

2. Curriculum and Instruction

A. Curriculum Map and Summary

Collaboration among teachers and an interdisciplinary approach to planning, delivery, and instruction of content matter is essential for the exponential expansion of student academic achievement. Every teacher will be trained in research-based curricular, instructional, and pedagogical methods such as inquiry, scaffolding, and differentiation. The teachers will use project based-learning to connect cross-curricular content to personal funds of knowledge (Genzlik, 1984) leading to real world application. The learning community is comprised of teachers, staff, students, parents, and community partners. This learning community will use textbooks, relevant supplemental materials, electronic resources, and simulation-based learning as tools to create interdisciplinary project-based experiences in the fields of Visual and Performing Arts, Technology, Media, and Global studies. In our professional learning community, teachers will design lessons and collectively reflect on the outcomes, achievement, and performance, to evaluate, revise, and align the effectiveness of the intended curriculum. We recognize the Arts as powerful forms of communication of thoughts, ideas and feelings. The Arts serve as a bridge to understanding other cultures. We therefore will integrate the Arts to foster depth of understanding of concepts, context and vocabulary. We will create a foundation for understanding via the use of visual mapping, student reflection and assessment (using vocabulary and established criteria) and the use of physical demonstration and manipulatives.

English Language Arts

Students will receive 225 minutes in English Language Arts instruction per day over 3 days. Some students will receive additional support of English Language Arts instruction for 5 days each week with an extra 30 minutes where those minutes are known as “scholastic intervention.” The textbooks, Prentice Hall Literature, will be used in the classrooms. English teachers will use research-based strategies such as the Specialized Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) to be effective in the classroom. We will also seek to partner up with the East L.A. Classic Theater to make novels and plays come alive for the students. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate skits and role playing into the lessons in order to further imbed learning. Art will be incorporated with English on a variety of levels, as imagination allows.

History/Social Science

Project-based instruction will focus on standards for history through a combination of English and History in conjunction with the required analytical skills. Since reading and writing are necessary for students to effectively learn history, it is best integrated with the English department. Professional development as offered by the UCLA History project, Literature Project and Writing Project, will provide the best training for teachers.

Teachers in the 6th grade will give early assessments to their students so that we can begin to analyze the needs of the students.

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Seventh grade history will be taught as an introduction to the modern world. Lessons will incorporate history of Africa, China, Native American as well as the Crusades, Renaissance, Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment. The Internet also allows students to read the news from all over the world as well as visit African cities that may be invisible on television. Online news sources also allow students to choose from a hundred different features that cannot be done from a normal newspaper.

Besides early assessment, the school will institute elective classes that will allow teams of teachers to create classes that will integrate the instruction of history skills with geography and culture.

Teaching history will be assisted by using technology such as computers, Elmo's presentations, AVID's history and social sciences book such as The Write Path. Teachers can take advantage of free instructional materials such as WE THE PEOPLE to teach US History and Constitution. Field trips to local museums such as the Getty Museum or the Natural History Museum will provide a change of pace to the traditional classroom environment. Technology will be utilized school wide, i.e., to broadcast specific events for cross-cultural learning.

Art and Music History add vital elements to the understanding of both culture and concept. Listening to music created to warn slaves, identifying the aesthetic of portraits of politicians and viewing historical events through painting evoke feelings to a child. Additionally, having students compose and sing a Blues song would further reinforce learning. Art skills as well are developed through the creation of storyboards, (i.e. illustrating the story of Paul Revere or the Prophet Mohammed.), creating portraits of mentors and significant individuals, and drawings (imagining a particular event, identifying and designing patterns of symbols used in a culture), etc.

Ideas will be facilitated via professional development and an Arts facilitator.

History and science teachers will have class projects to incorporate topics in geography and earth science together. For instance, lessons will take into account man's history of responding to environmental changes such as earthquakes, volcanoes, ice ages, and meteorites.

The school will insure that their teachers are fully prepared to teach basic reading and writing skills in their history classes such as main idea, compare and contrast, chronology, cause and effect, and evaluation.

The UCLA Literature project and its writing project are great sources for teachers to improve their instruction in these fields. Furthermore, teachers will use quality textbooks such as History of US and/or History Alive! in the classroom.

Mathematics

Students will receive 225 minutes in Math instruction. In alignment with the California State Standards, South MS #2b will utilize the textbooks of McGraw-Hill and CA Mathematic Concepts. Each math class will have problems of the week. Project based math instruction will include opportunities for students to learn concepts and practice skills (observing,

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listening, quantifying, computing, visualizing, measuring, mathematical reasoning and real-life problem solving.)

Science

South MS #2b will use the Full Option Science System (FOSS) to involve the students in hands-on experiments working as scientists. FOSS is a research-based science program for grades K-8 (See <http://lhsfoss.org/scope/index.html> for scope and sequence). It is a system that links key concepts with the understanding of how students learn and is used in school districts across the country. FOSS was created to engage students using the learning processes of inquiry, investigation and analysis as they explore the world around them. In addition, the school will use the GlenCoe science textbooks as a guide for project based learning. Students will learn through real life laboratory experiments. For example, teachers can take advantage of the Taco Bell Science Discovery Center as well as taking field trips to demonstrate science concepts

Arts

Students will be introduced to the elements of Art, the Principles of Design, Introduction to Music, Dance, and Drama.

Arts will be incorporated into other subjects. Teachers can teach critical thinking skills using materials from textbooks and other supplemental resources. The Write Path to show students how to examine photographs. Students will also learn how to interpret paintings of U.S. History such as those found in Joy Hakim's A History of US. Teachers can also use films and field trips to make classes more exciting and expose the students to existing opportunities in the city. For example, the school will explore affiliations with Inner City Arts and P.S. Arts as a supplemental partnership. In addition, we will fund a full-time arts teacher with the goal of cycling all students through expert instruction in the arts, with a priority on providing drama and visual arts in order to allow for maximum integration with our social studies and language arts programs.

Art can be integrated into any subject with the training and cooperation of the teachers. For example, calligraphy is an important part of Japanese and Islamic history and culture. Cartography was also very important during the time of European Age of Discovery where maps were used by many explorers such Amerigo Vespucci. The school will also implement programs such as "Room 13," which seeks to place young artist in contact with professional artists so that they can see the ins and outs of the art as a profession (See Foshay Learning Center's Room 13 project).

Physical Education

Physical education teachers will be assigned into teams to plan activities around the following topics: diet, sports medicine, importance of exercise, having a health life style, etc. In collaboration with English or Science/Health teachers, students will be taught how to read food labels relating to sodium, calories preserving, sugars, food colorings, fiber, protein, etc. The students will be taught a variety of 21st century sports; rock climbing, dancing, yoga, weightlifting, marathon, triathlons, bike riding, track and field, wrestling, swimming, surfing,

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snorkeling, snow boarding, skateboarding, etc. Students will also learn the basic skills of many team activities such as baseball, basketball, football, volleyball, tennis, and soccer. Characters such as sportsmanship and leadership will be incorporated into the physical education program. All students will comply with the Governor's recommendation of 60 minutes of exercise at least three times a week.

Encore classes

Encore classes will be offered along with the core subjects. All 6th grade are required to take a mandatory semester of study and organizational skills which includes a 3-year plan and goal planning. Programs that are technological based will also be offered such as a typing class.

B. Track Record of Proposed Curriculum

The curriculum design in Section 2A is guided by the research done by the Coalition of Essential Schools. CES benchmarks applied to standards-based curriculum framework currently being implemented at Local District 6 schools. The instructional strategies will be developed in PLCs using the Understanding by Design, Backward Planning model for curriculum development (Wiggins & McTighe, 2001). Reports from Boston Pilot Schools, Minnesota Schools, and New York Performance Standards Consortium confirm the students academic success improves when relational, tactical, behavioral, and value driven learning are in place. Specifically this curriculum improves problem solving ability, success in school, and improved physical health (Flaxman, 2009).

C. Addressing the Needs of All Students

Based on disaggregated data from the relieved schools, the largest population of at-risk students is the under-performing below-basic English-Language Learner. The framework for addressing the needs of all students with a focus on English-Language Learners consists of inquiry, knowledge acquisition, problem-solving, communication, and reflection (Strong, Silver, and Perini, 2001). Additional considerations for the participation of English-Language Learners in mainstream curriculum is anticipatory guides that connect prior knowledge and provide instruction in essential academic language and expression frameworks, particular to specific arts, media, or content areas. California standards-based curriculum will be implemented to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, ELL, SEL, students of poverty, and gifted students, have equal access to core curriculum, and are assessed for the same required knowledge. Student progress through the phases of language development progresses at different rates, depending on the students prior literacy experiences, the nature of the modeling available, monitoring/ correction and practice understanding who the English Language Learner is, is essential to teaching (Lether, 2009).

Instructional Staff - co-construct their knowledge, meaning and understanding of student performances through reading, writing, discussion, and reflection on student work. Staff needs to address curriculum and development needs of students requires a complete picture of the child including mental, physical, and social emotional needs of the students.

School-wide standards-based instruction will employ methods of expression via the Arts, and multiple assessments coupled with embedded-SDAIE strategies, writing across the

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curriculum and concern for the emotional and social well-being of every student. Equity in access will be ensured using research-based scaffolds, methods, and learning strategies. Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) will be a cornerstone of our instructional best practice.

Cognitive tools- thinking maps and venn diagrams along with methods of expression via the Arts will offer students a means deep and enduring understandings.

Multiple Assessments- Multiple assessments will be utilized to assess scope and breadth of knowledge-gained over the course of the term. Our focus is on the journey as well as the process. Students will demonstrate knowledge from a selection of criteria and projects that will allow for personal expression, knowledge application, inquiry, and analysis about their place in the world. Essential perspectives that draw from the Habits of mind framework, 'Big ideas', and enduring understanding will in return instill deeper learning. Additionally, a school-wide instructional strategy that entails meta-cognitive processing through error-recognition, correction, and refinement through written portfolio entries. Students will maintain both a written journal and digital portfolio as a ledger of their reflective thought-process, and acquisition of knowledge. We intent to acknowledge the basic components of learning, which may include problem-solving, collaboration, self-identified mistakes, and refinement through a developmental process. Furthermore, utilizing the habits of mind offers the following tenets:

The Habits of Mind as identified by Costa and Kallick are:

- Persisting
- Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision
- Managing Impulsivity
- Gathering Data Through all Senses
- Listening with Understanding and Empathy
- Creating, Imaging and Innovation
- Thinking Flexibly
- Responding with Wonderment and Awe
- Thinking about Thinking (Metacognition)
- Taking Responsible Risks
- Striving for Accuracy
- Finding Humor
- Questioning and Posing Problems
- Thinking Interdependently
- Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations
- Remaining Open to Continuous Learning

Breakdown of Student Population:

1 - Disability

Based on SAR Data it is anticipated that 5 percent of our student population will be learning disabled (DHH, RSP, SLD, AUT). The DHH and AUT sub-group population will be serviced by one of the South Region MS #2 small schools, respectively. Both of the Small schools on the campus of the SRMS#2 will have SLD & RSP District-supported programs.

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(220 students with IEPs in attendance area)

2- ELL

79% of students are ELL of which 67% are LEP and 12% RFEP. The 79 % ELL population is strikingly large and therefore illustrates a call for action regarding curriculum and instruction of the EL Learners. A disproportionate sub-group is represented by the ELs as under-performing in Academic Language. Similarly, we know that a student's ability to access content and academic language rests on comprehensibility. Second Language Learners can access academic content in non-native target languages prior to becoming fluent. However, academic content must be built using previous knowledge. Foundations of new knowledge must be laid on known expression and experience. A student's ability to make connections with content is related to direct neural network pathways. Vygotsky (1978) posited the notion that child development is influenced by the role of culture and interpersonal communication (Vygotsky, 1978). Maintaining a mind-set that respects and acknowledges that oftentimes, English Language Development is neither consistent, coherent, or sustained and results in academic gaps; We propose that teacher practice student implementation, parent support, the four targeted areas for strategy development remain focused on the following strategies: Academic language, thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, and communication. We are interested in depth in practice not breadth. Collaborative learning with a large structured-talk component that allows EL students to build context (Krashen, 1980; Cummings, 1981; de Avila, 1998).

As we have learned, the task of reading and writing are the most challenging because of their cognitive load. The complexity of academic thinking scripted in academic language is greater and requires more complex integration of skill (Au, 1998). As discussed earlier, risk in performance broadens as comprehensibility sharpens.

This process is sometimes referred to in the classroom as the “teachable moment.” These “moments” must be capitalized by evidence of student need, readiness, and internalized performance. Recognition and the corresponding instructional shift must be informed by systematic review of student performance as measured by attribute guidelines to coherently cue both teacher and student that it is time to push understanding and use (ZPD) to bridge to the next level.

3- SEL

Not a significant population

4 - Poverty

School wide Title I - all strategies for underrepresented students (SDAIE)

5-GATE

4.1% based on average from the relieved school- Nimitz, Elizabeth learning center, & Ellen Ochoa.

Services:

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An extended day and after school programs will be adopted for students who are under-performing. The initially targeted population falls within the below basic (BB) range. Review of data suggest characteristics of this population remain consistent among relief and feeder populations. The group is Hispanic, poor, and English language learner, having participated in previous intervention with no measurable sustained growth. Students and their parents will be provided culturally relevant tools in writing, reading, and in-home support, in math and language arts. Learning intervention will be supplemented with psych/social services. The extended course work will be structured for parent/student participation. Parent instructional partnership in course design and offerings is the kind of flexible grouping to solve problems in and out of the classrooms. Interventions within the day will focus on a scholastic period of intervention reading course as well as a double block (115 minutes per day) of English/Mathematics instruction/intervention, and reduced class size for intervention classes:

[1] Universe of Opportunity is the total of students that statistically meet a pre-established range of performance and statistically represent 90% (+/-10%) of the schools performance opportunity over a specific period of time (1-3 years).

- Reading – 25:1
- Intervention Math and ELA – 30:1
- Intervention Writing (ELL Only) – 25:1

Social Services - counseling / social worker, address mental health needs

Academic counseling services will be available to insure that all students are progressing toward culmination and continuation of their secondary education.

Special Day, RSP, AUT & DHH services will be allocated to the schools based on needs of the students

D. Accelerated Learning

A variety of specific methods, with both a cognitive (Habits of Mind) and arts awareness/multiple intelligence focus, will be utilized in the implementation and practice of the learning process and procedures. These methods are adaptable to the abilities and skills of ELL, Sp.Ed, Regular, and Gifted and Talented students.

For students these methods include :

generating debate, creating skits and persuasive arguments (which enhance oral skills), continual written critique/self-assessment (which develops analytical skills, reinforcing both vocabulary and context while honoring the activity of learning itself), demonstration, (which involves use of manipulatives and recognizes kinesthetic memory and learning as well as any artistic vehicle) and reflection, (which allows recognition of corrections made, as well as for the benefits of making mistakes) and refinement (which allows for extended time, designed to develop deeper meaning through enhanced exploration as well as content-mastery promotion.) For teachers this means; generating flexible grouping, group investigations and cluster groupings. streamlining the acceleration process, offering opportunities for specialized after school programs, including community based programs offering advanced placement and expanded curriculum, seizing opportunities to enhance learning by being creative, thinking "outside the box".

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We recognize that the difference between "schooling" and learning needs to be acknowledged and explored for the ultimate benefit of our students. A Behavioral enrichment program is vital. Therefore the school extends far beyond the classroom and we will, via our professional development meetings and direct interaction with the students, find unique ways to facilitate learning and generate wisdom (learning how to observe, communicate, demonstrating application of knowledge).

Cognitive tools have been identified prior, such as thinking maps, webs, matrix and reflection formats. These tools, used consistently from class to class, will strengthen the study skills structure for all students.

Our interdisciplinary arts approach will provide more ways for students to explore, develop and express their connection to and perception of the material taught. Opportunities for extended knowledge will be accessed via developing lasting connections to our community, providing interaction with and meaning to the materials taught. We hope and expect to extend the students beyond the classroom milieu, finding new ways to foster knowledge in unique and unfamiliar environments.

The Gifted and Talented (GATE) program will be implemented to meet the needs of accelerated students. In the instance in which there are not enough students to create GATE classes, the needs of accelerated students will be met through differentiated instruction and project-based learning. GATE students will be identified by teachers and counselors, and will be evaluated by the GATE specialist for confirmation of their exceptional abilities. During PD, teachers and counselors will be trained to identify GATE students, including GATE students that are learning-disabled or that are English Learners. Strategies for gifted and talented students will be incorporated into all classes. Even so, as the student population is 98% Hispanic, the absence of a GATE program will be indicative of racial bias, therefore implementation of the program is strongly encouraged.

In addition to the GATE students, all students will have access to accelerated learning through a Response To Intervention (RtI) school model. RtI is a three-tier paradigm model of academic support systems. The RtI Academic System incorporates:

- Tier 1 – In Class Core Instructional Interventions
 - All students
 - Preventive, proactive
- Tier 2 – In Class Targeted Group Interventions
 - Some students (at-risk)
 - High efficiency
 - Rapid response
- Tier 3 –Extended Day Intensive, Individual Interventions Student and Family
 - Individual students
 - Assessment-based
 - High Intensity
 - Of longer duration

Universal screening is critical in identifying students Tier 3 students. To identify students in need of intensive RtI, PLCs will identify proficiency parameters for struggling students.

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Research-based interventions include: a) academic support through remedial courses, additional instructional time, tutoring extended learning programs, study skills, or small-group instruction and b) preparation classes for state assessments.

E. Instructional Strategies

The teaching profession is such that teachers should have the flexibility to implement research-based instructional strategies that best meets the needs of their students. This includes strategies such as scaffolding, SDAIE, learning styles, multiple intelligences, problem-solving, critical thinking and differentiated instruction. CREE will be a core strategy used to meet the needs of students who come from a culturally diverse background. Certain programs will be adopted to meet the needs of our students, and GATE (a program for gifted student).

For additional strategies, see commentary in A-D and sections on Professional Development.