "shut out." Case studies conducted by Professor Doreen Nelson of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, indicate that Design-Based Learning is particularly effective at increasing competencies and test scores for English Language Learners, students receiving Special Education services, and other high-risk students;

*a direct appeal to lived experience* that creates both a heightened student engagement and an increased likelihood of content retention. David A. Sosa in "How the Brain Works" (2001) asserts that cognitive learning research supports integrated thematic units, the interdisciplinary approach, cooperative learning groups, and a general constructivist orientation. All of these are key elements of ELARA's instructional philosophy.

The inclusion, in ELARA's curriculum, of advisories, study skills and academic support classes, and student mentorship will allow for a growing precision of focus on the needs of each individual over time. Regular faculty and staff consultation will serve to keep the development of individual students in sight, and regular faculty and staff collaboration will serve to keep the themes and projects authentic and engaging.

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Growth levels and other details by group can be found in the Accountability Matrix (appendix to 4a).

### **d. Accelerated Learning**

See Appendix E (for section 2c) for details on specific strategies. As a small school, ELARA will need to rely on partnerships to truly serve the needs of accelerated learners and to accelerate the learning of students not pre-identified as Gifted. The population that ELARA will serve has traditionally had a smaller percentage of secondary students classified as Gifted than the District at large, and Advisory teachers, in consultation with the grade-level teams, will actively pursue Gifted status for students who appear to merit the designation.

ELARA's 2x8 schedule provides room for the high achieving student to take a significant number of college-level electives, some of them on campus with ELAC instructors, others off-site. An anticipated partnership with California State University at Dominguez Hills will eventually allow ELARA teachers with masters degrees to become adjunct faculty to CSUDH, and thus able to offer college credit electives on the Torres campus. With the guidance of their counselor, advisory teacher, and other partners, the advanced student will be able to craft a personalized program that prepares him or her for a specific college major.

AP courses, with the exception of several that can be taught in unison with an Honors section of a regular course, will be handled on-line through Apex Learning. Students taking online AP instruction will meet during a regularly scheduled period, with a teacher on hand for guidance and monitoring, as research has shown this to be far more effective than allowing students to fit the online work into an ad hoc schedule.

All students will be encouraged to take at least one AP course by 11th grade, schedule allowing. Using online instruction allows students to select the topic area most suitable to their interests without the need of a full roster. Recent studies indicate that online AP courses can have very successful outcomes, so long as a credentialed teacher (what credential doesn't matter) is available to help the student with basic academic issues.

The population that ELARA will serve has historically had very little success on AP exams (aside from one widely known exception) other than Spanish Language. The initial concern, then, must be less with how many AP courses will be offered, and with how many students enrolled, than with how the ELARA faculty will prepare its students for success with AP coursework.

Experience suggests that our population faces two particular challenges in this regard: a lack of sufficient literacy skills to tackle college-level texts, and a lack of sufficient study skills to tackle a college-level workload. The 9th grade Study Skills class, available to students not receiving additional periods of Math or English instruction, will tackle this directly, as will the online classroom teacher.

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Core classrooms will also be involved in the process of preparing students for AP success by incorporating pre-AP curriculum into the coursework.

As with many other aspects of the ELARA program, serving Accelerated Learning needs will be easier if the Community School proposed by LAEP for the entire Torres campus were to be adopted. The population we serve does not have a nearby Borders or Barnes and Noble to serve as a resource-rich meeting place for group study, nor do they always have the freedom from other responsibilities to devote serious time to serious learning. A true Community School, with a school library open in the evening, a community-run cafe with space for studying, and tutors provided by community partners, along with the other proposed services that will bring the community onto the campus in the evenings and on the weekends, would provide a type of support and incentive currently unavailable to those students who have the highest aspirations.

### e. **Instructional Strategies**

As noted in section 1.d, ELARA will rely on three primary pedagogical approaches: Humanitas, Design-Based Learning, and Shared Inquiry.

**Humanitas** is a program developed in 1988 by LAUSD teachers, overseen and further developed by the Los Angeles Education Partnership, and currently used in 44 small learning communities at 26 LAUSD high schools, with nearly 500 teachers serving roughly 13,000 students. The teachers on ELARA's design team have all taught in Garfield High School's Humanitas Academies.

Humanitas instruction begins with teachers from different disciplines, who will share the same students, meeting to identify course-specific key standards for a year, term, and/or unit, converting these to essential questions, and identifying a theme that all the teachers can use to contextualize their instruction. Such themes are designed to meet state standards, integrate the arts, and, in ELARA's case, connect to issues of urban planning and design. The theme and essential questions are used to generate a culminating activity and interdisciplinary essay for each unit. (See Appendix C for data on Humanitas success in LAUSD.)

**Design-Based Learning** is a pedagogical approach developed by Art Center College of Design in Pasadena and Cal State Poly, Pomona. As with Humanitas, a primary goal of the approach is to embed standards-derived instruction in creative, engaging activities to increase comprehension, retention, collaboration, and independent thinking. The DBL process begins with generating a problem, the solution of which leads to practice with or mastery of selected standards. The problem is then stated as a Design Challenge with a set of criteria to be met. Students, working in groups, attempt to solve the design challenge; this provides a context in which to examine relevant course content, which leads to revision of student designs and completion of the project. This will provide a template for creating thematic culminating activities that develop skills relevant to urban planning and design career pathways.

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**Shared Inquiry** is an approach to the use of texts, developed by the Great Books Foundation. It relies on assigning roles to group members when discussing a text and providing a framework for discussion which encourages socialized learning, particularly relevant to a community-focused program such as ELARA's.

While each teacher will make the critical decisions for his or her own classrooms, all will link their content to the shared themes and utilize the above pedagogies. All ELARA teachers will also adhere to standard backwards-planning techniques, by which key standards are identified, means of assessing them is determined, then instruction is designed to support mastery. Classrooms will also share Thinking Map protocols, Cornell Notes, and other non-discipline-specific strategies to provide coherence throughout the program. All of these shared efforts are meant to build a community of learners who can systematically and collaboratively guide their own learning.

ELARA's faculty is alert to the fact that we are at a period in educational history in which rigorous research into effective practice is ramping up. Accordingly, we will pay ongoing attention to the Federal Education Department's What Works Clearinghouse for adjustments in our practice and strategies.

Appendix E identifies specific strategies that will be used with specific groups. Some general observations are in order here.

Roughly 90% of our population are classified as "students of poverty." ELARA's focus on Urban Planning and Design is specifically intended to deal with the problems associated with that status.

First, our focus on re/building the physical community is meant to appeal to students who are strongly attached to their physical community. Students in higher socio-economic categories are less geographically devoted, and thus more attuned to opportunities outside the community; we hope to expand our students' sense of what is possible and available through exposure to the range of real and conceivable community types.

Second, the focus requires field trips to museums, architectural sites, infrastructure projects, and so forth; this again helps to expand the students' horizons.

Third, the career opportunities inherent in the focus areas range from the very practical and hand's-on to the very intellectual and theoretical; we anticipate that partnerships with such entities as Parks and Recreations or Public Works will draw students who might not be thinking of college, but can, by association, be moved onto a professional or college track.

### **3. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

#### **a. Description of Culture**

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In line with ELARA's vision and mission, the school culture will be built on the principles that animate a true scholarly community; in line with our career focus, the school culture will reflect the fact that scholarship should be the foundation for individual and communal empowerment; and in line with our pedagogical focuses, the school culture will embody the belief that individual and communal success rely on the ability to tap multiple disciplines in order to identify and solve problems.

The long-term prospects for establishing and maintaining such a school culture relies on the fact, noted above as part of our philosophy, that the students of the East Los Angeles area feel a deep connection and commitment to their neighborhoods. This can form the foundation for the culture described above, if school staff and our community partners establish for the students clear and demonstrable connections between their educations and the well-being of their neighborhoods.

In the ideal case, such as the community school model proposed by Los Angeles Education Partnership (which, if approved, would include ELARA), this is a relatively simple task, given that community partners such as Bienvenidos and East Los Angeles College would, in effect, have facilities on the campus. Establishing those clear and demonstrable connections between the students' academic life and their and their families' neighborhood lives will be a greater challenge if ELARA has to build its culture independent of other entities on the shared campus.

Still, our partners in Inner City Struggle and United Students bring a dozen years of experience in local organizing to ELARA, and this, combined with emphasis on the social empowerment aspects of the Urban Planning and Design curricular focus, will establish the foundation of expertise and ideas that can power the development of our school culture.

In terms of immediate practice, the design team will establish a concise *provisional* set of statements that express the attitudes and behaviors that embody the school culture. These will be posted about the campus and published/promoted in other ways as appropriate. Everyone on the campus, whatever their status, will be expected to abide by them.

A major component of the opening year experience for students, staff, partners, and parents will be the experiment in living with and by these statements. At or near the end of that initial year, ELARA will hold a convention of stakeholders to formally adopt a set of fundamental precepts that may or may not be comprised of those initial statements.

Returning to the three elements of school culture mentioned at the beginning of this section:

*a true scholarly community* implies a culture where questioning is valued and encouraged (and this is implicit in the Design-Based Learning elements of our curricula), where variant viewpoints and experiences are considered essential, where achievement has no upper limit, and where no one who makes a genuine effort to learn and grow would be considered a failure. The inculcation of this ethos would begin with explicit instruction and modeling in all 9th grade classes, and direct inquiry in advisory periods;

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*scholarship as the foundation of empowerment* is a truth that is always discovered by those who solve a problem through application of existing knowledge to novel situations. It would be the responsibility, first, of the faculty, and eventually of the students, to point to and celebrate such successes, and to analyze those successes for lessons on how to learn and how to apply learning;

*tapping into multiple disciplines* -- the hallmark of Humanitas instruction -- has a direct effect on student engagement, and through that to disciplined and responsible behavior, by showing that no discipline stands apart from any other and thus eliminating the individual's ability to claim that certain disciplines are outside their capacity. That in turn reduces the sense of pointlessness that plagues many students through portions of their school day, with the result of improved behavior.

### **b. College and Career Readiness**

ELARA's 2x8 schedule is intended to provide the scheduling flexibility that will allow for multiple pathways, with students taking whatever combination of remediative, core, and accelerated classes suits their needs.

Beginning with the Study Skills class that many of our students will take in 9th grade, continuing for all students in their Advisory periods, and through participation in the KnowHow2Go program through LAEP, ELARA students will be both schooled in the skills required for college success and knowledgeable in the routes for reaching college. Our partnership with LAEP also often yields college scholarship opportunities of which our students may avail themselves.

Section 2d addressed approaches ELARA will take with accelerated learners; all of our students will be invited to sample the AP and college credit courses. Design-oriented students will be encouraged to attend Saturday school offered by our partners at Art Center College of Design, which offers a taste of college level work, as will the capstone course of the four career pathways to be offered in collaboration with our partners at UCLA and ELAC (Urban and Regional Planning, Infrastructure Design, Architectural and Structural Engineering, and Environmental and Natural Science Engineering).

All students will take the PSAT and will be offered ACT/SAT preparation courses prepared by ELARA teachers and/or outside providers (one of the Design Team members has extensive experience in Test Preparation curriculum). Several of the Design Team members are experienced AVID instructors, and will provide professional development for all faculty in orienting students toward college.

### **c. School Calendar/Schedule**

The ELARA school calendar consists of two 20-week semesters with 8 classes per semester, plus an advisory period. The classes are blocked in 90 minute periods alternating four on one day (the A day), and four the next (the B day). This alteration is continuous across weeks, such that the first week, for example, will have three A days and two B, the second week will have two A days and three B days. This has the advantage of reducing schedule imbalances due to things like Monday holidays.

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The school day, minus lunch, has 400 minutes; 400 times 5 days times 40 weeks yields a base year of 80,000 minutes. This is reduced by 6,880 Professional Development minutes (see section 5, below), for a total of 73,120. Six mandated days off during the year and eight minimum days (or the equivalent in reduced plus minimum days) equals 4000 minutes, adjusting total instructional time to 69,120 minutes, 3,820 minutes (the equivalent of 9.55 full instructional days) in excess of the required 65,300 instructional minutes.

Since core English, Social Studies, and Science classes at each grade level are offered as an interdisciplinary set, these will all be scheduled on the A day (allowing for the teachers of these courses to share a conference period). Core Math will also be scheduled on A days. Accordingly, students receiving additional support in Math and/or English will have those subjects every day.

As noted in the education plan, above, this 2x8 plan allows students to earn 80 credits per year, against the 55 required for matriculation. This allows substantial space for additional support classes for those who need them, without reducing opportunities for a full range of elective courses and enrichment activities such as Internships.

Finally, it should be noted that credit recovery in core courses will be allowed only during the regular year, to guarantee that the full course is made up. Summer session classes will be restricted to enrichment and remediation.

See Appendix F for weekly and daily schedules.

### **d. Extracurricular Activities**

In order to decide what athletic programs and other extracurricular programs would be offered at ELARA (in conjunction, for sports at least, with the other schools and partners on the Esteban Torres campus) students from Garfield Senior High met at a Public School Choice Student Focus Group to discuss extracurricular activities, sports, and other programs that would meet students' social and emotional needs (breakout groups included the following focus areas: *Leadership, Support Services, Extracurricular Activities, Tutoring Programs, Partner Organizations, and Athletic Programs*). See Appendix G for details of student interests.

### **e. Student Discipline**

It is the philosophy at ELARA that every student has the right to be educated in a safe, respectful and welcoming environment. Every teacher has the right to teach in an atmosphere free from disruption and obstacles that impede learning. At ELARA this will be achieved through the adoption and implementation of a consistent school wide positive behavior support and discipline plan (as detailed in Appendix I). The discipline plan will be consistent with the District's *Culture of Discipline: Guiding Principles for the School Community* (Attachment A BUL-3638.0) and *Culture of Discipline: Student Expectations* (Attachment B BUL-3638.0).

**f. Student Health Needs**

ELARA expects that the Torres campus will be a Community School, as proposed by LAEP, which will include an on-site Bienvenidos Health Clinic to cover both immediate health needs and long-term healthful family living strategies. We will share a nurse, a psychiatric social worker, and a school psychiatrist with the other schools on the Torres campus, who will be part of the team monitoring compliance with IEPs and 504 plans.

**g. Student Nutritional Needs**

As a district school, ELARA will utilize District services and the Torres cafeteria facilities. ELARA will work with the District, however, to bring cafeteria offerings up to the latest (October 2009) recommendations of the Institute of Medicine for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and to improve the quality and appeal of cafeteria field. Inasmuch as well over 90% of our students can be expected to qualify for free or reduced lunch, we fail to fulfill our nutritional obligations if we provide food that goes largely or entirely uneaten.

**4. ASSESSMENTS AND SCHOOL DATA**

**a. Educational Goals and Metrics**

ELARA staff will gather and analyze the data outlined in the Accountability Matrix and use it to guide curricular design, professional development, intervention strategies, and college preparedness curriculum. See Accountability Matrix (Appendix H)

**b. Student Assessment Plan**

All assessments will be appropriately aligned with state standards, curriculum and instruction. They are also, and as importantly, meant to establish and maintain a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning.

Assessments created by teachers will be in line with vertical planning to ensure that students are constantly building on their education. In line with its pedagogical approaches, ELARA assessments are generally authentic and/or writing based: essays and/or oral or multimedia presentations will accompany the physical projects that culminate the interdisciplinary units. These will be the primary means of assessment for mastery of standards and content, supplemented with multiple choice tests that assure that students will be able to show their competency on CSTs and CAHSEEs.

Documentation from unit culminating activities will comprise a portfolio that is used annually as a benchmark measure to assure that students are progressing appropriately; these will be evaluated by teams led by students' Advisory period teachers.

For specific details of scheduling and rationales, see Appendix J.

**c. Data Team and Instructional Team**

As mentioned in the Education Plan (1d) above, faculty teams will establish grade-level



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achievement benchmarks. In line with Humanitas/Design-Based Learning techniques, and also in line with career pathway needs, benchmarks will be project/performance based with a written component, and it is through these authentic means that student growth and achievement will be evaluated. There will, however, be supplemental assessment in multiple-choice format in order to ensure that learned skills are being translated into the mode of thinking required for success on mandated, high-stakes testing.

Data will be evaluated on a routine basis in the weekly team PDs (see sections 5a and c for professional development details).

### **d. Data Systems**

As a District School, ELARA will utilize LAUSD's ISIS to track student records and identity services, and Modified Consent Decree indicators for students with disabilities, in accord with normal LAUSD procedures.

### **e. LAUSD School Report Card**

As a District School, ELARA will leverage LAUSD's system to create School Report Cards.

### **f. Research and Evaluation**

ELARA's faculty, as part of their election to work agreement, will agree to participate in research and/or evaluation projects in partnership with LAUSD, higher education institutions and/or research organizations, in order to capture, learn, and replicate best practices.

### **g. Operational Goals and Metrics**

Not applicable to internal applicants per PSC email 1/10/2010.

## **5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

### **a. Professional Development**

Professional Development for the first year of operation will focus on implementation of the three basic components of our curricular plan (Humanitas, Design-Based Learning, Shared Inquiry). Exact scheduling of this strand of PD is pending schedule announcements of the providing agencies.

In the summer before the opening of the school, ELA, Social Science, and Science teachers will attend a 3-day Humanitas Teacher Center to learn program basics, if necessary, and to develop a complete interdisciplinary unit for the first quarter. Subsequently, each of these grade level teams will take a full PD day prior to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters to plan those interdisciplinary units. Other LAEP provided opportunities include the Summer Essay Institute, the Target Science and Humanitas Science Seminars, Museum Seminars, and Teacher Institutes.

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Also in the summer prior to the opening year, Math teachers and the PE teacher will do the multi-day training for Design-Based Learning. These teachers will share techniques with the rest of the faculty during internal PDs, and the rest of the faculty will take the formal training in the following summer.

The World Language and Elective teachers will participate in formal PD in Shared Inquiry in the summer or early in the first quarter, depending on available PD. These teachers will also do an in-school PD with the rest of the faculty.

Time and funding allowing, AP teachers will attend an AP Summer Institute. Otherwise, they will have to avail themselves of various College Board- provided PD opportunities during the school year.

The final overarching PD goal will be to work with our Multiple Pathways partners to develop Urban Planning and Design-specific competencies in the faculty.

In-school PD sessions will proceed on two tracks: a weekly 88-minute period routinely devoted to grade level data analysis and student evaluation; and a biweekly 88-minute period typically devoted to whole faculty concerns, such as state-mandated PDs and sessions required for WASC accreditation. The earliest of these biweekly sessions will be devoted to developing data-driven practices utilizing the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Science practice guide, "Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making."

### **b. Teacher Orientation**

An orientation meeting/s will be held for new teachers. A tour of the school and its facilities will be conducted. New teachers will receive written documentation of school policies and procedures. This document will be reviewed at the orientation meeting. An additional orientation will be held for both new and experienced teachers where goals, policies, and instructional strategies will be addressed. The amount of time and number of days over which these meetings will occur is to be determined.

In addition to the hours of PD required by the BTSA induction program, new teachers will also be required to attend the next available Humanitas Teacher's Center in their grade level teams. All teachers, new and experienced, will receive on-site training, at the Humanitas Academy of Art and Technology on the Torres campus, in order to form their interdisciplinary teams and plan their project-based, collaborative units as outlined in the previous section. Each teacher will be required to attend at least one additional training during the year. The collaboration between educators that is the foundation of the Humanitas model will provide all teachers with the support and mentorship that they will need to successfully implement a variety of instructional strategies and teaching methods.

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### **c. PD Calendar**

Each week, grade level teams will meet for 88 minutes on Tuesday mornings for PD related to instructional practices and data analysis pertaining to specific student groupings, including individual students. On several occasions, this time may be used by departments to address vertical integration issues.

Ten times throughout the term the entire faculty will meet on Thursday mornings for 88 minutes, for larger scale professional development. As the tentative PD calendar in the appendix shows, these biweekly PDs are staggered throughout the term to ensure that neither of the alternating set of courses is unduly affected.

These sessions will focus most often on pedagogical practices; early in the first semester, one of them will be used to determine PD topics of interest to the faculty, and teams will be selected to research such topics in depth in order to present PDs on their findings later in the year. As needed, some weekly Tuesday sessions may be used by research teams in preparation for said PDs. This type of faculty-selected and research-driven PD approach will be responsive to the rapidly evolving landscape of educational research findings. See Appendix K for specifics.

Together these two PD strands equal 5280 minutes per year. Also, twice each term classes will be canceled to allow for a full-day PD, focused on pedagogical and whole-school data issues. This is in addition to a minimum of one to five days of summer PD, varying by teacher according to course load, and three to nine days of paid, off-site PD, dependent upon fund availability.

### **d. Program Evaluation**

The ultimate measure of the success or failure of Professional Development activities will be the goals articulated in the Education Plan (1d) above: exceeding state of California achievement on key performance indicators. Professional development will be evaluated immediately by all participants using feedback forms. Teachers will be surveyed on a regular basis in order to determine successfulness of any PD. If necessary, changes in future PD sessions will be made or content will be revisited in order for the PD to be valuable for teachers and students.

## **6. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE**

### **a. Professional Culture**

As an internal applicant, the school will adhere to the referenced articles of the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

As a Humanitas Network School, collaboration among teachers is the foundation of ELARA's curricular approach; as a Pilot School proposed by a teacher-led Design Team, teachers will be at the core of decision making. The Humanitas model uses a thematic,

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interdisciplinary approach to curriculum where teachers must work together in order to fully implement the units. Student success will be fostered by these well-supported collaborative strategies (DuFour & Eaker; DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour). Through collaboration, teachers will also serve as role models of team work and critical thinking. In addition to structured professional development meetings (see sections 5a,c and appendix K), teachers will meet daily during their common planning periods. Teachers will work on curriculum development and discuss student achievement in order to nurture consistency in curriculum and the classroom.

All new initiatives and decision making will be spearheaded by the teachers at ELARA. This includes topics regarding policy, budget, staffing, professional development, parent involvement, school operations, and outreach. Teachers will be communicating on a regular basis due to the constant collaboration that is required with our pedagogical model. Decision making committees will consist of faculty and staff members who will create policy that is based on teacher and student needs, gathered from discussions and written surveys.

Mentorship and collaboration will be a central focuses in our academy. Because teachers of varying levels of experience will be teamed in interdisciplinary groups, based on the Humanitas model, they will be able to share ideas and solve problems together. In addition, professional development will cater to teacher and student needs and will be developed by teachers.

### **b. Evaluation**

As an LAUSD Pilot school, ELARA follows all LAUSD personnel policies and practices and the contracts of relevant Bargaining Units, except that the school retains the right to select and evaluate teaching and administrative staff, as spelled out in the Pilot Schools MOU between LAUSD and UTLA.

The principal and all teachers will engage in a reflection and evaluation process in correlation with the elect to work agreement. The principal's evaluation will be based on the National Board Core Propositions for Accomplished Educational Leaders and the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The evaluation process will include teacher feedback, a self-evaluation and a leadership practices inventory. Teacher evaluations will be based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' Five Core Propositions and the California Professional Teaching Standards. All administrators and teachers will also be evaluated on their commitment to initiate and carry out the goals and objectives of the academy, based on the elect to work agreement.

The governing board of ELARA will oversee all procedures regarding struggling teachers as determined by the elect to work agreement. Teachers who are struggling to meet the Professional standards will be required to develop a plan with a school leader (chosen by the governing board) that consists of clear measurable goals for their practice. The struggling teacher will be intensively mentored and must show evidence of improvement.

At the end of a period of time determined by the governing board, reports will be written by both the struggling teacher and the mentor teacher to evaluate progress. The teacher will remain on the Administrative Mandated Evaluation list the year following removal

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from Intervention. Failure to successfully meet the standards and goals as indicated during Intervention will result in a formal LAUSD Stull evaluation by the school leader.

### **c. Feedback**

At a frequency determined by the elect to work agreement, teachers and staff will complete brief confidential surveys on the effectiveness of strategies in such areas as interdisciplinary instruction and advisory curriculum. Results of the surveys will be used by the principal to make adjustments in professional development or in curriculum and instruction.

## **7. SERVING SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS**

### **a. Specialized Instruction**

ELARA's mechanism for guaranteeing that the needs of all students are met is based upon the widely used Response to Intervention (RTI) model: the provision of systemic, phased-in interventions (Tier 1=school-wide preventive services; Tier 2=strategic interventions; Tier 3=intensive interventions) that are preventive and serve individual student needs with a multi-level response for students at risk. RTI has lately become well-established as a tool for general remediation, but is a relatively new approach for diagnosing and supporting students with learning disabilities or academic delays.

Strategies for meeting the needs of gifted and talented students are detailed in section 2d, Accelerated Learning, above.

Homeless students are an increasingly large sub-population and ELARA staff will be alert to signs that students are being distracted by issues outside of the school. The presence on campus of a Bienvenidos clinic with its various services will support our efforts to assist such students.

### **i. Special Education**

ELARA will comply with the following four step process to determine whether or not a student is eligible for Special Education Services and if so, which services are most appropriate: 1) Referral for Assessment; 2) the Assessment; 3) Development and Implementation of an Individualized Educational Program (IEP); and 4) the IEP Review. Special education teachers will each have a caseload of students with IEPs and, in collaboration with general education teachers, monitor implementation of IEP requirements. Special education teachers will also verify compliance with the District's Special Educations Policies and Procedures Manual as required by the Modified Consent Decree.

### **ii. Students with Disabilities**

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Special Education students will be provided with equal access regardless of any disability. Under Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) guidelines, students of this population will be served in the general education program and provided with adequate support to achieve educational success.

General and Special Education teachers will collaborate to ensure that student needs are met. In addition, the Advisory Period provides regular time for monitoring and planning support for SWDs.

ELARA will also take advantage of community agencies located on campus, as part of the Community School model, such as Bienvenidos. Well-trained clinicians work collaboratively with children and their families in addressing the kind of emotional and behavioral difficulties that interfere with full mainstreaming -- such as, anxiety, child abuse and trauma, depression, eating disorders, hyperactivity impulse control, reactive attachment, academic performance and adjustment, self-injurious behaviors, and sexual acting out.

### **iii. Extended School Year**

Extended school year services shall be provided for a student with disabilities who has unique needs and requires special education and related services in excess of the regular academic year. The primary goal of ESY services will be to ensure the continued provision of an appropriate education by maintaining skills and behaviors that might otherwise be lost during the summer/intersession period. ESY services will be coordinated with the LAUSD Division of Special Education.

Extended school year services shall be limited to the services, determined by the IEP team, that are required to assist a student in maintaining the skills at risk of regression or for students with severe disabilities to attain the critical skills or self-sufficiency goals essential to the student's continued progress. If the student requires ESY services to receive a FAPE, the school will develop an IEP for the student that includes ESY services.

If the IEP team determines that a student is not eligible for ESY, the student may be referred to the general education summer/intersession program.

### **iv. English Language Learner and Standard English Learners**

SEL students who struggle to meet standards will be addressed via the RTI approach discussed in section 7a, above. Meeting the needs of EL students requires the collaboration of teachers, parents, and support staff in a multi-tiered approach.

Students who qualify for ESL 1 and 2 will be placed in an intensive ESL program along with additional language supports in core content classes to allow maximum access to the grade level curriculum. Additional attention will be devoted to the students who have completed the ESL levels 1-3 and have yet to demonstrate a level of English proficiency.

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A review of incoming students' school history and previous ESL or English grades ensure proper assignment of English Proficiency level and classes. Primary language assessments, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT, administered within the first 30 days of enrollment), and home language surveys further ensure proper classification of new students.

Student progress toward reclassification will be monitored through the ESL classes. The teachers will have individual portfolios of student work to monitor the student's monthly progress. Checks for student progress, portfolios, testing and grade report data will be utilized in the reassignment of English Learners into mainstream classes, as well as after school and intervention programs.

EL students who have transitioned into sheltered instruction will receive strong English literacy instruction which is built upon language acquisition theory validated by research and successful classroom practices. Elements of phonemic awareness, comprehensible vocabulary development and print awareness will complement the school-wide use of research-based instructional strategies including use of SDAIE, AVID, Project-based learning, Thinking Maps, and Reciprocal Teaching, Cornell note-taking and interdisciplinary learning. Additionally, ELARA classes will employ culturally relevant materials in all classes in which it is appropriate.

These pedagogical techniques systematically scaffold instruction to allow students to access and master rigorous, standards-based content. Moreover, these strategies are complementary to each other in their deliberate approach to “chunking” instructional delivery with explicit teacher modeling, academic vocabulary frontloading, graphic organizers to help students organize and categorize learning, structured guided practice that facilitates oral language production and student interactions, collaborative learning environments, and finally independent student skills practice.

### **b. At-Risk Students**

ELARA will employ a three-tiered RTI model, similar to the one described in section 7a, above, to assist students who are at risk, due to the following: low achievement, poverty, behavioral issues, truancy, drug use, pregnancy, sexual identity and other emotional issues.

ELARA will also have several mechanisms to identify and encourage at-risk students and their parents to take advantage of the available options and opportunities. These mechanisms include the *Coordination of Services Team (COST)*, that serves as an initial referral source for teachers who are in the position to recognize struggling students and can ask for help on their behalf. Other intervention vehicles for at-risk students are the *Language Appraisal Team (LAT)* and the *Student Success Team (SST)*. These teams include teachers, administrators, support personnel and community agencies who work in collaboration to identify and provide critical interventions.

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ELARA will also employ IMPACT programs to support pregnant and parenting teens, students impacted by family issues, students with drug or alcohol problems, or who are struggling with sexual identity issues, or other emotional issues.

A psychiatric social worker based at the Torres High School campus will work under the mission and guidance of LAUSD's School Mental Health Branch, to provide students and community with a range of comprehensive services including prevention, early intervention and treatment services.

The psychiatric social worker will offer therapy (individual, group and family), parent education and training, behavior contracts and positive support planning, ongoing case management services, home visits, conflict mediation, crisis intervention, and mental health consultations. The social worker will collaborate with student support services such as Diploma Project counselors, attendance counselor, academic counselor, etc., in order to ensure that no student falls through the cracks.

Mental health services will also be provided through our community partner Bienvenidos, whose clinicians work collaboratively with children and their families in addressing emotional and behavioral difficulties such as anxiety, child abuse and trauma, depression, eating disorders, hyperactivity impulse control, reactive attachment, academic performance and adjustment, self-injurious behaviors, and sexual acting out.

## **8. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

### **a. Identification**

ELARA will serve the unincorporated community of East Los Angeles as well as the area of Boyle Heights in Los Angeles. The community is multilingual, culturally diverse, and serves families originally from other countries such as Mexico, Central America, and South America. For some years, parents, students and community representatives have fought for a new school in the area; the Torres campus, of which ELARA will be a part, is the result of this struggle, and the empowerment zone, of which Torres will be a part, represents a major opportunity for the community.

Although cultural diversity is an asset of this community, it also unveils some basic educational needs. 66.8 percent are English Learners, the graduation rate is low, students perform poorly on state and District Standardized assessments, and 86 percent are considered economically disadvantaged. ELARA and its partners on the campus and in the community believe that a focused, community-based approach can combat the disadvantages and magnify the advantages in order to assist the students of East LA to greatly heightened levels of achievement.

ELARA's intent is to use its Urban Planning and Design focus as a point of engagement for students, especially those who are in the process of disengaging from education when they arrive in high school. The students in the East LA community feel a deep connection to their neighborhoods, and our curriculum and partnerships directly address issues of community preservation, development, and improvement. This also provides a point of



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entry for parents and other community members who wish to be involved with our students and our school.

ELARA and its primary partner, LAEP, are working with the East Los Angeles Educational Collaborative, and particularly Inner City Struggle, to develop a Community School which provides services to the entire community. The Community School model, while good for the community, will serve primarily to engage the entire community, with all of its resources, in the education of our young people.

Some of the community resources planning to participate in the Community School include Bienvenidos Family Services Center, DCFS, East Los Angeles Classic Theater, East Los Angeles College, Families in Schools, La Causa, the Maravilla Foundation, and the United Farm Workers Foundation.

ELARA will be partnering particularly closely with UCLA's School of Urban Affairs/Department of Urban Design and Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, for career pathway development; the Los Angeles County Parks and Los Angeles County Urban Planning for internship opportunities; and ELAC, CSULA, Cal Poly Pomona, and CSUDH for additional academic resources.

### **b. Family and Community Engagement**

As stated above, ELARA's Urban Planning and Design focus and ICS/LAEP's Community School proposal are the main engines of our plan to engage parents and caretakers. The UP & D focus first emerged as a request from the community.

ELARA will also utilize activities such as fall parent orientations, parent-teacher conferences, student-led conferences, presentations of student work, and advisory committees to bring parents into the school, and will establish a PTA to generate other modes of involvement. Community School opportunities will also bring parents onto campus. Monthly newsletters, internet/website postings, and automated phone calls will be used to disseminate information. Families with Internet connectivity will be able to access syllabi and assignments online.

It is anticipated that, within the Community School model, the various post-secondary institutions with which ELARA is partnered will be offering evening classes open to the community, as well as to the students. It is also anticipated that, with institutional partners such as County Parks and Recreation, student projects within the community will also engage other community members.

ELARA's vision is to provide its students with the skills to actively shape their community, while they are students, and even more so after they graduate.

**c. Key Community Partnerships**

As ELARA is proposing to be one of five members of the Community School on the Torres campus, the community partners will play a key role in implementing our Mission and Vision. The ELARA leadership team will manage and cultivate these relationships, with the help of the manager of site operations, who will be responsible for practical arrangements. Inner City Struggle will be involved in engaging and recruiting community partners, conducting meetings and arranging outreach strategies for students. Community partners will also provide academy students real-world/authentic learning experiences through opportunities ranging from classroom visits to internships and direct relationships with adult mentors in their career strands. For parents, partners will provide educational opportunities, health and welfare services, and community connection. Some of the community partners who will be working with ELARA are the following:

Bienvenidos Family Services Center will provide health and wellness services and coordinate social services;

East LA Classic Theatre will use the Torres auditorium and provide cultural opportunities for student, parents and the community;

Inner City Struggle will provide youth development and leadership services; parent engagement and advocacy training; and community school improvement advocacy;

East Los Angeles Community College will provide college classes for students and adults, college access information and assistance, and help build a 9-16 vertical plan;

L.A. Parks and Recreation will provide a program to support parents with at-risk teens; and

Pan American Bank will provide assistance with a student-run bank and financial literacy services.

These are only a few of the services and resources we expect to locate at Torres. See Appendix P for complete list of currently secured and planned partnerships. The organizations located on the campus will receive free space but have their own funding for services, personnel, equipment and material. In Appendix P, we have attached letters from a number of partners, additional letters were submitted directly to the superintendent, and other letters committing resources are anticipated. We are proud that Esteban E. Torres, for whom the school is named, has endorsed our teacher-developed pilot schools for the Torres High School.

**9. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

As an internal applicant, the school will adhere to the referenced articles in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements. Also, the school will follow the Education Code regarding the formation and operation of the School Site Council.

**a. School and Advisory Organizational Charts:**

Please see Appendix O for organizational and advisory chart.

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***Campus-wide Governance:*** Although the Torres campus will contain five independent schools, some aspects of school management will require site-wide coordination. Assuming implementation of the Community School model proposed by LAEP, we will participate in establishing a central system for oversight of campus operations, overseen by a Site Operations Manager. The Site Operations Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Torres campus (see 10.e. for details). In addition, the Torres Community School Collaborative will coordinate the community-based organizations involved with the five pilot schools at the Torres site. The following elements will comprise campus-wide governance under the SOM:

*the High School Building Council* will be responsible for supervision of campus wide operations and collaborative decision-making about resource and space allocation. The campus-wide Building Council will be composed of the principal from each of the five pilot schools, plus one representative each from the Torres Community School Collaborative and Los Angeles Education Partnership.

*the Torres Community School Collaborative*, a broad array of organizations, will be involved with the Community School; InnerCity Struggle will be the lead agency responsible for convening the collaborative, link community-based organizations with the school, and coordinate efforts.

**Pilot School Governance for the ELARA:** as a pilot school with autonomies from LAUSD over the school's daily operation, hiring, budget, curriculum and assessment, the academy will be governed under a distributive leadership model. These key groups will contribute to shared decision-making:

*the School Site Council* will be formed first. The council will be composed of 12 members: the Principal; four teachers elected by teachers at the school; one other school employee elected by other school personnel at the school; three parents of pupils attending the school and community members elected by parents; and three students elected by students. Once selected, the School Site Council will add one more member to be selected from the Torres Community School Collaborative. The resulting organization will be the Governing Council;

*the Governing Council* meets, under the Pilot School model, the categorical requirements for the school site council. Governing Council members will discuss all issues, but only school site council members, per statutory requirements, will vote on the school's single plan and the categorical budgets. See Appendix Q for a list of GC responsibilities.

The GC chairperson will be selected by consensus or vote of the GC. The GC will establish term limits for all members except the principal. We will ensure that SSC and leadership training is provided to help participants fully participate in all decision-making. In forming the Governing School Council, we will endeavor to ensure that the members have an appropriate mix of expertise (e.g., finance, operations) to oversee the academy and to support the urban planning and design focus of the pilot school.

*Advisory Councils:* As required, the pilot school will have two advisory councils:

*the Compensatory Education Advisory Committee (CEAC)* is a five member committee (three parents, and two teachers elected by teachers at the school) that advises on educational matters (see Appendix Q for list of responsibilities);

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*the English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC)* is a five member committee: three parents of English Language Learner pupils attending the school elected by parents, and two teachers elected by teachers at the school. The committee has the responsibility to advise and make recommendations on four legally required topics; see Appendix Q.

**10. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING PLAN**

**a. Leadership Team Capacity** (See Appendix M for Design Team resumes)

**Leadership Team – East Los Angeles Renaissance Academy**

Name	Yrs Teach	Yrs @ GHS	Yrs in HUM	Subject	Additional Expertise
Martin Buchman	25	25	12	English	Established Garfield High School's Humanitas Program; Coordinator for multi-track SLC program of 32 teachers and 875 students school-wide; English Department Chair
Norman L. Hsiang Chen	5	5	5	Social Studies	Established Garfield High School's Service Learning Plan; Humanitas Club Moderator
Rachel Michelle Greene	3	1	1	Social Studies	Impact Teacher Training Program; Supervised all training sessions and events for Santee High School's Students Run LA group during the 2008-2009 school year; Data Works Curriculum Calibration
Michael Leavy	14	7	6	English	Authored Humanitas SLC RFP; served on SDMC and SSC; experienced writer of test preparation curriculum; taught at University level.
Antonio Marquez	14	9	2	World Languages	T.U.P.E. Coordinator; Member: School Site Council; Assistant Athletic Director; Academy of Finance Coordinator (Wilson High School)
Michael A. Rocha	7	7	6	English	Implemented the first AVID Program at Garfield High School; EST/Language Arts/SAT 1 verbal instructor
Adrienne Sarabia	5	5	5	Math	Bilingual/Sheltered Teacher; AVID
Zoe Souliotis-Foley	9	9	6	English	Implemented the first AVID Program at Garfield High School
Monique Geraldine Ulivi	6	6	4	English	Master's degree in Education; School Leadership Advisor; Professional Learning Community Lead Teacher; Learning Team Lead Teacher; Speech and Debate Coach; Hurdle Coach

**b. Staffing Model:**

The table below shows the school's staffing needs from start-up through year five, as well as various ratios and numbers per classroom. The school plans to have 25 students per class, which is below the number in most large comprehensive high schools. This will enable teachers to know students well and to address their learning needs effectively. IEP services will be provided by LAUSD.

**East Los Angeles Renaissance Academy – Staffing Plan**

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	Year 1	Years 2-5
<b>Enrollment</b>	372	464
<b>Grades</b>	9-11	9-12
<b>Certificated Staff</b>		
Principal	1	1
English language arts teachers	4	4
Social studies teachers	3	4
Math teachers	3	3
Science teachers	3	3
World Languages teachers	2	2
Physical education teachers	1	1
Humanities / Elective teacher	1	1
Librarian	.2	.2
Teacher-leader*	(.5)	(.5)
<b>Total Certificated Staff</b>	<b>18.7*</b>	<b>21.7</b>
<b>Classified Staff</b>		
Site Operations Manager	2	2
Counselor	1	1
Administrative Assistant	1	1
School Clerk	1	1
<b>Total Classified Staff</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Adult-to-student ratio</b>	<b>17 to 1</b>	<b>18.6 to 1</b>
<b>Students per classroom</b>	<b>25; 50 in PE</b>	<b>25; 50 in PE</b>
<b>Teachers per classroom</b>	<b>1 or 2 when team teaching</b>	<b>1 or 2 when team teaching</b>
<b>Aides per classroom</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

\*One of the teachers will teach half time and fill the teacher-leader position for the other half of the day. The .5 teacher is not subtracted from the teaching positions because it is unknown at this point from which discipline the teacher-leader will come.

**c. Compensation**

As an internal applicant, the school will use LAUSD’s salary schedule, benefits package, health benefits and lifetime benefits.

**d. School Leadership**

(See Appendix for Principal's job description)

The criteria for choosing a principal will include the following qualifications, experiences and qualities:

- a) demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to the core beliefs of small school reform
- b) extensive experience in interdisciplinary teaching, leadership and curriculum design at the high school level, preferably with the Humanitas model;
- c) effective experience in facilitating teacher leadership and in helping teachers grow in their craft;
- d) effective implementation of progressive education practices;

## ELARA (Urban Planning and Design) Application

- e) willingness to teach one period a day;
- f) demonstrated commitment to urban planning and design integration and project-based learning;
- g) a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively;
- h) familiarity with the needs of students and families in East Los Angeles or similar communities.

These characteristics are clearly aligned with the mission and vision of the school and support the educational plan.

The principal teacher position is unfilled at this time. Following approval of ELARA's proposal, a governing board will be formed, consisting of elected ELARA teachers and staff. (Students and parents will become part of the governing board after they officially select ELARA under the Zone of Choice process.) The Principal's job description will be posted using standard Pilot School protocol (February 2010). Principal interviews will be conducted by the governing board and the final decision will be determined by that body. Upon hiring, the principal will immediately become a member of the governing board as well as the leadership team. He or she will participate in all professional development and school planning meetings (see PD schedule) and through this process, develop into an integral member of the small school.

### **e. Leadership Team beyond the Principal**

(See Appendix L for job descriptions of other Leadership positions)

The proposed **Site Operations Manager** will oversee day-to-day operations of the Torres campus. This position conducts all regular and special meetings of the Building Council and maintains all the books and records of site operations. Responsibilities include:

- a) organizing and supervising campus-wide needs including safety and emergency plans and training, calendars, athletic program, shared space and requests from outside entities;
- 2) overseeing campus maintenance and safety, including security, custodial, health, cafeteria and library staff;
- 3) coordinating and overseeing all co-located and other community-based organizations; and
- 4) informing principals and school staffs and parents in matters related to school safety, emergency preparedness and response, permits and attendance, child abuse reporting, student discipline, facilities, athletics, and equity/compliance issues and concerns.

The **teacher-leader** will be selected from among the academy teachers. This position will teach half-day and during the other half-day will

- a) act as liaison between Humanitas teacher teams and the Los Angeles Education Partnership;
- b) prepare recruiting materials; visit local feeder middle schools for ninth grade orientation;
- c) assist the counselor in scheduling classes and programming students; and
- d) create a record of interdisciplinary units for each grade level as produced by local Humanitas teams.

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The classified staff will consist of one counselor, an administrative assistant, and a school clerk.

The **counselor** will counsel students in the areas of educational, personal, physical, social and career needs. The ideal candidates will understand the necessity of cohort scheduling for interdisciplinary teaching, be creative, and take the initiative to solve problems.

The **administrative assistant** performs a combination of secretarial and administrative duties. The AA will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the office and supervision of clerical procedures. Other duties include helping to prepare budgets, payroll and Master Calendar. The ideal candidate will be able to help the principal prepare budgets, have knowledge of office practice, procedures and equipment, be able to prepare and edit reports, bulletins; explain rules, regulations and policies; obtain and impart information tactfully and accurately; exercise initiative and good judgment, make sound decisions and work under pressure in meeting deadlines; operate a computer terminal.

The **school clerk** will perform a variety of clerical duties. The candidate needs a clear and complete knowledge of office practices, procedures and equipment; an outgoing personality; works well under pressure of deadlines.

We will use the standard small school procedure for announcing positions. The site operations manager will be chosen jointly by the five principals with support from the Los Angeles Education Partnership, as mentioned above. For the other positions, the interview process will be conducted by the leadership team in May 2010. Final selection will be made by June.

### **f. Recruitment of Teaching Staff:**

#### **(See Appendix L for job descriptions of teaching staff)**

As an internal applicant, ELARA will follow LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

The East Los Angeles Renaissance Academy will build on the strengths of the founding teacher team and work diligently to recruit and retain a stable, diverse and pedagogically cohesive teaching staff.

**Teacher Roster & Credentials:** Teachers who have already been recruited and have committed to the school are Martin Buchman, Michael Leavy, Zoe Souliotis-Foley, Michael Rocha, Rachel Green, Antonio Marquez, Norm Chen, Monique Ulivi, and Adrienne Sarabia. (See Appendix M for résumés of leadership team). These teachers all have been or will have been trained in the Humanitas model, shared inquiry, Socratic seminar, and literacy strategies; hold single-subject credentials in the disciplines they will teach, as will all teachers hired; have CLAD (Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development) certificates, giving them cultural sensitivity and qualifying them to teach English learners; and meet the required credentials to teach their unique student population including students with disabilities.

## ELARA (Urban Planning and Design) Application

**Timeline/Strategy:** The mix of new and experienced teachers hired for the academy will depend in part on the number of interested teachers from Garfield. The ideal mix would be a core of experienced veterans and new beginning teachers. The founding teachers include six veteran teachers and three with five or less years of experience. In late February/early March we will post the job description at the site and meet to answer questions. We want to attract creative teachers who are interested in collaborating to develop innovative, interdisciplinary instruction.

The timeline for hiring teaching staff will be:

Feb.-Mar. 2010	Posting Job Description using standard Pilot School protocol
Apr.-May 2010	After an application review, candidates will be scheduled for an initial interview with Design Team and Principal. Candidates will be asked to bring a demonstration lesson. Depending on the number of candidates applying, a second interview may be scheduled.
June 2010	Final selections will be made and announced
Aug & Sep 2010	Orientation and professional development for teaching team

**Criteria:** All teacher candidates will:

- a) demonstrate mastery of their discipline content (with single-subject credential) and a true familiarity with content standards;
- b) have a demonstrated interest in the broader Humanities studies;
- c) be experienced in or eager to learn progressive pedagogical strategies (i.e. simulations, Socratic seminar, project-based learning, student exhibitions, etc.);
- d) be comfortable using project-based learning both for formative and summative assessment;
- e) be committed collaborators who will hold themselves accountable for rigorous grade-level planning;
- f) be aware of the importance of writing across the curriculum and willing to use discipline-specific and interdisciplinary writing as a form of summative assessment;
- g) be aware that literacy is the gateway to all learning;
- h) be willing to learn and integrate strategic literacy strategies that will be used school wide; and
- i) eager to promote a college-going culture by leading an advisory group through graduation, promoting college access and awareness strategies, and assisting with college portfolios.

### 11. Operations

#### a. Internal Applicants

As an internal applicant, the school will continue to use all existing LAUSD operational services provided at the school site and follow LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

#### b. External Applicants

Not applicable.

#### c. Master Service Agreements



## ELARA (Urban Planning and Design) Application

As an internal applicant, we will continue to use LAUSD operational services and do not require a Master Services Agreement.

### **d. School Operations Experience**

As an internal applicant, the school will use LAUSD services and will work with LAUSD to coordinate all school operations. As described above, the five pilot schools will jointly hire one manager of site operations to coordinate the operations and facilities issues at the Torres High School site with LAUSD for the five pilot school leaders.

### **e. Operations Start-up Plan**

As an internal applicant, the school will work with LAUSD School Management Services to follow their operations timeline and schedule to successfully open the school.

### **f. Operations Plan**

As an internal applicant, the school will use LAUSD operational services.

## **12. Finances**

### **a. Funding**

As an internal applicant, the school will receive funding via LAUSD's transparent budgeting process, based on student average daily attendance.

### **b. Budget Narrative**

As a District School, funding is on a per-pupil basis. Funding priorities are classroom personnel, professional development/planning time, and classroom technology.

*Classroom personnel:* the research is clear that the primary determinant of classroom outcomes is the pupil-teacher relationship. All ELARA spending decisions will be guided by that principle. To the fullest extent possible, all personnel will be classroom personnel who take on additional responsibilities for a portion of the day. Along these lines, we will do everything possible to maintain the lowest student to teacher ratio possible, through small class sizes, teacher aids, tutors, collaboration with Special Education teachers, etc.

*Professional development and planning time:* the collaborative emphasis of ELARA's pedagogical approaches, the need to evaluate data regularly, and the need to monitor student progress all require time for teachers to work together.

*Classroom technology:* the character of the 21st century workplace, the nature of project-based learning, and the need for equitable access to off-campus resources, all argue for a fully wired, interconnected school.

*Additional Funding:* ELARA's staff will work with LAEP and our other partners to apply for grants that would be appropriate and attainable for our school and our students. Aside from relying on the our partners to provide us with their grant writing staff, we hope to take advantage of Professional Development opportunities as they become available, to train our staff in grant writing as well.

### **c. Financial Control**

## ELARA (Urban Planning and Design) Application

As an internal applicant, the school will be an LAUSD school operating under the rules and regulations of LAUSD.

### 13. **Facilities**

a. LAUSD will provide facilities use agreement to be finalized by the Workforce Stability Taskforce.

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