

**Los Angeles Unified School District
Improving Underperforming Schools
Application of Carver**

An Open Letter from the New Principal of George Washington Carver Middle School

I have wanted to come back to Carver since I left my Assistant Principal position there ten years ago to take an assignment at the Local District. As my resume reflects, my entire career since then has been in preparation for this return. Four months after my arrival at Carver in July 2009, we were identified as one of twelve focus schools by Superintendent Cortines because of chronic low performance. I accepted the challenge of guiding the reform and see it as an opportunity to re-invent Carver and lead it towards becoming a *Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage* model school.

In the past, interdisciplinary collaboration, transparency, meaningful community input and honestly looking at our areas of need was not a part of the culture of this school. Through many hours of committee work, we are in the process of changing the culture at Carver to one where excellence is the expectation not the exception. Even though the majority of the staff was already in place, most are ready to do the work necessary to become a *Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage* model school.

I am certain this plan contains all of the necessary elements to affect positive change and achieve our goals. Of course this will be a difficult and arduous process, but I know we all feel the sense of urgency. It is very clear that it is no longer business as usual; Carver must make the drastic changes necessary to ensure that every student that enters our doors will leave ready for a rigorous academic program at the high school and beyond. Failure will no longer be an option!

Sincerely,

Luz Cotto

1. Executive Summary

a. Assurances:

- i. Carver is an internal applicant and an existing public school that is part of Local District 5 of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). As such, we were informed that signatures are not required for the assurances section. However, we hold true to the following:
- ii. Carver will comply with enrollment procedures per LAUSD policy and will serve students from within our school's identified attendance boundaries.
- iii. The composition of students served at Carver will continue to reflect the composition of the students enrolled from within our school's designated boundaries. Carver will be inclusive and welcoming of all demographics, including race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English Language Learners (ELLs), Standard English Learners (SELs), gifted and talented students (GATE), students with disabilities (SWD), and students placed in foster care. The staff Problem Solving/Data Coordinator (Data Analyst) will compare the student compositions of the school to that of students from feeder elementary schools and the larger community on an annual basis to ensure alignment.
- iv. Carver is not an outside operator, and we will continue our track record of fiscal solvency and sound decision making.

v. The Carver Middle School Leadership Team (CMSLT) agrees to adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the Modified Consent Decree (MCD) and other court orders imposed upon the District pertaining to special education. We will use the District's Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual, the Integrated Student Information System (ISIS), and Welligent to create online Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and track related services that students will receive during their time at Carver.

b. Student Population:

Carver embodies the rich diversity of its South Los Angeles neighborhood. The majority of Carver students come from Wadsworth, Harmony, 49th Street, 20th Street, Main Street, Ascot, and Nevin Elementary Schools. For the most part, they continue on to Thomas Jefferson High School or Santee Educational Complex. Our current enrollment of 1,805 students reflects the profound shift of the neighborhood composition from a historically African American community to a mostly Latino community; our current enrollment per race/ethnicity is 7% African American and 93% Latino. 100% of our students participate in the free and reduced lunch program. The following demographics also apply:

- 13% Special Education
- 6% Gifted/Talented
- 89% Economically Disadvantaged
- 45% English Learners
- 38% Reclassified as Fluent English Proficient
- 17% Standard English Learners

The CMSLT and teachers at Carver have a long history of working with the students of this community, and have developed strong relationships with the families and organizations. As we initiate our transformation to a revitalized center for learning and for the community, we will implement new educational strategies and programs such as *Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage* model middle schools in Los Angeles County and throughout the state. These have proven highly effective for similarly diverse low income populations as evidenced by the schools' exiting Program Improvement status upon adoption and implementation of the program within five years.

c. Vision, Mission and Philosophy:

Vision

Carver's staff-developed vision demonstrates our commitment to academic excellence, developmental responsiveness and social equity: "Dr. George Washington Carver aspires to be a place where excellence in teaching and attention to the physical, social, emotional and academic needs of all students are nurtured and inspired in a safe, creative and challenging learning environment."

Achievement of this vision will be measured against the school's vision objective: becoming a *Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage* model middle school within five years. Selection means that a committee of reviewers representing the California Department of Education, California League of Middle Schools, California Teachers Association, California School Boards Association and other state-level education organizations have judged the school to have demonstrated significant academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, and social equity.

Mission

Our mission will be to provide a safe, clean, supportive, engaging and challenging learning environment that supports all students and prepares them for academic, social and personal success. Carver will measure the success of our mission with the following objectives grounded in the new LAUSD report card:

- (1) We will increase the number of students scoring proficient/ advanced by 10 % in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math as measured by the California Standards Test (CST).
- (2) All English learners will achieve at least one level of English proficiency and our reclassification rate will increase by 10% annually.
- (3) 60% of students will report feeling safe at school by the end of 2010-11
- (4) 75% of students will report their campus was clean by the end of 2010-11
- (5) 75% of students will report they had opportunities for learning by the end of 2010-11
- (6) 75% of students will report involvement with their school by the end of 2010-11

Philosophy

At Carver, we will value diversity, equity, educational excellence and collaborative relationships between staff, students, parents and the community. All students will succeed regardless of their economic or family situation. Each student will be viewed from a position of strength rather than deficit. Although our students face difficult home lives, we believe they have the strength, intelligence and resilience to overcome their circumstances and achieve in school and life. Every Carver teacher, administrator and support staff individual will be here to motivate and support students so all will succeed. “Failure is not allowed; Success is the only option!” The result for the community will be well-educated young people who graduate from college or enter well-compensated careers and contribute positively to the neighborhood.

A typical Carver student will be seated and ready to learn by 7:25 a.m. During each 50-minute class, he/she will engage in writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading – and experience a rigorous standards-based curriculum by interacting with peers in a variety of group settings. Classes will include interdisciplinary, culturally relevant projects and other brain research-based activities with technology use embedded. All his/her classes will be clustered, which means they will be located in the same section of the school – a grade-level “house” – and include the same grade-level classmates in math, English-language arts, social studies and science.

After Period 2, our Carver student will have a nutrition break, attend two other classes, and then enjoy a healthy lunch in the outdoor eating area with friends. Periods 5 and 6 will be followed by a brief advisory/ homeroom class. For the last period of the day, he/she will either receive intervention or enrichment depending on timely assessment data. At the end of the day, he/she might leave at 3:10 p.m., but will be more apt to stay and participate in a variety of after-school activities offered.

d. Education Plan:

Our education plan will feature a collaborative, comprehensive approach to teaching and learning. We will establish Personalized Learning Environments (PLEs) throughout the school to develop meaningful connections between students and adults through personalization that leads to greater student achievement. PLEs are similar to families in a neighborhood – a small group of four teachers teaching the core subjects (math, English-language arts, social studies and science) and sharing the same students, regardless of whether they are ELs, SELs, SWDs or GATE students. Because teacher teams will share students who attend the same classes with the same group of peers, a PLE feels like a family. There will be six PLE Team “families” in each of the clean, safe and inviting 6th, 7th and 8th grade houses which will be clustered together like a neighborhood. Each PLE will have parent representatives who will participate in grade-level decision making.

Teachers will implement culturally relevant, differentiated instruction by using access to core strategies such as Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) and Academic English Mastery and Proficiency (AEMP). We will expand our goal of a college going culture by applying school wide Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strategies.

Our response when students don't learn will be to utilize the Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI²) Problem Solving Model. Formative assessments such as periodic assessments and teacher created common tasks will provide data to inform instruction. In addition, faculty and staff will participate in ongoing professional development built around identified student needs and close coordination between general education, students-at-risk, special education, and English Language Development staff.

Distributive leadership through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be the final element that will empower teachers, administrators and other support staff to collaboratively direct their own professional growth and continually improve student learning and achievement.

e. Community Impact and Involvement

The South Los Angeles neighborhood served by Carver is steeped in history and character, but also mired in poverty. Over the past few decades, the manufacturing jobs that once were common in the area have dried up, leaving few employment opportunities. Students and their families must endure the constant threat of violence, homelessness, food scarcity, high mobility, and a lack of access to safe outdoor recreation areas and fresh, healthy food.

In this setting, the quality of the school experience will be critical to students' futures. Carver is reinventing itself to better serve the needs of the young people from this neighborhood and build stronger connections to parents and organizations. While we already have solid ongoing partnerships with over a dozen community organizations (Appendix 8.c.i), we intend to actively pursue more partnerships such as the one with Mount St. Mary's College that will offer teachers the opportunity to take instructional leadership courses. These partnerships will improve student and family access to after-school academic options, social services, explorations of art and culture, and other benefits.

f. Leadership/Governance

The CMSLT at Carver will represent a wide range of strengths, with deep expertise in administration, core content, English Language Development, special education, technology, operations, community relations, finance, safety, social/emotion development, discipline, as well as collective bargaining. In addition to a strong instructional background and passion for student learning, new Principal Luz Cotto brings proven oversight, financial and operational skills as evidenced by her impressive 21-year career in LAUSD.

To envision the school redesign, Ms. Cotto held a series of parent and community meetings followed by a series of faculty meetings (Appendix 1.f.i,1.f.ii) in the fall of 2009 to obtain vital input so the new school will represent all stakeholders: staff, students, parents and community.

As mentioned in Section 1.d., distributive leadership through 6th, 7th and 8th grade houses structured as PLEs will empower teachers, administrators and other support staff to collaboratively improve student learning and achievement. Each house will feature an assistant principal (house leader), a counselor, a parent, a clerk and the teachers. Supporting the houses will be the universal leadership team (Appendix 9.a.i).

While each teacher team will be empowered to effect change through methods such as curriculum mapping and common benchmark assessments, the entire school will be focused on attaining the primary measurable objectives defined in the mission statement. The most important of these objectives is the 10% increase in the number of students scoring proficient/ advanced in ELA and Math as measured by the CST and the number of ELs moving at least one level of English proficiency as measured by California English Language Development Test (CELDT) (resulting in a 10% reclassification annual increase). The distributive leadership model will mean there is clear responsibility at each staff level. We will partner with Mount St. Mary's College to establish cohorts of instructional leaders.

The School Site Council (SSC), with advisement from the Compensatory Advisory Council (CEAC), the English Learner Advisory Council (ELAC), and the CMSLT will serve as the governing bodies for Carver (Appendix 9.a.iii). Each grade house will have a member on the CMSLT. Since Carver will be a Title 1, School Based Management (SBM) School, we will apply for a waiver to recognize the CMSLT as a decision-making body. The Title 1 and ELL Coordinators will facilitate the CEAC and ELAC in addition to other student-centered services. House leaders will meet regularly with teachers, counselors, the Data Analyst and support personnel to address curricular and student issues related to their specific PLE, including discipline, attendance, curriculum, projects, homework, parent contacts and communications.

g. Fiscal Plan

The SSC in conjunction with the CMSLT will coordinate all school budgets to ensure “a safe, clean, supportive, engaging and challenging learning environment” through purchase of things such as out of classroom personnel and technology. The fiscal plan will also support the transition to PLEs, professional development, curriculum and assessment development, class size reduction, and support

services for Carver students and parents. Budgets will be reviewed and all stakeholders will have the opportunity for input in order to ensure equal access for all.

2. Curriculum and Instruction

a. Curriculum Map and Summary:

Rigor

Among the characteristics of PLEs is a focus on rigor and relevance. Academic rigor includes universal high expectations, standards-based curriculum, a focus on student work, student-centered instruction, and a high level of support for all students. Effective PLEs at Carver will feature heterogeneous grouping of all students, interdisciplinary curriculum, horizontal and vertical sequencing of subject matter (knowledge/content introduced, reinforced and mastered in sequential flow between grade levels and among subject/content areas), and a large repertoire of instructional strategies.

In order to place an emphasis on academic rigor, the focus must move from teaching to learning. Classrooms must be active, challenging and engaging. Each class will feature multiple methods of assessment, including portfolios. There must also be multiple opportunities for each student to succeed. Teachers will focus on checking for comprehension consistently looking for evidence of learning.

The Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model refined by former superintendent Dr. Richard DuFour has been widely adopted nationwide and proven effective by numerous education researchers. In PLCs, all staff members collaboratively focus on improving student learning through essential questions:

What do we want students to learn?

The California Content Standards will be the basis for the District and State adopted curriculum our teachers will use to guide instruction. The scope and sequence of all programs in all content areas at Carver are available through various publications via lausd.net. Whereas in the past some teachers failed to follow programs with the fidelity necessary for significant student learning to occur, now teachers will be committed to using the approved textbooks, programs, technological resources and other purchased or teacher-developed materials. This fidelity will be assured through the CSMLT and will be explained further in Section 6 of this document. All teachers will unpack the standards and collaborate to design a rigorous pacing calendar in core classes using the backwards design model, as well as focus on integrating technology into curriculum and assignments where possible. Course syllabi and pacing calendars will be developed and reviewed. They will contain detailed assessments, homework timelines, and regularly scheduled project-based learning opportunities. These activities will be research-based, cross-curricular and relevant to local, state, national and world events with special attention paid to global diversity and cultural awareness.

Instructional strategies that are challenging, aligned to the standards, and include special attention to enhancing critical thinking skills will be implemented. Whenever possible, advanced graphic organizers will be incorporated to enhance students understanding. Every Carver teacher will be a literacy teacher first and a content teacher second. All teachers will expect their students to take notes and write summaries using note-taking strategies such as Cornell Notes. Listening and speaking will be crucial in how we expect every student to engage in academic discourse. In classrooms, the seating will be arranged cooperatively to support student engagement. Every student will be given an opportunity to listen and then speak about their learning using academic vocabulary and instructional conversations using multiple modalities. To this end, teachers will also avail themselves of the latest technology, such as SMARTboards and the internet as an instructional tool. This will keep their classes on the cutting edge of relevant media.

To achieve the goal of becoming an effective learning community, our students must understand their roles and expected behaviors such as being attentive, and completing their homework as assigned. The success of our school will become evident when every Carver student shows that he/she understands the importance of what they are learning and the relationship of that knowledge to their lives now and in the future.

How will we know the students have learned the standards-based curricula?

As assessment data for students and classes are reviewed, key standards will be chosen according to the CST blueprints. To assure uniform grading and assessments throughout the core classes, Carver will establish and share departmental rubrics by grade-level teams. To increase collaboration and consistency and ensure student success, teacher-created criteria checklists and rubrics will share academic language across content areas. In this way, we will know when a student has or has not mastered the standards, objectives and goals and will be able to respond appropriately based on the information the assessments provide.

Assessment data will be shared with each student regularly by all teachers. Teachers will use this data to increase student time-on-task and develop instructional goals. All students will be encouraged to review A-G Requirements and set goals for themselves in discussions with their counselor, advisory teacher or any other teacher on campus. To increase preparedness Carver students will have a daily planner to keep track of assignments, learn organizational skills and monitor individual goals they have set. Students will actively chart their progress to increase intrinsic motivation and make learning more meaningful. Individualized Culmination Plans (ICPs) will become a significant part of a student portfolio and will assist students in organizing their calendars, work in progress, completed assignments, individual goals, and assessment results.

How do we respond if students haven't learned the standards-based curriculum?

Since teachers will be consistently looking for evidence of learning throughout the lesson, there will be multiple opportunities during "first teaching" to catch students who still are struggling with concepts and reteach on the spot. In addition, intervention will be available during their Focused Learning Experiences = excellence (FLEX) Class for students who have not reached mastery of a particular standard and can be given more time and methods for practice.

The Learning Center will be an on-site classroom with credentialed resource teachers available for *any* student needing remediation upon referral, as well.

Elective Class Options

Beyond academic preparation for each student, there is also the need for all students to have an opportunity to explore personal interests through elective classes. All students will receive art, music, technology and leadership skills at some point in their Carver career to align with the Jefferson HS Small Learning Communities (SLCs). Beginning in the 6th grade, students will be introduced to the basics of each course and then advance in content and outcomes as they progress through the grade levels. Potential electives are:

6 th and 7 th	Art	Music	Band	Dance	Cadets	Technology
					Leadership	
8 th	Art	Music	Band	Dance	Cadets	Technology
	Environmental Awareness		Drama		Leadership	

Various clubs like Woodcraft Rangers and intramural sports activities such as chess club and soccer will be scheduled after school each day. These activities will be available to all students without academic grade limitations.

The Library Media center will be updated with an LCD projector, screen and new computers to facilitate class instruction by teachers. In the past, the library-media center was non-existent. Now there will be a fully functioning library-media center available to all students and staff before, during, and after school, with a well-stocked college preparedness section and computers ready to access the many research search engines LAUSD subscribes to.

b. Track Record of Proposal Curriculum:

Unfortunately, standards-based instruction using state-mandated curriculum was not consistently implemented at Carver. This was primarily the result of a lack-of monitoring and support. From now on the curricula of all academic and non-academic classes will be reviewed regularly by PLE House teams and the administration in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement. Team goals will be used to ascertain the consistency of the curricula with the standards, as well as to develop assessments and adjust curricula and instructional strategies as necessary to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and the gifted and talented.

Secondly, horizontal and vertical articulation will be initiated to guarantee that students are introduced to concepts at the appropriate grade level and continue to enhance the depth of their knowledge in subsequent grade levels until they master that knowledge prior to advancing onto high school. The scope and sequence of each class will be reviewed regularly by grade-level teams as well as subject/content area teams. Elective and physical education teachers will be included in these reviews so that academic content is applied to all classes across the curriculum with purpose and relevance.

c. Addressing the Needs of All Students:

Based upon the work of Dr. Richard DuFour, an academic support program will be created to address the needs of ELLs, SELs, SWDs, and GATE students. All classes will use differentiated instruction and the RtI² Problem Solving Model to best meet the learning needs of students with varying learning abilities and learning styles. Teachers will also use direct instruction when appropriate to assist students in their understanding of concepts. Specific interventions, based on RtI², will be in place to assist students with learning difficulties.

The Learning Center will help students complete assignments with the assistance of teachers and paraprofessionals during the school day. This center has been recognized by the district as a model in the past.

FLEX will provide specific academic support for all students who are struggling meeting the standards. With the support of a classroom teacher, these small-group classes of fewer than 25 will help students to improve literacy and fluency in both language and math concepts.

GATE Classes will enable challenging projects and opportunities to be available for students above and beyond the standard curriculum of academic classes. Work and projects completed can be used as alternative assignments for regular classroom work.

d. Accelerated Learning

The establishment of PLE Houses will assist with the identification of students who are excelling in their academic work and need additional challenges and creative opportunities. As with other special needs students, gifted students will participate in full inclusion classrooms with teachers who are trained in differentiated instruction and can specifically provide skill mastery, content acquisition and product development.

PLE Houses will develop a schedule of regular meetings with the parents of gifted and talented students to address needs and concerns, plus plan additional approaches and opportunities to meet the needs of these students.

GATE classes will provide an additional opportunity for gifted and talented students to exercise their academic and creative talents. Projects, fieldtrips, guest speakers and other learning opportunities will be provided to students based upon their interests and their required coursework. The FLEX class will be a time when this type of enrichment will be available. Careful collaboration with the feeder elementary schools will ensure that potential GATE students will be identified early and placed in the appropriate classes upon arrival. High expectations for all students requires that we provide adequate support services for all students as well as an ability to move students who are not being adequately challenged into classes with greater expectations and more challenging coursework. This may mean that select students will be enrolled in courses at Carver such as geometry and receive high-school credit for it.

In his book, Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom, Thomas Armstrong argues that students possess as many as eight measurable intelligences. We at Carver, in a break with past procedure, will begin using multiple measures such as Armstrong uses in his work to identify our gifted and talented students. This will ensure that more African American students and students with disabilities have access to these classes. The electives will also offer our students more opportunities to develop their other intelligences.

The quality of the strategies implemented will be determined through consistent monitoring of data such as MyData, which is frequently updated with the latest student assessment results.

e. Instructional Strategies

Each teacher will regularly introduce opportunities for extended discourse in order to develop higher-order critical thinking skills in all students. Classroom instruction will be more than an opportunity for teachers to share knowledge and information with students. Each class session will challenge students beyond Bloom's knowledge, comprehension and application levels to the higher cognitive levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The goal will be to move students from short-term memory of information towards long-term, complex thinking and creativity. Teachers will use a lesson planning tool and a lesson planning agenda template to meet this goal (Appendix 2.e.i, 2.e.ii).

Unlike in previous years, teachers will examine student work as grade-level content expert groups during common conference periods to develop a consistent process for looking at student work and monitoring instruction. Students will then participate in frequent peer revisions based on their feedback, and continue to reinforce quality products. Additionally, student-led parent/teacher conferences, guided by the ICP, will focus on progress toward standards-mastery and establishing goals for "owning" individual learning.

All teachers at Carver are expected to be culturally aware of the community in which the school is located and the conditions in which our SELs find themselves living. It is important that students "find themselves" in the curriculum and are able to relate to the concepts they are being taught. Culturally relevant and responsive assignments, literature, recognition of historical events, music, and art will be regularly included in the curriculum, activities and assignments of all classes.

Teachers will implement differentiated instruction by using access to core strategies such as GLAD, which will particularly support ELLs and SELs. One example of a research-based GLAD strategy that enhances student learning is chants, where students develop metacognitive use of high level academic language and literacy through verbal repetition. This and other engaging GLAD strategies promote English language acquisition, academic achievement, and cross-cultural connections.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strategies are another way Carver will address students' organizational needs. Mentioned earlier, Cornell notes is an example of one AVID strategy that ensures retention of complex, grade-level concepts. Use of this and other AVID techniques will prepare our students to be successful in high school and beyond.

Lastly, Carver will continue to be committed to meeting the needs of its students with disabilities. Carver has had a strong Special Day Class (SDC) program in the past, and this year we will be building on this strength by exploring an option for certain classes to join general education classes under a co-teaching model. This new innovation will be available in addition to The Learning Center, which all students may use when referred. Studies have shown that the use of technology to present material to students increases content interest and retention. In addition to committing to making their subject more engaging, Carver teachers will instruct students in the appropriate and safe use of technology in many meaningful ways; required presentations and online research to name a few. Three laptop carts will be purchased for all classes to use which will be expected to employ them regularly.

3. School Culture and Climate

Carver will adhere to Article IX- Hours, Duties, and Work Year, Article XXIV- Student Discipline and Article XXVII- Shared Decision-Making and School-Based Management, as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

a. Description of Culture

Carver will initiate a new climate and culture on campus which will be focused on creating a safe learning and working environment for all, supporting a campus culture which promotes and sustains the vision of academic success, and providing opportunities for creative and social development among all students. The development of PLEs at Carver will bring about immediate change as students begin to experience a sense of belonging to an identifiable team within the larger campus.

Research has shown that among the benefits of Personalized Learning Environments are:

- Increased student learning and academic performance
- Increased student engagement and motivation
- Improved student attendance
- Higher promotion rates
- Strikingly lower drop-out rates
- Lower mobility

PLEs also improve teacher-student relationships through:

- Increasing the focus on active learning in all classes
- Increasing teachers' and students' knowledge of each other
- Reducing anonymity and isolation
- Increasing affiliation and a sense of belonging for all students
- Developing PLEs that provide teachers with opportunities to create and align curriculum, integrate knowledge and concepts across the curriculum, and analyze and use data for all students

Increased school safety is another benefit of a PLE. Research indicates that with their development, there are fewer negative social behaviors by students; less suspensions, expulsions, and disruptive behavior; and reductions in graffiti and property damage. Increased parent involvement within the school and the PLE and improved parent-teacher communication are also associated with their development.

The implementation of PLEs at Carver will be initiated with a “train-the-trainer” model as part of the overall professional development program for the 6 PLEs that will be established per grade level. All teachers will receive extensive training in PLE elements. The CMSLT will direct school-wide efforts to establish PLEs on campus once all teachers have completed initial training. Each CMSLT member will co-facilitate a PLE team so that there is a continuous flow of information and support between PLEs and school leadership. Grade-level leaders, counselors and support personnel assigned to each grade level will “loop” with students each year in order to maintain consistency and familiarity with students and parents. This approach has proven to be effective with middle school students and adds an additional level of student support and advocacy.

Each PLE will identify its own governance to report to the CMSLT. Initially, teams will adopt an identity for the personalization of their team, such as college names or careers. This personalization will promote integrity, ethics, and character. Regular PLE meetings will be scheduled and the 18 CMSLT representatives will participate in the meetings. The agenda for each meeting will be developed by the members of the PLE and forwarded to the CMSLT. It is the responsibility of each PLE to follow campus policies, rules and procedures, and to develop additional rules and procedures specific to the house to support the common vision, mission and plan for the house. These rules and procedures are to include (but are not limited to) approaches for enhancing family and community connections, working collaboratively with other grade levels and PLEs, maintaining rigor and relevance within the curriculum, and developing continuous relationships with all students within the PLE. The single most important goal of all PLE’s at Carver will be to *“Create a student-centered environment that places student learning and achievement at the core of all that we do.”*

b. College and Career Readiness

The renewed focus on academic success for all students also means a new emphasis on college and career readiness for all students. Though many early adolescents may not be prepared to determine their future path (two or four-year college, career/technical schools, job placement), opportunities must be provided to raise the awareness of all students of the many opportunities available to them and the requirements that must be met in order to secure admission to higher education or to be considered for a specific type of employment. College and university logos, banners and flags will be located throughout the Carver campus as a reminder of our overall goal for all students. We will also continue “College Awareness Fridays” for faculty and staff to wear college attire, i.e., sweatshirts with university logos.

Carver students will become knowledgeable of the A-G requirements for college admission in California. Parent workshops will be planned by the Carver Parent Center to familiarize all parents with the A-G requirements, as well as options available to parents to begin planning for their child to attend college. Programs such as those sponsored by the Lumina Foundation which educate minority parents about college -- including funding, scholarships, grants, and other financial opportunities -- will be initiated to provide all families with information and materials to assist them in planning with their children.

The Library Media Center will develop a reference section of college and university catalogs, brochures and information files which can be accessed by any student when they visit the library. Each college and university with information in the reference file will also have a direct link on a computer located in the library to provide additional print and video information on specific college and university programs. Counselors will update this information by semester as well as provide presentations to grade levels and PLE's. We will continue to operate the "UCLA College and Career Center" on campus.

c. School Calendar and Schedule

The school will operate under the Concept 6 calendar following recommended district and contracted holidays and non-attendance days. The proposed school schedule would consist of six (6) 50-minute instructional periods, plus a 15-minute nutrition break and a 30-minute homeroom/advisory period and one 30-minute lunch to serve all students. Following the advisory period will be a 5-minute "roundup" time during which students assigned to intervention and enrichment classes (FLEX) will be gathered and escorted to their respective 50-minute intervention classes by all available staff when applicable (Appendix 3.c). Students may continue intervention or enrichment after school, or go to intramural sports or after-school club activities.

d. Athletic Programs and Extra-Curricular Programs

The athletic and extra-curricular program of any middle school plays a very important role in the overall development of early adolescents. Middle-grade students are known to have high levels of energy, are very social and interactive, and have a wide array of interests which need to be addressed outside of the regular academic classroom.

All Carver students will participate in PE classes 5 days per week. The PE program will be in compliance with CST requirements and will focus on health and fitness while also educating students about their own physical conditions and helping them to make good decisions on how to improve and maintain healthy lives in the future.

The overall PE program for all grades will include aerobic exercise, strength and flexibility conditioning, movement (dance), individual and team sports, and reading and written activities associated with each of these core areas. PE teachers will meet regularly with science and math teachers to plan curriculum and activities which are integrated across the curriculum and incorporate written assessments based upon presented material. This academic aspect will be part of the overall grade given for PE on each report card.

Many years ago, intramural sports programs were offered each day after school. We will bring them back. Students not participating in intervention programs may choose to participate in any intramural sports program where the only requirement for participation in that sport is the desire to learn about the sport and actively participate demonstrating good sportsmanship, fairness and effort. Intramural sports programs may include soccer, softball, volleyball, lacrosse, flag football, basketball and other activities as space and equipment allows.

In addition to the intramural sports program, a wide array of clubs will now be developed and offered at Carver to address the many interests of our students. Clubs will meet during lunch and after school, and all clubs will be open to all interested students. Teachers at Carver will be encouraged to begin clubs based upon personal and student interest and willingness to participate in club activities. Included among possible clubs will be drama, journalism, photography/yearbook, school spirit, community projects, and graphic arts.

e. Discipline and Creating a Safe, Clean and Respectful Campus

At Carver, we will commit ourselves to providing a healthy, safe and caring learning environment and meeting the needs of all students in accordance with the Board-approved District Discipline Foundation Policy. In addition, a major focus of all adults and students at Carver will be to respect one another at all times – in our actions, language and overall demeanor on campus. The present school-wide discipline slogan of Carver – Be Safe, Be Respectful & Be Responsible – will remain.

Discipline on campus will now be addressed at varying levels and with consistency among all faculty and staff (Discipline Policy, Code of Conduct- Appendix 3.e). Each year students and parents will be advised of our school discipline policy and their responsibility to follow campus and classroom rules. Our focus will be on individual responsibility and students will be held to specific acceptable standards of behavior as found in the discipline handbook. All students will be advised of our campus policy prohibiting name-calling, ostracizing, and verbal, emotional or physical harassment of any student on campus through house discipline assemblies. Students will also be aware of procedures in place to safely report any incident which disregards this policy.

PLEs will have primary responsibility for the discipline of students within their specific house. Incidents or actions which require additional attention will be referred to a dean for additional action, including meetings with parents, counselors and other auxiliary staff members. In situations where disciplinary action has not been effective in resolving behavior problems, referral to the grade level house leader will be made for further action.

Special Education Students

Unlike in the past, Positive Behavior Support Plans will be included in all IEPs so they may know students' triggers for inappropriate behavior and teach replacement behaviors. The LAUSD Discipline Foundation Policy bulletin will be known and followed consistently by all teachers and students, as well.

Safety and Crisis Planning

Due to the crime-ridden nature of the neighborhood in which Carver is located, we have an existing, proven safety plan. The steps of the plan will be known by all adults at school, and can include closed campus, patrolling by administration, situation escalation and de-escalation directed by the campus police officer, school-wide announcements to all classrooms, and immediate communication to parents via email and automated phone system (ConnectED) following the conclusion of an incident.

Student Dress

All Carver parents will be notified that this is a “uniforms required” campus, and that all students attending Carver are to be appropriately attired at all times. The uniform dress code has been developed to improve safety among all students, eliminate distractions caused by various forms of apparel, and standardize acceptable apparel by limiting options for school dress and thereby reduce costs for parents as well. All Carver students will be required to wear:

Bottoms: Dark blue and black (no jeans)

Tops: White or pastel collared shirts White, beige, tan, cream, light blue, light yellow, light pink, or light gray collared shirts (polo or dress shirts – no t-shirts)

Shoes: Dress shoes or sneakers (no flip-flops, sandals or other open-toed shoes)

Caps/Hats: May be worn to school during inclement weather but not worn inside any building or classroom

Outerwear: Jackets, windbreakers, sweatshirts and sweaters may be worn but they must be logo/emblem free and not oversized

No gang related attire may be worn at any time.

Professional Attire

All Carver faculty and staff are to dress professionally at all times. Faculty and staff are to be mindful of student dress codes and are to dress accordingly.

f. Meeting Health Mandates and Health Care Needs

We will meet the health mandates and the health care needs of chronically ill students including students with 504 plans and IEPs by having a full time nurse, bridge coordinator, psychiatric social worker, school psychologist, adaptive PE teacher and the use of district provided itinerant support staff.

Within the next two years, we propose to begin planning for a partnership with local medical centers, hospitals and medical and nursing schools (USC, UCLA, CSU) to establish a health clinic on the Carver campus which would provide basic services to Carver families as well as other community members. It is our goal to have arrangements made to begin providing basic services such as school physicals, required inoculations, diabetes screening, ear-nose and throat screening, vision and hearing exams, and basic dental exams. Grants will be sought to fund this project beyond that which the partnerships can provide.

g. Meeting Nutritional Needs of All Students

Carver will provide a healthy breakfast, mid-morning nutrition and balanced lunch for all students. Following state and federal guidelines for student meal programs, every effort will be made to provide these meals to all students while also providing nutritional guidance to students on the need for a balanced diet. At a time when adolescent diabetes is increasing, especially among Latino and African American youth, it is important that students understand their health risks and how their nutritional choices can impact their lives.

4. Assessments and School Data

a. Educational Goals and Metrics

All teachers will participate in professional growth activities which will enhance their abilities to provide necessary standards-based curriculum, improve lesson design, and strengthen instructional practices which will benefit all students, including ELLs, SELs, and SWD. GLAD, AEMP, and AVID strategies will be implemented whenever and wherever necessary, along with additional interventions, to provide a consistent focus on academic growth and success for all students. Please refer to the Accountability Matrix in the (Appendix 4.a).

Goals

In addition to those listed on page three of this plan, our overall goal is to raise our API scores sufficiently to move beyond our present Program Improvement status within five years and qualify for Schools to Watch-Taking Center Stage model middle school status.

b. Student Assessment Plan

Assessment	Frequency	Grades Assesses	Rationale
Periodic Assessment	Three times a year	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Summative assessments with results available in 48 hours
Content Area Unit Assessments	Varies by content area. At least once every twenty days.	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Formative assessments that provide ongoing assessments of student learning and effectiveness of instructional practices
California Standards Test	Once a year	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Summative assessment that evaluates annual progress towards school wide benchmarks in content areas
California English Learner Development Test (CELDT)	Once a year	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Summative assessment that evaluates annual growth of English Language Development level in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing
IEP Assessments, i.e., KTEA, CAPA, and Woodcock Johnson III	According to student IEPs	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Diagnostic tool that evaluates cognitive ability for placement of students with special needs
Classroom Behavior Assessment Form	As needed	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Assesses the teachers' perception of student classroom behavior to assist in the implementation and management of a positive behavior and progressive discipline support plan
Response to Intervention Assessment	Once every week	6 th , 7 th , 8 th	Formative assessment that determines the degree to which a student responds to intervention attempts

Unlike in the past, a variety of methods will be used at Carver to assess student learning. All core classes (English, math, science and social science) will give teacher-created weekly common assessments. These frequent formative assessments will drive all instruction in these classes. Students and teachers will receive immediate feedback on each assessment and students will enter the results of each assessment into their portfolios, which will then be shared twice a year with parents at Student Led Conferences.

Additional forms of assessment will also be used in all core classes. These include unit tests, oral reports, group tests, teacher-made benchmark assessments, written reports, and individual and group projects that frequently incorporate technology.

Starting in 2010, teacher-created rubrics will be commonly used for assignments and projects and where appropriate, teachers will provide exemplars to support student understanding of assignments and outcomes. Culminating projects will be evident in most classes and these may be either individual or group projects. Most student-written work will be peer read, edited and scored. Student presentations will be commonly found in classes and these will also be evaluated based upon content, presentation skills and overall quality. Many of the above assignments will become a part of a student portfolio of work.

Students will be provided the support they need to meet the standards. Weekly formative assessments will reveal whether or not a student should receive extra support. Students will know exactly where they are in their learning and exactly what standards require additional attention. The support for each student will be mandatory and will require participation in an extended day program. Support will also be provided during the school day in the form of co-teaching with special education teachers, tutoring and FLEX.

c. Data Team and Instructional Team

The addition of a full-time Data Analyst to our staff will provide the necessary means by which all teachers can be better prepared and informed to work with their students. Daily interventions will be coordinated by the Data Analyst and grade level house team based upon assessment outcomes (Appendix 4.c).

In addition to published duties, the Data Analyst will:

- Work with all teachers in developing weekly quizzes and assessments
- Provide Scantron sheets or equivalent online surveys for each quiz
- Receive all assessments and disaggregate all results for classroom teachers, including individual student data on the number of questions that are correct/incorrect, questions missed by each student, female/male comparisons, race/culture comparisons, and overall results
- Prepare state assessment packets and preparation materials
- Meet regularly with PLEs, grade level teams and the CMSLT to discuss assessment data
- Create professional development utilizing current student data to support teachers in informing student instruction

d. Data Systems

In accordance with LAUSD policy and the MCD, Carver will utilize the ISIS, MyData and Welligent to track student records and identify services. The progress of all students, including SWDs, will be tracked with regular analysis of this data performed by our Problem Data Analyst and discussed with the CMSLT, house leaders and PLE leaders, with appropriate adjustments in curriculum and instruction made in order to guarantee the academic needs of all students will be addressed.

e. LAUSD School Report Card

Carver will continue to track and provide the information presented in the LAUSD School Report Card.

f. Research and Evaluation

Carver will actively participate in research and/or evaluation projects in partnership with LAUSD, higher education institutions and/or research organizations which comply with federal and state regulations and guidelines for human subject research in public education institutions. Carver will seek out opportunities to become active participants in research projects and studies which enhance the expertise of our teachers and benefit our curriculum and overall school programs.

g. Operational Goals and Metrics

Carver is an internal applicant and will use NCLB accountabilities. For students with disabilities, Carver will adhere to the MCD outcomes to measure student progress.

5. Professional Development Program

Carver will adhere to Article IX- Hours, Duties, and Work Year, Article IX-B-Professional Development and Article XXVII- Shared Decision-Making and School-Based Management, as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

a. Professional Development Unlike in the past, the goal for PD will be to focus on classroom practice and continuous learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, carefully crafted lessons and projects, data-driven instruction and decision making, and approaches to mastering key standards in the curriculum.

A regular schedule of PD will be developed by and across grade level houses with the guidance of the universal assistant principal and the principal. Our strategy for adding cohesion to these topics is to run the common thread of differentiated instruction through the PD. Presenters will include a combination of internal house leaders and the CMSLT content experts, as well as local district and other external providers. PD content will be based on collected school-wide achievement data for the 2009-2010 school year under this new plan will include the following:

Topic: Effective Behavior Management- 2 Sessions

This session will guide teachers and administrative team members through the development and implementation of an effective school-wide behavior plan, evaluation of the plan, and modification of the plan as the program grows. Teachers will learn to manage behavior in the classroom, deal with reactive and hostile student response styles, implement classroom procedures within PLEs, reduce office referrals and suspensions, and motivate unmotivated students – all while moving toward a more positive climate and culture on campus.

Topic: Peer Coaching

This session will show teachers how to peer coach effectively and help their colleagues set and meet goals regarding lesson planning, methods of instruction, assessment and any other topics which may enhance the instruction in their classroom. Teachers will learn how to do “walk-through peer coaching” not as evaluators, but as coaches to assist with instructional challenges or other problems that occur. Teachers will learn how to provide sincere, respectful, interactive and immediate feedback with outcomes including improvement in specific teaching behaviors, improvement in overall effect on student behavior, and higher expectations for all.

Topic: Using Technology to Support Your PLE- 2 sessions

Technology will have two major functions at Carver. The first will be to inform instruction via its timely data access; the second will be to improve instruction via innovative use in the classroom with students. This two-part PD will show teachers how to use technology for each of these distinct purposes and will be tailored to individuals’ level of comfort. Teachers will apply what they have learned to support learning, collaboration and communication within their PLE.

Topic: The Problem Solving Method of RtI²

The Problem Solving Model of RtI² will assist teachers in ensuring that all of their students’ learning needs are met. This PD will cover the two main steps in this process: evaluating the initial instruction and designing intervention. Teachers will explore the most common uses of data analysis and techniques to make the data more accessible to staff. They will learn key definitions and see a demonstration of analysis methods using school CST data. Finally, they will identify key components of sample data and use these components to make recommendations for curricular decisions by house. This work will lead to identifying populations of students in need of support and using the problem-solving method of RtI² to tailor intervention.

Topic: Instructional Strategies for All Content Areas- Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)- 2 Sessions

GLAD strategies will boost student achievement and engagement while meeting the needs of mixed-ability classes. Tools will be introduced which differentiate instruction pre-, during- and post-teaching. Teachers will learn brain-based methods for helping students remember more of what they learned through activities such as culturally relevant picture files. This will build on two intense training sessions most faculty and staff will have participated in during the 2009-2010 school year.

Topic: Differentiation for English Learners and Standard English Learners

Content objectives will continue to guide standards-based teaching, but teachers need to bring language objectives into their planning. Content area teachers will learn the ins and outs of differentiating in a classroom with ELLs and SELs and will practice forming a language objective tied to a content objective.

Topic: Advancement Via Individual Determination- AVID

The AVID program will provide systematic preparation and support for students to be successful in A-G requirements, Advanced Placement and Honors courses. The workshop will feature strands on increasing college readiness and critical thinking/inquiry in students.

Topic: Collaboration with Special Education

This session will show teachers how to read and follow a students' Individual Education Plan (IEP) effectively and help students meet their goals. General education teachers will learn how to collaborate with the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teachers and Special Day Class (SDC) teachers through common planning, assessments, and student data analysis.

A final but vital part of the professional development plan for Carver involves improving school performance through leadership development. As mentioned earlier, there will be partnerships between Carver and community organizations. One such partnership will involve offering leadership classes for interested teachers at Mount St. Mary's College. This experience will be specifically designed for those who are interested in school leadership but do not necessarily want to leave the classroom. We will continue to search for opportunities where the faculty can grow as campus leaders through other university partnerships or conference attendance such as the California Teachers of English (CATE), the California Bilingual Education Conference (CABE) or California Math Council (CMC).

b. Teacher Orientation**Existing Teachers**

In order to effectively meet the instructional needs of all of our students through use of effective instructional strategies and differentiation, all teachers will participate in the professional development described in Section A above. In this way, there will be a non-stop cycle of induction to continuously refresh skills and learning for the veteran teachers. There also will be a faculty meeting the first Tuesday of every month.

As mentioned before, in addition to regularly scheduled professional development utilizing "experts in the field," we will begin a program of "walk-through peer coaching" which will use the expertise of teacher leaders as well as RSP teachers in special education, the ELD coach and coordinator, and house leaders to visit classrooms on a regular basis -- not as evaluators, but as coaches to assist classroom teachers with instructional challenges or other problems that occur. The peer coaching program established at Carver will provide model lessons and look at effective teaching practices, strategies in classroom management, classroom climate and culture, safety issues, and teacher/student relationships.

New to Carver

Teachers new to Carver but not to the profession will be introduced to our policies and practices by their house. Teacher leaders in each PLE will “buddy-up” with new hires to act as liaisons and guides through the systems and curriculum each house will have in place. A new teacher binder with bell-schedules, policies, and procedures will be provided for quick reference to all new teachers. PLEs will lead by example and show them our commitment to continuous improvement and our emphasis on collaboration and cooperation.

New to Carver and New to Teaching

Teacher leaders will work in collaboration with the LAUSD Beginning Teachers Support and Assessment (BTSA) program to guide teachers new to the profession who will act as on-site, always accessible support. All new teachers will be required to meet once a month for one hour of PD after school. During this PD, the universal assistant principal will provide training to assist teachers in becoming familiar with the school’s policies, procedures, curriculum and differentiation. A new teacher binder with bell-schedules, policies, and procedures will be provided for quick reference to all new teachers. PLEs will continue to lead by example and demonstrate our collective will to persevere and overcome barriers, placing students first in all situations.

c. PD Calendar

Being on a Concept 6 calendar means we must be strategic about how and when we offer PD to our staff. In order to assure that all stakeholders have equal access to content, the CMSLT has developed a balanced PD calendar (Appendix 5.c). This calendar aligns with our school calendar (Appendix 5.c.i) and daily schedule by addressing topics that match to our instructional program and will be meaningful for our students and their teachers at the time they are offered.

The topics listed on the PD calendar are elaborated in Sections A and B above. The calendar is a practical timeline of those topics applied to the reality of a Concept 6 schedule. It is the intent of the PD program that all workshops and training be practical and applicable to the present and future needs of students and teachers. Also, individuals delivering PD will commit to working with PLEs and avoid the traditional types of workshops which provide little support for teachers in real classroom environments and that may have been present in the past at Carver.

d. Program Evaluation

Evaluation of all PD opportunities will take place immediately following each workshop or meeting attended. Unlike in the past, a standardized evaluation feedback form will be applied to each workshop/meeting with a focus on the professional value of the information presented, usefulness of the material for teachers in PLEs, and the quality of the presentation (Appendix 5.d). PD will be adapted, where appropriate, based on this feedback. Participants will be asked to determine whether or not the topic needs further discussion, whether teachers feel the need for more hands-on experience with the concepts discussed in the workshop, and whether or not the presenter should be asked to return and expand on and/or support application of the knowledge at Carver. All evaluation data will be reviewed by the CMSLT and a determination made as to the value or significance of the PD opportunity and further follow up.

6. Professional Culture

Carver will adhere to Article IX- Hours, Duties, and Work Year, and Article X- Evaluation as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

a. Professional Culture

To support our new school vision, mission and philosophy, Carver must transition from a school in which teachers had closed doors and were isolated from one another in their classrooms, to a campus where teachers are part of a large learning community where experimentation and reflection are the norm. Interdisciplinary PLE teams of teachers will meet at least once per week during their common conference period to analyze data and student work and use it to drive instruction. Content areas will meet regularly during Common Planning Time (CPT) once a month. Subject matter, assessments, projects – everything must be shared and all teachers need to be aware of the content and knowledge students are being taught across the curriculum. The days of operating in a vacuum where there is little or no collaboration or cooperation are over! Our new culture must be open, supportive, enriching, challenging and sustainable.

As stated earlier, many teachers will undertake leadership roles within their houses as part of the CMSLT in addition to the responsibilities peer coaching and assisting new teachers will afford them. Decision making will be multilevel, with most decisions being made by houses and other decisions made by the CMSLT which allows for full inclusion of all stakeholders. Overall school policies and procedures will be brought to the entire faculty and staff by the CMSLT for review and decision making. A free-flow of information among teachers, administrators and others on campus is necessary if our overall mission is to succeed. We will remember that our common mission is that we are, as a school, committed to the educational success of all students and we will therefore take whatever steps are necessary to fulfill our mission.

b. Evaluation

Since we expect our students to be on a path of continuous improvement, so our educators must also commit to this same path. The time of placing blame for student failure on the students, parents or their living conditions must recede into the past and Carver must move forward with a new outlook and commitment to continuous self and peer evaluation by using assessment data to determine the extent of our success in reaching all students.

Carver staff will hold itself accountable for student success. Assessment data will be regularly reviewed, shared, analyzed and discussed among PLEs, grade levels and subject/content areas. By collecting and analyzing student data, we will share experience of accountability among our peers. We will review the data, pose rhetorical questions to our groups, reflect on trends and move to define our next steps of action. Lesson plans will be reviewed regularly by subject/content area leaders, and all teachers are to be held accountable for having appropriate lesson plans, including notation of the CST and objective for the lesson, and all lesson plans should reflect the broad range of cognitive skills described in Bloom's Taxonomy. As stated earlier, informal peer support will be available via the non-evaluative "walk-through peer-coaching" for struggling teachers. Teacher leaders will also open their model classrooms for observation on exemplary management, curriculum implementation and organization. In addition, administrators will have data-driven discussions with teachers under their supervision in preparation for formal evaluations per the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement. This staff will develop a spirit of continuous improvement with the addition of peer coaching to build the capacity of teachers to meet challenges. See Section C for more information on the feedback process.

c. Feedback

Teachers, like students, have the right to expect appropriate and timely feedback from their PLE, Grade Level and CMSLT. Whether the feedback is in the form of a personal note or an evaluation form approved by the faculty, evaluation will be open, scheduled and respectful. It will follow a process which involves a discussion of teaching expectations and outcomes, observation of instruction, recommendations for improvement and follow-up and, if necessary, prescribed PD to assist a teacher in developing or enhancing necessary skills. In situations where teachers are believed to be challenged in helping students to succeed, possible remedies may include team teaching (the pairing of a strong teacher with another teacher identified as needing support in an instructional or management area) or additional PD, including the use of observation of successful teaching practices at Carver or other schools or attendance at professional conferences.

Students and parents will also be given an opportunity to give feedback to their teachers regarding school work, support, and attitude towards class. A feedback form will be developed to give parents and students a chance to share their thoughts on the quality of instruction they feel they are receiving. The PLE's and CMSLT will address all issues that arise.

Finally, it will be important to regularly hear from parents, students and teachers regarding their perspective on administrators' efforts. A feedback form will be developed which asks stakeholders to provide feedback on administrative support and also asks for positive feedback as well as areas of concern regarding the school in general. These questions will be aligned to the district-wide school report card.

7. Serving Specialized Populations

At Carver all students -- whether gifted, ELLs, SELs, SWDs, and GATE students -- participate in heterogeneous classes with high expectations. Every teacher will be provided with student CST scores and they will work diligently to close the achievement gap through differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and standards-based learning. Students who are Far Below Basic and Below Basic will be automatically enrolled in a FLEX period class in order to provide the additional support these student require. Teachers will work with support staff to become familiar with IEP goals/objectives.

Carver will meet the curriculum/ educational needs of our students in the following ways:

Carver will utilize the State and District mandated curriculum and materials as we serve all students, including students with special needs. We will train every teacher on GLAD, AVID and AEMP strategies so that they are better equipped to create and deliver culturally relevant, technology-based lessons. In addition, teachers will use formative assessments consistently to monitor student learning and check for understanding.

i. Carver will continue to follow Federal, State, and District guidelines used to assess, review and implement IEP's. Through collaboration between the house leaders, Bridge Coordinator, special education teachers, school psychologist, LAUSD district specialists and other personnel, and parents, Carver will place students in classes that target their needed instruction, intervention, and emotional support. The Carver Bridge Coordinator will meet regularly with staff members to discuss the needs of students with IEPs, as well as those students requiring additional assistance.

ii In accordance with the federal IDEA, Carver will provide a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) to all students, including those with moderate to severe disabilities. Whenever appropriate, Carver will continue to program special education students into general education classes in accordance with the LRE.

In order to meet one of the guidelines of the Modified Consent Decree (MCD), Carver will have general education and special education teachers pilot the full inclusion co-teaching model in selected content area classes.

iii Carver will follow LAUSD guidelines for providing Extended School Year (ESY) services for students with disabilities.

iv Carver will follow the LAUSD Master Plan for English Learners Guidelines to identify and place ELLs. They will receive access to grade level content via the GLAD strategies. Following the AEMP guidelines developed by LAUSD, we will meet the needs of SELs. AEMP emphasizes culturally relevant curriculum. ELs and SELs will both receive access to core via the GLAD strategies.

The Coordination of Services Team (COST) will use the Problem Solving Model of RtI² to address the social and emotional needs of all at risk-students such as the homeless, pregnant students and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered students (LGBT). The COST team members will use data to identify the students most at risk and provide specific services indicated. The case manager from the COST team will continue to monitor the progress of the identified students. As part of the process, some students will need to be referred to the Language Appraisal Team (LAT) or Student Success Team (SST) for additional services.

The partnerships with Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD), USC Social Work Interns, and Motivating Our Students Through Experience (MOSTE) will provide interventions for at-risk students including but not limited to individual counseling, group counseling, outside agency referrals, parenting classes, and gang abatement.

Our school will utilize all available community resources and services to meet the needs of our students and their families. Student academic success is dependent upon individual students believing they can succeed, living in an environment that supports their efforts, and attending school regularly. The entire Carver community will strive to meet these needs, overcoming the challenges of language and economics to embrace every children and their educational potential.

8. Family and Community Engagement Strategy

a. Identification

Carver is an inner-city school in Central Los Angeles. We serve all students in the community. As stated on page two, the Carver Community is an area of dichotomy, with a rich cultural heritage for both African-American and Latino communities, as well as a struggling area with broken homes, poor living conditions, poverty, violent sections, a high gang presence, chemical abuse, and more. Carver looks forward to facing the challenge of embracing the culture of this community while also trying to bridge language differences and family needs.

Carver held three meetings to inform the community of why Carver was identified as a focus school and to provide information regarding the public school choice process. At these meetings we informed them of our intention to apply as a comprehensive middle school and that their input was vital for our success. Additional meetings were held to have community members complete a survey (Appendix 8.a) individually around various school issues and to obtain input from them as to what changes they felt would make Carver an excellent school and to determined key areas that they agreed should be included in our school plan. This plan reflects their input in many key areas.

b. Family and Community Engagement

Carver families will be engaged as active partners. Parents will be invited to attend monthly “Coffee with the Principal” gatherings where answers to their questions and concerns regarding the school and the community will be addressed. A Customer satisfaction box will be placed in every office throughout the school to provide an opportunity for parents and community to share ideas and concerns. Furthermore, there will be a parent representative in each grade level house. Parents will also be represented in all advisory councils and on the CMSLT and we will continue to have parent volunteers in various areas of our school.

Carver will work with families to develop an attitude of advocacy by providing opportunities for parent learning: parenting classes, parent workshops, and training on various topics offered by the Title I program, the English Learner Program, support personnel, and the afterschool partners.

The PLEs will make conferences more convenient for parents because they will be able to meet with the interdisciplinary team of teachers at one time and discuss their student’s academic performance and needs.

c. Key Community Partnerships

Business and community connections are important to the success of Carver (Appendix 8.c.i). Businesses, higher education partners, community organizations and others must be involved from the beginning to develop a strong community partnership with sustained engagement. Community partnerships will be necessary in the development of service learning and community-based projects which support our goal of making curriculum relevant for all students.

Carver will continue the community partnerships that have greatly enhanced our students’ lives over the years. Woodcraft Rangers will continue to provide after school activities. These activities will include homework assistance, sports clubs, healthy snacks and physical activities. The GRYD will continue to provide counseling & outreach to students and families to reduce gang activity in the community. The ongoing partnership with CDTech, will provide technology opportunities for students and families at their site on Central Avenue & here at Carver. They also will connect us with Trade Tech and other colleges and universities to promote a college going culture. The established UCLA College Center on our campus will provide tutoring and college information for our students and families. Many of our young ladies will continue to participate in Motivating Our Students Through Experience (MOSTE). Their goal is to keep girls out of gangs, in school, and bound for college. The longstanding partnership with the Annenberg Middle School Program Center Theater Group and the East Los Angeles Classic Theater will provide opportunities for students to participate in performance experiences. We will continue our relationship with the Museum of Tolerance and the other partnerships because we know that they play an integral part in helping us achieve our mission (Appendix 8.c.ii).

9. School Governance

Carver will adhere to Article XXIV- Student Discipline and Article XXVII- Shared Decision-Making and School-Based Management, as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements. In addition, Carver will follow the Education Code regarding the formation and operation of the School Site Council.

a. School and Advisory Organizational Charts

CEAC and ELAC: follow government guidelines regarding operation, memberships, and purview; meets monthly; includes parents, community members and staff (Categorical Programs Advisory Councils- Appendix 9.a.iii).

School Site Council (Appendix 9.a.iii): controls budget, instructional programs and school equipment; meets monthly; includes principal, faculty at large, students, parents, and non-certificated.

Carver Middle School Leadership Team (CMSLT): makes decisions affecting budget, instructional programs, equipment, discipline, schedules, and activities; meets bi-monthly; includes instructional leaders, content specialists and support personnel (Appendix 9.a.ii).

Carver will consist of grade level houses will consist of PLEs that are self contained. Each house will be comprised of a house leader, counselor, clerk and parent. All of these positions will be year-round to best serve students' needs. There will also be universal personnel providing support to the houses. Additional universal personnel will include the individuals in the Carver Organization Chart (Appendix 9.a.i).

10. School Leadership and Staffing Plans

Carver will adhere to Article IX- Hours, Duties, and Work Year, Transfers, Reduction in Force/Reinstatement and Salaries as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements. In addition Carver will adhere to Duties, Responsibilities and Hours as described in all Collective Bargaining Agreements.

a. CMSLT Capacity

Unlike other schools, Carver's entire community participated in the writing of this plan, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, classified staff, students and parents. Selected members of the CMSLT worked on the final editing of the plan. These individuals have a depth of experience in school operations, English Language Development, special education, middle-grades education, counseling, intervention and writing. Those individual are:

Luz Cotto, Principal
 Lorna Bounds, Assistant Principal
 Evelyn Harris, Assistant Principal
 Jose Ramos, Assistant Principal
 Enedina Sanchez, ELL Coordinator
 Kirsten Ellis, UTLA Chapter Chairperson

The CMSLT also sought out the following additional expertise to help make our vision clearer:

Dr. Irvin Howard, Plan Consultant
 Katie Winchell, Writing Consultant
 Natalie Neal-Peters, ELD/Access to Core Expert, LD5

Please refer to 10a- Resumes for more descriptors.

b. Staffing Model

In order to achieve Carver's vision and mission, and become a School to Watch, our staffing needs for the next five years will include the staff and personnel listed on Appendix 10.b- Carver Staff Positions.

The adult to student ratio at Carver for the next five years will be 8:1. This ratio includes all adults listed on Carver Staff Positions (Appendix 10.b).

A Bridge Coordinator will handle Special Education services including providing for interpreter and translation and coordinating Special Education placement.

To address the large quantity of our students and our year-round calendar, Carver will depend on multiple support services and providers that will be shared by the PLEs. This will provide funding for these positions to be A-Basis.

In order to be in compliance with the QEIA Grant, Carver's class size will be:

Grade	Student ratio per academic class
6 th	25:1
7 th	24:1
8th	22:1

c. Compensation

Carver will use the District's Salary Schedule allowing for A-Basis positions as needed for support personnel.

d. School Leadership

Luz Cotto was assigned to Carver adhering to the Collective Bargaining Agreements. If need arises to hire a new principal, a committee of parents, representatives from the CMSLT and a representative from the District will interview applicants. The principal’s job description is Appendix 10.d.

Given the vision and mission for Carver, Luz Cotto is the ideal principal candidate. Ms. Cotto brings an excellent reputation in LAUSD, a distributive leadership mindset and strong conviction about student learning. Ms. Cotto’s many accomplishments are referenced in her resume (Appendix 10.a). Since her assignment in July 2009, she has already initiated a profound change process. For the first time ever, faculty, staff, parents, and administrators have been collaborating on what our new school will look like and how we can work together to ensure all students receive the quality education they deserve. Her primary role will be as an instructional leader providing guidance as we move towards a standards-based instructional model emphasizing accountability for all.

e. CMSLT beyond the Principal

The CMSLT is a multi-faceted and multi-leveled organization which attempts to provide a voice to students, teachers, administrators, families and community partners.

The Site Administrative Team consists of the individuals identified in our CMSLT Chart (Appendix 9.a.ii). The qualifications for the members of the CMSLT are identified in their resumes (Appendix 10.a).

In the past, there was a lack of transparency and many scheduled meetings were not productive. As we move into the PLE model, our meetings will be specific and purposeful with a focus on sharing of information among all levels of leadership and a common shared commitment to serving all students and helping them reach their full potential.

f. Recruitment of Teaching Staff

Carver will follow LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements (Appendix 10.f).

11. Operations

a. Carver will continue to use all existing LAUSD operational services provided at the school site and follow Collective Bargaining Agreements.

b. Carver in an internal applicant, this does not apply.

c. Carver will agree to enter into a discussion regarding the viability of master service agreements.

d. School Operations Experience

Duty	Personnel	Title
Payroll	Hilda Machuca	School Administrative Assistant
Security	Michael Campos	School Police

Transportation	LAUSD	Transportation Unit
Meals	Rachel Jacobs	Cafeteria Manager
Maintenance	Clarence Luckey	Plant Manager
Finance	Antonio Malapit	Financial Manager
Health	Lottie Patterson	School Nurse

- e. Carver is an internal applicant and will work with School Management Services.
- f. Carver will use the LAUSD menu of service provided.

12. Finances

a. Carver will receive funding via LAUSD's transparent budgeting process (using COST Center controls) which are based on per pupil funding and student Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Carver also receives funds from Title I, ELL Program, Federal Stimulus Funds, Special Education programs and the QEIA Grant. QEIA funds are based on meeting six yearly goals (Appendix 12.a). In addition, Carver will utilize other grants (iSTEM, ST Math: Secondary Intervention).

b. As stated in our vision, Carver aspires to be a place where excellence in teaching and attention to the physical, social, emotional and academic needs of all students are nurtured and inspired in a safe, creative and challenging learning environment. Our mission is to provide a safe, clean, supportive, engaging and challenging learning environment that supports all students and prepares them for academic, social, and personal success. In order to support the vision and mission, monies will be spent to build more instructional leaders amongst our staff by partnering with Mt. Saint Mary's College. In addition, we will support and refine personalization for each student at Carver via the PLEs and provide a variety of services for our students and parents via partnerships with USC (Social Work Internship).

Our monies will be used to provide personnel to meet these goals through smaller class size for greater personalization and to provide needed support service providers to students and parents in a community that lack many of these services. Funds will also be used for bringing support personnel onboard year-round.

Carver will run its fundraising efforts through its student store for clubs and organizations. Monies are controlled and audited by the Carver Financial Manager, principal and the CMSLT. All fund raising will follow District guidelines.

c. Carver will follow LAUSD guidelines on all matters of fiscal soundness and legal compliance. Financial monitoring will be done by district personnel as well as periodic checks by Carver Financial Manager, School Site Council, and CMSLT.

13. Facilities

LAUSD will provide facilities use agreement to be finalized by the Workforce Stability Task Force.