



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Central Region Elementary School #14

Executive Summaries



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

## Camino Nuevo Charter Academy

### Executive Summary

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (5-7 pages)**

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy (CNCA) has a proven track record of providing outstanding educational opportunities for children in the Greater MacArthur Park area. Located in one of the most densely populated and underserved communities in Los Angeles, our schools have proven that all students can accomplish unprecedented goals when they are held to high standards, exposed to relevant learning experiences, provided targeted intervention, and supported in a nurturing environment. Today, CNCA serves a total of 2045 students across a preschool, one K-5 elementary, two K-8 campuses, and a high school. The most recent school in our portfolio is Jose A. Castellanos elementary school formerly known as CRES #15. CNCA was selected to operate the school under Public School Choice 1.0.

**1A. MISSION AND VISION**

State the mission, vision and core beliefs of the proposed school as well as the school's values about teaching and learning. Include an explanation of what students will know and be able to do as well as the rigorous intellectual habits of mind, essential skills, knowledge and attributes they will possess upon matriculation that will prepare them to be successful adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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

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

To accomplish this mission CNCA created a comprehensive educational program, including a rigorous college preparatory academic curriculum focused on standards-based learning for grades K-12, a bilingual program, integration of the visual and performing arts, an emphasis on social justice, access to the latest information technology, after school enrichment programs at each campus, and extensive parent and community outreach. This proven model will ensure that CRES #14, serving grades K-8, will significantly increase the number of high-performing seats in the community and build on the history and success of CNCA.

CNCA believes that an educated person in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must possess a diverse set of characteristics and skills in order to function in an increasingly global society. Our students will possess:

- Advanced levels of literacy and mathematical skills to successfully navigate both their personal and professional lives.
- Strong critical thinking skills to evaluate and synthesize the abundance of available information.
- Proficiency with technology through regular exposure and access to computers and technological tools.
- Bilingualism and bi-literacy in English and Spanish to function in a global economy.

- Command of the emotional intelligences in order to communicate effectively, work well in teams with people of diverse backgrounds, and collectively solve problems.
- Capacity to draw upon their educational and experiential background to make decisions that positively impact themselves and the world around them.

In alignment with the CNCA mission, CRES #14 students will move on to secondary education equipped with the literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills necessary for academic and social success.

## 1B. STUDENT POPULATION

Describe the student population that your proposed school will serve, including the interests and critical educational needs of the students. Explain your team’s experience serving a similar population of students, and how your proposed school will meet the identified needs of these students.

CNCA currently serves over 2000 students from pre-K through twelfth grade. The total student body is made up of approximately 95% Latino, 2% other, and less than 1% of the following ethnicities: Filipino, African American, Asian, and Caucasian. CNCA schools are currently located in the densely populated, underserved greater MacArthur Park community of Los Angeles. The area is comprised of primarily Latino immigrant families that have a poverty rate of 35%, almost twice the city-wide rate of 18%, with a median yearly income of \$11,475. The census tracts that make up this community have the highest percentage of severe residential overcrowding in the city, the greatest concentration of single parent households, and the highest English non-fluency rate. The proposed school, CRES #14, would relieve over-crowding from Lake Street Primary, Rosemont Elementary, and Union Street Elementary and currently not identified local middle schools. The student population of the three schools, along with the middle schools that they feed into, closely mirrors that of CNCA’s existing elementary campuses:<sup>1</sup>

School	Hispanic or Latino %	Economically Disadvantaged %	English Learner %	Special Education %
CNCA (K-8 Aggregate)	97%	92%	56%	11%
Rosemont Elementary	78%	90%	42%	8%
Union St. Elementary	97%	92%	59%	10%
Lake Street Primary	86%	90%	64%	9%
Castro Middle School	93%	89%	31%	9%
Leichty Middle School	96%	90%	37%	9%
King Middle School	72%	86%	20%	11%
Virgil Middle School	86%	89%	36%	12%

CNCA has a proven track record ensuring student populations similar to the anticipated incoming population of CRES #14 successfully demonstrate academic proficiency in reading, writing and math, regardless of their previous academic performance. Our unwavering commitment to academic excellence is best illustrated in the unprecedented results CNCA schools have achieved in this community: a California API score of 859 for our K-8 campuses and an API score of 788 for our high school; an average of 62% of all students proficient in ELA and 80% of all students proficient in math (grades 2-8); and, a 96% high school graduation rate with an average of 80% of students accepted into four-year colleges and universities throughout the country. Based on the remarkable academic growth of our K-8 schools since 2000, CNCA

<sup>1</sup> Data Source: 2009-10 Data: LAUSD School Report Cards (<http://schoolinfosheet.lausd.net/budgetreports/reports.jsp>)

has received accolades from numerous neighborhood organizations and elected officials. In the 2009-2010 school year, CNCA K-8 was honored to receive the California Title 1 Achievement Award, California Distinguished Elementary School Award, and California Association of Bilingual Education (CABE) Seal of Excellence Award for the bilingual program at the Burlington Campus. Additionally, Camino Nuevo High School was granted with the U.S. News Silver Award for being one of the top U.S. high schools. The unique features of our proposed school model, including: a Bilingual Program, small student to teacher ratios, a culture of care that promotes college readiness, and an extended school year, have been proven to address the specific needs of the prospective school population.

### 1C. INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Provide an overview of the instructional program of the proposed school, identifying and describing the key instructional strategies and practices that the school will employ to drive student achievement. Briefly explain the research base that demonstrates that the identified strategies will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population.

“Whole teaching is inclusive in its teaching and learning strategies, meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse student population,”<sup>2</sup> Camino Nuevo embraces this “whole child” teaching approach and strives to create a culture of care for each individual student. We believe in teaching the whole child and consistently use differentiated small group instruction to inspire students to self-define what motivates them to learn. Our philosophy allows our students to find authentic connections to their academic learning through language, performing arts, and technology. We maintain an unwavering commitment to providing high-quality educational opportunities to the students and work diligently to continuously strengthen our educational practices and achieve our mission of preparing students to succeed in college and beyond.

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

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

1. **Academic Accountability:** CNCA holds high expectations of all members of our community. We hold teachers and staff to high expectations first, working to ensure we are prepared and ready to partner with parents and students. We habitually set rigorous student achievement goals, plan strategically to meet these goals, and regularly reflect on our outcomes. At Camino, preparation for college begins in kindergarten with high expectations for all students and a rigorous academic program.
2. **Instructional Program** – Every student at CRES #14 will receive a high quality, rigorous instructional program. There are research-based common cross-curricular structures utilized across grade levels to ensure consistency and academic excellence. In the elementary grades, these structures include the Bilingual Program and Four Blocks Literacy Framework. At the middle school, Integrated Block Structure, Reading Block, and Strategic Afternoon

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<sup>2</sup> Miller, J.P. 2007. “Whole Teaching, Whole Schools, Whole Teachers” Educational Leadership. Volume 64.

Programming are all interwoven to create an effective program that will prepare students to access high school curricula. Finally, Thinking Maps and Reading Strategies are two structures that will be implemented school-wide to ensure our mission of educating students to be literate, critical thinkers is met.

3. **Bilingual Program coupled with Systematic English Language Development:** The Bilingual Program at CNCA is a research-based program designed to build academic fluency in both Spanish and English. Joining a systematic approach to English Language Development with a rigorous core curriculum based on California state standards, within the context of a Bilingual Program, builds on the language that students bring to school. The model provides a vehicle for creating bilingual and bi-literate students who value and take pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage and are optimally prepared for the rigors of life in a linguistically diverse world.
4. **Comprehensive Wrap-Around Support Services for Students and Families:** In collaboration a full-time coordinator of student and family services, CNCA delivers a comprehensive student support program that includes parents, school and community, with the goal of creating healthy educated students who are poised to achieve their full academic and social potential. Partnerships with PAJA Medical Center, Los Angeles Child Development Center, Didi Hirsch and the Echo Center support physical and emotional health and wellbeing among our students and families. We seek to ensure physical and mental health services are accessible for all of our students and families in order to increase the potential of students to achieve personal and academic goals
5. **Partnerships for Arts Education:** CNCA is dedicated to partnering with the local arts community to provide a foundational arts program for our students. Our efforts to leverage the resources within our community and provide arts education to students include, exposing students to the visual and performing arts at an early age, and fostering love for and commitment to students' talents as they get older. Among CNCA's partners are PS Arts, Everybody Dance!, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, three existing organizations dedicated to providing meaningful and ongoing instruction in the performing and visual arts. PS Arts provides standards-based visual arts instruction for students from grades K-8 on a weekly basis, while also offering drama for grades 3-5. Everybody dance! provides weekly dance instruction to students in grades K-8. The Los Angeles Philharmonic Education Program provides music instruction to students in grades K-5 and after school opportunities for all students through a partnership between CNCA and the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (YOLA) at a local non-profit called the Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA).
6. **Genuine Adult Learning Community:** CNCA 's adult learning community has been recognized as a best practice by the California Department of Education and received the California Distinguished School Award during the 2009-2010 school year. We work diligently to foster a positive culture for all stakeholders. We place a special emphasis on maintaining a positive culture for our faculty and staff because of the impact a single teacher can have on student achievement outcomes. CNCA firmly believes that culture shapes and focuses our collective energy. We invest a significant amount of time creating a team atmosphere among faculty and staff that embodies a true adult learning community. The results of the most recent staff satisfaction survey (June 2010) at one of our schools indicate that 100% of teachers agree that "administrators effectively foster a team environment among school staff". Ultimately, we seek to create an educational environment where educators experience teaching as a craft and children own their learning. We strive to provide students with the academic and social skills they need to feel inspired and achieve their hearts' desire.

To accomplish our mission, CNCA developed a comprehensive educational program, including a rigorous college preparatory academic curriculum focused on standards-based learning for grades K-12, a bilingual program, integration of the visual and performing arts, an emphasis on social justice, access to the latest information technology, after school enrichment programs at each campus, and extensive parent and community outreach. The CRES #14 educational program both embraces and celebrates the linguistic and cultural diversity of our students. To that end, each of our research-based practices are continuously refined and shared across the organization to strengthen how we serve the whole child.

#### 1D. SCHOOL CULTURE

Describe the school culture that your team envisions for the proposed school and what, if any social-emotional supports are necessary to create that culture.

School culture is defined by a shared set of norms and values that guide the thinking, behavior, and relationships that typify the customs of an organization.<sup>3</sup> CNCA holds high expectations of all members of our community as defined by the organizational mission, site specific instructional vision and shared commitments, the CNCA Way and our approach to partnering with parents and students. We hold ourselves as teachers and staff to these high expectations first, working to ensure that we are prepared and ready to partner with parents and students. All CNCA schools habitually set goals for student achievement, plan strategically to meet these goals, and reflect on their outcomes.

Furthermore, all CNCA schools are expected to develop a site specific instructional vision to focus the efforts of the entire school community on the instructional components necessary to achieve the aims of our organizational mission. The CNCA instructional vision (see below) provides an example of the type of instructional vision typically adopted by CNCA schools. The CRES #14 leadership team and school community will be expected to develop a similar instructional vision that is used by the entire school community to reflect upon its culture, instructional approach, and results.

#### **CNCA Instructional Vision**

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

CNCA schools are also expected to have a set of shared commitments that all faculty members subscribe to when they become a part of the CNCA team. The commitments are used to ensure ongoing alignment between our mindsets, behavior, and outcomes for students and our team. The commitments are regularly reflected upon at the opening or closing of faculty meetings to ensure they remain alive in the minds of the faculty and leadership team. An example of a CNCA school's Shared Commitments follows:

- All children can learn, therefore all of our students will grow this year; We will do whatever it takes.
- Every minute counts; We will maximize instructional time.
- We are accountable to one another for quality instruction; We will support one another toward being successful and maintaining high expectations.

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<sup>3</sup> Crane, T. (2009). The Heart of Coaching.

We hold our entire school community to the “Camino Nuevo Way” (see below) and work diligently to instill these habits of mind and heart in our students beginning in kindergarten. We use classroom community circles and the Tribes curriculum to explicitly discuss each “Way”. Monthly school-wide community meetings reinforce classroom instruction. Each month one student from each classroom is selected by their peers and teacher because they most exemplify the highlighted CNCA Way. This student is publicly honored with a certificate and a few words during the monthly school community meetings. The “Camino Nuevo Way” is a rigorous set of mindsets and behaviors that defines the culture of our small school communities.

### **Partnering with Parents**

CNCA strongly believes that parents must be partners in the educational process. We offer high-quality family services, including a comprehensive parent workshop program and health case management for families in need. The school will build an infrastructure around our “parents as partners” motto and will identify a full-time student and parent services coordinator to lead this charge at CRES #14. Research suggests that parents who actively engage in their child’s classrooms display increased, consistent commitment to their child’s education (Stern, 2003). Childs Trend Data Research (2003), which examines trends in parent involvement, concludes that students with involved parents have fewer behavioral issues and are more likely to complete secondary school. Rather than approaching parent participation as a one-shot volunteer opportunity featuring a string of disconnected activities, CNCA seeks to develop genuine partnerships with parents around all aspects of their children’s educational lives.

It is the goal of CNCA to foster an environment of social and cultural inclusion for all families. Efforts to reach this goal will include an open-door policy for all leadership team members, extended opportunities to participate beyond the instructional day, monthly forums with the principal, workshops facilitated by the leadership team, weekly newsletters published in English and Spanish, and classes such as the Latino Family Literacy Project specifically designed to support the proposed parent demographic of CRES#14.

### **Supporting Students with Wrap-Around Services**

CNCA strives towards a comprehensive student support program that includes the parents, school and larger community, with the goal of creating healthy literate students who are poised to achieve their full academic and social potential. To this end, CNCA will organize human resources to support student needs. An administrator will be responsible for coordinating academic intervention programs to address the academic needs of those students who need additional support to access grade level standards. The Coordinated Support Team, comprised of the leadership team and resource teacher, will meet weekly to discuss the progress or needs of students. Student Support Team Meetings will be regularly held to provide additional support for struggling students. The Coordinator of Student and Family Services will be responsible for supporting students and families with gaining access to necessary medical, dental, vision, or mental health services to correct issues that impede their ability to learn. Additionally, through a partnership with the Los Angeles Child Development Center, there will be a full-time mental health counselor on staff who oversees a team of five interns that will provide counseling services to eligible students.

## **1E. ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE GOALS**

Briefly discuss how your organization will set and annually update targets for the indicators in the table below. Please share key data from the Performance Management Matrix highlighting the goals of the proposed school.

**Not required to respond** (according to LAUSD Innovation and Charters Schools Division)

## 1F. COMMUNITY ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT

Describe the community that your proposed school will serve. Include an analysis of the strengths, assets, values and critical needs of the community. Discuss your rationale for selecting this community, your experience serving this or a similar community, how your team has engaged the community thus far and how it will continue to do so if selected.

CNCA has a proven track record of operating successful schools that lead to the transformation of communities through education. We are a charter organization dedicated to working with the families and students of a specific geographic target area in central Los Angeles which is bordered by the 110 freeway on the east, the 10 freeway on the south, La Brea Avenue on the West and Sunset Boulevard on the North. Central Region Elementary School #14 is squarely within the communities we seek to serve. The enrollment patterns between CNCA existing schools and the relieving schools – Lake Primary Center, Rosemont Elementary, Union Elementary and local middle schools– are very similar in their demographics.

CNCA stands out among its public school peers of charter and non-charter schools because of its community development antecedents that have given it deep roots in the neighborhoods served and its continued place-based approach. CNCA's place-based approach integrates its educational programs with the wealth of resources available in our communities to create a network that addresses barriers to learning. .

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

- Extraordinarily high level of parent involvement at each school: CNCA places an emphasis on parent training and outreach. On a weekly basis, parents are given an opportunity to attend workshops ranging from nutrition and safety to effective discipline and college planning. In 2009-2010, the Burlington site parents had a 99% completion rate of the end-of-year parent satisfaction survey (over 500 parents). When asked what grade they would give the school, 82% said an "A" and 16% would give it a "B." In addition, 92% of parents strongly agree or agree that the academic program at his/her child's school is very effective.
- Extensive community partnerships: CNCA is able to attract numerous community partners which provide invaluable services to students and their families. Examples include educational partnerships with P.S. Arts, the Gabriella Axelrad Foundation, the Mind Institute, and Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Greater Los Angeles; primary medical care and mental health counseling through partnerships with Paja Medical Group, Didi Hirsch Mental Health Center and Los Angeles Child Development Center; and social services through Inquilinos Unidos, Centro de Educacion Popular, and Para Los Niños. These community groups have demonstrated level of investment to CNCA students that goes far beyond a contractual arrangement, and many of these partners have been with CNCA since its inception. CNCA partners have played an important role in supporting student success throughout the years.

CNCA has sought to actively engage with the community to seek input on the development for this plan. CNCA presented our organization, track record and proposal elements for CRES #14 to the Echo Park community at multiple meetings:

- Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council (GEPENC)
- GEPENC education committee meeting
- GEPENC Public School Choice town hall meeting
- Echo Park Community Action Committee (EPCAC)
- Community meeting at the Echo Park Episcopal Cathedral, hosted by CNCA

- Community meeting at the Camino Nuevo High School, hosted by CNCA
- LAUSD's School Plan Community Conversations at Union Ave. Elementary School

CNCA continues to work with stakeholder groups to plan the opening of the school and develop a thorough parent and community outreach and engagement strategy. Specifically, the decision to replicate one of our existing K-8 campuses was explored with the Site Based Council.

## 1G. LEADERSHIP

Provide an overview of the proposed school's governance structure and leadership team. Highlight the strengths of the leadership team and the proposed leader. If a leader has not been identified, speak to the key attributes the potential leader should possess.

### **Governance Structure**

CRES #14 will be operated as a charter school under CNCA's 501c3 not for profit organizational status. In order to continue operating under the same independent charter organization, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy will operate CRES #14 as a charter school.

- **CNCA Board of Directors:** CNCA operates in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws established by the CNCA governing board to the extent the Bylaws (see Appendices) and Articles of Incorporation are consistent with the Brown Act in dealing with operations of CNCA. The affairs of CNCA will be managed and its powers exercised under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Board of Directors will have a legal and fiduciary responsibility for CNCA. The Board will be responsible for providing fiscal accountability including approving and monitoring the budget. The board will also help ensure effective organizational planning by approving long-range goals and annual objectives, monitoring the general policies such as health and safety, use and maintenance of facilities, and fundraising, and overseeing that school resources are managed effectively.
- **Site-Based Council:** CNCA will have an on-site advisory governance board, the Site-based Council, consisting of the principal, parent representatives, teachers elected by grade level and/or discipline, classified staff representation, the student body president, and local community stakeholders. The Site-based Council will provide suggestions and recommendations to the site leadership and/or to the Board of Directors on issues including, but not limited to, budgeting, curriculum, school policies, school/community participation, and the general direction of the school.

### **Leadership Team**

The CNCA development team has experience with successful new school development. CNCA has opened four charter schools and a preschool center that collectively serve over 2,000 students. The CNCA Schools' academic performance has steadily increased and now exceeds that of local schools. The development team has extensive experience working in high performing schools and organizations. This team successfully opened CRES #15 as a part of Public School Choice 1.0 in August of 2010. The leadership team consists of (see Appendices):

- Ana F. Ponce, Chief Executive Officer
- Philip Lance, Co-founder and President of the Board
- Atyani Howard, Chief Academic Officer / Current Principal, Burlington Campus
- Hoa Truong, Chief Operations Officer
- Mary Funaoka, Director of Academic Affairs
- Margaret Domingo, Director of Human Resources
- David Partida, Parent
- Estela Sandoval, Cotsen Fellow and Teachers' Union Co-President

### **Key Leadership Attributes**

CNCA leaders must be visionaries, eager to be at the forefront of educational practices and must embrace the challenge of demonstrating that public education in a low-income, primarily immigrant, multilingual area can and should represent excellence and opportunity. Leaders must possess strong organizational, leadership, supervisory and administrative skills to promote increased academic achievement and continuous professional growth.

### **1H. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE MODEL**

Briefly explain the rationale for your choice of school type. Why are you applying to operate your school as a traditional, Pilot, Expanded School-Based Management Model (ESBMM), Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school? Please reference Appendix B for more information on the governance models listed above.

CRES #14 will be operated as a charter school under CNCA's 501c3 not for profit organizational status. In order to continue operating under the same independent charter organization, Camino Nuevo Charter Academy will operate CRES #14 as a charter school. CRES #14 will utilize flexibilities and autonomies within our instructional program and operating model to ensure that the needs of all students are best served. Specifically, our staffing plan is based on our instructional program, not enrollment numbers, and our extended school year allows us to maximize available instructional time. Our charter status also provides the autonomy and flexibility to swiftly respond to student achievement data. For example, quarterly benchmark assessment data may indicate a need for more instructional time currently allocated to a number of special electives. A site leader has the autonomy to negotiate revisions to the daily elective schedule in order to address the need for more academic instructional minutes.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Local District 4 Echo Park Community  
Partners Design Team

Executive Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (5-7 pages)

a. **Mission and Vision** *State the mission, vision and core beliefs of the proposed school as well as the school's values about teaching and learning. Include an explanation of what students will know and be able to do as well as the rigorous intellectual habits of mind, essential skills, knowledge and the attributes they will possess upon matriculation that will prepare them to be successful adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Mission:** CRES #14 Span School will use the "conceptual learning" method of instruction to promote critical thinking and problem-solving. The staff will work across disciplines, integrating the arts and sciences. Through experiential learning, the inquiry approach, and project and theme-based instruction, we will produce students who will have an enduring, holistic understanding of what they have learned. Students who will feed to CRES#14 Span School will benefit from a strong concept driven curriculum, which will connect them with the real world and their cultural/social backgrounds. The staff will provide student-centered, hands-on activities with well-planned open-ended questions to promote students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. CRES #14 Span School staff will work with local, national, and international organizations to create effective service learning and a dual language program. Through rigorous assessment and continual improvement, the staff will provide students with a stimulating and satisfying school experience, and equip students with what they need to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Vision:** The vision of CRES #14 Span School is that every student will successfully complete high school and graduate career-ready and college prepared, in order to become a productive member of the local and global community. All students will become bilingual, well-rounded, intellectually curious, socially conscious, environmentally sensitive, life-long learners and critical thinkers, who will be willing and able to join in the effort to improve the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. All students will have developed habits of character that will help them approach this task with humility, courage, intercultural understanding, and respect.

#### **Core Beliefs and Values about Teaching and Learning:**

1. **Quality Education:** is achieved through rigorous academic work that shows measurable mastery of predetermined instructional standards.
2. **Accountability:** is fostered by clear expectations, high standards, responsibility, and self sufficiency, and is vital for ensuring academic success and social growth.
3. **Lifelong Learning:** is fostered through curiosity, creativity, cultural understanding, and imagination that lead to intellectual stimulation and a lifelong love of learning.
4. **Teamwork:** is essential to create a positive environment because it fosters trust, mutual understanding, and open communication and collaboration among all stakeholders.
5. **Humor/Spirit:** is fostered through an atmosphere of trust, belonging, and humor that leads to a productive, safe and enjoyable work environment.
6. **Respect for Diversity:** is achieved in an accepting environment where all stakeholders are patient, informed, caring, demonstrate cultural understanding, and persevere to reach common goals.
7. **Peace and Social Justice:** is fostered through a sense of personal and intellectual accomplishment along with good citizenship will come from a healthy community that advocates integrity, fairness, positive solutions, peace, and social justice.

**Students' Outcomes:** Students at CRES# 14 Span School will acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They will actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives. They will learn to work collaboratively

with people from diverse backgrounds to explore concepts, ideas, and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they will acquire and develop in-depth knowledge across a broad and balanced range of disciplines. They will exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions. Students will show empathy, compassion, and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They will have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**b. Student Population** *Describe the student population that your proposed school will serve, including the interests and critical educational needs of the students. Explain your team's experience serving a similar population of students, and how your proposed school will meet the identified needs of these students.*

**Population:** Echo Park is an area containing a great diversity of ethnic groups, languages, and cultures. The diversity of the school children in the Echo Park area is apparent in the data from existing schools: some schools have a population that includes 20% English Learners, while English Learners comprise over 60% of the student body of other neighborhood schools. At one elementary school 39% are proficient and advanced in English Language Arts, while in a neighboring school 58% of students are proficient or advanced. Overall, middle school students score lower than elementary school students. At one middle school only 27% of 8th graders are proficient/advanced in ELA, while 44% of 8th graders are proficient and advanced at another middle school. These data clearly show much diversity in the community. (Appendix 1)

**Educational Needs and how CRES#14 will meet them:** Judging from the data in Appendix 1, students who live in this community need a strong concept-driven curriculum, through concrete experiential, project-based, and service learning, which will connect them with the real world and their cultural/social backgrounds. When these students are given opportunities to interact with peers and experts locally, nationally, or internationally, they will get a broader feel for diversity. Students' participation in a real-world activity will encourage them to do their best work, and see the relevance of core subjects in their daily lives.

Students need to be productive participants in their own neighborhood. Since the opportunity for exploring their neighborhood is not always available to them, the school needs to help them gain an awareness of their community, what it offers, and what it needs. Bringing all elements of the community into the school will be essential in creating a strong experiential and project-based school for these students.

The community also needs to have a PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade span program. This structure promotes a unified curriculum continuum aligned with the school's educational philosophy and provides 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students with opportunities to develop leadership skills. 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders need to become models for elementary students to look up to. They will become mentors for students who do not do homework or peer problem solvers to prevent bullying and improve positive social interactions between students. Students are much more likely to accept guidance from their peers, and, conversely, these peers gain leadership skills.

**The Echo Park Community Partners Design Team:** All members of the Design Team have been teaching and/or residing in Northeast Los Angeles, in areas where the students' mix is demographically almost identical to that of CRES #14 Span School, so they are uniquely suited to serve such a population. The Design Team consists of regular and retired teachers, an administrator, Nationally Board Certified teachers, special education teachers, a preschool teacher, a middle school teacher, Echo Park residents, current principals, LAUSD instructional specialists, a retired financial director, and a Local District 4 director. (Appendix 2)

*c. **Instructional Program** Provide an overview of the instructional program of the proposed school, identifying and describing the key instructional strategies and practices that the school will employ to drive student achievement. Briefly explain the research base that demonstrates that the identified strategies will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population.*

**PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** CRES#14 Span school will implement a PreK-8<sup>th</sup> grade span program in order to promote a unified curriculum continuum. The Echo Park Community Partners Design Team believes that this PreK-8<sup>th</sup> span model fits perfectly to Echo Park Community's diversity. Researchers in Milwaukee found that students in K-8 schools had higher academic achievement as measured by both grade point averages and standardized test scores, especially in math. These students also participated more in extracurricular activities, demonstrated greater leadership skills, and were less likely to be bullied than those following the elementary/middle school model. The authors concluded that the intimacy of the K-8 environment and the delay of the transition to a new school until students were more mature might have accounted for the discrepancy. (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Similar studies have shown similar results (Appendix 3)

**Multi-age Grouping:** Interest in the potential benefits of multi-age grouping has increased steadily in recent years. The National Middle School Association has identified multi-age grouping, cooperative learning, heterogeneous grouping, and flexible scheduling as important instructional strategies for older students. Multi-age grouping is also beneficial for Gifted and students with special needs (Nye, 1993). Gifted students are challenged to achieve to their potential because there isn't the limitation of a rigid grade-level curriculum. Students with special needs in mixed-aged grouping typically find that their individual differences are accepted and their contributions are recognized. In addition, at-risk students and English Learners are likely to benefit from this type of instructional setting, which creates a learning environment that provides them with developmentally appropriate challenges at their instructional level. CRES #14 Span School will place students in multi-age group settings, where one homeroom teacher and two partner teachers work together. Studies show that socially and emotionally, being able to bond with classmates and teachers for this longer time period gives students the security to academically risk and strive for in-depth goals. Team teachers will work collaboratively to provide differentiated instruction to all students, including English Learners, Gifted, and students with disabilities. (Appendix 8)

**PreK:** To ensure that all students are socially, emotionally, and academically prepared for kindergarten, CRES#14 Span School will apply for a state-funded preschool program. High-quality preschool programs offer children environments and experiences that encourage active, playful exploration and experimentation. In addition, many children benefit from specific support in learning English as well as a foreign language. Other children may have a special need that requires particular accommodations and adaptations. To serve all children, the CRES #14 preschool program will implement a program called the Reggio Emilia that builds upon the interests of children. Team planning is an essential component of the program. Teachers work together to formulate hypotheses about the possible directions of a project, the materials needed, and possible parent and/or community support and involvement. (Appendix 4)

**Conceptual learning:** The vision of CRES#14 Span School is to help all students to become well-rounded, intellectually curious, socially conscious, environmentally sensitive life-long learners and critical thinkers. Students will become productive members of society, and join in the effort to improve the local and global community with intercultural understanding and respect. This type of child is described as a "whole child." In order to help all students from every diverse background achieve "whole child" status, the educational method must be quite different from traditional methods that rely on textbook-based instruction moving from one page to the next, fixed scheduling, rigid skills

development without differentiation, and assessment focused on testing and periodic skill assessment.

Key to the development of CRES #14 Span School's instructional philosophy is the work of Lev Vygotsky who believed that culture and social interactions have a tremendous effect on child development. Learning occurs when students are actively engaged in constructing meaning by drawing from their own experiences and backgrounds. [It is the conceptual mind that makes sense out of the world. If the conceptual mind is not engaged, then there is no real thinking going on. Higher complexity moves from facts to concepts for enduring understanding. Children begin school at the conceptually engaged level. They are taught the concept terms 'family', 'self', and 'community'. Somewhere about the second or third grade they are turned into 'fact munchers.' In preschool and kindergarten students study the 'big ideas', but later in school students tend to be exposed to factual learning based on a flat line topic-based curriculum. Our focus is to continue conceptual learning from pre-kindergarten through the 8~' grade. The teacher's role is to build conceptual structures to create constructivists amongst all students who see learning as an active process where they construct new ideas from past/present experiences. (Appendix 5)

CRES #14 Span School will implement the "conceptual learning" method, using a project-based program structured around a concept-driven curriculum. (Appendix 9) Teachers will research interconnected concepts and decide upon themes from the California State standards, national and international standards. For example, a music teacher may be teaming with a science and math teacher or an elementary school teacher to teach interconnected concepts under the theme "Change." *Patterns in change emerge from a variety of setting.* (Math 3<sup>rd</sup> -grade standard) *Energy, which can be converted from one/arm to another, is necessary and causes changes.* (Science 4<sup>th</sup> -grade standard) Teachers ask open-ended questions like, " Why do the drum and the piano sound different? Why does music played in the auditorium sound different from music played outside? Why does the same song sound different when played by different people? Why does this note sound the same as the last note, but higher?" These questions serve an outlet for every student to experience success. Students will engage in in-depth investigation of the real world. Conceptual learning helps students succeed because it allows them to use all their "intelligences," just as projects of normal day-to-day living do. Therefore, it is not surprising to learn that Howard Gardner (1992), who has advanced the theory that there are multiple forms of intelligence, is a strong proponent of conceptual learning.

Because English Learners will be engaged in concrete, hands-on learning experiences, acquisition of concepts will not be limited by language ability. Additionally, a deeper understanding of concepts will facilitate the development of academic language. Open-ended learning experiences allow Gifted students to understand concepts with greater depth and complexity, going beyond grade level standards. Students with learning disabilities will also develop higher understanding than they would if instruction were only verbal or written. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program will be implemented from kindergarten to 8th grade to fully implement the concept-driven curriculum when funding becomes available.

**Service Learning:** The vision of CRES #14 Span School is aligned with philosopher Henry Giroux's critical pedagogy. Giroux " ... believes that knowledge originates in social interaction... [and] that social relationships must be understood in the context of power." (Spring, Joel. (2002). *Conflict of Interests: Fourth Edition*). He believes that the purpose of education is to help students understand who constructs knowledge and how it is constructed. Giroux believes that we must give our students the critical tools they will need to participate in a democratic society. The ultimate goal is to teach students to analyze and reflect. Reflection activities can engage students in addressing global issues ranging from poverty to hunger to the environment. Service learning that is integrated helps students see connections between their actions and pressing global issues.

To inspire students to observe their community/world and to take active participation, various partners such as Grand Avenue Partners (GAP), the Music Center, Cal Arts, the Cathedral of our lady of the Angels, the Center Theater Group, Grand Performances, the Los Angeles Central Library, the Los

Angeles Master Chorale, the Los Angeles Opera, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Harmony Project, Central LA. New High School #9, the L.A. Chamber Orchestra, the Academy of Creative Education, the Tree People, and Echo Park Community organizations will be the focus of our service learning and diversity projects. (Appendix 6) These partnership organizations will provide students with opportunities to broaden specific skills and talents, and also with responsibilities to serve, and give back to the community. All PreK-8th students are expected to work with the community and complete service based on the service project they establish during their course of unit of study. All students, including English Learners and students with disabilities, will learn the process of service learning more effectively through these types of hands-on activities with partnership organizations.

**English Language Arts:** The philosophy of CRES #14 Span School is aligned with Isaac Kandel's theory that states: "Children should be allowed to grow in accordance with their needs and interests ... Knowledge is valuable only as it is acquired in a real situation; the teacher must be present to provide the proper environment for experiencing but not intervene except to guide and advise. There must, in fact, be 'nothing-fixed-in advance' and subjects must not be 'set-out-to-be-learned.'" Balanced Literacy will be considered as a framework for the literacy instruction at CRES #14 Span School, as it fits well into the school's philosophy, including the systematic natural progression of language and literacy development. In this setting teachers will use authentic teaching, frequent meaningful assessments that are responsive to student learning and teacher instruction, interconnected literacy, authentic texts, purposeful connected teaching across content areas and meaningful student learning. Through various modalities, the teacher will implement a well-planned comprehensive literacy program that reflects a gradual release of control, whereby responsibility is gradually shifted from the teacher to the students. (Diane Ravitch 2010)

**Arts:** Arts education is an essential component of a well-rounded, inquiring, and reflective citizen. In *Arts with the Brain in Mind*, (2001) Eric Jensen posits that " ... the arts are not only fundamental to success in our demanding, fast-moving world, but they are what makes us most human, most complete as people. Arts contribute to our growth as human beings." He also states " ... the arts develop neural systems that often take months and years to fine-tune. The benefits... will be sprinkled across the spectrum, from fine motor skills to creativity and improved emotional balance." Using the materials, music and dance forms of different regions or countries gives students insight into the differences and similarities among regions of the world.

With the support of the Harmony Project, preschool and kindergarten teachers will develop a comprehensive standards-based music program. Arts teachers will work in partnership with GAP who will provide facilities, equipment, and training for the young. The Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra will share standards-based music lesson plans with teachers on an ongoing basis. Students will participate in arts programs not only through interdisciplinary approaches, but also through a school-wide, multi-arts program. In so doing, they will acquire in-depth knowledge and develop across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

**Science:** CRES#14 Span School teachers will implement project-based student-centered activities for teaching key science concepts and content standards, with an emphasis on ecology and sustainability. They will develop project- and inquiry-based learning activities in which students acquire information and build skills while investigating real-world issues and problems. Some of the project-based activities are introduced through the interdisciplinary approach. For example, students will learn the difference between organic and non-organic food, and how foods are defined as "organic." Students will work collaboratively to create organic gardens on campus, and in so doing, learn how to create organic soil, and how to make compost. Students will start separating garbage, and learn how certain garbage becomes organic nutrients. They will learn to work collaboratively with people from diverse

backgrounds to explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance.

**Linguistic Literacy:** Multilingualism embeds intercultural competencies as well as an awareness of the role of language in society. To succeed in the twenty-first century, students need to develop academic knowledge, proficiency in English, and linguistic and cultural literacy in several of the world's languages and cultures. (Appendix 7) The ability to communicate in culturally appropriate ways in a variety of settings will ensure success in a technologically driven global economy and increase intercultural understanding and the benefits derived from collaborative international efforts. An increasingly diverse society within the United States requires all students to know how to communicate across the permeable linguistic and cultural borders of our communities. CRES# 14 Span School is committed to provide these opportunities to students with careful planning of the dual language program. The dual language program with English and Spanish is well aligned with the critical educational needs of students in Echo Park.

**d. School Culture:** *Describe the school culture that your team envisions for the proposed school and what, if any social-emotional supports are necessary to create that culture.*

CRES #14 Span School will provide a safe, nurturing, and intimate PreK-8 environment based on student social and emotional health, safety, trust, respect, and high expectations. The PreK-8<sup>th</sup> structure allows the school to continue the relationship established with the students and their families in the elementary grades with a seamless transition into the middle school grades, giving students the security and time to develop the academic and emotional maturity required for success in high school and post-secondary education.

The School and partnership organizations will conduct training to provide direct instructions on expected social and emotional behavior that emphasizes respect for differences in ethnic background, gender or religious belief. Some examples:

1. Student Success Team: all members of CRES #14 Span School will support and share information related to students with social-emotional and/or academic issues, and plan steps for improvement.
2. El Centro Del Pueblo will train families and staff on child abuse prevention, intervention for neglected children, youth counseling, and behavior change.
3. The Children's Institute (CTI) promotes the well-being of vulnerable children. Their aim is to heal children who have been hurt, to protect them from getting hurt again and to provide families with a holistic blend of clinical and community programs.
4. LAUSD behavior experts will train staff on a systematic behavior system on campus called Best Behavior.
5. LAUSD staff will provide training on a consistent, school-wide implementation of a social-emotional learning program called Second Step.

**e. Accountability and Performance Goals.** *Briefly discuss how your organization will set and annually update targets for the indicators in the table below. Please share key data from the Performance Management Matrix highlighting the goals of the proposed school.*

N/A (See Monique Epps)

**f. Community Analysis and the Context:** *Describe the community that your proposed school will serve. Include an analysis of the strengths, assets, values, and critical needs of the community. Discuss your rationale for selecting this community, your experience serving this or a similar community, how your team has engaged the community thus far and how it will continue to do so if selected.*

**The Community:** CRES #14 Span School is located at the corner of Alvarado and Santa Ynez St. in Echo Park. Echo Park is a Los Angeles community that embodies diversity in many different

ways. From its hilly residential areas to its flat, bustling commercial streets, the residents of Echo Park include many immigrants from the Philippines, Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and other countries, as well as Los Angeles natives of many ethnic backgrounds. Echo Park has been changing over the past decade, and many parts of the community are attracting writers, artists, musicians, and professionals who are bringing gentrification to the area.

Spanish is the home language of the majority of students in Echo Park, and trends of California Standards Tests (CST) show that Latino students perform lower than average both in English Language Arts and mathematics. It is important, however, to recognize that many other languages are spoken in the homes in Echo Park. Tagalog, Korean, and indigenous dialects are a few of the many other home languages of Echo Park students. Students from these racial/ethnic backgrounds have a large gap between their present rates of proficiency and the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) mandated rates. (Appendix 1) Predictably, the demand for English language acquisition still remains high throughout the upper elementary schools to middle schools. One of the Design Team's objectives is to increase awareness of all students' heritage languages on our campus.

**Assets:** Another challenge that the diverse Echo Park community faces is that it must preserve and maintain its many resources, while at the same time creating new ideas for improvements. Some of the resources for students in this area include but are not limited to the following: Edendale Library, the Farmers' Market, art galleries, murals, independent book stores, the Echo Park Film Center, the Echo Park Historical Society, and the park itself, Echo Park. Many of the children in Echo Park are not familiar with these community resources, although they live very close to them. The Design Team is creating a plan that will integrate these resources into the curriculum, so that all students will be aware of them.

**The Design Team selected this school because** the members' interests and experience are in areas of Los Angeles that are geographically and demographically similar to that of CRES #14 Span School. Taken together, Design Team members have literally hundreds of years' experience living, working, teaching, and being a part of Echo Park itself or adjacent communities that share many of the same characteristics as Echo Park. This is where the Design Team's expertise lies.

**Engagement with the community:** The Design Team has formed partnerships with local organizations such as the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, El Centro Del Pueblo, and others. These partnerships are discussed in some detail in the relevant sections of this Proposal. CRES# 14 Span School will strengthen its relationships with these partners and will continue in the effort to find new partners who will broaden and deepen the school's relationship with the community. Also, the governance (see Sect. 'g' directly below) of CRES#14 is structured so that community members, parents, and partners not only are a part of the instructional program at the school, but voting members of the school's governing bodies, so their feedback and influence will keep CRES#14 and its programs strongly community-centered.

**g. Leadership:** *Provide an overview of the proposed school's governance structure and leadership team. Highlight the strengths of the leadership team and the proposed leader. If the leader has not been identified, speak to the key attributes the potential leader should possess.*

CRES#14 Span School will be democratically governed in a structure that facilitates feedback in all directions and allows stakeholders not only to voice their concerns, but also to vote on them as members of the Governing School Site Council and as leaders and committee members of several advisory councils. Teachers, students, parents, partnership organizations, and non-teaching school staff all have the opportunity to contribute their knowledge and insight towards CRES#14 Span School's shared vision of continual improvement.

The Governance Board: CRES #14 Span School will be governed by the Governing School Site Council. It will comply with the School Site Council Model as described in the California Education Code, Section 52012. The Governing School Site Council will be in charge of maintaining the vision and mission of CRES #14 Span School, annually reviewing and approving items such as: Elect to Work Agreement, annual budget, school policies and procedures, school calendar, and selection and evaluation of the principal and teachers. The Governing School Site Council will review performance indicators to ensure the school is in compliance with state and federal guidelines and making consistent academic progress.

**Desirable Characteristics of the potential leader:**

1. Leads in accordance with a strong personal ideology aligned with the CRES #14 vision, mission and philosophy.
2. Has a track record of demonstrating the capacity to be an instructional, transformational and cultural leader.
3. Has a passionate interest in arts and understands the value and processes at arts education.
4. Has personal experience and/or interest in environmental issues.
5. Has personal experience in conceptual learning and project-based learning.
6. Has a track record of accelerating student achievement with a similar population of students and generating good results in CST, attendance, resources, and communication.

**h. School Governance Model:** *Briefly explain the rationale for your choice of school type. Why are you applying to operate your school as a traditional, Pilot, Expanded School-Based Management Model (ESBMMj, Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school? Please reference Appendix B for more information on the governance models listed above.*

CRES # 14 Span School will implement the Pilot School model to seek autonomy in curriculum, assessment, scheduling, staffing, budget, professional development and governance. The multiage group settings with teacher teaming allow each child to be challenged from where they are to a higher level with differentiated instruction, strategies and assessment. This cannot be done in a traditional model. The project-based, concept-driven curriculum with flexible scheduling allows teachers to help students get involved in collaborative learning without being restricted by time. Due to the interdisciplinary/integrated approach, school scheduling does not follow the traditional model's guidelines and students' hours are longer than traditional.

Teachers' hours are longer than traditional hours as well, so as to give additional instructional time for students, and to attend additional professional development and team teacher planning. Professional development is planned around the educational philosophy, vision and core instructional activities. Additional professional development sessions are provided to teachers and administrators to acquire successful conceptual learning practices. The budget reflects what students, teachers, and parents need to do to support our educational goals. Because service learning is an integral part of student learning, partnership organizations in Echo Park and neighboring communities are also involved in the governance council, which is essential to the Pilot school model.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) / Echo  
Park Community Design Team

Executive Summary

## **ESBMM School Proposal: CRES#14 SPAN**

### **Local District 4/Echo Park Community Partners SCHOOL**

**(The community will be involved in the actual naming of the school if accepted)**

Type of School: Start-Up School

Enrollment Schedule: CRES #14 Span School will open in September of 2011 (Pre-K – 8<sup>th</sup>

Grade enrollment: 600)

#### 1. Executive Summary (5-7 pages)

a. **Mission and Vision.** State the mission, vision and core beliefs of the proposed school as well as the school's values about teaching and learning. Include an explanation of what students will know and be able to do as well as the rigorous intellectual habits of mind, essential skills, knowledge and attributes they will possess upon matriculation that will prepare them to be successful adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Mission** Our mission is to simultaneously improve the lives of our students and their families, and to reweave the diverse fabric of the community in which we all live. We will cultivate the emerging community in this rapidly changing area, while seeking to preserve the historic richness of one of Los Angeles' oldest neighborhoods. Building on the community's desire for an innovative school, we will further connect all students and their families to their immediate and extended communities through conceptual learning and arts education. All students will actively engage in a safe, technologically advanced, and interactive learning environment.

**Vision** We envision a school where students, teachers and community nurture and respect the diverse cultural heritage present in the community, and develop friendships and connections across social class and language boundaries. Our full-inclusion school will allow students with special needs and general education students to work together and learn from each other in a respectful, safe, and nurturing environment. In addition, English learners will benefit from fluid student groupings (e.g., multi-grade-level, heterogeneous, homogeneous, depending on language and learning needs) and differentiated instruction. We embrace the community's linguistic diversity and will offer heritage language programs, world language classes, and World Languages in the Elementary School (FLES). We will work with parents and the community to build a dual language program strand that is not necessarily limited to only English and Spanish. Our school will offer an enriched environment for our students and will serve as a resource for the extended community, and our students will be able to successfully transition to the high school environment.

**b. Student Population** *Describe the student population that your proposed school will serve, including the interests and critical educational needs of the students. Explain your team's experience serving a similar population of students, and how your proposed school will meet the identified needs of these students.*

The diversity of the school children in the Echo Park area is apparent in the data from existing schools: some schools have a population that includes 30% English Learners, while English Learners comprise over 60% of the student bodies of other neighborhood schools. Language differences often create barriers that hinder communication and social interaction. This is particularly apparent in our linguistically diverse community. All students need to develop their English skills, and in this program they will also acquire proficiency in another language. Although Spanish is the home language of the majority of students in Echo Park, it is important to recognize that students come to school speaking other languages, such as Tagalog and Korean.

The Echo Park Community Partners Design Team is composed of teachers, administrators, and local residents and we chose this site because of our strong ties to the area. Our Design Team

members have been working on creating a strong partnership with parents and organizations and resources such as the Greater Echo Park Elysian Neighborhood Council. Together we can develop meaningful service learning programs from early elementary through middle school.

**c. Instructional Program.** *Provide an overview of the instructional program of the proposed school, identifying and describing the key instructional strategies and practices that the school will employ to drive student achievement. Briefly explain the research base that demonstrates that the identified strategies will be successful in improving academic achievement for the targeted student population.*

### **Key Instructional Strategies**

i. PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Span School Based on several successful models of K-8<sup>th</sup> span schools (appendix 2), CRES #14 Span School is designed to improved student academic achievement for the diverse student population in Echo Park. The smaller school size, delayed transition to a new school and familiarity with school staff and multi-age level peers will foster leadership skills, positive social interactions and greater academic achievement in all curricular areas for all students (Offenberg, 2001; Simmons & Blyth, 1987).

ii. Multi-age Grouping At-risk students, students with special needs and English Learners will benefit from a multi-age instructional setting, which is designed to meet the needs of all students based on their developmental instructional level (Nye, 1993). Teachers will work collaboratively in teams to provide differentiated and developmentally appropriate instruction to all students, including English learners, Gifted, and students with disabilities.

iii. Pre-Kindergarten In order to meet the needs of our youngest students, we plan to provide a high-quality, full-day pre-kindergarten based on the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) focusing on four domains: social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics. Our program provides well-rounded and coherent curriculum, including arts, physical education, social and emotional learning, science, and history. Students will be able to participate in learning activities based on the California Preschool Learning Foundations, vol.1 (Appendix 3).

iv. Conceptual learning/ International Baccalaureate (IB) Program Our vision is to help all students will become well-rounded, intellectually curious, socially conscious, environmentally sensitive life-long learners and critical thinkers. Students will become productive members of society, and join in the effort to improve the local and global community with intercultural understanding and respect. Key to the development of our instructional philosophy is the work of Lev Vygotsky who believed that culture and social interactions have a tremendous effect on child development. Learning occurs when students are actively engaged in constructing meaning by drawing from their own experiences and backgrounds (Caine and Caine, 1991).

v. Service Learning Service Learning is a philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards. All students benefit from learning in context, and service learning can be a particularly effective strategy for English Learners and students with disabilities. Service learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities that are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities. The academic impact from service learning projects is stronger when the project is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards. (Shumer 1997)

vi. World Language Instruction Bilingualism is becoming more common in U.S. schools, particularly at grade levels where traditionally it has not been an option. Bilingualism and multilingualism are more the norm than the exception throughout the rest of the world. Most importantly, multilingualism embeds intercultural competencies as well as an awareness of the role of language in society. To succeed in the twenty-first century, our students need to develop academic knowledge, proficiency in English, and linguistic and cultural literacy in several of the world's languages and cultures. CRES14 Span School will begin with a Spanish FLES program while also supporting heritage language programs in Spanish, Tagalog or other languages if there is interest. We will build to begin a Dual Language Program in Spanish by hiring qualified BCLAD teachers and holding informational meeting to gauge parent interest during the first year of operation.

vii. Arts focus and Arts Integration: CRES 14 has attracted the interest of many arts organizations in Echo Park and as well as others such as the Grand Ave. Partners, California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts), the L.A Chamber Orchestra, and the Arts HS #9. Students will have art instruction as part of their core curriculum but students will have opportunities for creative expression built into their core subjects. This is an important element in the theme based, integrated IB Curriculum.

vii. Technology/multi-media All students at CRES #14 will gain proficiency in technology through relevant, real world projects that include the use of computers, document readers, numerous educational web tools and evolving technology appropriate for various academic achievement levels. Multimedia tools will be used throughout the curriculum to publish research projects, service learning projects and inquiry activities in a cohesive, interdisciplinary multi-age educational setting. Internet technology allows our students to connect with other students around the world.

**d. School Culture.** *Describe the school culture that your team envisions for the proposed school and what, if any social-emotional supports are necessary to create that culture.*

Community is one of the central unifying themes in the CRES 14 Span School Proposal. The parents have expressed the need to know and work with their children's teachers to help their children succeed. Although parent-teacher bonds are naturally evident in the elementary grades, by the time students transition to the middle school and beyond, it has been a challenge to maintain this relationship. Our School will provide a safe, nurturing, and intimate PreK-8 environment based on student social and emotional health, safety, trust, respect, and high expectations. A consistent, school-wide implementation of a social emotional learning program using Second Step and curriculum and practices from the PassageWorks Institute and outside resources such as El Centro Del Pueblo, Angelus Temple, and Children's Institute (CII) will be utilized to maximize social-emotional interventions. Our plan for this school meets the educational/developmental needs of our PreK-5<sup>th</sup> graders and it follows the California Department of Education's 12 Recommendations for Middle Grades Success. The four focus areas of the 12 Recommendations are: Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity, and Organized Structures and Processes.

**e. Accountability and Performance Goals.** *Briefly discuss how your organization will set and annually update targets for the indicators in the table below. Please share key data from the Performance Management Matrix highlighting the goals of the proposed school.*

CRES# 14 Span School strongly believes that ongoing public communication must be in place so the parents and community can monitor our progress. A balanced range of strategies for formative and summative assessment will be analyzed to provide information about the

individual needs of students and to inform subsequent modification of teaching and learning strategies and guide us as we develop a high-performance school. The range of assessment strategies will allow all students a means of demonstrating their progress toward meeting California and the Common Core State Standards, and the standards of the International Baccalaureate Program. When 8<sup>th</sup> grade students leave our school, they will be ready to meet the challenges of high school and beyond, to be college-bound or career ready. They will be ready to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with confidence, competence and an awareness of the interdependence of community.

Our strategic plans include: establishing long-term school goals and objectives, as well as annual instructional and program goals; defining how our school intends to achieve those goals; demonstrating how it will measure the school and program performance in achieving these goals; using data to identify, plan implement and monitor our improvement plan.

GOAL	ANNUAL TARGET
Raise API score	Meet and/or exceed API
Increase % of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the CST	Will increase by 10 %
Increase the number of students identified as Gifted	Increase by a minimum of 6% of the school's population
Increase % of ELL (English Language Learners) reclassification	Increase by 5%
Increase % of SWD (students with disabilities) performing at Basic and Above on the ELA and Math CST's	Increase by 5% in Language Arts and by 10% in Math
Increase % of daily attendance	Increase attendance by 5%

**f. Community Analysis and the Context.** *Describe the community that your proposed school will serve. Include an analysis of the strengths, assets, values and critical needs of the community. Discuss your rationale for selecting this community, your experience serving this or a similar community, how your team has engaged the community thus far and how it will continue to do so if selected.*

Echo Park is a Los Angeles community that embodies diversity in many different ways. From its hilly residential areas to its flat, bustling commercial streets, the residents of Echo Park include many immigrants from the Philippines, Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and other countries, as well as Los Angeles natives of many ethnic backgrounds. The Echo Park Community has historically embraced its diversity as a strength and source of pride; the entire community values the Asian Lotus Festival, Latin music, and traditions from different cultures. Echo Park with its beautiful lake is a central asset to the community as are the many arts and cultural organizations in the community. Echo Park has been changing over the past decade, and many parts of the community are attracting writers, artists, musicians, and professionals who are bringing gentrification to the area. Echo Park has a critical need to find some common places to join together as it changes and evolves. We chose this community because the members of the Design Team have deep roots here: we are the teachers, administrators, parents, and community members of Echo Park. We value diversity and we want to recognize and support all groups in the community. We have engaged continuously with community groups since September 2010, and we have gone door-to-door engaging parents and community members about the kind of

school they would like to see in our community. We plan on having regularly scheduled community meetings to be sure that all voices are heard.

**g. Leadership.** *Provide an overview of the proposed school's governance structure and leadership team. Highlight the strengths of the leadership team and the proposed leader. If a leader has not been identified, speak to the key attributes the potential leader should possess.* 6

Since the vision and the mission of the school reflect innovation, collaboration and empowerment, the governance model should reflect the same ideals. To this end our recommendation would be to follow the Extended School-Based Management Model (ESBMM). This of course would be contingent on a democratic process, which would include the faculty, the administration, the parents and the community in choosing this model. ESBMM would include autonomy over budget, curriculum, staffing, scheduling and governance. The governance plan and service-based learning are part of this plan and the staff may choose to convert to the Pilot model after the first year of operation.

The Echo Park Community Partners Design Team consists of teachers, community members and administrators who have had direct, relevant experience serving diverse student populations including English Learners and economically disadvantaged students in the greater Echo Park area. The principal plan author is a retired administrator having served 40 years in East, Central and South Los Angeles, as a regular classroom teacher, special education teacher, mentor teacher, assistant principal, principal in elementary and middle schools, Director of Special Education and Director of iDesign before retirement. Team members have experience in inclusion, working with students with special needs, English Learners, Standard English Learners, and students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Many of the team members live in the community. As members of the community we are uniquely qualified to understand their interests, strengths and needs and we have a high level of personal investment in the success of our students and their families.

The following groups provide the school with the decision-making structure and organization that are a part of our mission and vision:

The Governance Board –The school will be governed by a Governance Board, which will comply with the School Site Council Model as described in the California Education Code, Section 52012.

Instructional Leadership Team - The primary purpose of this board will be to maintain the mission and vision of CRES#14 Span School. The Instructional Leadership Team will, two instructional teacher leaders from each elementary and middle school levels, and a representative from LAUSD IB Curriculum Office, an Apple education consultant and partnership organizations representatives, Principal, Teachers, UTLA Chapter Chair, Parents, Students, and Classified Personnel.

**Desirable Characteristics of the potential leader:**

Leads in accordance with a strong personal ideology aligned with our vision and philosophy.

- Well-grounded beliefs about the purpose of education
- An understanding of curriculum: selection and sequencing of important knowledge
- Familiarity with multiple instructional strategies and research supporting them

- Broad knowledge of education policy; implications and relative efficacy of current policy initiatives
- A commitment to equity and excellence for all students
- Ability to work collaboratively with students, school staff, parents, community members, community organizations and foundations.

**h. Governance** *Briefly explain the rationale for your choice of school type. Why are you applying to operate your school as a traditional, Pilot, Expanded School-Based Management Model (ESBMM), Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school? Please reference Appendix B for more information on the governance models listed above.*

CRES #14 Span School will begin using the ESBMM school model because the staffing is not in place yet and the final boundaries for the school have not been finalized. During the first year of operation the staff will study the two models (ESBMM or Pilot) and then make a democratic decision based on the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Service learning, an integral part of this plan, is a required element in the Pilot Model. Other required elements for a Pilot School have been put in place except for the Elect to Work Agreement, to allow an easy transition to a Pilot if that model is chosen. ESBMM has autonomy over governance and we want to support the actual staff making a democratic choice.

Both the ESBMM and Pilot models will provide the school with autonomy over curriculum, assessment, scheduling, staffing, budget, professional development and governance. These elements are essential to create the educational environment we envision. Our multi-age group settings, with team teaching, allow each child to be challenged to reach higher levels. The International Baccalaureate Curriculum, which will be used school-wide, is theme-based and includes interdisciplinary instruction.