
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. Assurances. Please see Attachment 1.

“Seizing the Middle Ground” is the banner headline on the United Way’s 2008 groundbreaking report on middle schools in Los Angeles. In that study, the United Way identified four key factors that impact the success of middle school students: adolescent development, access to quality teachers, college planning and academic reform and rigor. (“Seizing the Middle Ground”, United Way, 2008, p.2) This proposal, submitted by the San Fernando Middle School Collaborative, is boldly focused on each of those factors.

b. Demographics and Student Population. San Fernando Middle School is located in the small city of San Fernando, in the heart of the Northeast San Fernando Valley. Many of the community residents have deep roots. It is not uncommon to discover that a San Fernando Middle School teacher or parent or local official is an alumni of SFMS or one of the nearby elementary or high schools. Notwithstanding the stable community exterior, SFMS families are challenged by multiple socioeconomic factors. The per capita income for the community is \$12,611¹, approximately half of the County average, and almost one-quarter of families with children are living at or below the poverty level. Students come primarily from working poor families, many of whom are unable to make ends meet despite working one or more jobs. Ninety percent of the community is Latino, most of whom (86%) are of Mexican descent and 78% of households are Spanish-speaking. Over half (54%) of SFMS parents did not graduate from high school and only 6% graduated from college; in the broader San Fernando community, 59% of residents age 25+ did not graduate from high school. Upward mobility for families is difficult despite the strong work ethic found among many residents; their lack of English proficiency and limited education and job skills often result in low-wage jobs without health benefits. Limited adult educational attainment also means that the schools needs to devote significant effort to creating a college-going culture. In more affluent communities, college is an assumed progression for high school graduates, and community elders promote the benefits of college by serving as an example; however, SFMS students have few adults to emulate.

In addition, significant gang activity in the community remains a destructive alternative for academically underperforming and disengaged youth. Many of our students reside within the city of Los Angeles’ Pacoima/Foothill Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) Zone and the County of Los Angeles Gang and Youth Violence Prevention Project, Pacoima Demonstration Site. The city of San Fernando also has a major gang presence. There are 19 identified gangs in the SFMS community. As students continually fail in school, the lure of the streets becomes ever more powerful. Our challenge, and our responsibility, is to create a community that inspires students to succeed by giving them the knowledge, skills, resources and adult support that they need, both inside and outside the classroom.

c. Vision, Mission and Philosophy. The SFMS Collaborative Public School Choice Plan (“PSC Plan”) strives to meet that challenge with the following mission:

MISSION: The San Fernando Middle School (SFMS) Collaborative will create a strong and mutually supportive community of parents and students, teachers and staff, and community organizations that responds to the developing adolescent, fosters the intrinsic value of learning through an interdisciplinary curriculum relevant to students’ life experiences and prepares students for success in their high school and post-secondary educational careers.

SFMS was not on track to fulfill that mission, though the community, parents and students report many strong features to the school that deserve preservation. Among them are the strong sense of caring and safety that students feel at school. The transition to smaller learning environments organized as academies was another. But, academically, the school was not generating academically prepared students, with the skills to be success in high school, let alone beyond. The new vision lays out a clear bridge between a caring school and the ability to demand and fulfill high expectations for its students:

¹ Source for community data: United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 2007 Zip Code Databook. Data are for zip code 91340, which represents the San Fernando community.

VISION: San Fernando Middle School is an enriching, student-centered environment that caters to the unique needs of the middle school child, where all students develop academic and personal skills and high expectations for their personal success that lay the foundation for becoming confident, competent, engaged and responsible members of a diverse society.

The Philosophy which will guide the implementation of the PSC Plan is based upon SFMS becoming a community school, where the adage “it takes a village to raise a child” is visible from any point in the community, at the front door of the school and throughout the campus.

Philosophy: SFMS, which will serve approximately 1,600 students in Grades 6-8, will be a community school in which assets from within the school and from the broader community are harnessed to support our students, most of whom are low-income, underperforming academically and often lack educational role models. With the needs of the students as the lens, the school will be a center of community life in which all relationships (e.g., between teachers and students, teachers and parents, administrators and teachers) are mutually respectful, genuine and caring. SFMS will be a welcoming, transparent environment with “open doors;” teachers will observe each other’s classrooms as a learning tool, parents will have the freedom to observe their children’s classes and community partners able to meet identified student, parent or staff needs will be embraced. The school will be responsive to the developmental, social, emotional and cultural needs of our students, with all SFMS stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, broader community) engaged in building students’ developmental assets.

All students will have access to a rigorous, standards-based, technology-infused curriculum that builds on their elementary school experience and prepares them for the transition to high school, with intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, informed debate, and academic achievement at the core of the educational philosophy. Parents will be engaged and valued as critical partners in their children’s education.

All community stakeholders will share responsibility for student success and will be given the tools and knowledge to meet that responsibility effectively. A collaborative framework will guide the work that is done at all levels, with students engaged in small group work and culminating interdisciplinary projects, school leadership groups reconfigured to encompass a wider range of stakeholders and teachers working in Professional Learning Communities that facilitate both vertical and horizontal teams.

We have high expectations and high standards for both students and adults – teachers, staff, parents, community partners –to be perpetual learners and contributing members of our community. SFMS will use genuine interdisciplinary teaching, rigorous writing-based assessments, and group projects employing multiple learning modalities to prepare students for success in high school, post-secondary education and careers, with the tools needed for success as 21st Century Learners.

d. Education Plan. The 2007 research report from Mass Insight Education & Research Institute has shown that *successful* school turn-arounds occur when there is a recognition of the challenge, dramatic fundamental change, a sense of urgency, supportive operating conditions and high capacity external partners. In this moment of urgency created by the PSC legislation, the PSC Plan is focused on the four “Seizing the Middle Ground” recommendations of adolescent development, access to quality teachers, college planning and academic reform and rigor by adopting bold structural changes, that enable personal, supportive relationships for students, and teachers, classrooms rich with research based instructional strategies and doors open to holistic supports, college access and enriching opportunities for students, parents and the community.

The heart of the new SFMS is small personalized learning environments for both students and teachers. Small groups of same grade level students will be partnered with a core group of teachers to form a “Team.” In sixth grade, the Team consists of fifty students with two teachers who teach the four core subjects (Math, ELA or ELL, Science, Social science.) In 7th grade, the Team consists of 150 students with six teachers (2 Math, 2 ELA or ELL, 1 Science, 1 Social Science.) The math and language teachers will each teach 75 students while the Science and Social Science will teacher the full 150. The 7th grade Team will loop together for 8th grade. RSP and Special Day students and their teachers will be included in Teams. In each Team, every teacher will be the educational advocate for 25 students. Multiple times during each week, teachers within the same Team will have the opportunity to meet with counselors, deans and other support staff to examine and support the learning of each child in the Team. Additionally, Teams of teachers will gather as a collaborative professional learning community (PLC) where the focus will be student progress and the ancillary instructional and assessment issues associated with it: Did the lessons work? Is the curriculum effective? Were first teaching instructional strategies successful? What intervention should be used to fill gaps for individual or groups of students? The work of PLCs is grounded in intensive teacher collaboration, interdisciplinary instruction, and targeted support for students.

To make this possible, life at SFMS will look significantly different. We are proposing two significant structural changes to the school schedule: 1) a later start time; and 2) 4x4+1 block scheduling. The school hours will be adjusted to start at 8:45am and end at 3:50pm. The later start time will allow for before school activities, as well as for a breakfast program, in addition to the traditional breadth of afterschool programming. This proposed schedule is more conducive to optimal learning for the middle school child for both developmental and behavioral reasons and does not interfere with parent or guardian work obligations. By ending the school day later, as well as by offering afterschool programs for students, we will reduce the time students spend unsupervised in the time frame law enforcement calls “the danger zone.” Equally important, we also have found that when extracurricular activities are available only after school, students often must choose between sports and academic assistance, and they opt for the former. Having homework help available before school will give students assistance with completing assignments before they are due, allowing them to participate more fully in class and decreasing their frustration, thus making them more engaged learners. Additionally, the school will be open for “office hours” from counselors, teachers, professional development, parent education and other services during this extended time frame.

The move to 4x4+1 block scheduling is a transition to putting the students “at center stage” by leveraging the professionalism of their teachers and staff. Teachers at SFMS researched alternative bell schedules and based upon that research the SFMS Collaborative has decided to move to a bell schedule that will add approximately 30 minutes per day of instruction in English Language Arts and math at all three grade levels, as well as for a second time period during the day for intervention in ELA and Math. Students will have Math and ELA classes everyday for 80 minutes, and alternate Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and exploratory classes held every other day. But the keys to this schedule’s success are what is enabled to happen: shared planning time by teachers sharing the same students, embedded intervention and enrichment, and a holistic focus on the needs of the whole child. The “+1” portion of the schedule will be a 37-minute class that will enable the school to provide both intervention and enrichment. The intervention portion will allow teachers to work with students to reach mastery in specific curriculum content, as well as to promote and teach behavioral expectations to students who are having difficulty in that arena. The I & E period also will allow community partners, such as ABC Learn, to provide intervention services to students, as well as for parents, community members and agency partners to participate in the regular school day by sharing skills, cultural activities and hobbies.

This model also satisfies the SFMS Collaborative’s passion and priority of equity and access for all students. Each SFMS student will have the opportunity to participate in exploratory classes, receive intervention support for the subjects needed or engage in honors level work and become competent with technology. In 6th grade, students will participate in an exploratory wheel in 10 week increments, exposing the student to four different topics including visual and performing arts, technology, and science. 7th and 8th grade students can take semester or year-long exploratories with all students having the option for year-long music instruction. Technology will be infused throughout the school. Students will be expected to master basic computer skills for communication and research. Those students with an interest in technology will have the opportunity to leave SFMS certified and ready to take advanced computer classes in high school. With respect to honors level work, all students will be encouraged to take on the additional rigor and work necessary to meet that educational challenge and by displaying evidence of a deeper understanding of the content material, students will receive honors credit.

Here is a snapshot of what an 8th grade student's day will look like:

A Day In the Life at SFMS

Notes from an interview with an 8th grader

.....I arrive at school at 7:30am.... Mr. Lawrence greets me at the back gate. I say good morning, because he hates it when I don't say anything to him. I head to the C-building because I know that Mr. Rolston is having a Homework Club before school. I could not figure out what I was supposed to do on my Algebra homework last night. I stay there until 8:30 when the morning tutoring session ends and head to the restroom at the C-building. I say good morning to Alex (Supervision) who is there every morning before school.....Then off to my period 1 English class with Ms. Logan.

8:40 am.....I'm greeted at the door by Ms. Logan....She reminds me to get out my Reader's and Writer's Notebook as I sit down. When I am just about finished with my "two-minute edit", I begin to get my homework out from last night, because I notice on the agenda that we will be discussing that next..... Ms. Logan asks us to share the corrections we made on our two-minute edit with our "back" partner, and I realize I missed one other correction..... I fix it! Homework was to Google a different World War II novel than "The diary of Anne Frank", and then write a paragraph on why that novel caught my interest. Ms. Logan then separated us into groups according to our interests and we shared our books with each other. We then had to come to a consensus on which book our group wanted to choose to read together. We will then complete a project together on that book. As the period is about to end, Ms. Logan interrupts our group, to let us know that it is time to clean up and get ready for nutrition. I think to myself, "Where did the time go so quickly?" it feels like class just started, but that's the way it usually is in Ms. Logan's class.

10:06 am.....Nutrition with my friends.....There is Mr. Lawrence again in the Student Cafeteria keeping students safe and moving the line along. There are two counselors at the door of the exit, making sure that everyone goes to their grade level area where we find our classmates waiting. The PE area is open too if we want to play basketball during Nutrition.

10:31 amoff to period 3 for Algebra with Mr. Rolston. I'm so excited! I was able to figure out my homework this morning at Homework club. Now I'm going to be able to participate in the class discussion today and not feel so lost. I tried looking at Mr. Rolston's Homework website last night, but I was still not able to figure out the homework, and my parents had no idea what I was talking about. Mr. Rolston's class is always interesting because he uses the Smartboard. We are then given the opportunity to practice the problems independently or with a partner until we are comfortable with the problem solving strategy we are going to use. Wow before I know it that class is over, it's 11:55 am and I'm heading to period 5..... Social Studies with Mr. Bozurich.

I don't get to see Mr. B every day, but when I do he makes it so interesting and fun. As I enter the classroom I see student work posted everywhere. Mr. B has five donated refurbished laptops that were brought in through our community school partnership. We use these computers to do research for our group projects, as well as communicate with other students throughout the nation, and end up having some very interesting discussions about current events with our government. My project group is planning on meeting at the San Fernando Library after school. The Librarian there always says she is so happy to see our students from SFMS. Next week we are competing against Ms. Araujo's class in a game of Jeopardy, so we are prepping really hard because her class beat us the last time we played before the Periodic Assessment.

1:21 pm, intervention before 8th grade lunch.....back with Ms. Logan. We are working on sentence structure for two more weeks. If I do well enough, I'm going to get to transfer to Mr. Robertson's Enrichment and play softball for the next five weeks, so I have been working really hard. Working with my same teacher I have for regular English, really gives me the opportunity to understand and get the help I need. Ms Logan asked me to come to her Homework Club tomorrow morning, so she can help me with some other sentence structure stuff I'm not getting. I won't have to miss basketball practice after school with Coach Eric so that sounds cool.

After I&E we then go to lunch at 1:57 pm. the sixth and seventh graders just finished their lunch, and our leadership class has set up a noon dance for 8th graders in the girl's gym. They played some real cool music last time so we are all excited to get there!

2:30 pm..... PE for seventh period. We head over to the park and the pool for our PE class SWIMMING! We are working on the backstroke this week. After swimming, it is back to school for basketball practice with Coach Eric and the Beyond the Bell After School Program. We play Pacoima and Byrd this weekend so we are working real hard.

Hey, I think that is my mom's horn. My goodness it is already 5:30PM. I'm off to eat dinner and do some homework. Got to remember tomorrow is an "Even" day, so I get to go to Science and Mariachi with Mr. Vasquez.....

The academic success of students and the emphasis on increased rigor and high expectations will be a collaborative effort shared by all stakeholders: students, teachers, administration, parents and partners. Doors will be open and teachers will have the chance to work together with each other and with outside partners. Excellent instructional delivery will be the responsibility of teachers who will work towards interdisciplinary, design-based instruction in their Teams using five shared core teaching strategies adopted by SFMS: Cooperative Learning, Management Involvement Feedback Focus (MIFF), Thinking Maps, Cornell notes, and Writing to Learn. Additionally Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) methodology will be incorporated in all classes to support the English Language Learners. The current District curriculum and instructional guides are aligned to the California State standards and incorporate effective research-based strategies specific to the needs of each core content area. Our belief is that we need to focus the bulk of our immediate effort on changing the way that instruction is delivered, rather than changing the actual curricula.

Notwithstanding that assessment, beginning in Year 1, the Professional Learning and Curriculum (PLCC) work group will review the curriculum for each grade level and determine what changes, if any, will be recommended to the Collaborative Council, the SFMS governing body. Changes to the curriculum will focus on two key elements: 1) changes to fit the interdisciplinary model, including common vocabulary; and 2) making curriculum more culturally relevant, including more fully incorporating the contributions of Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and women in science, politics, the arts, etc. and weaving service learning into the framework to help connect students to their community's past and present. We anticipate that this process will be phased over two years, with all curricular changes in place by Year 3, recognizing that revisions may be easier for some subjects than for others. For example, Science and Math may not need major changes, while we envision an interdisciplinary curriculum for ELA and Social Science which will take longer to construct, as teachers will need to identify texts and literature that will support grade level content, historical period, culture and culturally relevant material. Notwithstanding this focused attention during years 1-3, SFMS will always be considering ways to improve upon the existing curriculum.

We will continue to measure student mastery of course standards, concepts, and skills, as each core department works to create benchmark assessments for each course. Teachers will not simply cover material and test, but will be trained to explain information and provide context. Students will be afforded a curriculum rich in context as we move to an interdisciplinary, design-based approach to instruction that addresses multi-modality learning that enhances critical thinking, builds student engagement and creates curiosity. In addition to course benchmark assessments, students will also demonstrate their learning through authentic assessments aligned to interdisciplinary units.

e. Community Impact and Involvement. For students to leave SFMS as confident, engaged and academically skilled, a holistic approach to their success is essential. This requires fundamental changes to the governance structure within the school and the relationship of the school to stakeholders. SFMS will become part of the Valley Neighborhood Collaborative community school network, embracing and leveraging all of the assets in the broader school neighborhood including parents, governmental and nonprofit service providers, local institutions and cultural centers, as well as students, teachers and school staff. As a VNC community school, SFMS will have the following core components: 1) Resource Council, integrated into the SFMS Collaborative governance structure, comprised of all community stakeholders that will cultivate new partners to meet identified needs, monitor partner services and assess their effectiveness, serve as a vehicle for enhancing inter-agency communication and collaboration and review and refine family and community engagement strategies, including specific strategies for engaging hard-to-reach parents; 2) stakeholder services integrated with the academic core of

the school; 3) On-site coordinator who will engage, recruit and communicate with all stakeholders, coordinate resources to maximize participation and reduce duplication; integrate the work of the Resource Council with the academic core of the school and facilitate the work of the Resource Council as problem solvers.; and 4) Use data to drive change. In addition to these core components, each VNC school develops its own strategies to meet shared VNC objectives and any additional school-developed objectives. San Fernando Middle School Collaborative has identified four initial school-wide approaches: 1) “Open Doors” policy, described previously; 2) parent/supportive adult engagement; 3) increase volunteers and support for school; and 4) increase partnerships with service providers.

Parents will take an equally vital role at the school. During several community meetings, parents reinforced their desire for their children to be successful and their eagerness, with some additional support and guidance, to be active participants. All Teams will be required to support a minimum of two activities per semester that bring parents and teachers together for conversation, increased shared expectations and skill building. Guidance counselors’ hours will be flexed to ensure they are available when parents are available. SFMS is building an ambitious, but achievable plan to use technology to increase communication with all student academic expectations and accomplishments on line, as well as information about school and community events, local resources and governance information. Parents will be encouraged to take advantage of computer classes to develop their own technological skills. With hard work, SFMS is confident that each student, teacher, staff member and family will have access to 21st Century technology.

f. Leadership/Governance. In addition to having a more prominent space on campus, and priority relations with teachers, parents will have a significant voice and vote in the governance of SFMS. The Parent Council will be one of four stakeholder councils advising the new governing body with respect to the governance of the school. It will have the responsibility for oversight and input into the implementation of the mission and vision from the vantage point of student guardians and parents, and will develop and implement the strategy to involve more parents and caregivers through an expanded definition of engagement and volunteerism.

The other three stakeholder councils in the new governance structure are: School Staff Council; Student Council; and Resource Council. Each council will collect and use data to inform and coordinate the PSC Plan implementation. Each council will build strategies, programs, activities and recommendations to the Collaborative Council relative to instruction, school culture, budget, engagement of stakeholders, learning supports, resources and fund development. Stakeholders have numerous opportunities to contribute their expertise and knowledge to the shared decision-making, as well as take responsibility for the progress of the school.

The overall governance of the school will be managed by the Collaborative Council, an 18 member body consisting of 8 teachers (2 from each grade level, 1 out of classroom teacher, 1 UTLA representative), 1 classified staff member, 4 parents, 2 representatives from the Collaborative Partners (Project GRAD LA, LAEP, CSUN, UCLA), 1 community member, and the Student Council president. The Collaborative Council chair will be elected by the full Collaborative Council. The primary purpose of the Collaborative Council will be to maintain the mission, vision and philosophy of SFMS. The Collaborative Council will have the authority to hire staff, evaluate the principal, approve the budget, approve contracts for service, and adopt school policies.

To enable the Collaborative Council to be a true governing council for SFMS, SFMS is seeking to operate under the auspices of the I-Design Division of LAUSD with the following autonomies:

- State per pupil funding allocated directly to the school
- Ability to purchase positions at actual cost
- Control over the school budget (in compliance with federal and state law)
- School staffing including
 - Staff hiring
 - Retention of existing Design Team members
 - No “must place” or involuntary transfers of any staff
 - Year to year transfer opportunities for staff who do not wish to remain at SFMS
- Contracts with service providers
- School calendar & hours

Twelve Collaborative Council members will also serve as the School Site Council in compliance with federal and state requirements. These twelve elected members will be joint members of the School Site Council and the Collaborative Council. The School Site Council will comply with all federal and state mandates and will be the

only body authorized to approve the School Site Plan and the budget for Categorical funding. All such votes will be appropriately documented.

g. Fiscal Plan. The resources of the school are maximally aligned to support the small personalized learning environment Team structure and our late school start. As a recipient of funding via the Quality Education Investment Act, (QEIA), we must maintain a class size of 25 in all core classes. Successful implementation of our PSC model requires a flexible staffing plan. We need to shed the trappings of the traditional school norm table and make site-based decisions on class size and the needed certificated and classified personnel. We have requested that the state per-pupil funding be allocated directly to the school and that our budget reflect the actual salaries and benefits of the incumbent personnel instead of the maximum costs the District budgets per position. Since we have a number of new employees, this would increase the general funds available to the school and allow us to fully implement our staffing plan. The number of out-of-classroom personnel will be reduced to afford additional teachers, the savings garnered from purchasing positions at actual cost also will be used to hire teachers. Our proposed staffing plan accounts for significant health and human services to be provided by our collaborative partners and the continued availability of those in-kind resources will inform our decision-making regarding the purchasing of itinerant staff. We intend to work with our stakeholder councils to leverage all funds and resources, as well as to seek new funds to maintain the SFMS Plan.

Conclusion. In June, when SFMS students matriculate to one of our partner high schools, they will be proficient in English language arts and mathematics. They will have mastered the academic skills required to rigorously study content material in high school. And, they will have a personal expectation for success and accomplishment, with the confidence to make it happen and an individualized graduation plan to show them the way. Their parents and guardians will be smiling from the audience, feeling proud of their child's accomplishment, understanding and ready to support the next steps on the path to college or other post-secondary experience. Teachers will similarly beam with pride, overwhelmed by the academic explosion occurring within their school and acknowledging that it happened because of their investment in it. Community partners will nod, feeling satisfied that linking arms around their community ensured that no child was left behind.

2. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

a. Curriculum Map and Summary. The curriculum maps for each subject and grade level are detailed in the tables in Attachment 2. Initially, SFMS will continue current practices with respect to content, course scope, sequence and instructional materials for each subject and grade level, which align with LAUSD Guidelines for Instruction (http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/instruct/instruction_guidelines/), with three exceptions:

- Within English Language Arts (ELA), the Developing Readers and Writers Course (DRWC) will switch from the *Language!* curriculum to *Read 180*. SFMS teachers have already received *Read 180* training.
- The Intermediate ESL program will be offered in a differentiated manner for students based on CELDT and CST results, diagnostic data and length of time in the program. Students will participate in a typical 2 semester Intermediate ESL curriculum that will emphasize reading and writing or a 3-semester option that emphasizes all ESL domains as determined by their needs. The English Language Development (ELD) standards for Grades 6-8 are designed for students who are literate in their primary language. Many students enter SFMS not literate in their primary language, and need to be taught the ELD literacy standards for earlier grade levels.
- The English Language Arts department will restructure the four instructional units for each grade level as follows: Narrative, Response to Literature, Exposition, and Persuasion. Teachers believe that this is the most natural order to progress student learning. Response to Literature builds on the content and skills learned in the Narrative unit just as the Persuasion unit builds on concepts and skills learned through the Exposition unit. The Exposition unit is also heavily assessed on the CST. Our reordering of these units will place the Exposition unit after winter break and before the spring exams.

Beginning in Year 1, a professional learning and curriculum workgroup will review the curriculum for each grade level and determine what changes, if any, will be recommended to the Collaborative Council. Changes to the curriculum will focus on three key elements: 1) changes to fit the *Humanitas* model, which features engaging, interdisciplinary, theme-based, team-taught lessons; and 2) making curriculum more culturally relevant, including more fully incorporating the contributions of Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and women in science, politics, the arts, etc.; and 3) weaving service learning into the framework to help connect students to their community's past and present. We anticipate that this process will be phased over two years, with all curricular changes in place by Year 3, recognizing that revisions may be easier for some subjects than for others. For example, Science and Math may not need major changes, while we envision an interdisciplinary curriculum for ELA and Social Science which will take longer to construct, as teachers will need to identify texts and literature that will support grade level content, historical period, culture and culturally relevant material. After all initial changes are in place, we will use student achievement data to drive further refinements. The curriculum will no longer be a static course of action that teachers are mandated to follow, but rather will be ever-evolving based on assessments of student progress.

The current District curriculum and instructional guides are aligned to the California state standards and incorporate effective research-based strategies specific to the needs of each core content area. Our belief is that we need to focus the bulk of our immediate effort on changing the way that instruction is delivered, rather than changing the actual curricula. We will continue to measure student mastery of course standards, concepts, and skills, as each core department works to create benchmark assessments for each course. Teachers will not simply cover material and test, but will be trained to explain information and provide context. Students will be afforded a curriculum rich in context as we move to an interdisciplinary, design-based approach to instruction that addresses multi-modality learning that enhances critical thinking, builds student engagement and creates curiosity. In addition to course benchmark assessments, students will also demonstrate their learning through authentic assessments aligned to interdisciplinary units.

As is discussed in more detail in the *School Culture and Climate* section, we are proposing changes to the schedule, including a 4x 4+1 block schedule, that will significantly impact instruction and create a schedule that is conducive to the intense level of collaboration we envision, providing for shared conference periods and almost daily opportunities to discuss individual students' needs. The 4x4+1 block schedule not only will provide approximately 30 additional instructional minutes in Math and ELA each day, but also will allow for one 37-minute period four days per week devoted to "Intervention and Enrichment" (I & E). The intervention piece will enable teachers to target more specific assistance to those students who are unable to reach mastery in the their

first exposure to the material and also give them time to promote and teach the SFMS behavioral expectations to students who are not close to mastery in those areas. Our enrichment piece will promote higher attendance, provide students with additional opportunities to deepen their learning in specific areas, and motivate students to be successful and come to school by offering an enrichment curriculum that allows students to engage in educational, fun activities that include both direct instruction and disguised learning opportunities.

Our current system of solely using academies to provide Personalized Learning Environments for students will be restructured to include smaller student groups, each supported by an interdisciplinary team of teachers, referred to as a Professional Learning Community (PLC). For purposes of this application, the smaller teacher and student groupings will be referred to as “Teams.” Prior to implementation, teachers will decide on the terminology they wish to use. In both the 7th and 8th grades, students will be grouped into grade-level Teams of 150 students, with each Team taught by a PLC of six core subject teachers. Core subjects are ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. Sixth grade students will be grouped into Teams of fifty students with two teachers providing core instruction. Each two-teacher pair will be paired with one or two other pairs to form a 4-6 member PLC. RSP and Special Day students will be members of Teams and their RSP or Special Day teacher will be an additional member of the corresponding PLC. The work of PLCs is grounded in intensive teacher collaboration, interdisciplinary instruction, and targeted support for students. For the purpose of vertical teaming, three to four academies consisting of 6th, 7th and 8th PLCs will be formed. Vertical teams promote community building, cross-age tutoring and mentoring. The number of academies will be based on student enrollment, which in turn will determine the number of Teams and PLCs. Currently, each academy has a specific theme. The SFMS Collaborative has elected to revise that structure; instead, teachers and students will be empowered to determine academy themes (or lack thereof) on a yearly basis, giving them the flexibility to have themes emerge organically.

To assist students with learning academic content and developing skills needed to work and compete in the 21st Century, we have adopted five instructional strategies to be used school-wide in addition to specific curricular strategies. The strategies selected provide continuity in instruction across school levels by continuing strategies acquired in elementary school such as MIFF and Thinking Maps and building skills expected at the high schools (e.g., writing to learn and working cooperatively in groups) and allow for differentiated instruction. Technology will be infused into instruction, allowing not only for differentiated learning but also for students to develop the skills needed to thrive in the 21st Century. (Please see Attachment 2 for the SFMS Collaborative Technology Plan.) The selected instructional strategies are as follows:

- ***Cooperative Learning.*** Students of different levels of ability collaborate in small teams to work on complex tasks, using a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of the learning standards. Students are held accountable individually and as a group to collaboratively complete rigorous academic tasks. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning, but for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement that builds individual interpersonal skills and positive group interdependence. (Waxman and Tellez, Hertzog)
- ***Thinking Maps.*** Thinking Maps are a set of visual patterns for eight fundamental thinking processes. The experts researching brain-based learning all agree on one key concept: the brain makes sense of the changing world by detecting and constructing patterns. By linking a visual pattern with a thought process, Thinking Maps enable students to develop neural networks for thinking that the brain recognizes and builds on continuously, enhancing the student’s ability to independently transfer thinking skills to content learning across disciplines and to lifelong learning. There is a solid base of research demonstrating that Thinking Maps are an effective strategy for closing the achievement gap. (Student Successes with Thinking Maps. David Hyerle, Ed.D., Editor. 2004.)
- ***MIFF (Management Involvement Feedback Focus).*** A collection of procedures and routines used by the teacher to facilitate active involvement of learners during instruction including hand and finger signals, specific questioning, positive reinforcement and deliberate mistakes. These techniques provide students the opportunity to participate in classroom discourse in a non-threatening environment and give all students the opportunity to take part in their education, accelerating school-wide change by strengthening the subject matter knowledge of middle school students. The management and involvement strategies help teachers to increase the amount of time that students are actively engaged in learning (Cotton, 1990; Evertson and Harris, 1992); the focus and feedback strategies help teachers to improve their questioning techniques and create a positive learning environment (Cotton, 1989; Marzano, 2000).

- **Cornell Note Taking.** Students take notes using an inquiry-based approach that stimulates critical thinking and increases information retention. Information is recorded into two columns sequentially as the teacher lectures during direct instruction. Students then summarize the information received while keeping in mind the five R's of note taking: Record, Reduce, Recite, Reflect, Review. Studies show that students who take good notes do better in school (Faber, Morris, & Lieberman, 2000). Cornell Note Taking is one of the core strategies employed as part of the AVID college readiness system.
- **Writing to Learn.** Students write to recall, clarify, and question in order to deepen their understanding of content as they are learning and to make connections with prior learning. These strategies are useful tools in engaging more students in their own learning, helping them to capture ideas and connect personally to the curriculum content, without being critiqued for grammar or graded for the ideas presented. Writing to Learn strategies allow teachers to continually assess student comprehension, logic, reasoning, and problem solving skills. (*Improving Adolescent Literacy: Strategies at Work*. Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, Editors. 2003)

Access to arts education. All students will have equitable access to instruction in music, visual arts, performing arts and media arts through their exploratory periods. We currently offer theatre arts, mariachi, artistic development, music and movie history as part of our exploratory courses. In 6th grade, students participate in a 10-week exploratory wheel where they have the opportunity to experience all the different extracurricular choices. 7th and 8th graders take a semester course in a specialized area after exploring the options during 6th grade. 7th and 8th graders new to the school will be able to participate in the exploratory wheel if they have not had that experience previously, or may elect to take a specialized semester course. Music students will have the option of participating for a full year.

Library media strategy. The SFMS Collaborative recognizes the critical role that a strong school library plays in improving academic achievement. According to Dr. Doug Achterman, "California public schools with strong school library programs outperform those without such programs on the state's STAR tests. This is true regardless of the school community's parent education and poverty levels, ethnicity, and percentage of English language learners." The SFMS library collection includes print, digital, multicultural and multi-level materials, enabling students, including English Learners and Special Education students, to access materials at their grade level. As part of the SFMS collaborative framework, the Library Media Instructor will become an integral part of each PLC, working with teachers as instructional partners to identify reference books and culturally relevant materials that support and expand the curriculum. The Library Media Instructor also will be responsible for training students, both individually and in groups, to do research in conjunction with the more intensive use of design-based learning that is planned. Fortunately, SFMS is located within two blocks of the San Fernando Public Library. The Library Media Instructor also will schedule regular field trips to the nearby public library to ensure that all students are aware of the resources available to them, obtain library cards and are trained in how to access the library's resources.

b. Track Record of Proposed Curriculum. As noted above, during Year 1 we will continue to use the District-adopted curriculum for all grade levels and subject areas. The only change will be in ELA, which will move from the *Language!* curriculum to *READ 180*, which is approved for middle schools if consent from the Local District Superintendent is obtained. The District-adopted curricula are aligned with state content standards, research-based and have been shown to be effective.

During Year 1, a professional learning and curriculum workgroup will begin the process of revising curricula. We do not envision starting from scratch in any subject area, but rather plan to make modifications that will better support the interdisciplinary model we have planned and are more conducive to cooperative and design-based learning. The workgroup also will focus on refining curricula to make lessons and instructional materials more culturally relevant for our students which will engage them more in learning. Workgroup members will be responsible for doing extensive research to ensure that all changes to curriculum are aligned with standards, research-based and proven effective in working with student populations similar to that of SFMS and will be required to document how any proposed changes meet those three criteria. All recommendations for curriculum changes, with supporting rationale, will be brought to the Collaborative Council for approval.

c. Addressing the Needs of All Students. The school culture that we are creating is designed to provide a personalized learning experience for every student that aligns with their individual needs. The smaller Team structure that we will implement will allow for a deep level of collaboration among teachers and through that structure, every student in the school will have a "teacher advocate." Each teacher will be responsible for tracking

the progress of 25 students in all areas, not just within their own class, and will bring any issues the student is having, both instructional and behavioral, to the Team to determine what strategies and services will be offered to address the issue(s). Teachers will be trained to recognize specific risk factors (e.g., poor attendance, substance abuse, gang affiliation and recruitment, mental health issues) and protocols will be established for referring students to prevention and early intervention services that will be available through school and community partner resources, such as on-site counseling services from El Nido Family Centers and City of Los Angeles Gang Reduction Youth Development services. To meet this goal, counselors and the dean will be regular attendees at Team meetings.

From the outset, we all agreed to view challenges through the lens of student achievement; “adult agendas” would not be part of the decision-making equation. Every decision made by the SFMS Collaborative planning group (e.g., changing to a later school start time, block scheduling, the Intervention and Enrichment period) is based on the belief that the change will have a positive impact on one or more groups of students. For example, one of the reasons that the block schedule will be implemented is that it allows for flexibility of groupings to address specific language and literacy deficits.

Key ways in which the educational program will support the needs of all students are delineated below. More detailed information on serving students with disabilities is provided in the *Serving Specialized Populations* section. Levels of growth expected as a result of implementing these strategies are delineated on the Accountability Matrix in Attachment 4.

Special Population	Key Strategies and Services
English Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Block schedules with “stacking” of ESL/ELS/Reading classes will facilitate flexible groupings to address specific language and literacy deficits. “Stacking” is the practice of scheduling all levels of courses at the same time of day so that students can progress from one level to the next without changing the balance of their course schedule. Placement will be determined by CST, CELDT, <i>High Point</i> Portfolio Assessments, teacher recommendation, and criterion-referenced tests. ○ Block scheduling will enable students to receive an additional 30 minutes per day of instruction in ELA and Math ○ Intermediate ESL program will be offered in two formats (two-semester and three-semester) to accommodate students who enter SFMS with low language/literacy skills in their native language. ○ Stacking of ESL classes will allow ESL students in 6th grade to be in core classes with a team of teachers including their own ESL teacher to implement Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies in core curriculum instruction. ○ SDAIE strategies will include teacher-designed ongoing assessments for specific small group instruction. ○ ESL curriculum will use <i>High Point</i> in the first year; in subsequent years other materials will be considered, particularly additional reading materials such as novels that will add rigor and experiences to the ESL curriculum.
Students with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning in Year 3, pilot a Special Day Class-General Education program class for one period ○ As needed, provide Teacher Assistants in the general education Intervention and Enrichment period and exploratory classes to which Special Day Program students have been assigned to assist them in being successful in those classes ○ The Special Education Program will use <i>The Six Minute Solution: A Reading Fluency Program</i> as a reading intervention. ○ Articulate with feeder elementary schools to help them write an offer of Free Appropriate Public Education in IEPs that can be implemented at SFMS in conjunction with SFMS class schedules and collaborate with 5th grade teachers from feeder elementary schools to ensure proper 6th grade placement ○ Special Day Program schedule will mirror general education schedule to facilitate collaboration among all teachers and to ensure that students are included in the general education curriculum and activities as appropriate, using accommodated assignments and differentiated instruction ○ RSP students, teachers and aides will be clustered with gifted student clusters, as research shows that there must be a gap in achievement levels for reciprocal teaching and behavioral modeling to occur. This pairing will benefit both the students with disabilities and the gifted students.

<p>Gifted Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gifted students will be clustered with high-achieving peers to stimulate them, thereby engaging their intellectual capacity and curiosity. ○ School counselors will be available to address the social and emotional needs of gifted students (e.g., stress, frustration) and referrals to community mental health partners will be made as needed ○ The Enrichment period will provide gifted students with additional opportunities to fulfill their intellectual curiosity and deepen knowledge and skills in areas of particular interest to them
<p>Standard English Learners (SELs) and Students of Poverty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SELs and students of poverty will receive specific instruction to improve academic English and literacy skills using culturally relevant and responsive education methodologies ○ All students, including SELs and students of poverty, will have a teacher tracking their performance and serving as their “advocate.” This will help ensure that SELs and students of poverty who do not fall within other specialized population groups and who are not exhibiting specific risk factors (e.g., poor attendance) do not fall through the cracks.
<p>Students Performing Below Grade Level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers will each track the performance of 25 students across the instructional program. Every student performing below grade level will be discussed regularly at PLC meetings during shared conference periods to develop, monitor and refine instructional strategies and supportive services that will meet the student’s needs. ○ Block scheduling will enable students to receive an additional 30 minutes per day of instruction in ELA and Math and reduce the total student load for ELA and Math teachers from 150 to 75. ○ The additional 30 minutes per day in ELA and Math will allow teachers to provide intervention and differentiated instruction during regular class periods. ○ The four day per week 37 minute Intervention and Enrichment period will enable teachers to provide more specific assistance for students unable to master concepts during the first teachable moment. ○ Tutoring and homework help will be available both before and after school. ○ The five overarching instructional strategies will provide consistency in instruction that will reinforce skills and learning for below grade level students ○ Professional development regarding best practices/strategies for differentiated instruction, including assisting low achieving students, will be conducted at least once per semester

d. Accelerated Learning. The Collaborative is intent on encouraging *all* students to achieve at higher levels. As is discussed in more detail in the *School Culture and Climate* section, establishing and continuously reinforcing a culture of high expectations is key to our reform effort. Honors credit will be available for all students who reach proficiency in honors level coursework, reflected in a grade of “B” or better. The coursework will require students go above and beyond grade level standards; this may include additional volume and depth of assignments. Criteria for honors coursework will be determined by each core department. SFMS will cluster gifted students and universalize honors opportunities to preserve heterogeneous groupings. By foregoing the implementation of the honors strand, we present the challenge for every student interested and motivated to earn honors credits in all core academic classes each semester.

We will work to increase the number of students in our gifted program with a cultural shift in our thinking about Gifted and Talented (GATE) students. Our search and identification for students must be proactive and ongoing, rather than once yearly. We have many students who, despite exhibiting strong intellectual awareness and characteristics of gifted students, do not perform well enough on standardized tests or meet only partial criteria to be identified as gifted through the standard High Achievement or Specific Academic abilities criteria. For these students, we will follow District guidelines to refer these students for identification under Intellectual Ability in which IQ tests are administered by District psychologists. School staff also will compile the required documentation (e.g., portfolios, teacher recommendations, student/parent questionnaires) and refer students under the Creative, Visual or Performing Arts or Leadership Ability options.

All members of the school community are responsible for the referral and identification process. Any member of our school community, including the student, can make a referral. We will work with the District GATE office to ensure that all staff members receive appropriate training to be able to identify the characteristics of gifted students and that teachers receive professional development in tools and strategies to differentiate instruction for these students. As GATE students will be clustered throughout the school, all teachers will be encouraged to attend salary point classes and earn GATE certification. Additionally, parents will be given the opportunity to receive education on identifying the characteristics of a gifted child and will be encouraged to make appropriate referrals.

e. Instructional Strategies. As described in Section 2a, SFMS will adopt five research-based, overarching instructional strategies that will be used school-wide. To ensure that teachers have the proper training and capacity to implement the strategies effectively, a phased-in approach will be used:

- ***MIFF and Thinking Maps.*** MIFF and Thinking Maps will be implemented in Fall 2010. Many SFMS teachers already have received training in both strategies and some are qualified to train other teachers. Training for those who have not yet received professional development in MIFF and/or Thinking Maps will take place in Spring 2010 or prior to the beginning of the school year.
- ***Writing to Learn.*** Beginning in Fall 2010, teachers will be encouraged to start using writing to reinforce content on a regular basis. Teachers will share their practices with one another over the next two years, ultimately leading to interdisciplinary writing projects.
- ***Cornell Note Taking.*** Teachers will be trained on the Cornell Note Taking strategy in Spring 2010 in preparation for school-wide implementation in Spring 2011.
- ***Cooperative Learning.*** Currently, some SFMS teachers are using cooperative learning models. The extended conference period and “Open Doors” policy will facilitate sharing of effective strategies and all teachers will be encouraged to explore various cooperative learning models. Over the next two years, teachers will engage in the research and practice of cooperative learning models, leading to the adoption of a set of cooperative learning strategies that all teachers will be trained to implement.

Instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students, including students of poverty, special needs, including students with disabilities, gifted, EL and SEL students are delineated in Section 2c and in the attached Curriculum Maps.

3. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

As an internal applicant, the SFMS Collaborative 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. Each of the key changes that the SFMS Collaborative is proposing, (smaller Teams, a different school schedule, implementation of school-wide instructional strategies, new interdisciplinary curriculum content based on *Humanitas* model, prioritized shared teacher planning time, “open doors” policy and change in the governance structure) will contribute to a shift in the school culture from one in which isolation is the norm to one in which isolation will be impossible. It is our strong belief that is only through such a paradigm shift that our students will have the supports needed to make significant strides in their learning and achievement. The changes that we intend to make align with the California Department of Education’s 12 Recommendations for Middle School Success (Taking Center Stage – Act II). It is only by implementing the changes as a collective whole that we will truly effect change in outcomes for students; no single strategy alone has the power to alter the school’s trajectory.

Two interrelated concepts underpin the culture that we envision for SFMS: 1) collaboration at all levels is intrinsic to the “way we do business” and 2) in order to thrive and maximize their potential, our students need a more personalized learning environment. Each is discussed in more detail below:

1) *Collaborative environment in which accountability for student success is shared by all stakeholders and leadership is distributed among stakeholder groups.* Collaboration at every level will be embedded into daily school life for students, teachers and staff, administrators, community partners and involved parents and community members, encompassing both formal collaborative structures (e.g., PLCs, governance councils) and multiple opportunities for stakeholders to build relationships through less formal interaction (e.g., breakfasts with principal, teacher/parent potlucks, etc.). Successful collaboration is predicated upon the development of relationships that are mutually beneficial, genuine and caring and that reinforce that every community member is a valued partner in the school’s success, with the collective whole exponentially stronger than its individual components. Members of the SFMS Collaborative have extensive experience in affecting school change. We fully recognize that collaboration at the level we envision is difficult, challenging work. Our collaborative’s experience, coupled with the body of research demonstrating the critical role of collaboration in turning around

schools, leads us to conclude that creating a culture of intensive collaboration in which student needs are the lens through which all decisions are made is the only viable option if we are truly committed to our students' success.

As is discussed in detail in the *Family and Community Engagement* section, SFMS will become a hub within our neighborhood, driven by all stakeholders, focused on aligning and linking resources for children and families. An "Open Doors" policy, referenced earlier, is at the heart of the culture shift. SFMS will be a welcoming, transparent environment in which teachers will observe each other's classrooms as a learning tool, parents will have the freedom to observe their children's classes, and community partners able to meet identified student, parent or staff needs will be embraced. We believe that the "Open Doors" policy will reinforce the "shared accountability" doctrine, as no one on campus will have the option to do their work in isolation. On any given day, a visitor to the school will observe collaboration at work in multiple arenas: students engaged in small group work and interdisciplinary projects; teachers strategizing about how to meet the differentiated needs of groups of students or discussing the progress of individual students during shared planning time; community members and parents working with teachers to provide enrichment opportunities for students; community partners providing mental health services to address issues that are impacting the student's capacity to be an engaged learner, etc.

2) *In order to thrive and meet their potential, students need a personalized learning experience focused on the whole child that sets and continuously reinforces high expectations.* In the *Curriculum and Instruction* section, we have delineated ways in which the classroom experience for students will be more responsive to their individual learning styles and achievement levels. The 4x4+1 schedule, described in detail in the next subsection, also facilitates a more personalized education experience through expanded enrichment and intervention opportunities tailored to their individual needs and longer class periods that will enable teachers to provide small group and 1:1 intervention during the class period. At the broader school culture level, the smaller Personalized Learning Environments (50 students in 6th grade, 150 in 7th and 8th grade) will allow for a deeper personalized education experience for students, as discussed in the *Curriculum and Instruction* section, while the academy structure will continue to support vertical PLCs. In 7th and 8th grades, teachers, with the possible exception of Science and Health teachers due to credentialing issues, will loop so that students have a teacher for two years rather than one, helping to build stronger teacher-student relationships and consistency in instructional delivery over time.

The revised structure will contribute to a more personalized learning environment for students in numerous ways. ELA and Math teachers will have a maximum of 75 students to teach, while Social Studies and Science teachers will carry the full 150. Combined with the plan for looping teachers, the ELA and Math teachers, in particular, will be able to truly get to know their students, enabling the PLC team to more effectively design an instructional program and identify supportive services for each student that meet their individual needs. In addition, every student will have an advocate. Each teacher will be responsible for tracking the progress of 25 students, not just in their own class but across courses and in all aspects of their school life. They will regularly review assessment results from all courses and monitor student behavior, school attendance and participation in recommended interventions and extracurricular activities to ensure that no student falls through the cracks. All community partners will be required to collection participant data that will be stored in a central database, providing teachers with a richer picture of each student. The three day per week PLC meetings will afford ample opportunities for teachers to discuss the needs and progress of individual students and develop strategies for addressing identified needs, as well as to focus on differentiated learning strategies targeted to specialized groups of students.

To demonstrate the critical importance we place on setting high expectations, the Collaborative Council will define the term in the context of SFMS and develop a set of criteria for determining if that culture is being created effectively. The literature on resiliency confirms that setting high expectations is a key protective factor that helps youth from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome the odds. (Garbarino et al., 1992; Werner, 1990). Clearly, the curriculum's rigor is a fundamental reflection of the expectations we set for students; as we consider revisions to curriculum components both rigor and relevance will be key criteria. Beyond the curriculum, the tone set in the daily interactions that teachers and other adults have with students is critical. Successful youth identify being respected and having their strengths and abilities recognized as motivating factors (McLaughlin et al., 1994; Mehan et al., 1994). At the beginning of each school year, each PLC will develop a set of strategies to be employed in their Teams to continuously reinforce high expectations. High expectations also will be reinforced in each of the stakeholder councils with students, parents and partners.

b. College and Career Readiness. The SFMS Collaborative is keenly aware of the need to focus on preparing our students for post-secondary education. Our intensive focus on college readiness aligns with one of the three key recommendations found in the United Way of Greater Los Angeles' 1998 report *Seizing the Middle Ground: Why Middle School Creates the Pathway to College and the Workforce*. In that report, they recommend that schools *prepare middle grades youth for college and the high-paying jobs and careers of the 21st century by giving students the academic foundation for future success*. As the SFMS Collaborative's mission and vision statements reflect, it is our expectation that students will attend college or some other form of post-secondary education and our responsibility to prepare them both for high school and for post-secondary careers. As we refine the school's curriculum, part of the task will be to make the connections between classroom learning and future careers more explicit, so that education will have more relevance to our students. The need to create a college-going culture at SFMS is particularly critical given our almost exclusively Latino, low-income student population. A great majority of our students will be the first in their families to attend college. In more affluent communities, college is an assumed progression for high school graduates, and community elders promote the benefits of college by serving as an example; however, SFMS students have few adults to emulate. National and statewide data on college achievement indicate that Latinos lag behind other ethnic groups. According to a 2002 study by the Pew Hispanic Center entitled *Latinos in Higher Education: Many Enroll, Too Few Graduate*, only 16 percent of Latino high school graduates obtain a college degree, compared to 37 percent of Caucasians and 21 percent of African Americans.

U.S. Census data indicate that only 5% of San Fernando residents have earned a college degree. SFMS Collaborative will engage students, parents, the school and greater community to generate and sustain a college-bound culture that systematically targets every aspect of a student's middle school career. Our work around college readiness will be led by our collaborative partner Project GRAD, a nationally acclaimed college access program that research shows reduces drop-outs and increases college attendance among high risk students (Olatokunbo et al. 1998). A College Access Coordinator, in conjunction with a Career and Peer Leadership Coordinator, will provide targeted college access support, career planning and mentorship, and peer leadership opportunities that are integrated into every aspect of our students' middle school years. To motivate students to stay in school and focus on college preparation, Project GRAD awards non-competitive scholarships, typically providing a minimum of \$1,000 per year for four years in any accredited college or university in the United States, to all students who meet eligibility criteria. During 6th grade, Project GRAD will formalize a learning contract with each student and family that stipulates what is expected of both the student and parents, as well as what SFMS and Project GRAD will provide during the middle and high school years and beyond.

The model meshes perfectly with the community school model we envision, as it engages the entire community to increase high school graduation and college access, using a four-pronged approach: 1) Academic Support & Enrichment: activities that provide high quality, academically rigorous, experiential-based learning activities and tutoring in Math, Science, and Literacy; 2) Parent Engagement: activities designed for parents to increase their rate of involvement in their child's education, and to teach parents their child's postsecondary options, and how to navigate the education system; 3) School, District, and Community Relationships: Project GRAD believes that strong school, District, and community relationships are vital in order to catalyze systemic change in education. We aim to sustain these relationships, as well as develop new ones; and, 4) College Awareness, Access, and Scholarships: activities that are designed to expose and teach middle school youth and their families about their postsecondary options, to inspire and support them to achieve their postsecondary goals, and to support them financially in college. Specific college and career awareness activities that Project GRAD will offer to SFMS students and parents are delineated in Attachment 3. College and career-related activities will include workshops for students and parents on A-G requirements, the demands of high school and navigating the higher education system; field trips to college campuses and local venues to explore potential careers, such as the San Fernando Courthouse located across the street from the SFMS campus; Monthly "College Days" where teachers and school staff discuss their college experiences with students.

c. School Calendar/Schedule. SFMS will continue to operate on a traditional school calendar. There have been discussions among the feeder high schools to move to a "balanced calendar" and if that initiative moves forward, the Collaborative intends to raise the option with the school community. The only immediate modification to the calendar will be the addition of two professional development days prior to the beginning of the school year that all teachers will be expected to attend. We are proposing two significant changes to the school

schedule: 1) a later start time; and 2) 4x4+1 block scheduling. A schedule is included in Attachment 3. The plan and rationale for each change is delineated below:

1) Later start time. The school hours will be adjusted to start at 8:45am and end at 3:50pm. The Banked Professional Development and Common Planning time will be held on Tuesday mornings rather than Tuesday afternoons as is currently the case, with school starting at 10:30am on Tuesdays. The later start time will allow for before school activities as well as for a breakfast program. The Design Team opted for the later start time for several reasons. First and foremost, the schedule is more conducive to optimal learning for the middle school child. There is a wide body of scientific research related to sleep patterns that demonstrates that adolescents have a sleep-phase delay in their biological clock that results in a tendency to go to bed later and wake later (Dahl, Carskadon). Many come to school sleep-deprived and sleep deprivation has been shown to negatively impact functions such as creative thinking and goal-oriented behavior (Dahl, 1996; Horne 1993); studies have shown that later school start times are correlated with improved adolescent academic achievement (Wahlstrom, 2001). There also is an abundance of research (Fox, J.A., 2003, Richardson, J.L. et. al 1989) that indicates that the hours of 3-6pm, when many youth are unsupervised after school, are the hours when youth are most likely to become victims of crime, engage in risky behaviors and commit crimes. By ending the school day later, as well as by offering after-programs for students, we will reduce the time students spend unsupervised in the time frame law enforcement calls “the danger zone.”

We also have found that when extracurricular activities are available only after school, students often must choose between sports and academic assistance, and they opt for the former. Having tutoring and homework help available before school will address that issue. In addition, many of our students think that they understand their homework assignments when they are handed out, but when they get home find that they are unable to complete the assignments. Because many of our parents have limited English skills and formal education, they frequently are unable to help their children understand assignments. Having homework help available before school will give students assistance with completing assignments before they are due, allowing them to participate more fully in class and decreasing their frustration, thus making them more engaged learners.

2) 4x4+1 Block Scheduling. Having discovered that our current seven period bell schedule gives us the exploratory time that we wanted for each child but does not provide enough time in ELA and Math to meet student needs, teachers at SFMS researched alternative bell schedules. Based upon that research the SFMS Collaborative has decided to move to a bell schedule that will add approximately 30 minutes per day of instruction in each of these two areas at all three grade levels, as well as for a second time period during the day for intervention in ELA and Math. Students will have Math and ELA classes everyday for 80 minutes, with Science, Social Studies, Physical Education and exploratory classes held every other day. The “+1” portion of the schedule will be a 4 day per week, 37-minute class that will enable the school to provide both intervention and enrichment. The intervention portion will allow teachers to work with students to reach mastery in specific curriculum content, as well as to promote and teach behavioral expectations to students who are having difficulty in that arena. The I & E period also will provide community partners, such as ABC Learn, to provide intervention services to students, as well as for parents, community members and agency partners to participate in the regular school day by providing enrichment to students. It is important to acknowledge that this scheduling change will be accompanied by the transformation in instructional practice outlined in the *Curriculum and Instruction* section so that the longer periods aren’t simply extended lectures that will bore students and be non-productive.

The 4x4+1 block schedule will contain four 80-minute periods, a 37 minute period and four 5 minute passing periods on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Tuesday (Banked Professional Development), the schedule will contain four 68 minute periods and three 5 minute passing periods. When multiplied by a 180 day school calendar, the total number of instructional minutes will exceed the required 62,160 minutes.

d. Athletic Programs and Other Extracurricular Programs. As noted above, the schedule will allow for both before and after school programming, enabling students to participate in multiple activities. We will continue to partner with the LAUSD Beyond the Bell Branch to provide after-school athletic and enrichment programming that promotes leadership, teamwork, social interaction and school pride and also will continue to promote intramural lunchtime sports activities for students, as well as after school student vs. teacher activities to support our overall athletic program and promote our overall healthy school philosophy.

The following core activities will be offered:

Before School

- Tutoring
- Homework Help
- Enrichment activities
- Counseling
- Cardiovascular athletics

After School

- Tutoring
- Homework Help
- Enrichment Activities, including college readiness and service learning
- Counseling
- Sports

Guidance counselors will flex their schedules to ensure that at least one school counselor is available during both the before and after school hours. In addition to guidance counseling, community partners El Nido Family Centers and Centro de la Amistad will provide on-site mental health counseling, as needed, both before and after school and ABC Learn will offer academic diagnostic and intervention services. As part of our community school framework, the Resource Council will be responsible for outreaching to community partners who can provide extracurricular activities that are responsive to the social, emotional and academic needs of SFMS students and help build their developmental assets.

e. Student Discipline and Creation of Safe, Clean and Respectful Campus. Since the School-wide Positive Behavior Support program was implemented at SFMS, we have experienced a significant decrease in suspensions and an overall improvement in student behavior. Given that, the SFMS Collaborative will continue implementation of the program, which is aligned with the District Discipline Foundation Policy, with minimal modifications. Issues related to school discipline, safety and campus cleanliness will be monitored by both the School Staff Council and the Student Council.

SFMS behavioral expectations are as follows: 1) be safe; 2) be respectful; 3) be responsible; 4) be honest; and 5) be academically involved. In keeping with our new school culture, we will add a sixth expectation: be a team player. To motivate students to meet these expectations, SFMS has a “Falcon Bucks” program, through which teachers and staff award Falcon Bucks to students for a variety of positive behaviors, including: each of the behavioral expectations identified above, homework completion, good work habits, no tardies, etc. Students redeem Falcon Bucks at the Falcon Store to purchase prizes. The SFMS Collaborative will modify the Falcon Bucks program that reflect our new culture: 1) parents, service providers and community members also will be able to award Falcon Bucks to students, so that the broader community is reinforcing behavioral expectations and helping to increase students’ self-esteem; and 2) the reasons for awarding Falcon Bucks will be expanded to encompass behaviors such as demonstrating leadership and contributing positively to a group effort.

We also will continue to implement the Campus Beautification Referral Program, which enables teachers to provide an immediate consequence for students who misbehave during class. Teachers can assign campus beautification to students, who must then work in a designated area during nutrition and lunch. This discipline strategy not only serves as an effective discipline tool, but positively impacts the cleanliness of the school campus.

f. Health mandates and health care needs of chronically ill students. As an internal applicant, SFMS has structures in place that align with health mandates and meet the needs of all students, inclusive of chronically ill students with and without IEPs and 504 plans. The school will have a 2-5 day per week nurse, depending on funding. In addition, the SFMS Collaborative is exploring options to provide additional health services to students via community partners. Northeast Valley Health Corporation has expressed interest in potentially housing a school-based clinic at SFMS.

g. Nutritional Needs of Students. The nutritional needs of students will continue to be met through the LAUSD Food Services Branch Café LA meal program.

4. ASSESSMENTS AND SCHOOL DATA

a. Educational Goals and Metrics. The Accountability Matrix is found in Attachment 4.

b. Student Assessment Plan. The table of formative and summative assessments is included in Attachment 4. In addition to every teacher continuously assessing student progress, SFMS systemically will use multiple forms of authentic assessments to measure student progress in ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science that are aligned to the state standards. To establish a culture of continuous improvement and high expectations, the

students will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the school year to determine student needs, monitor progress and provide intervention to the students in need to ensure mastery of the grade level standards. All stakeholders will be accountable for student learning.

The teachers will develop SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Bound) to improve student achievement and motivate all stakeholders to achieve the goals. The SMART goals will be posted around the school and in the classrooms. At student-led conferences, students will share their progress with their parents.

With high achievement and college access in mind, each stakeholder council will monitor the school's progress in moving toward the goals identified on the Accountability Matrix.

Assessment will be used on a continuous basis to inform instruction:

- The PLCs will meet to review student data after every assessment to determine how they will meet the needs of the students.
- The PLCs will review the results of the benchmark standards-based assessments at the grade level team meeting, to determine how the students are making progress on the grade level standards. They will analyze student data to identify strengths and weaknesses, effective strategies that address the specific needs and to plan instruction. They will provide differentiated instruction during Tier I (initial instruction) through research based strategies such as the use of manipulatives, cooperative groupings, Thinking Maps etc.
- Based on the outcome of the standard-based benchmark assessments the teachers will modify their instructional plans and delivery of instruction to meet the needs of the students. The teachers will benchmark the focus standards to be able to teach them throughout the school year.
- The teachers and the instructional team, in PLCs, will review the results of the ELA and Math Periodic assessments to identify the focus students that did not master the benchmark standards in order to determine the appropriate level of intervention and the most effective way to meet the needs of the students using Tier II strategic or supplemental interventions such as small group or 1:1 instruction and effective instructional strategies.
- The PLCs will review the school, grade level, and classroom CST data to determine the focus standards in Language Arts and in Mathematics. They will analyze the performance levels, and the number and percentage of students at each performance band (advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic) for all subgroups, to determine the number of students that need to move to proficiency, the focus students that need small group instruction, and the specific areas of need.

c. Data Team and Instructional Team. The school will establish a Data and Problem Solving Workgroup that will include members representing the following stakeholders: teachers; administrators; Coordinator; Counselors; Partnership Representatives; Parent Representative. Using the Problem Solving Process (identify the problem, analyze the problem, design and monitor the intervention, and evaluate the response to intervention), the team will review formative and summative assessment data (academic and/or behavior) to inform instructional programming and professional development decisions. Working collaboratively, the team will collect data using the protocols embedded in the Problem Solving Process to create specific, observable, and measurable hypotheses in order to develop and implement targeted and viable interventions for students and/or professional development for teachers. The team will continually monitor the progress of the interventions, using formative assessment data to drive the evaluation. As a result of the Problem Solving Process the team will be able to identify, on an ongoing basis, the students that need Tier 2 (strategic and supplemental intervention) and Tier 3 (intensive intervention) services. Intervention will be provided for the focus students in the specific areas of need. The groups will be flexible with the goal of exiting them when they master the benchmark standards.

Furthermore, the PLCs serve as instructional teams, providing a systemic approach to making continuous improvement to instruction to ensure that all students are learning and progressing in mastery of grade level content standards. Through the implementation of the PLCs, teachers will participate in ongoing professional development, tweak the delivery and use of instructional strategies to better address the diverse learning styles of students and support their needs, and develop recommendations for curriculum content refinements that will be brought to the Professional Learning and Curriculum workgroup. The proposed structure will allow for the PLCs to work collaboratively to analyze data, develop lessons, determine next steps and professional development

needs, establish long-term and short-term goals for their students, develop rubrics, benchmarks and criteria charts to improve teaching and learning

The Data and Problem Solving workgroup and PLCs build a foundation of effective data use to improve decision making, instruction, and student learning outcomes at SFMS by:

- Building a structure for data-driven decision making where student achievement goals are established. Specific achievement goals are set at the school and classroom levels that are measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. All goals can be articulated clearly by teachers, administrators, and students.
- Creating a culture of data use and assessment literacy. A common language and shared understanding of how data are used to inform, improve and differentiate instruction is established. Explicit norms and expectations regarding the use of data will be a non-negotiable, and the administrators will promote mutual accountability for data use among teachers, the data and instructional teams, and the school.
- Use of data to include formative assessments aligned to grade level content standards, summative student achievement data, instructional practices and goal implementation data. These data are critical to informing instructional, curricular, resource allocation and planning decisions for the school.
- Building school capacity for data-driven decision making by empowering and organizing teachers and administrators to use data to inform instructional decision-making. The data and instructional teams will develop teacher capacity and protocols for data use and analysis through investment in professional development, support for teachers in how to use data and modeling data use and data discussions, and by providing time for teachers to regularly collaborate at grade level and cross grade level team meetings.
- Examining, analyzing and acting on data to create systemic improvement in all classrooms. Instruction is examined to inform what current practice looks like and how those practices relate to effective practice for student learning. Action is taken to develop a plan to improve instruction and to assess whether the changes put in place have impacted student learning outcomes. Both action plan and changes are monitored and assessed for effectiveness and their direct impact upon student learning and student learning outcomes.

d. Data Systems. SFMS will integrate fully the Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) into school operations in accordance with the LAUSD Modified Consent Decree. All teachers will utilize LAUSD MAX/ISIS for attendance and eventually for their grade records. The administrative and support staff will use LAUSD MAX/ISIS to document, track and monitor student information. All data entered into ISIS will be monitored and verified on a weekly basis. This data system will be used to inform the administration and/or Data and Problem Solving workgroup on how to best address student needs. The Data and Problems Solving workgroup will meet monthly to review student data, to monitor progress of the focus students, determine specific needs, and interventions. Additionally, student and parent participation in extracurricular and school sponsored activities will be captured using the community school database established by the Valley Neighborhoods Collaborative. All appropriate disclosure and confidentiality agreements will be in place, as needed, to permit appropriate sharing of data.

e. LAUSD School Report Card. SFMS will participate in the LAUSD Report Card program. The administrators and support staff will be responsible for completing all reports, administering LAUSD and school-designed surveys to all stakeholders to measure their satisfaction with the school's academic policies and programs, culture, environment, and safety and sharing all results with LAUSD. The results of the survey will be shared with the parents and community members at meetings and in the school-parent newsletter and with community partners at Resource Council meetings. Staff survey results will be shared with staff at Professional Developments. The teachers will share the results of the student surveys with the students during class time. The Collaborative Council and all stakeholder councils will include the LAUSD Report Card in their data review and analysis.

f. Research and Evaluation. To continually inform and improve our own best practices and contribute to the knowledge base regarding effective school reform, SFMS teachers, staff and administration will participate fully in research and/or evaluation projects administered by LAUSD and by higher education institutions and/or research institutions in association with the District, as well as any research and/or evaluation projects undertaken by our partners -- CSUN, LAEP and Project GRAD. Our Data and Problem Solving workgroup and partners will work together to collect, disaggregate, and disseminate the research and/or evaluation data to the staff, teachers, and parents in timely and effective ways (i.e. parent meetings, professional development, etc) that facilitate constructive dialogue about any program adjustments needed in response to findings. The SFMS Governance

Council will agree to disseminate reports and research data to all stakeholder groups in the community, school and District. All appropriate disclosure and confidentiality agreements will be in place, as needed, to permit appropriate sharing of data for research and evaluation purposes. Funding permitting, the VNC evaluator will provide an analysis of the community school impacts on student achievement at SFMS.

g. Operational Goals and Metrics. Per PSC office instruction, this section is not applicable since we are an internal applicant. As an LAUSD operator, we will continue to use LAUSD goals and metrics.

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

As an internal applicant, SFMS 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. A detailed Professional Learning and Development Plan is included in Attachment 5. The professional learning and curriculum workgroup will work with the Collaborative Council, administrators and collaborative partners to design and implement a quality ongoing, intensive professional learning program which focuses on school-wide goals and teacher needs and is connected to practice. Above all, the program will support the collegial environments, such as core departments and PLCs that underscore the paradigm shift the SFMS Collaborative believes is needed to improve student learning. In addition to professional development for teachers, all school staff (e.g., counselors, administrators, teachers' assistants, support staff, classified staff) will participate in professional development opportunities with teachers, as well as training specific to their jobs and roles with the SFMS Collaborative.

The professional development plan has the following overarching goals that tie directly to the educational objectives of the school and embody the principles of effective professional development delineated in the National Staff Development Council report *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad*. (Darling-Hammond et. al., School Redesign Network at Stanford, 2009):

- Teachers develop and enhance their capacity to employ the school-wide instructional strategies effectively and to adopt them for delivery of specific curriculum content
- Teachers are empowered with the time, skills and knowledge to make strong recommendations for curriculum changes
- Teachers and staff enhance their ability to respond to the needs of the whole child
- Teachers understand and embrace the school's culture shift and develop the skills and knowledge to be effective in an interdisciplinary, personalized collaborative environment
- Teachers enhance their technological skills and learn how to analyze data and use results to make immediate and long-term adjustments to improve student learning

The attached plan will be continually reviewed and revised in response to feedback from participants and student achievement data, including results of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. As the plan is more fully fleshed out, additional information will be added to include specific dates, presenters, and needed materials. The professional learning and curriculum workgroup will meet twice a month to schedule, plan and evaluate professional learning activities. Teachers are the targeted group for the proposed calendar; however, differentiated professional development for each stakeholder group to meet their responsibilities in supporting classroom instruction will be conducted. We do not plan for costly contracts and will leverage the resources and expertise of our collaborative partners before carefully selecting and contracting outside vendors. We also will seek to align strategies with neighboring high schools to which our students feed to ensure that we are effectively preparing our students for the transition to high school. We will articulate in the areas of instructional strategies and strategies to strengthen our PLCs.

Beginning in February 2010, we will use Banked Professional Development and Common Planning Tuesdays to introduce key elements of the SFMS Collaborative's Public School Choice Plan and desired features of community schools. During the months of March and April 2010, we will formally introduce and review school-wide instructional strategies and expectations for use. Teachers will incorporate strategies throughout the spring

semester and share best applications of strategies during Banked Professional Development and Common Planning Tuesdays.

By May of 2010 the matrix of classes, delineating tentative teaching assignments, will be released with newly formed grade-level interdisciplinary teams referred to as PLCs. Team building strategies, collaborative strategies, and roles and responsibilities of PLC members will be introduced at this time, emphasizing interdisciplinary instruction and teaching in response to students' needs. The phrase "responsive teaching" should avoid controversy because it is pedagogically neutral. However, in being *responsive*, teachers must necessarily engage in practices that best meet the learning needs of their students. And having a *goal* of being responsive should help teachers be more open to the different instructional strategies, beyond the lecture, that will become a required component of their teaching.

As we are the middle level in the K-12 structure, beginning in March 2010 we will seek to improve articulation with both the elementary schools and high schools. We will begin these activities in March of 2010. In September of 2010 we will hold two professional development days prior to the start of the school year. We will begin with in-servicing teachers on how to access various school, District and State data sources. Staff members will also spend time analyzing school-wide, subgroup, and individual student data. As a follow up later in the school year, January of 2011, teachers will receive additional support with a pertinent source of data as they learn to use protocols to evaluate student work to inform their instruction. The task of analyzing achievement data and student work will be ongoing for PLCs, which will meet three times a week during their common conference periods. Departments will also review such data during Banked Professional Development Tuesdays. During our two-day professional development we also will kick off the focus of our work for the upcoming school year: to improve instructional delivery and revise and restructure the current District curriculum so that a site-specific curriculum emerges. We will build a new bold curriculum that is culturally relevant, standards-based and includes both Department benchmark and authentic assessments. Instructional delivery of this curriculum will include design-based learning, interdisciplinary instruction, and differentiation for all learners to meet the needs of special populations. Throughout the year, PLC's will collaborate with their Special education teachers and ESL instructors to plan instruction and meet IEP goals

Throughout the 2010-2011 school year, time will be devoted to departments to review District core curriculum and make decisions to maintain, revise, or replace. In Year 2, this may include eliminating the use of District periodic assessments; decisions will be made on a case by case basis. By the end of the 2011-12 school year, we expect to reveal a site-based curriculum with aligned benchmark assessments to measure student mastery of course standards content and skills for each course. We expect greatest revision of curriculum in the English and Social Studies courses. The English department, in collaboration with the Social Studies department, will select text and literature that serve several key purposes in a Humanitas model: 1) maintain the grade level standards sets of the ELA framework; 2) provide historical context for civilizations studied in grade level Social Studies courses; and 3) favor a curriculum which emphasizes greater cultural relevance for the students of our community. We will take a holistic approach to curriculum and instruction so PLCs will also be given time to develop authentic assessments and corresponding interdisciplinary instructional units. In the 2012-13 school year, PLCs will review the alignment of their authentic assessments and instructional units to our site-based core curriculum.

Teachers will need to model the technological 21st Century skills we seek to develop in our students. Beginning October of 2010, we will seek methods to assist our teachers in using technology as tool. Through an Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) grant, our partner CSUN will provide general professional learning for all the math teachers throughout the year as a lever to change instructional practices. The ITQ Grant does not fund computers; however, a second proposal was submitted for federal earmark money to purchase laptops and software. The plan is to provide software licenses and 100 notebook computers for student use; the software can be installed on existing computers as well. The technology (and the Texas Instruments-*Nspire* software) would allow students to engage in discovery activities, deepen learning and access other web-based resources. Teachers will collaborate monthly to explore and share different ways to utilize the technology while Texas Instruments will help provide training on how to use the *Nspire* software. Through leveraged resources from CSUN, teachers will receive training to use the technology in formative assessments. The data generated will provide a rich source of feedback for teachers as they engage in responsive teaching. Although this project is slated for mathematics, the professional learning and curriculum workgroup will work with the collaborative partners to prioritize instructional technology learning opportunities for all teachers.

b. Teacher Orientation. All teachers, including new teachers, will be expected to attend the 2-day professional development that will occur prior to the beginning of each school year. New teachers will have an additional two half-days of training prior to the school-wide professional development, at which time they will tour the school and be given an overview of school processes and procedures. A “new teacher” strand will be woven into the general professional development session, giving new teachers a solid overview of the school’s culture, site-based curriculum, school-wide instructional strategies, Team/PLC framework, etc. At that time, new teachers (and all new employees) will be matched with a mentor who will be responsible for continuing the employee’s induction. Teachers will specifically receive mentoring through their PLCs. Teachers who are new to the District will be supported by LAUSD BTSA. SFMS will provide support to assist teachers with completing their BTSA induction program.

The pre-service professional development will encompass 20 hours; with an additional 70 hours spent in PLC meetings, totaling **90 hours**. The amount of time spent with the mentor will depend upon individual teacher needs.

c. PD Calendar. The PD Calendar is as follows: 1) 3 days per week: Common Conference Periods (60 hours per year); 2) Every Tuesday: Banked/Common Planning (46 hours per year) and 3) August 25-26, 2010: two-day professional development prior to beginning of school year (12 hours), totaling **118 hours**. The Professional Learning and Development plan that the SFMS Collaborative has designed is ambitious, but not unrealistic; we have incorporated multiple opportunities for professional learning that will occur before, during, and after school hours. As earlier stated, we will have two professional development days prior to the start of school and also will utilize Banked Professional Development Tuesdays before school and occasional Saturdays and/or release time as needed. Our primary goal is to keep teachers in their classrooms during instructional time, so we are proposing a bell schedule which affords an additional 120 minutes of teacher conference period time than the average six-period daily bell schedule. The schedule also accommodates a common conference for the core teachers of each grade level, which builds in time during the school day for core grade-level meetings (6/7/8), grade/core subject level meetings (ELA/Math, Science, Social Studies), and interdisciplinary core team meetings (PLCs). At these meetings, teachers will determine appropriate interventions for students who did not demonstrate proficiency or meet benchmarks during initial instruction, design interventions such as small group activities to re-teach information, providing appropriate scaffolds and use protocols to analyze data and student work.

During Year 1, the professional learning and curriculum workgroup, with input from teachers, also will explore less traditional opportunities for before and after school professional learning. For instance, teachers may choose to form a professional book club, participate in optional technology training, or Spanish classes for educators to assist staff members in communicating with parents. We will work with our collaborative partners to provide salary point classes. A yearly needs assessment for optional learning opportunities will be conducted beginning in March 2010.

d. Program Evaluation. Since the primary purpose underscoring all professional development is to improve student learning, student achievement is the true gauge of the program’s effectiveness. The professional learning and curriculum workgroup will evaluate PD effectiveness and make revisions as needed on an ongoing basis through assessments of student work, classroom observation summaries, observations of PLC meetings and data from all sources including periodic assessments, CST, grades, etc. and will disaggregate by grade level, subject, specialized populations and so forth to ascertain differences and target PD appropriately. The professional learning and curriculum workgroup also will examine teacher feedback to identify trends. For example, the workgroup may find that the needs of Special Day Class instructors are not being met through the current PD program, or that ESL teachers need additional PD on instructional strategies for their students.

Participants also will be asked to fill out a brief comment form following each formal PD session so that the professional learning and curriculum workgroup will have immediate feedback on the perceived value of the sessions and can make mid-course adjustments, if needed, to multi-part trainings. It is our intent to create a culture of learning among both students and teachers, so it is important for our PD to truly inspire teachers to be more effective practitioners, in addition to giving them concrete skills.

6. PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

As an internal applicant, the SFMS Collaborative will adhere to Article IX – Hours and Duties and Article X – Evaluation and Discipline, as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

a. Professional Culture. As is discussed in detail in the *School Culture and Climate* section, the SFMS professional culture will be highly collaborative in nature, requiring all stakeholders to actively participate in the school community. Individual stakeholders will be held accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities to the collaborative and the collaborative as a whole will share accountability for the overall success of the school. The PLCs will be the core mechanism through which this culture shift occurs and the 4x4 +1 block schedule will allow for daily collaboration among teachers via common conference periods, creating more opportunities for teachers to support one another, offer constructive support to struggling teachers, brainstorm about ways to address individual student needs as well as broader issues such as effective implementation of instructional strategies. Isolated classrooms of teachers and students will be relics of the past. School staff will model the collaboration, interdisciplinary and team learning that will be expected of students. Our vision is that no staff person will ever say “I don’t know” in response to a question, but will be so connected to the school community that their response always will be “Here’s who can help...”

As part of the “Open Doors” policy, in addition to the formal observations conducted by the site administrators, PLC teachers are encouraged to conduct informal peer observations and construct feedback to be discussed at PLC, Department, and grade-level meetings, to support our collaborative culture. Such feedback may include attention paid both to what and how students are learning, what teachers are doing well to inspire continued growth and to areas for improvement. The Instructional Coach will work both one-on-one and collaboratively with teachers of content-specific departments and administrators will expand their role as coaches, taking off their administrative hats to observe teachers outside the construct of assessment and provide constructive feedback.

School counselors, as the point-of-service for each child, must work with teachers, parents, and community-based agencies to ensure the needs of the whole child are met. Teachers Assistants will be responsible for assisting teachers with implementation of school-wide instructional strategies to support student learning in the classroom. Classified employees will be knowledgeable about the goals and resources of the collaborative as they often serve as the first point of contact when parents and community members enter the school.

Sustained, ongoing and intensive professional development connected to, and derived from, teachers’ ongoing work with students will be conducted to ensure that all staff have a solid understanding of the high expectations set for both students and staff with respect to being engaged learners, effective collaborators and positive, involved contributors to the school climate. Professional development will be grounded in inquiry and reflection, participant-driven and collaborative, facilitating sharing of knowledge among teachers within communities of practice.

School administration will work diligently to involve teachers, parents, and community partners in the school governance. All staff members will participate in decision-making processes directly and through elected representatives. Through their PLCs, teachers will be empowered to make group decisions related both to individual students and broader decisions, such as selecting an interdisciplinary, Team-wide service learning project for students to engage in together. There will be multiple leadership opportunities for teachers and staff, including Team Lead Teachers, Department Chairs, workgroup Chairs and seats on the Collaborative Council and School Staff Council. Team Lead Teachers will meet with the principal during the I & E period every two weeks.

b. Evaluation. It is the minimum expectation that all certificated employees will be evaluated formally every other year. Certificated teachers who do not meet the standards or those who struggle to meet the standards will be evaluated annually. Classified employees are evaluated annually according to their respective contracts. With the assistance of the collaborative partners, teachers and administrators will develop a formal classroom observation form in the Spring of 2010. This form will be used for the Stull evaluation process for classroom teachers. This form will be aligned to the California Standards for the teaching profession and will assess teacher use of school-wide adopted instructional strategies, interdisciplinary instruction and differentiation for all learners. Additionally, we will develop a form to provide constructive feedback tailored to the specific duties of the various out-of-classroom personnel who are also subject to the Stull evaluation process. A strong component of all employee evaluation will focus on the participation of the employee in the collaborative process. Much consideration will be given to how well the employee works with all stakeholders groups, participates in collaborative activities, models collaboration for our students, and directly contributes to student collaboration throughout school and the community. At the beginning of the school year certificated employees to be evaluated

will submit their Initial Planning Sheets. Administrators will hold Initial Planning Conferences with the employee to discuss their goals/objective for the year and delineate the strategies to meet these goals. As part of this process, employees will be required to include goals/objectives and aligned strategies for collaboration in their Initial Planning Sheets.

We will follow District policy and employee contracts. Administrators will adhere to all timelines and to confidentiality stipulations. Administrators will conduct formal classroom observations, delivering written feedback in timely post-observation conferences, at a minimum of four times throughout the school year. If an employee is not meeting the standards, additional observations and detailed plans to provide guidance and assistance will be implemented to assist the individual. This may include a one-on-one mentor, additional time with the Instructional Coach and consultation with the respective department chair to help address identified shortcomings. Release time will be provided for struggling teachers to observe peers modeling desired practices and to elaborate cognitively on findings with the assistance of the Instructional Coach. In addition to the standard practice of having individual administrators observe teachers, administrators also will observe teachers as team and hold reflective conversations with the individual teachers regarding the teaching and learning observed. The intention of such activity is not to put the teacher through an uncomfortable process, but rather to align the expectations and feedback of individual administrators so that teachers receive clear, consistent critiques that enable them to improve their instructional practices.

c. Feedback. Quarterly, teachers and staff will complete a brief confidential survey on the effectiveness of strategies such as interdisciplinary instruction and curriculum, school-wide instructional strategies, I & E period, and 4x4+1 schedule. Results of the surveys will be analyzed by administrators and all stakeholder councils to inform decision-making.

7. SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

a. Specialized Instruction. As described in section 2, the SFMS Collaborative's educational plan and instructional approach are ideally suited to providing high-quality education to specialized populations that is targeted to their particular needs. Per instruction from the PLC office, the balance of this section is dedicated to discussing instruction for students with disabilities.

i. Implement and Monitor the Special Education Process. SFMS is dedicated to providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for all students. Students with disabilities will be served in accordance with Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) mandates. SFMS will ensure that all services, supports, and correct placement of students with disabilities are implemented in a timely manner according to the mandated timelines. This process begins before the student enrolls at SFMS through articulation activities with the feeder schools and Counselor/Resource Teacher/Special Day Program Teacher participation in transition IEP's written at the elementary school. All students with disabilities will be fully included in articulation activities with their general education peers. Prior to the beginning of each school year, each IEP is reviewed for placement and services to ensure that each student with a disability is programmed into the correct classes. A review of the IEPs of all new incoming students is done to ensure they are complete and current, at which time determinations of appropriate placement, need for further assessment and/or review are made.

ii. Least Restrictive Environment. Services for students with IEPs span a wide spectrum within Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) mandates. Students requiring Designated Instruction Services (DIS) only (Adapted Physical Education, Language and Speech, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Occupational Therapy etc.) will be programmed into a grade level PLE with appropriate accommodations in place within the general education classroom and campus. These students will receive DIS services from LAUSD assigned itinerant teachers/therapists.

Students with IEPs requiring a Resource Specialist Program (RSP) will be programmed as small clusters within a Team and receive their services from a fully credentialed Resource Specialist Teacher (RST) (and/or Special Education Aide) within their general education classroom using a collaborative model which may include co-teaching. The RST shares a common conference period with other teachers in the Team and will be a member of a PLC along with the core subject teachers. Students whose IEP requires Learning Center support will receive this during the Intervention/Enrichment (I&E) period, which meets for 37 minutes per day, 4 days per week. Students will receive targeted skill intervention in Language Arts and/or Mathematics

as well as techniques for working around their identified areas of academic challenge. These Labs will be centrally located on campus to facilitate easy transition of students and to minimize distractions from trains, Physical Education classes, etc. RSP service logs will be updated weekly in the Welligent System to ensure ongoing frequency of services.

Students whose IEPs require a Special Day Program/Specific Learning Disability (SDP/SLD) setting will be served in Special Day classes for 1-4 of their core academic classes. The classes will be scheduled so that the students will, with few exceptions (as noted in IEP) be able to participate in grade level Physical Education, Exploratory and I&E classes as well as have the opportunity to be assigned to and participate in the activities of a grade level appropriate Team. Students will be clustered in these classes and baseline assistants will be assigned to provide support as needed. General Education teachers will provide appropriate accommodations as required in the IEP and/or discussed in the weekly meetings. SDP/SLD classes will be grade level departmentalized classes taught by fully credentialed special education teachers who will share a common conference with the Teams to which their students belong as well as a common conference for the three SDP teachers who teach the 7th & 8th grade students. The 6th grade and Mild/Moderate Mental Retardation (MRM) SDP teachers share a common conference with each other and with the 6th grade Teams to which their students will belong. SDP/SLD teachers will use a variety of research-based strategies to address student's individual learning strengths and areas of deficit. Differentiation strategies will be employed to provide necessary accommodations in order to facilitate full access to grade level standards and curriculum. Strategies appropriate to subject material and student needs will be utilized. These include but are not limited to: Interdisciplinary teaching, SDAIE strategies, Thinking maps, Reciprocal teaching, Cooperative Grouping and Universal Lesson Design.

Students whose IEPs require an MRM class will receive services in a multi-graded self-contained class taught by a fully credentialed special education teacher. The students will participate either in grade level curriculum or in LAUSD's Alternate Curriculum (as indicated in IEP). They will be clustered in general education Physical Education (or Adapted PE per IEP), Exploratory and I&E classes as well as any core classes to the maximum extent possible (per IEP) with the SDP/MRM teacher and/or baseline/AAA assistant providing accommodations and modifications of curriculum as needed. The MRM teacher will share a common conference with the 6th grade SDP/SLD teacher and with the teachers of a Team so that these students will share in any activities being held by that Team.

While SFMS does not currently have any programs for moderate to severe students on its campus, should we acquire a number of students whose home school is SFMS and who need a specialized program, we will work with Support Unit North to put that program in place. Until that time, we would expect that any single student who needs such a program would be placed per their IEP at another LAUSD school that already has that program in place.

Service Models may include a combination of special education and general education classes as needed to meet the unique educational needs of each student. Students with disabilities and their parents will be served by an experienced Coordinator who is fully credentialed in both special education and counseling as well as a School Counselor. Behavioral issues will be addressed within the classroom, through school-wide discipline procedures and through Positive Behavior Support Plans as needed. SFMS will collaborate with parents, Support Unit North personnel and community resources as needed to give students the supports needed to improve behavior.

All students will be systematically monitored by Team staff, the Special Education Coordinator and Counselors to ensure consistent academic, social and emotional development. Students experiencing difficulty should first be discussed within the PLC meetings. Once accommodations and interventions have been given a chance to work within the team and further intervention is needed, a referral to the Student Study Team (SST) will take place. This process entails a multi-disciplinary team (parent, teacher, Counselor, student, RST, Administrator) studying the case and making recommendations for student support. Periodic review of progress/assessments will dictate the necessity of a referral for SPED assessment.

iii. Extended School Year (ESY) Services. Students eligible for ESY will be taught by properly credentialed teachers in appropriate settings, where they will be provided support and intervention according to their IEPs. Focusing on reading and math, student will be provided broad subject as well as specific interventions according to their individual needs and grade level. Using manipulatives and engaging multiple modalities, teachers will provide support and challenge students to develop critical thinking and higher levels of response according to Bloom's Taxonomy.

iv. English Language and Standard English Learners. As noted above, this is covered in the Curriculum and Instruction section.

b. Students in at-risk situations. As noted above, this is covered in the Curriculum and Instruction section.

8. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

a. Identification. The SFMS Collaborative will serve the San Fernando Middle School community. SFMS is located in the city of San Fernando; approximately 60% of its students are San Fernando residents and the balance live in Pacoima and other surrounding communities within the city of Los Angeles. The school is a school-wide Title I school and 77% of students qualifying for free/reduced meals. The student population is almost entirely Latino (96%) and 38% are English Learners. Thirteen percent of students have disabilities and 8% are participants in the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program. Most students are underperforming academically, with less than one-third of students scoring at the *Proficient* or *Advanced* level in any subject area on the 2009 California Standards Test, and significant disparities in performance can be found between English Learners and other students.¹

SFMS families are challenged by multiple socioeconomic factors. The per capita income for the community is \$12,611², approximately half of the County average, and almost one-quarter of families with children are living at or below the poverty level. Students come primarily from working poor families, many of whom are unable to make ends meet despite working one or more jobs. Ninety percent of the community is Latino, most of whom (86%) are of Mexican descent and 78% of households are Spanish-speaking. Over half (54%) of SFMS parents did not graduate from high school and only 6% graduated from college; in the broader San Fernando community, 59% of residents age 25+ did not graduate from high school. Upward mobility for families is difficult despite the strong work ethic found among many residents; their lack of English proficiency and limited education and job skills often result in low-wage jobs without health benefits. Limited adult educational attainment also means that the school needs to devote significant effort to creating a college-going culture. In more affluent communities, college is an assumed progression for high school graduates, and community elders promote the benefits of college by serving as an example; however, SFMS students have few adults to emulate.

Significant gang activity in the community also is an abiding issue. Many of our students reside within the city of Los Angeles' Pacoima/Foothill Gang Reduction Youth Development (GRYD) Zone and the city of San Fernando also has a major gang presence. There are 19 identified gangs in the SFMS community. As students continually fail in school, the lure of the streets becomes ever more powerful. Youth are confronted with opportunities to choose a negative path on virtually a daily basis; our challenge, and our responsibility, is to create a community that inspires students to succeed by giving them the knowledge, skills, resources and adult support that they need, both inside and outside the classroom.

Despite the community's many challenges, there also are many assets upon which to build. During our parent and community meetings held as part of the PSC planning process, parents repeatedly expressed the desire to learn more about how to support their children's education and increase their understanding of grade-level standards, A-G requirements, etc. and offered numerous specific suggestions for parent involvement strategies. Parents identified many school strengths as well, including a safe, clean campus that is well-supervised, the Small Learning Academies and a willingness to be self-reflective and change. Three focus groups were held with students, who in general felt positively connected to the school and their teachers, describing SFMS as a protective, caring environment.

As an internal applicant, the SFMS Collaborative has an extensive history in the community. A number of our teachers and staff are graduates of SFMS; many live in the community and are engaged in the area's civic life.

¹ Sources for school data: CA Dept. of Education Statewide Assessment Division, CA Standardized Testing and Reporting and CA Dept. of Education 2009 Growth Academic Performance Index (API) Report.

² Source for community data: United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 2007 Zip Code Databook. Data are for zip code 91340, which represents the San Fernando community.

For example, several of our staff serve on city commissions, such as the Parks and Recreation Commission. Our PSC Design Team consists of partners with a long-standing commitment to the San Fernando community: Los Angeles Education Partnership has been working in the community for twenty years, San Fernando has been a targeted community for Project GRAD services for 10 years, and California State University Northridge has had a strong presence for decades. Project GRAD has developed a database of key community resources, including community-based organizations, financial institutions, government services, public safety programs, elected officials, medical facilities, churches, parks and libraries. (Please see Attachment 6.) Between four and eight parents regularly participated in SFMS Collaborative planning meetings, adding a critical voice to the process. Other community members also were involved; for example, former LAUSD teacher and administrator Delmarie Carver, whose area of expertise is school scheduling, co-facilitated the school culture and climate planning committee. In addition, approximately 150 parents and community members attended the PSC Parent and Community meetings, attesting to the community's interest in bringing positive change to SFMS. Meeting sign-in sheets are included in Attachment 6.

As described in more detail below, SFMS will become part of the existing full-service community schools Valley Neighborhoods Collaborative (VNC), so the community school model that we envision for SFMS will not need to be created from scratch. Also connected to the VNC, is the Pacoima Community Initiative (PCI), an "on-the-ground" collaborative initiated three years ago, focused on facilitating a "community-driven response" to the increased youth violence and gang activity in Pacoima, home to many SFMS students. The PCI brings together representatives from all parts of the community including parents, parks, law enforcement, schools, community-based organizations, government offices and elected officials to strategize about aligning resources, meeting the needs of families and integrating with schools. The recently convened Northeast Valley Safety Collaborative, comprised of LAUSD, Los Angeles County Department of Probation and City and County of Los Angeles Human Relations Commissions, agreed to use PCI and VNC as their infrastructure.

The PCI and VNC are now intertwined and collectively are becoming the community school infrastructure for city/county/LAUSD and CBO collaboration. The city of Los Angeles GRYD program for Pacoima and the County's Gang prevention initiative use PCI as the "collaborative center" of their work. The County Department of Children & Family Services Prevention Initiative, the City of Los Angeles Family Source Center, the Census project, mental health providers and substance abuse agencies are all participants of the PCI as well as VNC resource councils.

b. Family and Community Engagement. SFMS will become part of the Valley Neighborhoods Collaborative (VNC), the full-service community school partnership network started at San Fernando High School (San Fernando Neighborhood Partnership), expanded to Sylmar (Sylmar Neighborhood Partnership) and opening soon at Maclay Middle School and Arleta High. The overarching goal of the VNC is to increase the number of high school graduates so that high school graduation is the expectation for *all* students in the Northeast Valley. The strategy for accomplishing the goal is to support each school becoming a hub within its neighborhood, driven by all stakeholders, focused on aligning and linking resources for children and families, from birth through college. A chart delineating the VNC mission, model and strategies is found in Attachment 6.

As a VNC community school, SFMS will have the following core components: 1) Resource Council, integrated into the SFMS Collaborative governance structure, comprised of all community stakeholders that will cultivate new partners to meet identified needs, monitor partner services and assess their effectiveness, serve as a vehicle for enhancing inter-agency communication and collaboration and review and refine family and community engagement strategies, including specific strategies for engaging hard-to-reach parents; 2) stakeholder services integrated with the academic core of the school; 3) On-site coordinator who will engage, recruit and communicate with all stakeholders, coordinate resources to maximize participation and reduce duplication; integrate the work of the Resource Council with the academic core of the school and facilitate the work of the Resource Council as problem solvers.; and 4) Use data to drive change.

In addition to these core components, each VNC school develops its own strategies to meet shared VNC objectives and any additional school-developed objectives. San Fernando Middle School Collaborative has identified four initial school-wide approaches: 1) "Open Doors" policy, described previously; 2) parent/supportive adult engagement; 3) increase volunteers and support for school; and 4) increase partnerships with service providers. Attachment 6 contains a table outlining services, activities and specific strategies within each approach.

c. Key Community Partnerships. As discussed in Section 2c, above, parents, students and other community members actively participated in SFMS Collaborative planning meetings. The SFMS Collaborative’s mission and vision for the school cannot be achieved without partnerships; collaboration is the essence of the vision. Our mission explicitly states that we *will create a strong and mutually supportive community of parents and students, teachers and staff, and community organizations.* The Community Schools Coordinator, in collaboration with the Resource Council, will be responsible for cultivating, building and strengthening relationships with service providers.

The table below identifies the partners that form the Design Team alongside SFMS teachers, staff and parents and Local District 2. As the letters in Attachment 6 demonstrate, each Design Team partner has committed to being involved for the full five-year implementation period. The specific services to be provided will be adjusted each year based on evolving needs. The team discussed the option of reconstituting the Design Team each year based on Accountability Matrix results; however, partners believe that the type of culture change we envision requires intensive effort that research shows may not produce immediate results, but will pay off in the longer term. Our philosophy is that our service partners are responsible for the quality of their individual services, while Design Team members assume responsibility for the success of the school.

Additional partners and services are listed in Attachment 6. Each partner has been selected based on their capacity to meet student, parent and school staff needs, their experience working in the SFMS community and the quality of their services. Some currently provide services on-site; others were recruited by Design Team members who have a history of working with them and can attest to the quality of services. The list of those who have pledged their support for the proposed school is included in Attachment 6.

Organization	Service(s)
<p>Los Angeles Education Partnership</p>	<p><i>Planning:</i> Devoted over 150 hours in-kind to PSC planning, including facilitating meetings, identifying and obtaining letters from partners and supporters, writing narrative sections and editing the application. Contributed toward hiring of grantwriter.</p> <p><i>Implementation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide support and guidance for the reform plan and its implementation ○ Welcome SFMS into the LAEP-led Valley Neighborhood Collaborative, ○ Train the new Community School Coordinator at SFMS ○ Help establish the four councils in the governance model. ○ Provide or ensure the delivery of professional development to support the interdisciplinary and design-based instructional strategies ○ Assist the instructional staff and governance members with the use of data to guide instruction and decision-making.
<p>Project GRAD</p>	<p><i>Planning:</i> Devoted over 150 hours in-kind to PSC planning, including participation in meetings, editing the application, identifying and obtaining letters from partners and supporters. Contributed toward hiring of grantwriter.</p> <p><i>Implementation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide support and guidance for the reform plan and its implementation ○ Provide full-time, on-site Community School Coordinator ○ Provide professional development to teachers on setting high expectations and creating a college-bound culture ○ Provide college readiness activities for students and parents outlined in Attachment 6
<p>Michael D. Eisner College of Education at Cal State University Northridge</p>	<p><i>Planning:</i> Participated in PCS planning meetings and provided expertise on specific issues, including how to effectively use technology as a tool for improving instructional delivery</p> <p><i>Implementation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide summer school intervention classes for students that also serve as learning environments for teachers to try out new practices ○ Provide professional development in the use of assistive technology ○ Professional development for teachers and principals to foster school-wide collaboration

- | | |
|--|---|
| | ○ Assistance with research and evaluation |
|--|---|

9. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

SFMS will be founded on a model of distributive leadership and responsibility under the I-Design division within LAUSD. It is because of this engagement approach to the leadership and governance of the school that the Collaborative Partners, (Project GRAD LA, LAEP & CSUN) have agreed to participate in this plan.

Stakeholders will have numerous opportunities to contribute their expertise and knowledge to the shared decision-making, as well as to take responsibility for the progress of the school. The ultimate level of decision-making will occur at the Collaborative Council, SFMS' governing body. The primary purpose of the Collaborative Council will be to maintain the mission, vision and philosophy of SFMS. The Collaborative Council will have the authority to hire staff, evaluate the principal, approve the budget, approve contracts for service, and adopt school policies.

To enable the Collaborative Council to be a true governing council for SFMS, the Collaborative will have the following autonomies from LAUSD:

- State per pupil funding allocated directly to the school
- Ability to purchase positions at actual cost
- Control over the school budget (in compliance with federal and state law)
- School staffing including
 - Staff hiring
 - Retention of existing Design Team members
 - No “must place” or involuntary transfers of any staff
 - Year to year transfer opportunities for staff who do not wish to remain at SFMS
- Contracts with service providers
- School calendar & hours

The Collaborative Council will plan to meet monthly, but no fewer than eight times per year. Its membership will be comprised of the following 18 elected members: 8 teachers (2 from each grade level, 1 out of classroom teacher, 1 UTLA representative); 1 classified staff member; 4 parents; 2 representatives from the Design Team Collaborative Partners; 1 community member, the Student Council president and the principal. The Collaborative Council chair will be elected by the full Collaborative Council. Bylaws for the Collaborative Council will be developed and adopted upon approval of this plan.

Twelve Collaborative Council members will also serve as the School Site Council in compliance with federal and state requirements. These twelve elected members will be joint members of the School Site Council and the Collaborative Council. The School Site Council will comply with all federal and state mandates and will be the only body authorized to approve the School Site Plan and the budget for Categorical funding. All such votes will be appropriately documented.

Four stakeholder councils (Resource, School Staff, Student & Parent) will meet monthly to support the implementation of the Plan and to monitor its progress from their unique vantage point. Each council will be required to develop and sign a compact endorsing the vision and mission of the SFMS Collaborative and outlining the specific ways in which the council will support the SFMS Collaborative PSC plan. The Councils will collect and use data to inform and coordinate plan implementation. Each council will build strategies, programs, activities and recommendations to the Collaborative Council on instruction, school culture, budget, stakeholder engagement, and more. Members of each stakeholder group will be required to sign a compact endorsing the vision and mission of the SFMS Collaborative and outlines the specific ways in which the council will support the reform model. In addition to this shared purpose, the Councils will accomplish the following:

- **Resource Council.** Identify and organize resources and volunteers to support the needs of students and their families, as well as to support the SFMS mission and vision. All on and off-site service providers will be required to deliver services consistent with the SFMS mission, vision and academic goals. They will keep participation data and be encouraged to attend meetings of the Resource Council.

- **School Staff Council.** Gather input from all teacher and staff groups relative to progress towards meeting the goals of the school plan. In addition to bringing forward for discussion the professional development, instructional and curriculum plans of teachers, the council will provide a forum for the sharing of ideas among them and classified staff. PLC teams, department teams, academy teams and classified teams will be represented on the School Staff Council and are invited to bring issues and suggestions for school improvement there.
- **Student Council.** Meet regularly as either, a class, enrichment or club to provide a student perspective on the academic, culture, and resource needs of students. The council will be engaged in identifying and meeting the holistic needs of students.
- **Parent Council.** Encourage the broadest possible engagement of parents, guardians and caregivers in support of students. Organize activities to inform and educate parents, build relationships between teachers and parents, and foster the highest of expectations for children. Develop, monitor and implement strategies for engaging hard-to-reach parents.

Additionally, the Compensatory Education and the English Learners Advisory Councils will provide advisory support to the Collaborative Council in compliance with federal and state law. Lastly, topical workgroups comprised of representatives from all stakeholder groups will be created as needed to address broad topics such as budget, transitions, orientation, or safety.

A governance chart is included in Attachment 7.

10. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP & STAFFING PLAN

As an internal applicant, SFMS will adhere to Hours, Duties and Work Year, Transfers, Reduction in Force/Reinstatement and Salaries as described in LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements. We also will comply with Duties, Responsibilities and Hours as described in all Collective Bargaining Agreements.

a. Leadership Team Capacity. Design Team members submitting this plan are listed in the table below:

Name	Title & Organization
Eduardo Solorzano	Principal San Fernando Middle School
Kelly Welsh	Assistant Principal San Fernando Middle School
Jeremy Lawrence	Assistant Principal San Fernando Middle School
Patricia Valdivia	Assistant Principal San Fernando Middle School
Barbara Mecka	Interim Administrator San Fernando Middle School
Laura Tracy	Teacher, UTLA Representative San Fernando Middle School
Jose Rodriguez	Director, Secondary Schools LAUSD Local District 2
Ellen Pais	Senior Director, Connected Communities Los Angeles Education Partnership
Ford Roosevelt	President and CEO Project GRAD Los Angeles
Michael Spagna	Dean Michael D. Eisner School of Education California State University Northridge
Delmarie Carver	Community Member, LAUSD Central Office Coordinator Retired, Educational Consultant, Ask the Moose and Owl

The Design Team brings a breadth and depth of experience and expertise, both from inside and outside the world of education, that give the Team the collective capacity to meet the challenges that lie ahead. On average, team members bring two decades of experience to the effort. The Design Team possesses strong capacity in a number of areas that will be key to successful implementation:

- Strong facilitation skills and ability to help school stakeholders collaborate effectively within the construct of a common vision and goals
- Extensive experience with parent engagement in the San Fernando community
- School administrator experience in implementing a Community School model and in middle school culture transformation, including specific experience with implementing a 4x4+1 block schedule
- Experience in teaching and in teacher leadership
- Administrator skill in building strong relationships with teachers and gaining buy-in to the need for culture change
- Successful experience working with schools in the San Fernando community to create a culture of high expectations that has resulted in increased college enrollment among the community's students
- Teacher training program experience and expertise in instructional delivery, intervention and the use of technology in school settings

Less tangible, but perhaps equally important, is the passion that every member of the Design Team brings to their work and our collective commitment to transforming urban schools so that every student has equity and access to a quality education. That passion is shared not only by the members of the Design Team, but among the broader SFMS stakeholder group. In addition to the core Design Team, approximately 25 teachers, parents and community members dedicated many hours of their time to the planning process. Teachers took the lead in writing the curricular maps and participated extensively on the various planning committees that were formed. A separate series of meetings was held with teachers, facilitated by a group of retired LAUSD administrators and current SFMS students offered their advice in focus groups. Partners also brought other resources to the table including Paula Goodman, director of the design-based learning program at Art Center College of Design, John Match, Director of Coaching for LAEP, Debra Greenfield, Executive Director of ABC Learn, Inc and Jose Navarro, California 2009 Teacher of the Year and lead teacher of Humanitas at Sylmar High School. All contributed their wisdom to SFMS staff working on the PSC plan. The role of the Design Team was to take the many ideas and suggestions generated and turn them into a coherent, substantive plan grounded in best practices research. If we have done our job correctly, and we strongly believe that we have, our stakeholders will quickly take ownership of the plan because their thoughts and ideas clearly reflected in it.

Our extensive experience gives us insight and wisdom about the incredibly challenging task that lies ahead, but we also have insight into the power that we have to change the life trajectory of our students. The knowledge that we have that power – and that responsibility – will keep us motivated even as we encounter the inevitable obstacles that will crop up during this five-year journey. If we are able to remain true to our mantra of “no adult agendas,” we have no doubt that San Fernando Middle School will truly be a transformed school at the end of the process.

b. Staffing model. The staffing plan is included in Attachment 8. We don't envision substantial changes over the five year period, but will make adjustments based on funding, enrollment and the evolving needs of our school community. Our staffing plan is designed to maximize the number of teachers we can afford so that our teacher to student ratios are in keeping with the personalized learning experience we envision for every student. The student-to-teacher in the general education program will be 25:1. We cannot specify the number of aides at this time as it is our understanding that those positions will be very limited due to budget cuts. In Special Day Classes, the student-to-teacher ratio will be 14:1, with one teacher and one Special Education Aide per classroom. The ratio of adults on campus to students cannot be determined precisely at this time, since decisions regarding the number of days to purchase for itinerant positions such as the Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor will be determined based on funding; our we estimate that the student-to-adult ratio will be approximately 13:1.

c. Compensation. As an internal applicant, compensation will be commensurate with the LAUSD salary schedule.

d. School Leadership. The Collaborative Council will be tasked with establishing a rigorous selection process for filling the principal position, aligned with the process outlined in the PSC plan, should the principal position become vacant. We have requested autonomy over staff hiring; a hiring committee comprised of members of the Collaborative Council, including student and parent representatives, will vet principal candidates, with final selection voted upon by all members. Preference will be given to candidates with demonstrated ability to lead schools with a similar vision and mission and experience with, and openness to, a framework of shared accountability and distributed leadership. While exact criteria will be determined by the Collaborative Council, key characteristics this individual will need to possess in order to align with the SFMS Collaborative’s mission and vision include: knowledge of the research and practice of school culture change; demonstrated commitment to ensuring equity and access to a quality education for all students; a solid understanding of the SFMS community and the students we serve; willingness and ability to lead by example in creating a culture of high expectations for all; articulated understanding of adolescent development; demonstrated capacity to establish and maintain collegial relationships with teachers that are grounded in mutual respect; and experience in leading a school that embodies the Community School philosophy. A job description for the principal position is included in Attachment 8.

Eduardo Solorzano, current SFMS principal, possesses each of the qualities the SFMS Collaborative desires in a principal. A former Math teacher with experience in instructional coaching, Mr. Solorzano came to SFMS this year from Maclay Middle School, where he helped lead Maclay’s transformation, including the switch to a 4x4+1 schedule. Mr. Solorzano possesses strong collaborative skills and the capacity to partner with teachers to effect change and is unafraid of challenge. He is passionately committed to achieving equity and access for all students, a commitment rooted in his personal background, which shares striking similarities with many SFMS students. Mr. Solorzano emigrated from Mexico with his family when he was 10 years old and entered LAUSD as an English Language Learner. His family struggled economically. Overcoming these challenges, he graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and embarked on a career in education, later going on to earn his Master’s Degree. Mr. Solorzano and the SFMS Design Team are committed to creating an environment in which all students are able to maximize their potential, so that stories like Mr. Solorzano’s became the norm rather than the exception.

e. Leadership Team Beyond the Principal. Initially, the leadership team will consist of the current members of the PSC Design Team, Team Leads and Department Chairs and will be expanded to include leaders representing each of the stakeholder councils we will form as part of the governance structure. The role of this team will be to motivate teachers and staff, provide the link between governance and implementation and serve as facilitators of cultural change.

All positions are filled. The leadership team is comprised of high quality staff, each of whom we expect will be effective in helping to lead the transformation we will be undertaking. As the Design Team composition table in Section 10a indicates, several members of the leadership team beyond the principal have been closely involved in designing our implementation plan. Job descriptions for those that will be involved in these leadership positions are included in Attachment 8.

f. Recruitment of Teaching Staff. Our teachers are in place. As noted earlier, many of them participated in the planning for this application. We have requested an autonomy that would allow teachers who are unhappy with the culture change to request year to year transfers. Inevitably, we expect that some teachers will choose to leave. In the event that we need to fill positions, we will work with our supporter UTLA to recruit the best teachers in the area who believe in our mission, vision and change philosophy. Hiring timelines will align with professional development timelines; all new hires will be in place in time for the new teacher orientation and school-wide professional development planned for late August, prior to the beginning of the school year.

Teacher job descriptions are included in Attachment 8.

11. OPERATIONS

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

b. External Applicants. Not applicable.

c. Master Service Agreements. SFMS will adhere to LAUSD operational services policies regarding Master Service Agreements.

d. School Operations Experience. Not applicable to internal applicants.

e. Operations Start-up Plan. Not applicable; SFMS is fully operational.

f. Operations Plan. We will continue to work collaboratively with LAUSD for all goods and services.

12. FINANCES

a. Funding. As noted in the *Governance* section, the SFMS Collaborative, as a potential iDesign school, has requested the autonomy to receive per-pupil funding, based on actual state-allocated, per-pupil funded ADA. In the event that the autonomy is approved with modifications, SFMS will continue to receive funding via LAUSD’s transparent budgeting process.

b. Budget Narrative. In the spring of 2010, SFMS will form a budget workgroup to begin the budget development process, reviewing both the Single Plan for Student Achievement and our Public School Choice plan to allocate funds and meet compliance. The budget workgroup will take a “big picture” approach, determining how to combine and leverage all general and categorical funds to best support our plan, in compliance with federal and state guidelines.

Successful implementation of our PSC model requires a flexible staffing plan. We need to shed the trappings of the traditional school norm table and make site-based decisions on class size and the needed certificated and classified personnel. Our proposed staffing plan accounts for the health and human services provided by our collaborative partners and the continued availability of those in-kind resources will inform our decision-making regarding the purchasing of itinerant staff. We have requested that the state per-pupil funding be allocated directly to the school and that our budget reflect the actual salaries and benefits of the incumbent personnel instead of the maximum costs the District budgets per position. Since we have a number of new employees, this would increase the general funds available to the school and allow us to fully implement our staffing plan.

As a recipient of funding via the Quality Education Investment Act, (QEIA), we must maintain a class size of 25:1 in all core classes. Additionally, as part of our commitment to creating a more personalized learning experience for our students, we plan to reduce the number of students with whom ELA and Math teachers work from 150:1 to 75:1. To accomplish this, the number of out-of-classroom personnel will be reduced to afford additional teachers, the savings garnered from purchasing positions at actual cost also will be used to hire teachers and we also will leverage both QEIA and categorical funds to meet these personnel needs.

Several other components of our plan will need to be considered by the budget workgroup:

- As we move our school start time to 8:45 a.m., additional funding will be needed for certificated personnel and classified supervision personnel to implement a quality before school program that includes includes homework assistance, enrichment, and recreation.
- While categorical funds will be used to fund six hours of new teacher orientation and faculty participation in two professional development days prior to the beginning of the school year, general funds will need to be allocated for participation of teachers’ assistants and classified employees in these and similar activities.
- Our technology plan will require funding. Our stakeholders, including Community Union, are able to assist with some aspects of the plan, such as helping the school gain access to quality refurbished computers, but we will need to allocate general funds to purchase materials and equipment which may not be purchased through categorical funds. SFMS is in need of technology and equipment school-wide. Needs include desktop computers, laptop carts, smart boards, document cameras, projectors, etc. Money for alterations and improvement to update school facilities to support technology also is needed.

The SFMS Collaborative recognizes that additional fundraising will be necessary to fully implement our vision. One of the initial tasks of the Collaborative Council will be to map out a specific fundraising plan, based on the most up-to-date knowledge regarding school funding, that will delineate amount of funding needed for specific purposes, potential sources of funding (grants, leveraged resources from community partners, etc.) and council member responsibilities for accomplishing the tasks outlined. One of the major strengths of our Design Team is fundraising experience. Each of our Collaborative Partners has infused the San Fernando community and its schools with significant resources based on their proven track record of obtaining local, state and federal government grants, as well as funding from private and corporate

foundations. For example, the Community School Coordinator position included in our staffing plan is an in-kind contribution from Project GRAD. The Valley Neighborhoods Collaborative, the full-service community school partnership network discussed in the *Family and Community Engagement* section, is funded in part through a \$2.4 million Full Service Community Schools grant from the Department of Education.

c. Financial Controls. As an internal operator, SFMS will adhere to all LAUSD practices and procedures regulating the control and expenditure of funds. The school will maintain detailed financial records available for review and audit by LAUSD as requested.

13. FACILITIES

The SFMS Collaborative will adhere to the facilities use agreement provided by LAUSD and finalized by the Workforce Stability Taskforce.