



**Application for:
Central Region ES #15
from Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
Submitted January 11, 2010**

1. Executive Summary

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) has a proven track record of providing outstanding educational opportunities for children in the Greater MacArthur Park area. Located in one of the most densely populated and underserved communities in Los Angeles, our schools have proven that all students can accomplish incredible goals when they are held to high standards, exposed to relevant learning experiences, provided targeted intervention, and supported in a nurturing environment. The first CNCA schools opened in 2000 to serve children in grades K-5 at two separate campuses. CNCA expanded in 2001 as a response to parents' call for increased educational choice in the area by adding two middle school campuses serving grades 6-8. In 2004, an early childhood education program was started on the Burlington Campus that now serves 120 students.

To provide continuity in the instructional program and increase the number of academic opportunities for graduating middle school students, CNCA opened a high school campus in 2004, serving 430 students. In 2008, the high school campus graduated its first senior class. Realizing our "College Ready, College Bound" mission, 60% of 2008 graduates and 79% of 2009 graduates were accepted to four-year colleges. Today, CNCA serves a total of 1514 students across a preschool, two K-8 campuses, and a high school.

Despite the social and economic challenges faced by residents of this community, CNCA students are defying the odds by demonstrating exceptional academic excellence. CNCA now ranks 10 out of 10 on the State of California's performance index when compared to similar schools and 6 out of 10 when compared to all schools statewide. Our K-8 students have achieved unprecedented gains, going from a 453 Academic Performance Index (API) score in 2002 to an 817 API score in 2009. CNCA now ranks among the top 25% of all Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) elementary schools and top 10% of all LAUSD middle schools, consistently outperforming neighborhood LAUSD schools by 62 to 162 API points.

1A. Assurances: See Appendix, Attachment 1: Assurances.

1B. Student Population

CNCA currently serves over 1500 students from pre-K through twelfth grade. The total student body is made up of approximately 96% Latino, 1% Filipino, 1% African American, 1% Asian, and less than 1% Caucasian students. CNCA schools are located in the densely populated, underserved greater MacArthur Park community of Los Angeles. The area is comprised of primarily Latino immigrant families that have a poverty rate of 35%, almost twice the city-wide rate of 18%, with a median yearly income of \$11,475. The census tracts that make up this community have the highest percentage of severe residential overcrowding in the city, the greatest concentration of single parent households, and the highest English non-fluency rate. The proposed school, CRES #15, would relieve over-crowding from Vermont Elementary and Magnolia Elementary. The student population of both schools mirrors that of CNCA's existing elementary campuses:

School	Ethnicity					English Learner %	Special Education %	Economically Disadvantaged %
	Latino	African American	Filipino	Asian	Caucasian			
CNCA (K-5)	96%	1%	1%	1%	Less than 1%	76%	11%	99%
Magnolia	98%	1%	0	0	0	75%	10%	84%
Vermont	91%	8%	0	0	0	59%	8%	93%

Data Source: PowerSchool Information Database, October 2009 (CNCA) and LAUSD Report Card, 2007-2008 (Magnolia Elementary and Vermont Elementary)

CNCA has experience working with a student population similar to the incoming population of CRES #15. More importantly, we have an unwavering commitment to academic excellence for every student as demonstrated by our unprecedented track-record of success in this community: **a California API score of 817 for our K-8 campuses and an API score of 775 for our high school; an average of 50% of all students proficient in ELA and 68% of all students proficient in math (grades 2-11); and, a 96% high school graduation rate with an average of 70% of students accepted into four-year colleges located throughout the country.** Based on the remarkable academic growth of our K-8 schools since 2000, CNCA has received accolades from neighborhood organizations and elected officials and is under final consideration for awards by the California Department of Education as a California Distinguished School and the California Association of Bilingual Education for the Seal of Excellence.

1C. Vision, Mission and Philosophy

CNCA was founded by Pueblo Nuevo Development, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing a productive, safe, and healthy livable community, which has had a strong presence in the Rampart and MacArthur Park areas for over 17 years. Pueblo Nuevo Development, with the support of the non-profit organizations, New Visions Foundation and Excellent Education Development, founded CNCA and determined that education is a key factor in realizing a larger vision of urban revitalization where families have an opportunity for educational and economic advancement.

The underlying philosophy of CNCA is that when underserved students are provided equal access to rigorous, research-based educational programs in which families are an integral component, children gain the tools to achieve academic success as early as kindergarten.

The mission of CNCA is to educate students in a college preparatory program to be literate, critical thinkers and independent problem solvers who are agents of social justice with sensitivity toward the world around them.

To accomplish this mission CNCA created a comprehensive educational program, including a rigorous academic curriculum focused on standards-based learning for grades K-12, integration of the visual and performing arts, an emphasis on social justice, access to the latest information technology, after school enrichment programs at each campus, and extensive parent and community outreach. The new school at CRES #15, serving grades K-5, will build on the history and success of CNCA.

1D. Education Plan

In comparison to larger schools, small schools produced more favorable student attitudes, positive social behavior, better attendance, lower dropout rates, and positive inter-personal relationships that support academic success¹. We firmly believe that students have a much greater chance of academic and social success in this type of setting. We strive to create a culture of care for each individual student. We believe in teaching the whole child and consistently use differentiated small group instruction to inspire students to self-define what motivates them to learn. Our philosophy allows our students to find authentic connections to their academic learning through language, performing arts, and technology. We maintain an unwavering commitment to providing high-quality educational opportunities to the students and work diligently to continuously strengthen our educational practices and achieve our mission of preparing students to succeed in college and beyond.

CNCA is distinguished by a number of excellent programs, including a developmental bilingual program designed to help children achieve academic proficiency at or above grade level in Spanish and English. Students also receive a rich educational experience through weekly art, music, dance, drama, and physical education instruction. We also strongly believe that parents must be partners in the educational process and offer high-quality family services, including a comprehensive parent workshop program and health case management for families in need. CNCA strongly believes students will find greater academic success when their home and school share similar values about learning and forge a genuine partnership.

CNCA's academic program is distinguished by a number of exceptional components:

1. **Academic Accountability:** CNCA holds high expectations of all members of our community. We hold teachers and staff to high expectations first, working to ensure we are prepared and ready to partner with parents and students. We constantly set

Emily is a typical third grade student at CNCA Burlington. She enjoys math, reading and loves to play tag at recess. She began Kindergarten at CNCA after transferring from the neighborhood's public school because her mother (a non-high school graduate) decided she preferred a school that could offer a small community environment where Emily could excel in her studies. At the start of this year, Emily was not proficient in reading for a 3rd grade student so her teacher recommended her for intervention.

Today is Wednesday, Emily arrives at school at 6:50 am for her Decoding and Fluency intervention class. At 7:50 Emily lines up for class. She then takes out her agenda, homework and gets started on her Do Now activity and silent reading. After breakfast Emily has ELA class where her teacher begins with the Working With Words block and transitions into a Guided Reading Lesson. After recess, Spanish Language Arts is taught until 11:05 and then goes to dance class. At 12:40pm she lines up with her ELD class. Emily still struggles to acquire English because her family speaks little English at home. Her ELD class consists of students from all 3rd grade classes who are similar in language skills and abilities.

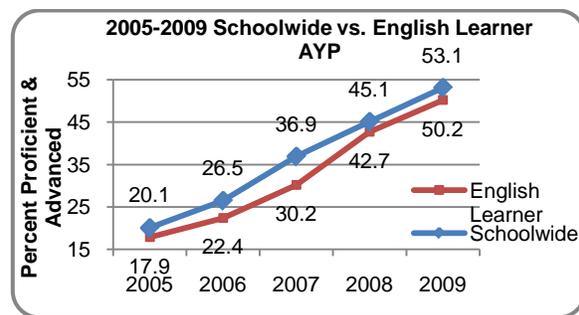
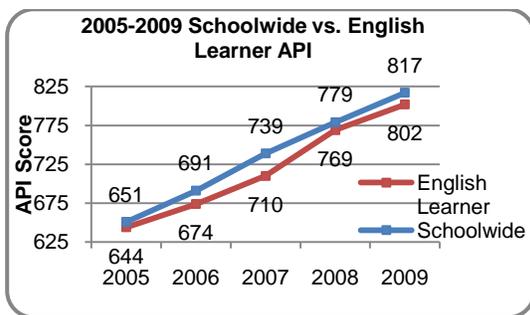
Emily then goes to math class where her teacher uses the Singapore Math curriculum and supports students with additional basic math skills practice and mental math sprints. From 2:30-3:00pm Emily works on writing. Her teacher alternates between whole class and provides Emily and other students individual attention to avoid common errors. At 3:05pm she is picked up by her aunt, ready for a break before spending

¹ Cotton, Kathleen. School Size, School Climate, and Student Performance (School Improvement Research Series). Portland, Ore.: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1996.

goals for our achievement and our outcomes, plan strategically to meet these goals, and regularly reflect on our outcomes. At Camino, preparation for college begins in kindergarten with high expectations for all students and a rigorous academic program.

2. Development Bilingual Program coupled with Systematic English Language Development: The Developmental Bilingual Program at CNCA is a research-based program designed to build academic fluency in *both* Spanish and English. English learners with literacy skills and well-developed vocabulary in their primary language bring a great deal of applicable knowledge to language and literacy development in English. Understanding that quality content instruction in English is not sufficient to ensure English Learners gain academic proficiency, we accelerate academic achievement by providing students systematic and explicit instruction in English- vocabulary, word usage, grammatical features, and syntactical structures- preventing gaps in knowledge instruction and filling existing gaps.

Joining a systematic approach to English Language Development with a rigorous core curriculum based on California state standards, within the context of a developmental Bilingual Program, builds on the Spanish language that students bring to school, and becomes a vehicle for creating bilingual and biliterate students who value and take pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage and are optimally prepared for the rigors of life in a linguistically diverse world. The graphs below are a testament to the impact our model has had on CNCA students over the last five years:



3. Parent Partnerships: Rather than approaching parent participation as a one-shot volunteer opportunity featuring a string of disconnected activities, CNCA strongly believes that parents must be partners in the educational process. We offer high-quality family services, including a comprehensive parent workshop program and health case management for families in need. The school has built an infrastructure around our “parents as partners” motto and will identify a full-time parent coordinator to lead this charge. As volunteers, learners, advocates, and leaders, parents are a constant presence at our school. Parents are committed to providing a supportive environment for their child.

4. Supporting Students and Families: CNCA delivers a comprehensive student support program that includes parents, school and community, with the goal of creating healthy literate students who are poised to achieve their full academic and social potential. To this end, CNCA organizes human resources to support student needs. Student Support Team Meetings take place regularly to provide additional support for struggling students. CNCA, in partnership with PAJA medical center, provides access to an onsite medical clinic that delivers primary care services and health related education to students, staff, parents and the larger community. We seek to provide accessible health services and education to our students and families in order to increase the potential of students to achieve personal and academic goals.

5. Partnering for Enrichment: CNCA is dedicated to partnering with the community to provide more opportunities for an enriched education for our students. Our intentional efforts to leverage the resources within our community to support students include infusing the arts into academic programs, exposing students to the visual and performing arts at an early age, and fostering love for and commitment to students’ talents as they get older. Among CNCA’s partners are PS Arts and Everybody Dance!, two existing organizations dedicated to providing meaningful and ongoing instruction in the arts and dance. PS Arts provides standards-based arts instruction for students from grades K-5 on a weekly basis, while also offering drama for grades 3-5. Everybody dance! provides weekly dance instruction to students in grades K-5.

6. Genuine Adult Learning Community: CNCA works diligently to foster a positive culture for all stakeholders. School culture is defined by a shared set of norms and values that guide the thinking, behavior, and relationships that typify the customs of an organization (Crane, 2009). We place a special emphasis on maintaining a positive culture for our faculty and staff because of the impact a single teacher can have on student achievement outcomes. CNCA firmly believes that culture

shapes and focuses our collective energy. We invest a significant amount of time creating a team atmosphere among faculty and staff that embodies a true adult learning community. The results of the most recent staff satisfaction survey (June 2009) indicate that 100% of teachers agree that “administrators effectively foster a team environment among school staff”. Ultimately, we seek to create an educational environment where educators experience teaching as a craft and children own their learning. We strive to provide students with the academic and social skills they need to feel inspired and achieve their hearts’ desire.

1E. Community Impact and Involvement

CNCA has a proven track record of operating small successful schools that lead to the transformation of communities through education. We are a charter organization dedicated to working with the families and students of a specific geographic target area in central Los Angeles which is bordered by the 110 freeway on the east, the 10 freeway on the south, La Brea Street on the West and Sunset on the North. Central Region Elementary School #15 is squarely within the communities we seek to serve. The enrollment patterns between CNCA existing schools and the two relieving schools – Magnolia Avenue Elementary and Vermont Avenue Elementary – are very similar in their demographics.

CNCA stands out among its public school peers of charter and non-charter schools because of its community development antecedents that have given it deep roots in the neighborhood and its continued place-based approach. CNCA’s placed-based approach integrates its educational programs with the wealth of resources available in our communities to create a network that addresses barriers to learning. There are six key elements to how CNCA operates its schools to positively impact its community. See Appendix, Attachment 2: Place-Based Approach.

CNCA Place-Based Approach

CNCA’s place-based approach results in key benefits to its students and their families:

- *Extraordinarily high level of parent involvement at each school:* CNCA places an emphasis on parent training and outreach. In 2006-07 over 18% of families served over 50 hours. In addition, over 96% of CNCA parents attend parent/teacher conferences. In the latest annual parent survey of 600 parents (June 2009).
- *Extensive community partnerships:* CNCA is able to attract numerous community partners which provide invaluable services to students and their families. Examples include educational partnerships with P.S. Arts, the Gabriella Axelrad Foundation, the Mind Institute, and Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles; primary medical care and mental health counseling through partnerships with Paja Medical Group, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center and Los Angeles Child Development Center; and social services through Inquilinos Unidos, Centro de Educacion Popular, and Para Los Niños.

CNCA will actively work with stakeholder groups to plan the opening of the school and develop a thorough parent and community outreach strategy. This will be done by engaging existing and established neighborhood and community based groups using a culturally appropriate bilingual approach as a majority of families are Spanish speaking, and by developing strategies to reach out to individuals and communities in the targeted area that are not aware of nor participating in existing services provided by neighborhood groups.

1F. Leadership/Governance

CNCA is committed to developing working and learning environments where all stakeholders actively engage in defining the community they are a part of. To this goal, the school’s academic, professional and outreach programs integrate strategies to disseminate information and data, obtain feedback, and engage stakeholders in the various levels of decision making. CNCA maintains a proven track record of engagement across stakeholder groups.

The CNCA development team has experience with successful new school development. CNCA has opened three charter schools and a preschool center that collectively serve over 1500 students. The CNCA Schools’ academic performance has steadily increased and now exceeds that of local schools (see Appendix, Attachment 3: 2009 API Comparison.). The development team has extensive experience working in high performing schools and organizations. In addition to instructional and operational expertise, CNCA also has extensive facilities development and experience including: fundraising, permitting and code-compliance, as we have designed and developed our own award-winning school facilities. The leadership team consists of:

- Ana F. Ponce, Chief Executive Officer
- Noemi Donoso, Chief Academic Officer

- Chris Moggia, Sr. Director of Technology
- Margaret Domingo, Director of Human Resources
- Mary Funaoka, Director of Knowledge Management
- Yolanda Sanchez, Compliance and Communications Manager
- Corey Podell, Special Education Coordinator
- Atyani Howard, Burlington Campus Principal

CNCA Board of Directors: CNCA operates in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws established by the CNCA governing board to the extent the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are consistent with the Brown Act in dealing with operations of CNCA. The affairs of CNCA will be managed and its powers exercised under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Board of Directors will have a legal and fiduciary responsibility for CNCA. The Board will be responsible for providing fiscal accountability including approving and monitoring the budget. The board will also help ensure effective organizational planning by approving long-range goals and annual objectives, monitoring the general policies such as health and safety, use and maintenance of facilities, and fundraising, and overseeing that school resources are managed effectively.

Site-Based Council: CNCA will have an on-site advisory governance board, the Site-based Council, consisting of the principal, parent representatives, teachers elected by grade level and/or discipline, classified staff representation, the student body president, and local community stakeholders. The Site-based Council will provide suggestions and recommendations to the site leadership and/or to the Board of Directors on issues including, but not limited to, budgeting, curriculum, school policies, school/community participation, and the general direction of the school. The Site Based Council members will be elected on a yearly basis and serve for a term of one school year. The by-laws will be developed during the first year.

1G. Fiscal Plan:

The budget is designed to meet the instructional needs of students at CRES#15 and nurture a collaborative learning and working environment. The budget ensures appropriate funding to maintain an average teacher/student ration of 1:20 Kindergarten – 3rd and 1:28 in 4th and 5th grades. It also provides for student academic and social/emotional intervention support, parent support and enrichment programs such as art, music and dance. It also reflects a commitment to a professional learning community by allocating resources for teacher training and ELD support. The balanced five-year budget attached demonstrates the viability of the program described in this application. See Appendix, Attachment 4: Financial Plan.

2. Curriculum and Instruction

2A. Curriculum

In his book, *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*, Robert Marzano² identifies a “guaranteed and viable curriculum” as the school-level factor with the most significant impact on student achievement (2003). The CNCA leadership team maintains a strong commitment to ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students by guaranteeing *what* gets taught through teacher-created standards based pacing plans and *how* it gets taught through consistent professional development around pedagogy that meets the needs of our learners.

Standards-Based Pacing Plans

In 2005, CNCA initiated a formalized process to create standards-based pacing plans for every core content area. Plans were completed using a scaffolded process that builds upon the *Understanding by Design*³, backwards planning approach:

- Current pacing plan formats analyzed to determine the components of a CNCA pacing plan template.
- California standards grouped into units around big ideas and essential understandings.
- Measurable objectives written to teach each standard.
- Classroom instructional resources identified.
- Authentic assessments developed for each learning objective and unit.

These standards-based pacing plans will provide the foundation for a guaranteed and viable curriculum at CNCA. They will also allow us to engage in meaningful and lasting vertical analysis of our curriculum. Ultimately, these standards based pacing plans will provide the foundation from which all teachers can create rich unit plans that address a diverse and ever-changing student body. See Appendix, Attachment 5a-5f: Standards-Based Pacing Plans.

Bilingual Program

The Developmental Bilingual Program at CNCA (also known as Maintenance Bilingual Program) is a research-based program designed to build academic fluency in *both* Spanish and English. The Bilingual Program plan aligns with the school’s mission to create literate, critical thinkers, and with our instructional vision to close the achievement gap by providing rich and rigorous academic instruction. The Developmental Bilingual Program and curriculum is based on the California State Standards for academic achievement, builds on the Spanish language that students bring to school, and is a vehicle for creating bilingual and biliterate students who value and take pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage and are optimally prepared for life in a linguistically diverse world. The climate at CNCA is one that values, celebrates and promotes our Bilingual Program and our bilingual learning community. “Students...perform better when they consider that their bilingual abilities help rather than hinder development of their individual languages.”⁴ Furthermore, the creation and implementation of standards-based pacing plans in English Language Arts (ELA) and Spanish Language Arts (SLA), ensures that essential standards are taught across the grades. See Appendix, Attachment 6: Bilingual Program.

English Language Arts Curriculum Overview

At CNCA, our instructional vision charges us with producing students that have the ability to engage in authentic and rigorous reading, writing, and critical thinking. In each of the grades, writing units are crafted based on the California English Language Arts Content Standards. The standards will be grouped into units in our pacing plans, using the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California as their guide. Teachers will work together in grade level teams to develop standards-based units centered on deep, essential questions which culminate in writing projects. Moreover, explicit reading support will be provided to all students, regardless of reading level, throughout the day.

A primary goal of the reading program at CNCA is to encourage students to value reading as a source of information and to develop as life-long readers for both academic and personal pursuits. Students’ love of reading will encourage their growth as readers and writers. All students are encouraged to read silently every day and teachers provide opportunities for students to choose literature and topics they find meaningful and interesting. Beginning in kindergarten, students choose from an array of reading materials including big books, picture books and primers to read daily. Students in the upper grades continue to develop their love of reading and comprehension skills by reading texts at their independent reading level independently for 20-30 minutes during each full instructional school day. Six core reading strategies are taught and emphasized at all grade levels with increased sophistication; 1) Phonics/Decoding, 2) Predict/Infer, 3) Monitor/Clarify, 4) Question, 5) Summarize, and

² Marzano, Robert. *What Works in Schools: Translating Research Into Action*. 2003.

³Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. *Understanding by Design*. 2005.

⁴ Brisk & Harrington, *Literacy and Bilingualism*, 2007

6) Evaluate. The elementary language arts program, based on California content standards, utilizes a balanced literacy approach based on Reading and Writing Workshop outlined by Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University. Elements of the balanced literacy framework include: independent reading workshop; writing workshop; shared reading; interactive read-aloud with accountable talk; story time; small group work (guided reading or strategy lessons); word study (phonics and spelling); interactive writing (Collins, K. 2004. *Growing Readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.)

This program provides a sound instructional framework for teaching and learning through a literature-based curriculum with a strong foundation in phonics in the early grades moving to a focus on comprehension in the upper grades. It also offers ongoing formative and summative assessment opportunities, as well as integrated thematic units that develop students' literacy skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. There is a strong emphasis on daily phonics and phonemic awareness in the primary grades where students are "learning to read." Critical thinking skills are addressed through "read aloud with accountable talk," open-ended questioning, and oral retellings. Students work in centers to complete different language arts activities, and teachers work with small guided reading groups to differentiate instruction. A comprehensive set of leveled texts is available for guided reading instruction. Classroom libraries include books of different genres and levels. Leveled lending libraries support a strong at-home reading program where all students read at least 30 minutes each night.

Reading comprehension is also a cross-grade focus. Beginning in kindergarten, students listen to stories and create storyboards to demonstrate their comprehension. As students advance in reading levels, they both listen to and read a variety of texts and learn to use reading comprehension strategies in concert to create meaning from what they read. These integral strategies are posted on classroom walls for teachers to refer back to during reading instruction to help students with metacognition (the ability to understand the thinking process). Teachers use strategies such as think-alouds, wherein they used reading strategies, model them aloud, and then have students practice them during read-alouds, shared, guided, reciprocal reading and independent reading. Guided reading groups use books organized by reading levels to facilitate targeted instruction based on the needs of the individual students.

In the upper elementary grades, 3-5, instructional focus shifts from phonics and phonemic awareness ('learning to read') to an increased emphasis on comprehension strategies ('reading to learn'). However, teachers continue to build upon the phonics/phonemic awareness skills acquired in the primary grades, and support students who may need extra help with phonics and decoding. Students also practice reading fluency. To individualize instruction a portion of the language arts block is designated to differentiating instruction with small groups to focus on specific reading skills or levels. Students also use Thinking Maps to help them organize text in language arts and throughout the content areas into relational patterns such as sequential, cause-effect, and compare/contrast. The goal of these student-centered activities is the development of meta-cognitive thinking, where students automatically apply comprehension strategies and make connections to other subject areas and the world at large.

Writing instruction at Camino Nuevo helps students figure out reading "from the inside out" and develop a sense of authorship that will carry them into high school and college. As children write, they use their letter-sound knowledge, develop knowledge they have read about, and practice the art of writing that they have analyzed in models that they have read either as a class or individually. Children who write daily become more fluent in reading due to the efforts of teachers making explicit connections between reading and writing. In each of the grades, students practice writing in four genres: narrative, expository, persuasive, and response to literature. Camino Nuevo uses a spiraling writing curriculum that returns with more sophistication to already-visited genres. See Appendix, Attachment 7: Curriculum Summary Tables and Attachments 5a-5f: Standards-Based Pacing Plan.

Mathematics Curriculum Overview

Knowing that algebra is the gateway to college, and that traditional programs focused on procedural math insufficiently prepare our students for rigorous levels of math, we adopted Singapore Math for grades 1-5. The curriculum, aligned with the state standards, emphasizes conceptual understanding of the full math spectrum while at the same time building basic skills. Students are introduced to all of the major content domains – number sense, algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability. The curriculum is designed to equip students with a strong foundation in mathematics through a mastery-based program aimed at developing logical thinking and critical lifelong problem solving skills.

The goal of mathematics instruction is to produce students who are fluent with numbers, have built mathematical reasoning skills and have the ability to formulate and solve problems. In order to mathematically reason, students must learn the vocabulary to communicate ideas and synthesize concepts. "Problem solving includes being able to (a) develop a clear

understanding of the problem that is being posed, (b) translate the problem from everyday language into a precise mathematical question, (c) choose and use appropriate methods to answer the question, and (d) interpret and evaluate the solution in terms of the original problem.”⁵ In order for students to acquire the ability to reason and apply problem-solving skills, they need both conceptual and procedural knowledge of mathematics. The emphasis on conceptual understanding will shift students’ thought processes from gaining absolute knowledge to increasing mathematical reasoning skills.

Math instruction will provide a concrete experience through the use of manipulatives, then move to pictorial representations where students draw models and then the abstract where students work only with numbers and symbols. They will be taught to visualize and construct concrete pictures called model-drawing to help make sense of word problems. The model drawing method will require students to understand mathematical concepts underlying word problems and serves as a bridge to algebra. See Appendix, Attachment 7: Curriculum Summary Tables and Attachments 5a-5f: Standards-Based Pacing Plan.

History Curriculum Overview

The Social Studies curriculum is based on a holistic approach to developing the students’ critical understanding of history and of their own identity. Out of this dynamic, historical understanding, the goal of social studies and humanities instruction is to foster a culturally sensitive perspective rooted in civic-mindedness and democratic principles, and to help students develop an ethical empathy towards social justice and act according to these ethics within their community. These competencies will be developed in active learning classrooms and community-based projects that further the development of the whole student. Teachers will strive to connect the content standards to students’ personal context.

Teachers will use the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies textbook as a resource, along with other reference materials in order to access the knowledge needed for the units. Multiple instructional strategies will assist in the comprehension of the content material for ELL students. Students will tap into the curriculum through the use of primary sources, such as photographs, interviews, artifacts, and other neighborhood resources. Field trips will be planned to neighborhood historical landmarks and museums to study the evolution of their community. Teachers will ask guest speakers to come share their historical narratives with the class. Furthermore, instructors will try to build background knowledge through the use of videos and other multimedia so that students can better connect to the content material. Graphic organizers, particularly Thinking Maps will be used to record new information and support the students with making connections to previous knowledge. Word walls will be used to record new vocabulary for students to easily access. See Appendix, Attachment 7: Curriculum Summary Tables.

Science Curriculum Overview

The goal of the science curriculum is to provide a comprehensive curriculum that includes the essential skills and knowledge students will need to be scientifically literate. Teachers will use Houghton-Mifflin Discovery Works. All grade levels will utilize the Full Option Science System (FOSS) Kits, which have been developed by the Lawrence Hall of Science at University of California, Berkeley, that provide hands-on learning and experimentation that builds upon previous knowledge. Each FOSS kit is thematically-based and provides a series of hands-on and inquiry-based learning experiences for the unit. Supplemental materials include videos (i.e. Magic School Bus, National Geographic for Kids), standards-based ecology units, and trade books specifically pertaining to the current science topic being taught (i.e. a natural disaster unit would include books and technology resources on earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters).

Teachers will use the Houghton Mifflin Discovery Works textbook as a resource, along with FOSS Kits and other reference materials that aid student access to content mastery. The implementation of our standards-based curriculum will be driven by the constructivist belief that students learn best in an inquiry-based, hands-on investigative environment that builds upon the knowledge of previous grade levels. Language arts (expository reading and writing) and math skills are critical components that will be incorporated into the science curriculum. See Appendix, Attachment 7: Curriculum Summary Tables.

Visual and Performing Arts

The goal for the visual and performing arts curriculum at CNCA is to expose students to different art forms and to encourage them to appreciate art as a form of communication and to express ideas with proficiency and aesthetic effectiveness. The strands for visual and performing arts are as follows: Artistic Perception, Creative Expression, Historical and Cultural Context, Aesthetic Valuing, Connections, Relationships and Applications.

The arts program is aligned with state standards. CNCA is committed, through instruction and exploration, to providing all students with many artistic avenues for creative self-expression. This curriculum allows students to channel emotions into

⁵ “Reaching for Common Ground in K-12 Mathematics Education.” D. Loewenberg Ball, J. Ferrini-Mundy, J. Kilpatrick, J. Milgram, W. Schmid, and R. Schaar. October 2005.

creative forms, with the objective of instilling value and a lifelong pursuit of the arts, as well as tolerance and respect for diversity. Specific learning activities will further students' understanding of artistic elements and principles of visual design. By engaging in visual and performing arts, students enhance their knowledge of core academic subjects, apply critical thinking skills and acquire artistic skill and style. CNCA will partner with PS Arts for visual arts and drama enrichment and instruction, Gabriella Axelrad Foundation for a dance program, and the LA Philharmonic for a music program.

Art: The goal of art instruction is to expose students to a variety of artistic media and to develop their understanding and enjoyment of creating visual art. Visual art consists of two-dimensional and three-dimensional creative expressions such as painting, drawing, graphic arts, sculpture, photography and ceramics. Following state standards, the primary elements of art that are incorporated include line, color, shape/form, texture, and space.

Drama: The goal of the drama program is to enhance students' self-confidence through expression and to allow students to perform in front of live audiences. Third through fifth grade students attend drama classes once a week.

Dance: The goal of dance instruction is to train students to develop strong bodies and to instill in students an appreciation for dance through direct kinesthetic experiences of different dance forms. The philosophy of this program, which is built on state standards, involves imparting to each child the benefits of dance training: healthy bodies, alert minds, self-discipline, team work and a love and appreciation for dance, music and the arts. The intended benefits are as follows:

- To give under-served children the opportunity to study dance
- To develop and nurture in children a love of music and the arts
- To increase the physical fitness and skills of inner-city children who reside in neighborhoods where arts and recreational opportunities are severely limited
- To give each child the means of individual expression and creativity through dance

Dance instruction will be offered to students in grades K-5 at least once a week, depending on grade level. Kindergarteners and first graders begin with creative movement, followed by second graders who study multicultural dance, third graders who focus on tap dance, while fourth graders learn modern dance, and fifth graders learn jazz. This dance program culminates in year-end performances for the entire student and parent body.

Music: CNCA participates in the Los Angeles Philharmonic School Partner program in order to bring music instruction to all of our third through fifth grade students. The school partner program provides access to the world's finest musicians and creative programming. The program is dedicated to providing leadership in music education and to help restore arts education for all students. The goals for participating students are:

- To learn developmentally appropriate musical concepts and vocabulary illustrated through teaching artist visits and the concert experience
- To demonstrate the capacity to listen and to comment on music.
- To understand and experience music in relation to its historical and cultural context and gain an appreciation of classical music.

Physical Education and Health

The goal for the physical and health education curriculum is to promote healthy lifestyles among students and their families through the development of positive physical and mental habits. The physical education and health curriculum covers the following strands: movement skills and knowledge, self-image and personal development, and social development. In addition to the development and enhancement of physical skills, human development is also a central part of the health curriculum, particularly at the upper grades.

The state standards are met through dance and other physical activities. The physical education program emphasizes individual motor skills, fitness and good sportsmanship. Students in grade five will participate in the standardized physical performance test, the California Fitness Gram, which includes aerobic capacity, body composition, abdominal strength, trunk extension strength, and upper body strength and flexibility.

Standards-based, age-appropriate health education lessons will be incorporated into the academic curriculum wherever possible. As part of health education, students in grades K-5 learn about maintaining proper health by developing responsible lifelong habits in and out of the classroom. The knowledge and skills important for students to know and do will include: food pyramid guidelines, types of food and nutritional values, exploration of food labels, eating patterns among certain cultures,

long-term consequences of dietary habits, variables that affect dietary requirement, such as age, amount of activity level, weight and other health conditions.

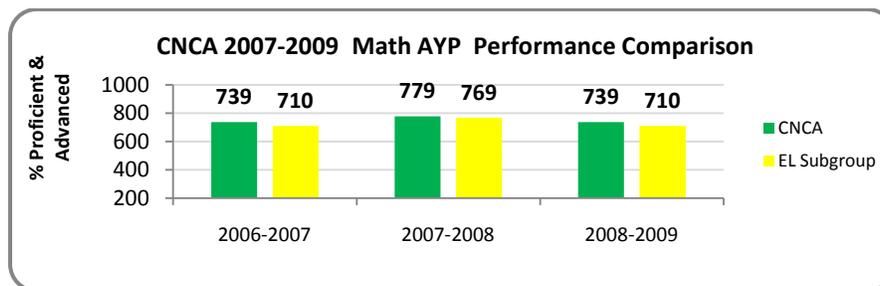
2B. Track Record of Proposed Curriculum

In an effort to yield the greatest student achievement gains in the shortest amount of time, the CRES #15 leadership team will ensure quality instruction for every student through a guaranteed and viable curriculum. This comprehensive curriculum includes a Developmental Bilingual program, the Singapore Mathematical approach, and a strategic literacy program.

One component of the CRES #15 academic curriculum is the Bilingual Program. Expert researchers in the area of language acquisition instruction identify three key predictors of academic success for English learners (Thomas and Collier, 2001):⁶

- 1) Cognitively complex, on-grade-level academic instruction through students' first language for as long as possible (optimally through grades 5 and 6) and on-grade-level *academic* instruction in the second language (English) for part of the school day.
- 2) The use of current approaches to teaching the curriculum through two languages (e.g. cooperative learning strategies, language transfer, thematic units, inquiry and problem solving, incorporation of technology and fine arts, and building on students' backgrounds and life experiences).
- 3) A socio-cultural climate at the school that values bilingualism and sees the home language as an asset (additive philosophy of bilingualism vs. a subtractive philosophy). School curriculum is inclusive of ELL students, their families and their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and where teachers have high expectations for students' academic achievement in both languages.

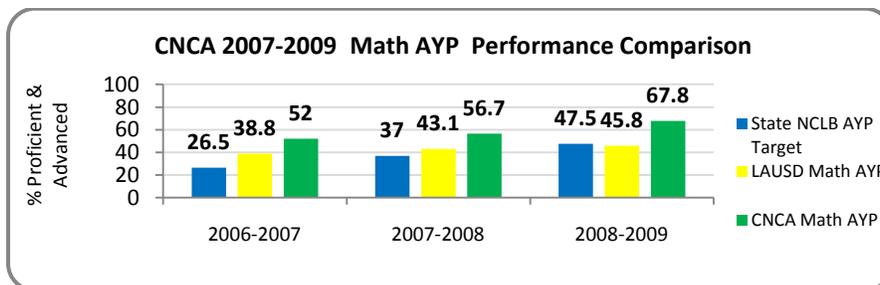
CRES #15's bilingual model will include the three key aspects noted above. Additionally, the creation and implementation of standards-based pacing plans in English Language Arts (ELA) and Spanish Language Arts (SLA) ensures a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Standardized test scores reflect our ability to ensure high-quality bilingual and ELD instruction for the large English Learner population we serve. For the past three years, CNCA exceeded API growth targets, including those for the English Learner Subgroup. The graph below shows the difference between the school-wide API and the EL Subgroup API. This is significant evidence that CNCA is effectively closing the gap between English Learners and fluent English speakers. The increase in the API for the EL Subgroup from 2007-2009 is **92** points, whereas the increase in overall API during the same years is **78** points. Further demonstrating that the CNCA EL subgroup is making more pronounced API growth over the past three years is the chart below that compares math performance school-wide versus the English Learner subgroup:



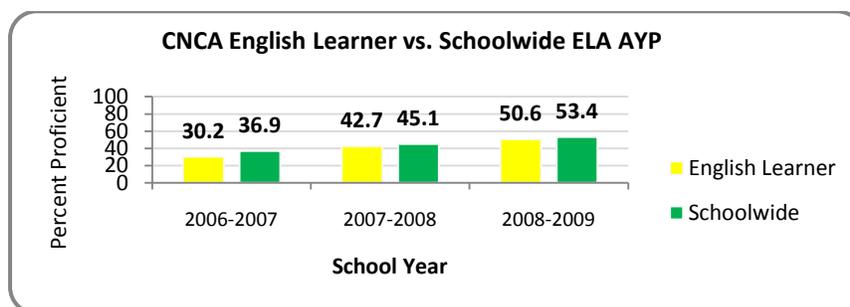
Another component of the CRES #15 academic curriculum is the Singapore Math program that is based on the highly successful Primary Mathematics series from Singapore. Students in Singapore using this program have scored first in the world in mathematics proficiency on the last three Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS). Additionally, a LAUSD school serving a comparable English Learner population, Ramona Elementary, has experienced promising math success with the program. In 2006, after one year of implementing the Singapore Math program, the percentage of students proficient and advanced in math increased by 17.6%, from 54% in 2005 to 71.6% in 2006.⁷ At CNCA, we continue to make growth and exceed state and federal targets, especially in math. The graph below demonstrates the percentage of students proficient/advanced on the CST in Math from 2007 to 2009. Over the past three years, the percentage increased by 15.8%. Each year CNCA has also significantly outperformed neighborhood LAUSD schools in math and exceeded the NCLB state targets.

⁶ Thomas, Wayne & Collier, Virginia. *A National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement*. CREDE (Center for Research Education Diversity and Excellence), 2001.

⁷ Sources: www.cde.ca.gov & Landsberg, M. "In L.A., Singapore Math has added value." *Los Angeles Times*. March 9, 2008.



The proposed CRES #15 literacy program has a proven track record of success both school-wide and for the English Learner subgroup, as demonstrated through the percentage of students of students proficient and advanced in English Language Arts. Additional data (depicted below) clearly show an increase in EL Subgroup performance in ELA. The school-wide AYP increased by 16.5% over three years, from 36.9% to 53.4%. Meanwhile, the English Learner AYP increased by 20.4% over three years, from 30.2% in 2007 to 50.6% proficient/advanced in 2009.



The proposed curriculum for CRES #15, a Developmental Bilingual program, the Singapore Mathematical approach, and a strategic literacy program, has already yielded significant student results at CNCA campuses. With continual consideration of the students we serve and reflection upon the delivered curriculum, CNCA will continue to increase its track record of success.

2C. Addressing the Needs of All Students

A student's academic success is affected by a variety of factors including, nutrition, mental and physical health, study habits, neighborhood influence, attendance and motivation. With 97% of our students qualifying for free and reduced lunch and the low literacy, high poverty and crime rates in the neighborhood surrounding our school community, we make every effort to ensure that our students receive an excellent education that will allow them to be prepared for higher education and a variety of career options in the future. Given the many challenges that face CNCA's student population, there are students who will not meet grade level expectations and require interventions both within and outside of the classroom.

At CNCA, teachers are responsible for differentiating lessons to accommodate all learners. If students are not meeting grade level expectations within the classroom, as identified by formative and summative assessments, standardized tests, anecdotal observations, or other information gathered, an instructional plan will be developed for how to best meet their needs.

The framework for how we approach students who do not meet grade level expectations is best described as a "problem solving approach" within a Three Tiered Response to Intervention Model. Tier 1 interventions occur at the classroom level. A classroom teacher may identify students who are having difficulties with their coursework and implement modifications or use other instructional strategies to help meet students' needs. The student is referred to the Coordinated Support Team, which is responsible for following up with all Tier I stakeholders. Teachers will provide opportunities for students to engage in cooperative groups, learning centers, peer discussions, and teaching through the use of multiple learning modalities. Because a majority of our students are English Learners, teachers will employ a variety of SDAIE (Specially designed academic instruction in English) strategies and targeted ELD instruction to meet their diverse language development needs. To aid the problem solving approach, teachers may meet informally, in Critical Friends Groups or as grade level teams, to find new ways to address a student's needs. The teacher will carefully monitor student progress, gather information on the student and determine whether or not the interventions have been successful.

If classroom interventions and scaffolding prove insufficient to address the needs of a student, the student will be referred for supplemental, (Tier II) intervention outside of the classroom. At this time a Student Success Team (SST) will discuss what type of interventions may benefit the student. The SST, comprised of classroom teachers, parents, administrators, parent coordinators, and any other concerned parties, will meet to develop a plan for the student's progress. An action plan may include modifications and supports to be provided by the teacher as well as other intervention strategies for families to implement at home and outside of school. Any student recommended for academic intervention will be assessed and depending on his/her needs (Spanish Language, English Language, Math, etc.) the student may be asked to attend morning intervention classes (7:00-7:50am) and/or afternoon intervention classes (3:30-5:00pm) to address their academic needs. Intervention classes are typically small, with a student/teacher ratio of 8:1, with some students receiving 1:1 assistance.

In addition to before and after school intervention classes, students will also have the opportunity to take targeted afternoon classes designed to develop their writing, math, or reading skills. The SST may find that a student has needs beyond academics. For example, an SST may also address student health, attendance, work and study habits, behavior, or language needs. If language is identified as an area of need, a Language Acquisition Team (LAT) may be called. In all SST's the immediate outcome will be a structured plan for how to improve in one or more of these areas and then a follow up meeting is scheduled to review parent and teacher feedback to determine if progress is being made on the SST plan.

The SST plan outlines actions, timeline, multiple check-points and responsible parties to inform the team on how to proceed in further aiding a student who is not meeting grade level expectations. Parents will be asked to provide insight into how their child is doing at home, classroom teachers will provide knowledge about how students are progressing on grade level standards, and intervention class teachers will provide data to show students progress in supplemental intervention classes. If a student is not meeting the determined goals set forth in the SST, follow up meetings may be held to consider other modifications. A student may also be referred to be pre-screened for a learning disability. If the SST determines that a student should be pre-screened for a possible learning disability, then the SST would move into Tier III.

Tier III begins with a meeting where all information regarding Tier I and II interventions and outcomes are reviewed with the parent and consent is sought to evaluate if a child meets the criteria for receiving additional one on one support from the Resource Specialist. Ultimately, if a Specific Learning Disability is the diagnosed, then the child will have an IEP that will be implemented by the classroom teacher as well as the Resource Specialist. Special Education students receive all of the intervention academic resources and support identified in this section. In addition, see section 7A for how the specific needs of special education student are addressed.

2D. Accelerated Learning

CNCA has a focus on differentiation within the classroom. Teachers consistently analyze student data and performance to inform their instruction. They will use this information to create learning activities that target the needs of all students, including students achieving above grade level. Examples include: using different text levels in independent reading and guided reading instruction, homogeneous grouping for some challenge projects, assigning challenge problems for early finishers, and optional enrichment projects aligned to academic learning.

2E. Instructional Strategies

The following structures make up the framework of the instructional design at CNCA. They are common cross-curricular structures that will be utilized across grade levels to ensure consistency and academic excellence. CNCA promotes a climate of inclusion and supports systematic English Language Development throughout instruction. Our research-based strategies are highlighted below:

Student Engagement: We challenge ourselves to achieve 100% learner engagement. Students are engaged in learning when they have goals for schooling; they participate; they ask questions; they actively incorporate new information with prior knowledge; they are held accountable.

High Quality, Student-to-Student Interaction: As a school we have committed to providing opportunities throughout each lesson for students to discuss ideas and process information. Teachers spend time explicitly teaching "partner talk": what it looks, sounds, and feels like. CNCA will also adopt strategies from Kate Kinsella's "Building Vocabulary" workshop.

Non-Linguistic Representation: Non-linguistic representations help English Language Learners associate meaning with academic language through sensory and mental images. They include real objects, pictures, pictographs, diagrams, physical models, video clips, recorded sounds, gestures, and movement. "The purpose of non-linguistic representation is to enhance

students' abilities to use mental images to represent and elaborate on knowledge."⁸ Singapore Math heavily emphasizes creating math models such as the use of fraction bars, algebra tiles, and bar models for algebraic concepts. Teachers will compliment their instruction with visual aids and written instruction.

Informal Assessment and Immediate Feedback: English Language Learners require immediate feedback that is timely and realistic in order for students to know how they are doing in the classroom. Informal assessment and feedback supports learners in actively engaging in the lesson self-assessing their understanding, as well as, informs instruction so that the teacher can adjust "on the spot." Adopted practices that informally assess students and provide feedback include:

- Allow students to self-assess: thumbs check, fist of five
- Pose questions that students answer in visual form: thumbs up/down, hold up fingers for answer choice
- Students complete work on white boards and show answers in unison
- Use exit slips to check if students have mastered the objective and share results with students the next day

Four Blocks Literacy Framework

CNCA will also implement Patricia Cunningham's Building Blocks (kindergarten) and Four Blocks (grades 1-5) frameworks for Literacy and Language Arts. The Four Blocks represent four different approaches to teaching children to read, and daily instruction in all four blocks provides numerous and varied opportunities for all children to read and write:

- **Guided Reading Block:** Explicitly models and teaches reading comprehension skills, using before-, during-, and after- reading skills and strategies of "good readers."
- **Working With Words Block:** Learn to read and spell high-frequency words and phonetic patterns that enable decoding and spelling.
- **Writing Block:** Self-selected writing and focused writing, to learn writing forms and genres. Develop fluent writing, grammar and mechanics, particular writing forms, knowledge of the writing process, and ways to communicate thoughts, opinions, facts, and ideas.
- **Self-Selected Reading Block:** Self-select "just right" books based on their own interests, reading level and motivation to read. Expose students to variety of genres and types of literature.

In grades K-1, the Building Blocks and Four Blocks will be used mainly in Spanish, although teachers utilize many of the same structures and components of the blocks in the ELA and ELD instruction. In grades 2-3, teachers will work to build on students' primary language (Spanish) and build language transfer skills by using the Four Blocks framework in both languages. In grades 4-5, teachers will use all Four Blocks during ELA instruction to ensure student mastery of grade level reading and writing skills. Additionally in grades 4-5, Guided Reading and Independent Writing will be a core component of the Spanish Language Arts instruction. See Appendix, Attachment 8: Four Blocks Literacy Framework.

Thinking Maps

Thinking Maps will be used school-wide in kindergarten-5th grade as a "common visual language" in the CNCA learning community for transferring thinking processes, integrating learning, and for continuously assessing progress. In summary, Thinking Maps are eight visual learning tools (similar to graphic organizers) that teachers and students use to articulate eight key thought processes: (define, describe, classify, sequence, compare/contrast, cause/effect, identify part-to-whole and whole-to-part relationships, and define analogies). Students in all grades and subject areas will use Thinking Maps to process new information, show what they have learned, and show how they organized their ideas (meta-cognition). Thinking Maps are especially helpful for English learners to process and organize information. Additionally, parents attend regular workshops to learn about the eight Thinking Maps so that they can reinforce critical thinking at home and support in school-wide implementation of the Thinking Maps.

3. School Culture and Climate

3A. Description of Culture

The mission of CNCA is to educate students in a college preparatory program to be literate, critical thinkers, and independent problem solvers who are agents of social justice with sensitivity toward the world around them. At CNCA we embrace this commitment as a promise to our students and our community. Over the last few years, we have studied relevant research to implement best practices that make college accessible to students. CNCA will proactively address the following factors that are critical for preparing students for college: (1) a college-going culture; (2) rigorous academic curricula; (3) high-quality

⁸ Hill, Jane, Bjork, Cynthia. Classroom Instruction That Works with English Language Learners. ASCD, 1996.

teaching; (4) extra support, as needed; (5) multi-cultural college-going identity; and (6) family connections and social networks (Oakes, 2002)⁹.

Research from the California Dropout Research Project has found that a student's school experience plays a critical role in determining whether or not he/she will drop out from high school. The study noted that in LAUSD, a student's chance of graduating on time was less than 50% (Silver, Saunders, & Zarate, 2008)¹⁰. Silver et al (2008) further found that, "Academic experiences explained six times more the difference in graduation rates among students in this study than demographic characteristics--such as race/ethnicity, gender, language and socio-economic status." Ultimately, school factors are a stronger predictor for graduation than student factors, starting as early as elementary school. Our strong academic program at the elementary level, coupled with a small school environment focused on individual attention, prepares students for success in high school, as illustrated by our 96% graduation rate and 80% four-year college acceptance rate.

CNCA will establish a college-going culture by providing students with rigorous curricula and high-quality teachers, supplemented by student support systems and family partnerships. Our college path begins by placing a high value on students' ability to think critically about content knowledge, synthesize learning, and apply knowledge and skills to intellectual experiences in and out of the classroom. CNCA's vision reflects our culture, academic approach, and commitment to results:

At CNCA, we believe that the teacher is the most critical key lever to student success and that no set curriculum meets the

The CNCA community (students, teachers, staff, administrators and parents) will work relentlessly to close the achievement gap. We will produce students who have the ability to engage in rigorous reading, writing, critical thinking, speaking and mathematical and scientific problem-solving in order to have access to high-quality educational opportunities.

needs of all students. Therefore, we will hire teachers that believe in "owning their craft" by continuously reflecting on their effectiveness and seeking out best practices in pedagogy. Teachers' ability to structure material, ask higher order questions, and engage students in problem-solving activities, is essential to create a college-going culture. Skilled and committed teachers at CNCA maintain high expectations for all students and nurture a college-going culture that directly impacts student achievement. For a more detailed description of CNCA's professional culture, which is an integral part of our overall school culture, see section 6A.

3B. College and Career Readiness

For most of our existing students and those enrolled at CRES #15, students will be the first in their family to attend and graduate from college. Many of the families we work with have limited knowledge of higher education options for their children. We will work hand-in-hand with families through College Knowledge workshops to first explore the college idea, then to begin preparing for the academic and financial requirements, and finally to grapple with the social and emotional challenges of attending college. Workshops will be focused around the theme of building parents' college awareness and include college visits, partnering with Wells Fargo for college financing, and scheduling counselors to discuss feelings of separation and culture-shock when kids leave for college.

Our college readiness program for students will begin in kindergarten and focuses on normalizing the expectation that our students *will* go to college, in spite of the fact that they reside in neighborhoods that continue to be socio-economically neglected and have had historically high dropout rates in high school. Oakes (2002) defines a college-going culture as one where parents, educators, and students share the belief that college is attainable, that all students should have the opportunity to go to college, and that persistence and preparation for college is a normal part of growing up. A college-going identity is

⁹ Oakes, J. (2002). "Ensuring equity in college preparation: What K-16 partnerships can do." Highlights from California K-16 Partnerships and Student Success: Highlights from the Third Annual Statewide Conference, California State University, Long Beach.

¹⁰ Silver, D., Saunders, M., & Zarate, E. (2008). "What factors predict high school graduation in the LAUSD?" California Dropout Research Project, Policy Brief 14.

nurtured and enables students to see higher education as integral to their future and who they are. All students will experience college by partaking in regular field trips to universities.

We seek to build an investment and a belief in the value of higher education. By the time CNCA students transition to middle school, they will be able to define opportunities afforded by a college education. When they transition to high school, they will be able to communicate with specificity their plan to prepare for and gain admission to their top three university choices. Focusing on a college-going culture while maintaining a rigorous academic program has translated to parents' positive attitudes and beliefs about CNCA's commitment to preparing students to be college bound. Out of 700 parents surveyed in 2009, 97% agreed that their child will attend a 4-year college or university after graduating from high school. Our promise to prepare all students raises the bar for the CNCA community, resulting in increased aspirations and academic excellence.¹¹

3C. School Calendar/Schedule

To ensure that students reach their highest potential, they will be provided an extended school year and optional extended school day with an after school program running until 6PM. CNCA will operate on a single-track calendar of 195 instructional days (See). CNCA will utilize a bell and calendar schedule that exceeds the minimum requirement of educational minutes set forth in Education Code 47612.5, with 65,415 instructional minutes per year. Our K-5 school day will run from 8:00AM-3:00PM. See Appendix, Attachment 9: School Calendar and Attachment 10: Bell Schedule.

3D. Extracurricular Activities/Athletic Programs

In addition to weekly physical education classes, CNCA will also offer an after school program to improve the quality of extended day educational and enrichment opportunities available to students. The after school program will provide students with three different fitness components: organized outdoor play time, formalized sports instruction and dance classes. The goal for the physical fitness curriculum is to promote healthy lifestyles among students and to reinforce cooperation and good sportsmanship. Activities will be organized to cover the following strands from the physical education standards: movement skills and knowledge, self-image and personal development, and social development. Students with physical disabilities will receive adapted PE services from a licensed physical therapist to address their IEP goals. Dance instructors will train students to develop strong bodies and to instill an appreciation for dance through direct kinesthetic experiences.

The educational enrichment component of our program will also continue to offer the quality programs we have already established (Chess Club, Kidz Lit Reading Club, Drama Club, Karate, Urban Art Club, "Just Like You" Cultural Awareness Club, CSI Science Club, Art and Crafts Club, Domino Club, Extended Learning Computer Lab, and various sports clubs (i.e. basketball, flag football, and cheerleading) and offer more targeted English Language Learner programs.

3E. Student Discipline

Student discipline at CNCA will be based on positive support and involve multiple parties including school staff, teachers, parents, and students. CNCA will develop a comprehensive student discipline policy that will be included in the student handbook. School staff will review the discipline policy with students and parents prior to enrollment to CNCA. The discipline policy will include the students' rights and responsibilities and the school's suspension and expulsion policies. The policy will be adapted as needed in regard to the discipline of a student with special needs as determined by the provisions of the IDEA.

Any student who engages in repeated violations of the school's behavioral expectations will be required to attend a meeting with the school's staff and the student's parent or guardian. The school will prepare a specific, written remediation agreement outlining future student conduct expectations, timelines, and consequences for failure to meet the expectations which may include, but are not limited to, suspension and/or expulsion.

Students who present a threat including but not limited to verbally or physically aggressive behavior, to health and safety of others may be immediately suspended and later recommended for expulsion by the Principal. The policies of CNCA will provide all students with an opportunity for due process and will be developed to conform to applicable federal law regarding students with exceptional needs. See Appendix, Attachment 11: Discipline Policy and Procedures.

In the case of a student who has an IEP, or a student who has a 504 Plan, the school will ensure that it follows the correct

¹¹ See CNCA XXX

disciplinary procedures to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973. Prior to recommending expulsion for a student with a 504 Plan, the school administrator will convene a Link Determination meeting to ask the following two questions: A) Was the misconduct caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student's disability? B) Was the misconduct a direct result of the Charter's failure to implement the 504 Plan? Outcome data will be maintained including: suspensions, expulsions and expulsion placements, reinstatements, and out of district expellees.

3F. Health Care Needs/Mandates

Students will receive hearing, scoliosis and vision screenings as mandated by California State Law Education Code 49450-49457. Where applicable, the school nurse or the medical staff of the CNCA Clinic will act as CNCA's medical agent for medical screenings at no cost to the parents. Other screenings such as dental screenings may be performed on-site by private health professionals. CNCA will also work with a local dentist to provide free dental screenings for students on an as needed basis. The current goal is to offer two screenings per year to all 1st-5th grade students.

We believe that in order for students from historically underserved communities to achieve academic success, their home environment and their physical and mental health need to be as balanced as possible. However, in high-poverty communities such as ours, gaining access to primary health care, optometry services, dental care, and mental health counseling, can often become an insurmountable obstacle for many families. CNCA supports our parents with advocating for their children. We have created a support system where families are guided through the public health system in order to achieve a physical or mental health diagnosis that can help us create an appropriate educational plan.

The school office and designated administrator will be notified if a student with a medical or health condition requires accommodations at school in order to participate in the educational program. The school administrator will arrange to meet with the parent and necessary school staff to develop an accommodation plan for the student's medical condition. Students with diabetes, severe asthma and allergies will have an accommodation plan at the school. Students who have section 504 Plans and IEPs will be evaluated by a school nurse and/or other appropriate personal and accommodations will be made by the school to fit their plans.

3G. Nutritional Needs of Students

CNCA recognizes that good nutrition and optimal physical fitness correlate with learning readiness, academic achievement, decreased discipline problems and improved emotional wellbeing. As a result a "no junk food policy" will be established at all sites to encourage lifelong healthy habits. Carbonated drinks or sodas, and chips will not be allowed during school hours, this includes classroom parties, school events, fundraising activities, parent gatherings, potlucks, or any other special circumstances where food is being served. To support our policy and celebrate National Nutrition Month (March), CNCA will host an annual Nutrition & Physical Activity Fair. The event will involve parents, students and teachers in a special day to celebrate and promote lifelong healthy habits. The fair will feature a variety of food demonstrations and interactive activities that provide students with the opportunity to practice stretches or exercises. CNCA will involve the community in children's well being through Spanish and English workshops for parents on health issues such as nutrition and disease, participation in health seminars and other community activities. Residents in the field of medicine and dentistry from local universities will serve as guest speakers to promote healthy lifestyles that include eating habits, dental hygiene and personal care. CNCA will also participate in the National School Lunch Program which provides students with a nutritious, well-balanced meals.

4. Assessments and School Data

4A. Educational Goals and Metrics

CNCA employs both a CNCA district-level and school-level dashboard system that is intended to highlight the expectations and goals of the organization. It is a measurement system that communicates what is important and what should be prioritized when making decisions at all levels. CNCA envisions that it can meet its mission of graduating students prepared for college success and civic engagement by ensuring the following four outcomes: a) provide high quality education with high expectations; b) prepare students for choices in higher education and professional career options; c) recruit and retain quality educators and leaders who implement and share best practices; and d) operate in a financially sustainable manner. While the district sets organization-wide dashboard goals, individual schools set unique three-year targets and yearly measures based on the school's baseline data. The educational goals and metrics for CRES #15 can be found in Appendix, Attachment 12: Dashboard and Attachment 13: Accountability Matrix.

4B. Student Assessment Plan

CRES #15 will meet all statewide standards and conduct the pupil assessments required pursuant to Section 60602.5 and any other statewide standards authorized in statute or student assessments applicable to students in non-charter public schools. To evaluate the unique educational experience for students at CRES #15, we will administer state adopted and district-developed exams to monitor student improvement and progress. See Appendix, Attachment 14: Assessment Summary.

In addition to summative testing, CRES #15 will employ a benchmark system that is aligned to state standards and purposefully used to formatively assess student progress throughout the school year. Contrary to the snapshot data that summative tests provide, benchmarks allow for a close monitoring and guiding of student performance over time (Boston, 2002)¹². Teachers will utilize the data management system, Data Director, to create exams using multiple item banks as well as teacher-generated items. Additionally, resources such as Bellworks, Measuring Up, textbook test generators, and CST Released Test Questions, will be used to guide the creation of a comprehensive exam. Each benchmark will then be reviewed and revised based on a *Quality Control Checklist* (see Appendix, Attachment 15: Benchmark Quality Control Checklist) to ensure the validity and reliability of the questions in relation to the standards and skills being assessed. The results from the benchmark assessments are intended to provide CNCA with a preliminary projection of how students will perform on the CST as well as quarterly progress on standards-based proficiency. These assessments will be carefully analyzed with the goal of revising curriculum pacing and offering strategic, differentiated intervention to ensure that all students master the standards.

Attachment 16: Benchmark & Instructional Design Process in the appendix depicts a general protocol for creating benchmark assessments. Step two is key in that it provides teachers with the autonomy to create their own standards-based pacing plans and then create a visual representation of how their plans align with the CST in ELA and math. Step six is also a critical step in the process because as teachers assess for learning, not of learning, they are able to better monitor and address the specific, individual needs of their students on a daily basis. Benchmark results also provide data for the planning of targeted professional development.

Attachment 14: Assessment Summary in the appendix identifies the district-developed formative assessments CRES #15 will use to further measure student outcomes. In addition to these standard measures, the evaluation will include collecting and analyzing data linked to performance-based assessments of student work.

4C. Data Team and Instructional Team

School administrators, classroom teachers, and counselors at CRES #15 will receive multiple structured opportunities to participate in data analysis of both summative and formative assessments through weekly professional developments. At the beginning of the year, staff will analyze California Standards Test (CST) results on a school-wide and individual class level. Teachers are guided through an analysis process in which they reflect on each student's skills and develop an instructional plan to address individual and class needs. When California Educational Language Development Test (CELDT) results become available in January of each year, staff will also delve into assessment data to ensure English Learners are placed in classes appropriate to their language skills and needs.

Moreover, each quarter teachers will proactively analyze benchmark data on various levels. The *Grade-Level Data Protocol* (Appendix, Attachment 17: Grade-level Protocol) outlines steps for independent and collaborative analysis, while the *Data Conversation Map* (refer to Appendix, Attachment 18: Data Conversation Map) identifies key steps in a one-on-one data conversation with a teacher and led by the principal to develop targeted intervention and support based on results. CRES #15 site leaders will also be held accountable for their data as school goals are expected to be set and school-wide re-teaching plans are an expectation at the end of each benchmark test. This ongoing data analysis process will lead to re-teaching in the classroom, programmatic changes within the school, and will inform broader instructional decisions made at the district level.

4D. Data Systems

We confirm our commitment to partner with the district to fulfill the requirements of the Modified Consent Decree. CRES #15 will utilize multiple student information systems to track student records and identity services for the general and special education population. These systems include:

- SchoolMAX – integrated student information system (ISIS)
- California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS)

¹² Boston, C. (2002). The concept of formative assessment. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 8(9).

- Data Director – assessments and benchmarks
- California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) - Online Public Update for Schools (OPUS)
- Welligent
- PowerSchool

4E. LAUSD School Report Card

CNCA will complete LAUSD School Report Card by using multiple student information systems.

4F. Research and Evaluation

CNCA agrees to participate in research and evaluation projects with LAUSD.

4G. Operational Goals and Metrics

CNCA's Board of Directors developed a CNCA success equation and organization-wide accountability dashboard aligned with the mission and vision of the organization. The accountability dashboard monitors academic and operational goals including high school graduation, 4-year college acceptance, API, CST proficiency levels for ELA and Math, student and parent college awareness, staff retention, teacher satisfaction, and fiscal soundness. Dashboard metrics include both qualitative and quantitative data from students, staff and parents. CRES #15 will develop site specific metrics aligned to meeting organizational goals. The Chief Executive Officer monitors school site dashboards throughout the year and updates the Board annually. The current dashboard goals extend through 2011 at which time the CNCA Board will revise goals as needed. CNCA's organizational dashboard exceeds NCLB requirements. See Appendix, Attachment 12: Dashboard.

In addition to the organization-wide accountability dashboard, the school will use the LAUSD Modified Consent Decree Indicators to measure progress of students with disabilities. We will monitor our monthly MCD report and take corrective action as needed.

5. Professional Development Program

5A. Professional Development

CNCA provides extensive professional development opportunities to our teachers, administrators, and staff. Five full professional development days are calendared each year, during which the principal guides teachers in learning and applying new approaches to curriculum planning, data analysis, and reflection. Professional development is also embedded into the work week through weekly sessions dedicated to ongoing adult learning. All teachers participate in these two-hour sessions. These professional sessions take several forms: grade level or department groups may collaborate around student work or offer peer feedback on unit plans, an expert may present to the staff, teachers might analyze assessment data and plan lesson studies together, or the staff may read and discuss a professional article related to instruction.

Other topics that will be addressed during onsite professional development program include the development of social capital in urban schools, creating action plans to foster our parents as partners philosophy, effective bilingual pedagogy, lesson plan development, discussions about powerful strategies to increase student achievement, regular data analysis and reflection. Although the focus of CNCA's professional development plan is standards-based classroom instruction, mandatory trainings in child abuse, sexual harassment, health, CPR and First Aid, school emergencies, technology, and daily operations will also be scheduled for all-school staff.

CNCA will also offer extensive professional development to administrative leaders. School leaders will serve on an organization-wide leadership team that meets monthly to share best practices, engage in case studies, and develop collaborative action plans for key growth areas. In addition, CNCA will provide all leaders with optional workshops focused on topics like: teacher evaluation, documenting personnel performance, data driven dialogue, and stakeholder communication.

5B. Teacher Orientation

CNCA currently provides induction support for new teachers through a partnership with Local District 4 of the LAUSD to offer Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) mentorship. Trained Support Providers assist participating teachers in collecting and interpreting evidence of teaching performance, in reflecting on their teaching, and in identifying meaningful professional development activities that are targeted to their individual needs. During induction teachers receive approximately 2 hours of coaching (planning, teaching and reflecting) per week. Year 1 and 2 participants must also complete

15 hours per year, which includes professional development and orientation. In addition, they are provided with non-mandatory workshops, training and network opportunities targeted for different audiences involved in all levels of the program.

5C. Professional Development Calendar

CNCA has designed a school calendar and bell schedule to make professional learning a priority for all staff members. The schedule includes in-service days prior to school starting in August and at the end of each quarter. Also, two hours of weekly professional development time is built into our bell schedule, and teachers in grade-level teams will have common collaborative planning time built into the weekly instructional plan. This level of PD and collaboration is essential to promote an authentic learning community, engaged in regular reflection and growth. See Appendix, Attachment 19: Professional Development Calendar.

5D. Professional Development Evaluation

Implementation of ideas and skills learned in professional development are critical to ensuring academic excellence for every student. Professional development activities will be reviewed in two primary ways: end-of event feedback surveys and satisfaction surveys administered in January (mid-year) and June (end-of-year). Results pertaining to professional development will be brought to the Instructional Cadre to review, discuss and integrate into future planning, adjusting the annual professional development calendar if necessary and/or addressing teacher needs within the professional work day.

6. Professional Culture

6A. Professional Culture

Research maintains that when teachers learn together in a collaborative culture, dramatic increases in student achievement are possible. We will combine three essential components to define the culture and ensure a powerful adult learning community focused on academic excellence:

- A set of shared commitments that guide teachers and leaders in carrying out the CNCA mission.
 - All children can learn, therefore all of our student will grow this year; We will do whatever it takes.
 - Every minute counts; We will maximize instructional time.
 - We are accountable to one another for high quality instruction; We will support one another toward being successful and maintaining high expectations.
- Five key practices that combined to create the structure of the adult learning community.
- A focus on strategic, standards-based planning, teaching, assessment and monitoring.

The shared commitments will be used to ensure ongoing alignment between our mindsets, behaviors, and outcomes for students and our team. The professional learning community will be defined by five key structures: Critical Friends Groups, Classroom Walk-Throughs, Instructional Coaching, Focused Professional Development, and a belief in Teacher Leadership. Lastly, in our effort to yield the greatest student achievement gains in the shortest amount of time, CNCA will maintain a strong commitment to ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. As a means to foster collaboration and reflection, build teacher capacity with hands-on support, and ensure a bottom-up approach to school improvement that invests teachers in the process and outcomes, we commit to the following five key structures.

Critical Friends Groups (CFG)

Developed by The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, the Critical Friends process focuses on using structured discussion protocols to develop collegial relationships, encourage reflective practice, and rethink leadership roles. CNCA will employ monthly CFG's as a core structure in our professional development program. The structure is entirely teacher-driven and teacher-led.

Classroom Walk-Throughs (CWT)

The UCLA School Management Program developed this process to provide teachers and leaders with the opportunity to observe and discuss classroom instruction through focused guiding questions. CNCA will conduct an average of 6-8 classroom walk-throughs per year to collect data and analyze school-wide instructional trends around critical questions developed collaboratively by teachers and administrators. Teachers will facilitate the walk-through process and debrief dialogue for the entire faculty. The resulting analysis will support the development of commitments to adjust our instructional program and practices to achieve stronger results with students.

Instructional Coaching

CNCA administrators will be required to be authentic instructional coaches as well as leaders. Our instructional coaching challenges the traditional evaluator/coach paradigm and promotes reciprocal, shared inquiry and growth for both teachers and administrators. At CNCA we strive to harness the collective power of collaboration by opening up our doors and our dialogue to build professional relationships that help all students meet the standards. We believe that professional growth is dependent upon creating a “feedback rich” culture that creates and sustains high performance.¹³ The role of our administrative coach is to build teacher capacity to implement effective instructional practices that improve student learning and performance. The role of our teacher is to be a learner who is continually engaged in their curriculum and the study of teaching as a craft. Administrative coaches observe teachers weekly and provide one on one feedback to strengthen differentiation and modification of instruction. Our coaching allows both the teacher and the coach to engage in an ongoing, reflective conversation about what happens in the classroom that has translated into engaged and prepared students as well as satisfied and supported teachers.

Focused Professional Development

Research confirms that professional learning communities are the best form of staff development. CNCA will provide extensive professional development opportunities for our teachers, administrators, and staff. Five full professional development days are calendared each year, during which the leadership team guides teachers in learning and applying new approaches to curriculum planning, data analysis, and reflection. Professional development is also embedded into each work week through one two hour session dedicated to honing our craft as educators. These sessions take several forms: grade level/department groups collaborate around student work or offer peer feedback on unit plans, experts may present, teachers might analyze assessment data and plan lesson studies together, or the staff may read and discuss professional articles.

Teacher Leadership

An Instructional Cadre will be formed, consisting of teacher leaders representing all grade levels, to work closely with the leadership team to support curriculum development, instructional delivery, and professional development. These teacher leaders will receive ongoing leadership development and will have opportunities to reflect on their work with fellow teachers.

6B. Evaluation

Teachers: Teacher Performance will be evaluated by the principal or designee on an ongoing basis during the contracted year on criteria including but not limited to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the CNCA teacher job description, as negotiated on the CNCA Camino Nuevo Teachers Association (CNTA) Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). It is the goal of this process for every teacher to demonstrate proficiency (defined as “meets expectations” on the attached checklist) in all standards. A mid-year evaluation will be completed by the end of the first semester using the standards based evaluation checklist. A comprehensive evaluation will be completed at the end of the year using the same checklist. When a deficiency (defined as “progressing toward meeting expectations” or “limited evidence of progress” on the attached checklist) is noted at any time in the year the teacher will be notified in a timely manner and provided guidance or offered support to correct the deficiency. This type of support may include a guidance plan, coaching, release time, classroom observations or other resources as identified in the plan for growth. See Appendix, Attachment 20: Teacher Evaluation.

Administrators: Administrators will be evaluated using our 360 degree leadership evaluation. This tool was designed to provide supervisors and school leaders with an evidence-oriented evaluation process that positively impacts student achievement through data, candor, reflection and follow-up. Each leader will be evaluated by their Primary Evaluator (supervisor) and at least one secondary evaluator twice per year. The goal of the 360 degree leadership evaluation is to:

1. Communicate explicit performance standards for all schools leaders
2. Focus school leaders on instructional and organizational goals.
3. Promote, support and document growth throughout the school year.
4. Compliment the California Professional Standards for Education Leaders (CPSELs).

If a deficiency is noted at any time during the year, the employee will be notified in a timely manner and provided guidance or offered support to correct the deficiency. This type of support may include job coaching, periodic check-ins, trainings, clarification of policies and or procedures, guidance plans and other resources that may help improve performance. See Appendix, Attachment 21: Leadership Evaluation.

¹³ Crane, T. (2009). *The Heart of Coaching*.

Classified: Performance evaluations will be conducted annually to provide both the employee and the supervisor with the opportunity to discuss job, tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss methods for improving performance. The performance evaluations are intended to make the employee aware of progress, areas for improvement, and objectives or goals for future work performance. If a deficiency is noted at any time during the year, the employee will be notified in a timely manner and provided guidance or offered support to correct the deficiency. This type of support may include clarification of policies and/or procedures, guidance plans, periodic checks-ins and trainings.

6C. Feedback

Every school year, CNCA will administer mid-year and end-of-year stakeholder satisfaction surveys. The surveys will maintain strict confidentiality using a computerized system with Survey Monkey (mid-year) and Web Feedback (end-of-year survey administered by USC). Close-ended and open-ended survey questions ask staff, faculty, students and parents about school culture, school administration, working conditions, academic program, and support services (including professional development). Survey results will be aggregated and distributed to the school leadership team to analyze, share with stakeholders, and use to develop actionable growth plans. The data has yielded invaluable information to site leadership teams, detailing strengths, needs, priorities, areas for growth, and overall sentiments about leadership, culture and progress toward mission. See Appendix, Attachment 22: Executive Summary Mid-year Teacher Survey.

7. Serving Specialized Populations

7A. Specialized Instruction

Special education services will be provided to commensurate with the needs of any student. These services will adhere to applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the American with Disabilities Act, and the No Child Left Behind Act. Students with disabilities will be provided a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. All special education policies are outlined in the charter, including compliance with the Special Education Local Planning Area (“SELPA”), as defined by district policy.

Collaboration with LAUSD will ensure compliance with the District’s Modified Consent Decree as it relates to data systems; including tracking progress on IEP data, reporting on student data, and tracking performance outcomes. Collaboration with LAUSD will further ensure the highest quality special education services through the provision of a full continuum of special education services that meet the needs of relevant students in the least restrictive environment, thereby guaranteeing that all children will have access to appropriate programs, supports, and services.

Special Education students will receive support with their core class assignments, self-advocacy, and through accommodations made in the classroom in accordance with their IEPs. The Special Education teacher will “pull out” and “push in” to assist students within their general education classes by collaborating and/or co-teaching with the general education teacher as well as provide targeted instruction in a smaller setting.

Students with IEPs successfully participate in all CNCA activities including enrichment programs, physical education program, and student activities such as the science fair, college fair, college visits, and dance performances. Students with IEPs at CNCA go on to be quite successful at the high school level. In CNCA’s most recent LAUSD Validation Review (November 2008), commendations for our special education program were as follows:

- Providing inclusive learning environments, activities, and programs which provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.
- Meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities by providing services in accordance with their Individual Education Programs.
- Creating a school environment that welcomes parent and community participation.

Extended School Services to Students with Disabilities: CNCA will provide both academic and related services, employing a physical therapist who provides Adapted PE and Occupational Therapy services, an independent company that provides Speech and Language services, and a school psychologist who provides services for full assessments. These services, both academic and related will be provided, and if the IEP indicates a need, throughout the extended school year.

Serving English Language Learners: At CNCA our instructional vision states that students must gain the ability to engage in rigorous reading, writing, critical thinking, speaking and mathematical and scientific problem solving. It is our goal that our English Language Learners develop oral written and reading language proficiency in order to have access to high-quality

educational opportunities. CNCA will provide EL students with ELD and SDAIE, as needed, and/or primary language instruction until they are Re-designated as Fluent English Proficient (RFEP).

In addition to integrating SDAIE and ELL strategies throughout the K-5 curriculum, CNCA has developed a targeted English Language Development program for students acquiring English as a Second Language. Traditionally we have used the state adopted programs, i.e. Into English and Avenues by Hampton Brown for the elementary school. Based on extensive research into effective programs, CNCA has adopted a new methodology for teaching English language development in grades 2-5: *EL Achieve: Focused Approach to Systematic ELD* by Susana Dutro. Teachers will receive training over the first two months of school. The program employs the following guidelines:

- Students are grouped and taught at their assessed ELD proficiency level during a specific instructional time.
- ELD lessons have clear and stated language objectives based on a scope and sequence of language skills & focus on:
 - Language function or purpose
 - Language patterns and vocabulary
 - Structured language practice at least 50% of the time
 - Engaging topics and instructional practices
- Instruction includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing with an emphasis on listening and speaking.
- Utilize identified ELD materials to implement the year-long instructional map for target proficiency level.

7B. Academic Intervention Program

As there is often a correlation between low socioeconomic status and low academic achievement, CNCA developed a comprehensive supplemental academic intervention program. The supplemental academic intervention program is intended to address the needs of those students who demonstrated significant academic deficits that are not most effectively addressed within the context of the larger classroom environment.

Participating students will attend classes four days a week either before school, from 7:00-7:55 a.m., or after school from 3:30-5:00 p.m., to receive remedial support in reading, mathematics, or Spanish language development due to the demands of the bilingual program. The goal of the supplemental intervention program is to address students' skill or learning deficits as quickly as possible to support access and mastery of grade level standards.

Three core research-based curricula will be used in the program: SRA Corrective Reading which offers decoding and comprehension classes for students in grades 3-5; Passport which provides Spanish language development classes for students in grades 2-5; IPASS computer software program which provides targeted mathematics instruction to address basic skill gaps for students in grades 4-5.

Student Services Case Management: CNCA practices a comprehensive approach to education. We believe that in order for students from historically underserved communities to achieve academic success, their home environment and their physical and mental health need to be as balanced as possible. However, in high-poverty communities such as ours, gaining access to primary health care, optometry services, dental care, and mental health counseling, can often become an insurmountable obstacle for many families. CNCA will support parent advocacy by creating a support system where families are guided through the public health system in order to achieve a physical or mental health diagnosis that can help us create an appropriate educational plan.

Through the Student Study Team, CNCA will explore all factors that may be influencing a child's low academic achievement. We have found that in many cases, the root of the problem can be found in a doctor's office. Physical and mental issues significantly contribute to a student's low academic achievement. Medical diagnoses such as: ADD/ADHD, astigmatism, myopia, hearing infections, depression, and anxiety are sometimes found when digging deeply into the health and family history of a child, particularly in high-poverty communities. Through the student services case management process qualifying students and families will receive mental health and family counseling services provided by a partnership CNCA has with the Los Angeles Child Development Center (LACDC). CNCA will provide students and families with a safe and nurturing environment to deal with difficult issues affecting a child's performance – an environment which will be fostered at CRES #15.

8. Family and Community Engagement Strategy

8A. Identification

The very heart of CNCA's mission is to "educate students in a college preparatory program to be literate, critical thinkers, and independent problem solvers who are agents of social justice with sensitivity toward the world around them." Most of the

residents of this area are immigrants from Mexico or Central America whose children have historically not gone on to obtain college degrees. Many of the students that we will serve will be transfers from the surrounding community schools, including Vermont Elementary and Magnolia Elementary. The majority of these families, over 90%, are Hispanic and over 95% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. A majority of students are also English Learners and come from households where most parents are not high school graduates.¹⁴ As a result, our mission fits a specific need for the residents of the area. The goal of CNCA is to bring quality educational choices to families, to improve the quality of life for its students through a solid educational foundation and to strive for a positive change in the ecology of the neighborhoods we serve. Our K-8 schools have achieved tremendous academic results and are eligible for 2010 California Distinguished School recognition.

CNCA enjoys a successful ten year track record of working with our target community. It is with a deep understanding and knowledge of the needs of the students and parents in this area that drives our desire to build additional capacity for growth in the neighborhoods lying west of downtown Los Angeles and primarily east of Hancock Park. This area comprises roughly 25 square miles. The neighborhoods include MacArthur Park, Pico-Union, Mid-Wilshire, Korea Town, Rampart and the southern edges of Silverlake and Echo Park. The target area is covered by approximately 13 ZIP codes.

The rationale for selecting this target community is based on the following reasons:

- *Existing facilities and emerging school sense of community.* Growth builds off of CNCA's school culture and sense of community; hence, location near existing facilities is important.
- *Need.* Target community has need for a high performing school with focus on college prep.
- *CNCA's history.* CNCA was founded with a dedication to serve these neighborhoods. Our school culture has been shaped by our history of "placed-based" community development.
- *Existing relationships.* CNCA's existing community relationships with parents, businesses, elected officials, and community based partner agencies are assets that can be leveraged to support new CNCA schools located in this area.
- *Philanthropic support.* Many of CNCA's supporters identify the mission of the school with this particular area of the city.
- *Expected population growth.* The Los Angeles Planning Department has identified these communities as targets for high density residential and affordable housing development. The city's "Smart Growth" agenda promotes housing development near major transportation thoroughfares and transit centers stations that honey-comb these neighborhoods.

More than just a school, CNCA serves as a center to residents in the in the community, providing open space, resources and an innovative and socially conscious curriculum. The schools' campuses have historically been the result of renovation projects of abandoned buildings and designed to serve as a catalyst for reinvestment by other neighborhood property owners. The flagship campuses on Burlington Avenue in the MacArthur Park neighborhood were designed out of an abandoned mini-mall and an office building that were eyesores and contributed to the blighted feel of the community. This redevelopment spurred additional investment into the community bringing businesses such as Home Depot and Starbucks into the area. Our emphasis on creating Agents of Social Change in our students also affords them the opportunity to partake in, and take ownership of the rehabilitation of their community.

8B. Our Philosophy: Parents as Partners in Education

Research suggests that parents who actively engage in their child's classrooms display increased, consistent commitment to their child's education (Stern, 2003). Childs Trend Data Research (2003) which examines trends in parental involvement, concludes that students with involved parents have fewer behavioral issues and are more likely to complete secondary school. Rather than approaching parent participation as a one-shot volunteer opportunity featuring a string of disconnected activities, CNCA seeks to develop partnerships with parents around all aspects of their children's educational lives. To reach this objective, the school has build an infrastructure around parents as partners.

CNCA has also created a strong connection with the parents it serves. We view parents as vital components in the academic success of students regardless of their own education level, economic status, or dominant language. Their participation, involvement and support are crucial to the accomplishment of their child's academic goals. Consequently, we have developed

¹⁴ Source: CA Dept of Ed: DataQuest.

a strong Parent Program that constantly strives to develop creative and innovative strategies to encourage families to advocate for their child's academic success and extend the learning process at home.

One vital component to our Parent Program is educating our parents regarding the public education system and college going process through our College Knowledge workshops. These workshops work closely with parents to walk them through all aspects of the college going process from financial aid to admissions requirements to the social and emotional challenge of attending college. As a school community, we are also committed to promoting literacy in English and Spanish which goes hand in hand with our bilingual instructional program, intended to build fluency in both languages. This endeavor can be observed among different activities including:

- A Literacy Workshop Series which emphasizes the importance of creating a literacy rich environment at home, develop reading techniques, homework strategies, etc.
- The Latino Family Literacy Project encourages a family reading routine to improve English language skills and strengthen their communication with their children.
- A parent-led reading laboratory is open to all students.
- Books & Pajamas Night where families have the opportunity to visit the classroom, and participate and observe strategies for reading with their children.
- Our Biannual Book Fairs
- Reading Together/Leyendo Juntos: A longstanding tradition at CNCA that provides weekly opportunities for parents and family members to visit the classrooms and read aloud to the students.

Making math a fun skill for students and parents is a year round campaign that allows families to see how a math concept can also be fun and practical. Examples of these efforts include:

- A Family Math Night where students practice math games with their parents.
- A short Math Segment during the parent-led reading lab that supports students with practicing math with flashcards and simple games guided by parent volunteers.

CNCA parents are a powerful and consistent force that move many other programs including: a leadership council known as the Site Based Council, a Safety Valet Program, fundraising events, a Nutrition & Physical Activity Fair, monthly parent forums, Grandparent's Day, Read Across America Week, fieldtrip chaperones, etc. Moreover, 97% of parents have attended at least two parent conferences throughout the year for the past three years. CNCA remains committed to strengthening our Parent Program to support the academic achievement of students in the underserved community we are intended to serve. As volunteers, learners, advocates, and leaders, parents continue to be a constant presence at our schools. Parents commit to providing a supportive environment outside of school for their child to read and complete homework. Our school staff facilitates partnerships with families and provides parent education workshops, institutes, assemblies and special events and other activities throughout the year. For those parents who work during school hours, communication is maintained through weekly family newsletters that contain academically themed messages from the leadership team, important calendar items, resources and special announcements.

All administrators make daily efforts to communicate with parents or guardians. These efforts include an open-door policy for all leadership team members, monthly assemblies with the principal, and workshops facilitated by the leadership team. From the first day on, there are regular discussions with parents about their students and what it will take to become a successful student at CNCA. Parents can track homework for their students through a computer at home, work or a library. There are several ways we measure parent/guardian involvement, which include: participation at trainings, school events, Back-to-School Nights, Open Houses, and parent satisfaction surveys.

CNCA realizes that many parents must work full-time and cannot be at the school during school hours. Therefore, efforts are made to accommodate family schedules to include them in their child's education. Volunteer projects that can be completed at home are made available to working parents and a concerted effort is made to ensure evening events are scheduled.

Due to our strong reputation in this community, our waitlist has consistently had over 1,000 students for about 100 open seats for the past five years. In addition to many community partnerships, our school has garnered membership into numerous organizations such as the California Charter Schools Association, California Network of Education Charters, and Center for Educational Reform, California Association for Bilingual Education and Latino Family Literacy Project. In 2007-2008, CNCA, with the Charter School Development Center, was selected for a dissemination grant to share its ELL best practices. The school's leadership plans to leverage our experience, expertise and partnerships to continue our mainstay in the community.

8C. Key Community Partnerships

CNCA stands out among other charter and public schools due to our deep roots in the community. Our placed-based approach to learning integrates our education programs with a wide range of community partners and resources. Some community partners include: (See Appendix, Attachment 23: Community Partnerships.)

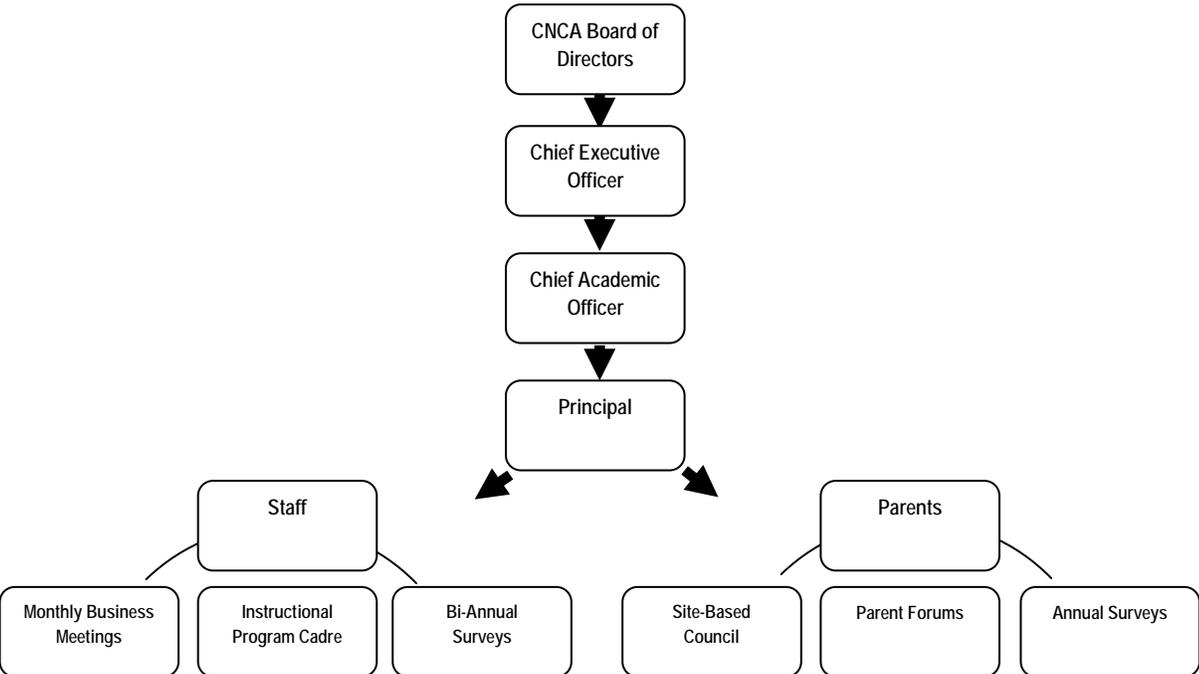
- **Mentoring:** Big Brothers Big Sisters
- **Arts Programs:** P.S. ARTS, Los Angeles Philharmonic, The Gabriella Axelrad Education Foundation
- **Health Services:** PAJA Medical Group, The Los Angeles Child Development Center (LACDC), Didi Hirsch Community Mental Health Center, UCLA School of Nursing
- **Community/Business Development:** Excellence Education Development and Pueblo Nuevo Development
- **Parent Support Services:** Latino Family Literacy Project, Centro de Educacion Popular, Inquilinos Unidos
- **Educational Enrichment:** The Mind Institute, Youth Policy Institute (YPI), National Council of La Raza

The Compliance and Communications Manager will be responsible for cultivating and managing these partnerships. CNCA is also pleased to be supported by a number of community members and long standing community partners. (See Appendix, Attachment 24: Letters of Support.) In surveying the community around this school we have also identified some organizations as potential future partners, including: 1736 Family Crisis Center, Challengers Boys and Girls Club, Children, Youth and Families Collaborative, Strategic Actions for a Just Economy and Salvation Army Youth Center. It is our intent to use the implementation phase to establish partnerships with these potential groups in order to identify how to collaborate to meet the comprehensive needs of students and families residing in the area. These partnerships will be based on our place-based approach to community development that we have successfully established at all of our other campuses.

9. School Governance

9A. Organizational Chart

CNCA is committed to developing working and learning environments where all stakeholders actively engage in co-creating the community they are a part of. To realize this goal, the school's academic, professional and outreach programs integrate strategies to disseminate information and data, obtain feedback, and engage stakeholders in the various levels of decision making. CNCA maintains a proven track record of engagement across stakeholder groups.



Parent Engagement: Rather than approaching parent participation as a one-shot volunteer opportunity featuring a string of disconnected activities, CNCA strongly believes that parents must be partners in the educational process and offer high-quality family services, including a comprehensive parent workshop program and health case management for families in need. The school will build an infrastructure around parents as partners. As volunteers, learners, advocates, and leaders, parents will be a constant presence at our school. It is the goal of CNCA to foster an environment of social and cultural inclusion for all families. CNCA strongly believes students will find greater levels of academic success when their home and school share similar values about learning and forge a genuine partnership.

Site-Based Council CNCA will have an on-site advisory governance board, the Site-based Council, consisting of the principal, parent representatives for each grade level, parents elected by grade level, teachers elected by grade level/discipline, classified staff representation, the student body president, and local community members. The Site-based Council will provide suggestions and recommendations to the site leadership and/or to the Board on issues including, but not limited to, budgeting, curriculum, school policies, school/community participation, and the general direction of the school.

Board of Directors: CNCA operates in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws established by the CNCA governing board to the extent the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are consistent with the Brown Act in dealing with operations of CNCA. The affairs of CNCA will be managed and its powers exercised under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Board of Directors will have a legal and fiduciary responsibility for CRES #15. The Board will be responsible for providing fiscal accountability including approving and monitoring the budget. The board will also help ensure effective organizational planning by approving long-range goals and annual objectives, monitoring the general policies such as health and safety, use and maintenance of facilities, and fundraising, and overseeing that school resources are managed effectively. This goal will be accomplished primarily through hiring, supporting, reviewing the performance of, and if necessary dismissing the Chief Executive Officer. The Board will have a maximum of 20 members. All management powers not specifically designated to the Board are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, who will answer directly to the Board. See Appendix, Attachment 25: Board of Directors.

10. School Leadership & Staffing Plans

10A. Leadership Team Capacity

The CNCA development team has experience with successful new school development. CNCA has successfully opened three charter schools and a preschool center which now serve over 1500 students. The academic performance at every CNCA school has steadily increased and now exceeds that of local schools. The development team has extensive experience working in high performing schools and organizations. In addition to instructional and operational expertise, CNCA also has extensive facilities development and experience including: fundraising, permitting and code-compliance, as we have designed and developed our own award-winning school facilities. The leadership team consists of:

- Ana F. Ponce, Chief Executive Officer
- Noemi Donoso, Chief Academic Officer
- Chris Moggia, Senior Director of Technology
- Margaret Domingo, Director of Human Resources
- Mary Funaoka, Director of Knowledge Management
- Yolanda Sanchez, Compliance and Communications Manager
- Corey Podell, Special Education Coordinator
- Atyani Howard, Burlington Campus Principal

See Appendix, Attachment 26: Leadership Resumes.

10B. Staffing Model

Projected enrollment & student/teacher ratio:

Grade	Student Teacher Ratio	# of Classrooms	Total
K – 3	20:1	16	320
4 – 5	28:1	6	168
RSP	28:1	1	0

The Staff at CRES #15 will include 27 Certificated positions and 16 Classified positions. For a more detailed list of all our academic and non academic positions, please refer to Appendix, Attachment 27: Staffing Model.

10C. Compensation

CNCA offers a competitive salary and benefit package that is comparable to other school districts. For a more detailed list of salary ranges, benefits as a percentage of salary, and health benefits as a percentage of salary please refer to Appendix, Attachment 28: Compensation Summary.

10D. School Leadership

CNCA is committed to using innovative curriculum and teaching methodologies to establish a culture of educational excellence through meaningful and intensive professional development opportunities in a collaborative team teaching environment. CNCA leaders must be visionaries, eager to be in the forefront of educational practices and must embrace the challenge of demonstrating that public education in a low-income, primarily immigrant, multilingual area can and should represent excellence and opportunity. Leaders must possess strong organizational, leadership, supervisory and administrative skills to promote increased academic achievement and continuous professional growth. We have a pool of highly qualified internal candidates who will be considered to serve as a school leader. We also intend to continue recruiting for the position using various websites and job fairs to ensure a candidate is selected by March 2010. See Appendix, Attachment 29: Principal Job Description. The recruitment, selection and hiring process for the Principal will be as follows:

- Recruitment begins Ongoing
- Search committee is developed December
- Intensive recruiting begins January
- 1st & 2nd round interviews February/March
- Search committee makes recommendation February/March
- CEO announces school leader March

10E. Leadership Team

Other leadership positions include Assistant Principal, Bilingual/Intervention Coordinator, Office Manager and Parent Coordinator. We have a pool of highly qualified internal candidates who will be considered for these positions. We also intend to continue advertising these positions on various websites and attend job fairs so that candidates are selected by April/May 2010. See Appendix, Attachment 30: Leadership Team Job Descriptions.

The recruitment, selection and hiring process for all other leadership positions will be as follows:

- Recruitment begins Ongoing
- Search committee is developed February
- 1st round of interviews March/April
- 2nd round of interviews April/May
- Search committee makes recommendation April/May
- CEO makes final decision and the offer May

The principal will then finalize offers made to his/her leadership team.

10F. Recruitment, Selection and Hiring

CNCA maintains a professional staff that shares the educational philosophy of the school and are committed to the education of all children. Regardless of their role in the school, every person hired by CNCA will actively help to promote the mission, instructional program and the organizational core values. The recruitment, selection and hiring for CRES #15 will follow existing CNCA practices which have contributed to a high teaching staff retention rate.

Recruitment: Recruitment at CNCA has been very successful. Each year we receive hundreds of resumes from applicants who want to work for our schools thus, giving us the opportunity to hire excellent teachers, committed to the CNCA mission. To broaden our pool of candidates CNCA recruits both internally and externally. For an overview of our hiring process please refer to the appendix, attachment 31: Selection/Hiring Process.

Selection/Hiring Process: CNCA site leadership team selects its own staff. Individuals that apply for a position at CNCA will be required to submit a resume and complete a CNCA employment application. All resumes are carefully screened and

reviewed by a hiring committee to determine which candidates are best suited for open positions at the school based on their qualifications. The hiring committee is made up of the principal, site administrators, select teachers, and other stakeholders. This process helps ensure that the candidate and school are well-matched. Candidates that are selected will go through an extensive interview process which includes panel interviews, lesson/unit design, demonstration lessons, and data analysis action plans. Once a candidate has been selected, a written offer of employment from CNCA will be sent to the candidate outlining the terms of employment. CNCA certificated teachers are represented by the CNTA.

All personnel must commit to the mission and vision of the CNCA school. Employees' job descriptions and work schedules will be reviewed and modified as necessary to meet the needs of the school and its students. The comprehensive job descriptions will be based on the job duties and work basis as outlined in individual employee contracts or in the collective bargaining agreement for certificated teaching staff. Each core subject teacher will have the necessary California teaching credentials provided by State Commission on Teacher Credentialing for his/her teaching assignment. Teachers of non-core classes will have qualifications consistent with the requirements of state legislation. See sections 6 and 7 of this application, as well as the appendix, attachment 19 for details about teacher training and professional development.

CNCA leadership will invite interested teachers from the relieved campuses to apply. Timeline for hiring teachers:

- Recruitment begins Ongoing
- Search committee is developed February
- 1st & 2nd round of interviews March/April/May
- Search committee makes recommendation April/May/June
- Principal makes final decision and the offer May/June/July

Classified Personnel: Classified and other personnel will be selected by the Principal on an application and interview basis. Selection will be based on the ability to perform the job duties for that position. Classified personnel will perform duties suitable for their job positions. Staff from relieved schools will be invited to apply for available positions.

11. Operations

11A. Not Applicable

11B. External Applicants

CNCA will enter into a facilities use agreement with the LAUSD. The facilities use agreement will include a commitment to contract with the District as the default provider of outsourced school facility support services. The use agreement would further specify that the District must meet agreed-upon performance standards for competitive contracted services. These standards must be met within an agreed-upon time frame. If the District fails to meet these standards within this timeframe, and a timely discussion does not resolve the identified issues, then external partners may then contract with non-District providers for specified support services.

11C. Master Service Agreement

CNCA agrees to enter into discussion regarding the viability of master service agreements.

11D. School Operations Experience

The CNCA team currently operates three charter school campuses and a preschool campus. All campuses have been start up campuses with the first campus opening in 2000 and the most recent in 2007. The site Principal will be responsible for the day to day operations of the site. In addition CNCA Home Support Office team will provide services as identified below:

- *Human Resources and Payroll* - The Director of Human Resources, Margaret Domingo, has been with CNCA for five years. She has extensive experience in all aspects of human resource management including processing, payroll and benefits.
- *Compliance and Reporting* - The Compliance/Communications Manager, Yolanda Sanchez has been with the organization for over three years. She has extensive training and experience in all aspects of public school compliance reporting including attendance, CALPADS, meal program, ConApp and all other required reporting formats.
- *Technology* - Our Sr. Director of Information Technology, Chris Moggia, has extensive experience in overseeing the implementation of effective technology plans as well as effective information management.
- *Financial Oversight* - Chief Executive Officer has extensive experience with fiscal oversight and new school development. CNCA contracts with a non-profit business services provider for financial services. Tammy Stanton is

our Business Manager and works closely with the CEO and CNCA Board of directors to ensure fiscal oversight and sustainability.

- *Maintenance* - General maintenance is overseen by site facilities managers. CNCA has been effectively managing school maintenance teams since 2003. Our campuses are clean and safe.

11E. Operations Start-up Plan

The implementation of our start up plan will be led by CNCA's Senior Leadership Team, including the following individuals:

- Ana F. Ponce, Chief Executive Officer
- Noemi Donoso, Chief Academic Officer
- Chris Moggia, Senior Director of Technology
- Margaret Domingo, Director of Human Resources
- Mary Funaoka, Director of Knowledge Management

Our proposed planning calendar is geared towards executing all the necessary activities to ensure a successful school. See Appendix, Attachment 32: Operations Start Matrix.

11F. Operations Plan

CNCA is committed to engaging with the appropriate district personnel to negotiate an agreement and working with the LAUSD to meet service level standards for services provided. The school will enter into negotiations on all required services and foundational services, including existing outsourcing contracts:

Service	Description	Service Standard	Estimated Costs
Speech & Language	Provide speech and language services to students per IEP.	Flexible scheduling, punctuality, demonstrate significant student progress toward meeting goals	\$85/hr
Adapted PE	Provide APE services to students per IEP.	Flexible scheduling, punctuality, demonstrate significant student progress toward meeting goals	\$103/hr
Psychologist	Evaluate students for initial and three year IEPs.	Flexible scheduling, timely submission of reports	\$95/hr
Nursing	Evaluate students for initial and three year IEPs.	Flexible scheduling, timely submission of reports	\$642/Quarter
BTSA Mentor	Works with interested teachers to meet all the BTSA requirements and clear credential	Flexible schedule, solid track record of effective teaching and coaching.	\$1000/Teacher
Business Services	Provide	Timely and accurate reporting	\$176/student
SIS	PowerSchool and Data Director	24/7, Monday-Friday, 2-hour response time	\$11/student

Internal Services:

Service	Description	Service Standard	Estimated Costs
Cafeteria Clerk	Oversee distribution of meals and reporting	Accuracy in program implementation and reporting	\$21k/ year
Maintenance	Maintain school ground clean and safe.	Meet quality standards established	\$220k/yr

12. Finances

12A. Funding

Funding will be provided via charter school funding formulas.

12B. Budget Narrative

The CRES #15 budget was developed using anticipated projected average daily attendance to determine staffing needs and revenue base. The budget reflects the schools commitment to creating a comprehensive educational program where students are college ready and college bound at every grade level. Resources have been allocated to the core instructional program in addition to intervention and enrichment programs as outlined in the application. See Appendix, Attachment 4: Financial Plan.

12C. Financial Controls

CNCA has a solid track record of success with fiscal controls as evidenced with nine years of clean audits. The CNCA Board monitors fiscal soundness by reviewing budget vs. actual financial statements and dashboard to monitor actual vs. forecasted cash, income and expenses, enrollment and average daily attendance at every board meeting. The board meets annually with the contracted auditors to review the audit and report on internal controls. See Appendix, Attachment 33: Fiscal Policy.

CNCA currently out sources business services to ExED, a 501(c)3 tax-exempt, California Nonprofit Public-Benefit Corporation who provides charter school business and operations management services. This enables school site staff to focus on instructional and curricular issues. The business services provided to CNCA include: budgeting; financial statements, fiscal planning; vendor management; accounts payable, and attendance tracking systems; completion and submission of compliance reports; monitor adherence to applicable laws; and serve as a liaison with the District. The contracted organization will employ generally accepted accounting principles and maintain the CNCA General Ledger in accordance with the California State Account Code Structure and non-profit fund accounting principles.

Financial reports will be generated by the business services provider, reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer, School Principals and the CNCA Board of Directors, including:

- Provisional Budget – Spring prior to operating fiscal year
- Final Budget – July of the budget fiscal year
- Financial Statements in budget vs. actual format broken out by school site and consolidated formats - monthly
- First Interim Projections – November of operating fiscal year
- Second Interim Projections – February of operating fiscal year
- Unaudited Actuals – July following the end of the fiscal year
- Audited Actuals – November following the end of the fiscal year
- Classification Report – monthly the Monday after close of the last day of the school month
- Statistical Report – monthly, the Friday after the last day of the school month, P1 (January), and P2 (April)
- Bell Schedule – annually by November
- Other reports: Con App, Title Funding, ARRA, Class Size Reduction, ASES, National School Lunch program.

Financial Sustainability: Today, CNCA runs a four-site system which breaks even, with less than 5% of funding from private philanthropy. Factors which contribute to financial stability include:

- *Strong management team that values financial discipline.* CNCA's leadership, including its Board of Directors, has shown strong financial discipline by running a balanced budget for the last nine years. Factors that point to leadership's sense of fiscal responsibility include: 1) limited Home Office Support, 2) minimal fundraising for operational cost, 3) strong financial monitoring and reporting, and 4) clean audits.
- *High student attendance.* Due to CNCA's high attendance rates (consistently around 95%), CNCA receives a large % of available Federal and State per student funding, allocated based on "Average Daily Attendance" (ADA).
- *Partnerships with community organizations.* Due to CNCA's "place-based" strategy and strong ties to the community, the organization has been able to receive free or reduced rate services for its students from several organizations.
- *Zero debt.* To date, CNCA has no long-term debt on the balance sheet.
- *Strong record of success with fundraising.* CNCA has successfully raised an average of 5% of the operating budget on annual basis which provide enrichment and supplemental services to students and families.
- *Strong financial systems.* CNCA has developed strong internal systems for financial accountability and reporting.

13. Facilities

13A. LAUSD will provide facilities use agreement to be finalized by the Workforce Stability Taskforce.