



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Clay Middle School

Executive Summaries



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Ánimo Clay Middle School #1

Green Dot Public Schools

Executive Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

***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 Statement**

The mission of Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 ("ACMS #1") is to prepare students in the South Los Angeles community for success in high school, college, leadership and life. ACMS #1 will achieve this mission by providing a small, college preparatory program where all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, community) actively engage in the education process. We will create a student-centered environment that unifies the efforts of family, community and school to foster life-long learning, cross-cultural competency, social responsibility and academic excellence. The underlying belief at ACMS #1 is that **all** students can and may go to college.

### **Vision Statement**

Green Dot Public Schools has an unwavering belief in all students' potential. We believe that schools should reflect the needs of the community and that all stakeholders including teachers, parents and students, should have a voice in shaping their school. Under Green Dot management, the existing Clay Middle School will be transformed into 2 small independent charter middle schools with an approximate enrollment of 560 students in each school. In its first year, ACMS #1 will serve all grade levels and students residing in the attendance area.

ACMS #1 students are "agents of change," individuals who will positively impact our community. The school will emphasize a student culture of self-confidence, self-discipline, success, and proactive leadership so that students will excel in high school, college, and beyond. Green Dot has identified four pillars that will define our students as "agents of change" and educated leaders of the 21st century:<sup>1</sup>

- Students will be **College-Directed Learners**, those who think critically and analytically in order to understand complex concepts across the curriculum. All students will be expected to complete a course of study that prepares them for success in high school and college, even if college is not their ultimate educational goal.
- A **Cultural Learner** is an individual who is prepared to excel in today's diverse workplace. A cultural learner embraces diversity, is aware of cultural differences, unique group histories, and different perspectives.
- An **Innovative Leader** will be capable of contributing to the success of his/her community through service and the ability to communicate effectively in distinct situations.
- A **Life-Long Learner** is someone who continues to learn and improve long after his/her formal educational process is complete. We believe the hallmarks of life-long learners are those who are goal-oriented in all they pursue and able to leverage technology to help them succeed.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Taking Center Stage-Act II (TCSII): Ensuring Success and Closing the Achievement Gap for All of California's Middle Grades Students," California Department of Education, 21 July 2009  
<http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/recommendations.aspx>

***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.***

ACMS #1 will serve all students residing in the attendance area. Green Dot Public Schools has opened 18 charter schools in the Los Angeles area and all these schools are successfully serving students, similar to those currently attending Clay Middle School, and are achieving far greater results than comparable schools on all key performance metrics. Green Dot schools have produced outstanding results: 72% of our graduating seniors have been admitted to four-year universities. Another 20-25% of graduates go on to two-year colleges. On average, Green Dot schools scored 92 points higher than their neighborhood school.

Green Dot is a unique charter school management organization in that we have experience serving entire attendance boundaries through our operation of Alain Leroy Locke High School in Watts. In September 2008, Green Dot re-opened Locke High School as a family of eight small schools, broken down in order to increase our ability to recruit and retain all of the students in the school attendance boundary. Since that time, Green Dot has shown record-level improvement in retaining and increasing rigor. We have seen a 36% increase in retention and 54% increase in 10th grade students passing the CAHSEE.

While other charter schools have limited capacity and waitlists for students who exceed school capacity, Green Dot understands and is well-versed in providing services for every student in the attendance boundary, regardless of individual needs or challenges.

Green Dot is particularly familiar with the community surrounding Clay Middle School. Since 2004, Green Dot has run Ánimo South LA Charter High School, which is located on Western and Imperial and which receives a majority of its students from Clay. Today, Ánimo South LA is one of Green Dot's strongest schools, with an API score of 730 (200 points higher than neighboring Washington Prep High School) and a four year graduation rate of 71%.

Based on our experience at Ánimo South LA and Locke, we have observed the following major needs among our students that we will address at Ánimo Clay Middle School #1: need for math and literacy intervention, need for safe haven for students after school, and writing intervention.

Based on our success serving a similar demographic group, Green Dot Public Schools will implement its successful model at Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 because middle students in South Los Angeles deserve a quality education led by an organization with proven results.

***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.***

ACMS #1 will follow implement the instructional strategies and practices that are effective in our 18 schools. ACMS #1 will be grounded in the belief that effective instruction is the most significant factor in achieving our mission. Teaching at Green Dot requires an ongoing

Ánimo Clay Middle School #1  
Green Dot Public Schools

commitment to student achievement, data driven-decision-making, professional growth, and collaboration to ensure all of the students we serve are ***prepared for success in college, leadership, and life.*** Effective teachers actively engage students, facilitate collaborative learning, create safe learning environments and understand that all students can learn.

ACMS #1 will draw from the following continuum of research-based practices:

- **Planning and Preparation:** based on the “Essential Elements of Effective Instruction” by Madeline Hunter
- **Assessment and Learning:** Based on “Understanding by Design: Backwards Design,” by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins.
- **Instructional Techniques:** Based on “Teach Like a Champion” by Doug Lemov
- **Classroom Environment:** Based on Safe and Civil Schools, Randy Sprick.

Each strategy is discussed in greater detail in section 2.

***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.***

Most students learn best in a nurturing, supportive environment where they are known and treated as individuals, and where their background is honored. Accordingly, personal attention to individual students and sensitivity to their backgrounds will be a cornerstone of the school.<sup>2</sup> The small, personal nature of Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 and the rigor of its academic program nurtures students and helps them develop a willingness to work hard to achieve an excellent education; these student characteristics are typically more difficult to foster in a large, traditional public middle school.<sup>3</sup>

Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 will utilize the middle school model that Green Dot Public Schools has developed based on our experience operating successful schools. Green Dot’s school model has been created to ensure that the organization can consistently open high quality schools in which students are being prepared for college, leadership and life. The Six Tenets school model has resulted in 18 of urban Los Angeles’ most successful public schools. Green Dot schools have demonstrated that learning best occurs in schools that follow the Six Tenets of High Performing Schools.

The Six Tenets are a set of six core principles that all Green Dot schools (including Ánimo Clay Middle School #1) must follow. They are:

- 1.) Small, Safe, Personalized Schools
- 2.) High Expectations for All Students
- 3.) Local Control with Extensive Professional Development and Accountability.
- 4.) Parent Participation
- 5.) Get Dollars into the Classroom
- 6.) Keep Schools Open Later

---

<sup>2</sup> “Taking Center Stage-Act II (TCSII): Ensuring Success and Closing the Achievement Gap for All of California’s Middle Grades Students,” California Department of Education, 21 July 2009  
<<http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/recommendations.aspx>>

<sup>3</sup> Meier, Deborah, *In Schools We Trust* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

Each tenet is described in further detail in section 3.

Additionally, below are the key ingredients to Green Dot's success that will be implemented at ACMS #1:

- **A firm commitment to serve all students, including the highest need**
  - We do what it takes to prepare the highest need students for college, leadership and life, which makes us better at serving all students
- **A culture of transparency, reflection and performance**
- **Pioneers of leading edge practices to develop highly effective teachers**
  - We are part of a \$60M, 7-year grant from the Gates Foundation to raise teacher effectiveness
- **Unparalleled focus on strong principal leaders**

Each ingredient is discussed in further detail in section 3.

***e. Accountability and Performance Goals. Briefly discuss how your organization will set and annually update targets for the indicators in the table below.***

The assessment of student achievement will drive *Ánimo Clay Middle School #1's* program, discourse of evaluation and improvement, and the allocation and usage of resources. Student quarterly benchmark data in English, mathematics, science, and reading, student grade reports, and standardized testing scores in combination with student work discussion, and other assessment will be at the root of all decisions made on our campus.

The achievement of *Ánimo Clay Middle School #1* will be measured in both growth and absolute measures. Growth in student achievement is the primary measure that will be used to determine whether the school is an academic success. For API, *Ánimo Clay Middle School #1* shall maintain an API score above 600 and strive to meet all API growth targets. Clay Middle School currently has a 538 API. Under our leadership, the goal of for *Ánimo Clay Middle School #1* is to reach an 800 API within 6 years, (which is a goal that we have set and are holding all Green Dot schools accountable to). Additionally, we will significantly increase the number of students who are advanced/proficient in both Math & ELA in the next five years. In order to monitor cultural indicators, we will strive to have 95% attendance rate to demonstrate increased student engagement and at least a 70% satisfaction rating on student and parent surveys. We are currently meeting these cultural metrics at all schools in our portfolio and are confident that ACMS #1 will achieve similar results.

***f. 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.***

Green Dot Public Schools would like the opportunity to transform Clay Middle School as we have an existing presence in this community and proven track record serving similar students. Many students from Clay Middle School have matriculated to our *Ánimo South Los Angeles Charter High School* and the *Locke Family of High Schools*. These schools are located 1.1 miles away and 3.5 miles respectively from Clay Middle School.

*Ánimo Clay Middle School #1*  
Green Dot Public Schools

Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 is located in a community where the neighborhood schools suffer from high dropout rates, low standardized test scores, and overcrowding and violence. It is located in a residential, urban, economically challenged area where ethnic distribution in the 90047 zip code is 73.2% of the population is African American and 24.1% Latino. The median household income is \$35,142 and the per capita income is \$14,527. In this community, 20.6% of families and 23.3% of individuals live below the poverty line. This community has historically high levels of poverty and unemployment which have facilitated generational gang affiliations, crime, and violence.

Providing a quality education to ACMS #1 students is the first critical step needed to not only dramatically improve student achievements but to transform an entire community. Please see section 8 for a detailed explanation of community assets.

Green Dot is currently engaging the South Los Angeles community through Back to School Nights, participating in community events such toy drives, community leader breakfasts and hosting community resource fairs.

Green Dot has a vested interest in the success of Henry Clay Middle School, as 50% of the students at Ánimo South LA and 3% of the students at Locke graduate from Clay. We understand the real need for a change at Clay. Our students who enter 9th grade at Ánimo South LA perform far below grade level in all core subjects; in 2009, only 30% scored proficient or advanced in grade level English on the CST exam, and only 16% scored proficient or advanced in math. The students entering our schools from Clay are far behind where they need to be. We spend all four years of high school working hard to get our students to perform just up to grade level; if we had the opportunity to intervene in the 6th grade instead of the 9th grade, we would be able to address academic misconceptions and weaknesses earlier, and better prepare our students to graduate high school and go on to four year colleges.

***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.***

Green Dot has the track record and capacity to successfully perform all task required to lead Ánimo Clay middle School #1. Green Dot's leadership team has extensive knowledge of the following key areas: curriculum and leadership development, instructional strategies, data analysis, financial management and school culture.

Our governance structure is a reflection of our belief that students, staff members and parents are all collaborators in the educational process. Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 will be an independent charter school and will be governed by Green Dot Public Schools, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit benefit California Corporation. The structure of Ánimo Clay Middle School #1's governance and its relationship to Green Dot's home office is outlined in **Appendix A**.

Ultimate responsibility for the governance of Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 will rest with Green Dot's Board of Directors. Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 is also governed by a School Advisory Board, comprised of teachers, students, parents and administrators. Its role is to ensure fair representation of diverse thoughts and oversight of the school.

The School Principal is responsible for the school's academic and financial results and has hiring and firing power over the entire staff. The hiring of the Ánimo Clay Middle School #1 Principal will follow the standard Green Dot principal hiring process. The first step will be an interview with the Vice President of Education. Next, the candidate will participate in a panel interview that includes a team of cluster directors and campus leaders. At this panel interview, the candidate will model a professional development presentation, respond to a series of scenario questions, and produce an on-demand writing sample. Third, the candidate will watch a short video of a teacher's lesson and then debrief with the Cluster Director on feedback and next steps for support to be given to that teacher. On the same day the candidate will spend a half-day shadowing a current Green Dot Principal and then write a reflection identifying school strengths and weaknesses in the following areas: instructional leadership, resource management, people management, problem solving, and community leadership.

Any candidates who successfully move through these phases of the interview process will participate in a community panel made up of students, parents, teachers and classified staff members. The cluster director will facilitate the community panel. The panel will provide input into the process but Green Dot management will make the final decision on hiring. The timeline for recruiting and hiring is March-April. The Principal will need to be hired as soon as possible as they are responsible for selecting the rest of their staff.

***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 (ESBMM), Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school? Please reference Appendix B for more information on the governance models listed above.***

Green Dot Public Schools operates 18 successful charter schools including the Locke High School Transformation, a radical restructuring of a chronically failing school. All schools that Green Dot opens and operates are based on the school model that Green Dot has developed over the past ten years. Our school model has been created to ensure that Green Dot can consistently open high-quality schools in which students are being prepared for college, leadership and life.

Our independent charter school model, has given us the necessary flexibility and autonomy needed to tackle a legacy of neglect and transform Locke High School. Our **student-focused** strategy has 5 essential components. We will follow the same successful strategy to transform Ánimo Clay Middle School #1. The strategy requires the following:

- Establish an **early presence** on the campus to manage the transition
  - Find and enlist student and teacher ambassadors to generate support for the new operator
- Assemble a **high performing and aligned team** by requiring all staff to reapply for their positions—teachers and classified employees
  - The single greatest success factor is getting a strong team in place- a turnaround operator must have the ability to choose its own staff
- Divide the campus into two **small schools** to increase personal attention and allow for accountability
  - Yet, also establish a structure that allows for collaboration and shared resources
- Establish a dramatically improved **school climate and culture** from day one
  - Create clear and consistent expectations for students and provide a safe,



- clean and respectful environment focused on learning
- Increase **interventions** for highest-need student populations.
    - Special education , English learners, credit deficient students, juvenile detention returnees, and foster care students



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Ánimo Clay Middle School #2

Green Dot Public Schools

Executive Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 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 Statement**

The mission of Ánimo Clay Middle School #2 (“ACMS #2”) is to prepare students in the South Los Angeles community for success in high school, college, leadership and life. ACMS #2 will achieve this mission by providing a small, college preparatory program where all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, community) actively engage in the education process. We will create a student-centered environment that unifies the efforts of family, community and school to foster life-long learning, cross-cultural competency, social responsibility and academic excellence. The underlying belief at ACMS #2 is that all students can and may go to college.

### **Vision Statement**

Green Dot Public Schools has an unwavering belief in all students’ potential. We believe that schools should reflect the needs of the community and that all stakeholders including teachers, parents and students, should have a voice in shaping their school. Under Green Dot management, the existing Clay Middle School will be transformed into 2 small independent charter middle schools with an approximate enrollment of 560 students in each school. In its first year, ACMS #2 will serve all grade levels and students residing in the attendance area.

ACMS #2 students are "agents of change," individuals who will positively impact our community. The school will emphasize a student culture of self-confidence, self-discipline, success, and proactive leadership so that students will excel in high school, college, and beyond. Green Dot has identified four pillars that will define our students as “agents of change” and educated leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century:<sup>1</sup>

- Students will be **College-Directed Learners**, those who think critically and analytically in order to understand complex concepts across the curriculum. All students will be expected to complete a course of study that prepares them for success in high school and college, even if college is not their ultimate educational goal.
- A **Cultural Learner** is an individual who is prepared to excel in today’s diverse workplace. A cultural learner embraces diversity, is aware of cultural differences, unique group histories, and different perspectives.
- An **Innovative Leader** will be capable of contributing to the success of his/her community through service and the ability to communicate effectively in distinct situations.
- A **Life-Long Learner** is someone who continues to learn and improve long after his/her formal educational process is complete. We believe the hallmarks of life-long learners are those who are goal-oriented in all they pursue and able to leverage technology to help them succeed.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Taking Center Stage-Act II (TCSII): Ensuring Success and Closing the Achievement Gap for All of California’s Middle Grades Students,” California Department of Education, 21 July 2009  
<http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/recommendations.aspx>

- 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.*

ACMS #2 will serve all students residing in the attendance area. Green Dot Public Schools has opened 18 charter schools in the Los Angeles area and all these schools are successfully serving students, similar to those currently attending Clay Middle School, and are achieving far greater results than comparable schools on all key performance metrics. Green Dot schools have produced outstanding results: 72% of our graduating seniors have been admitted to four-year universities. Another 20-25% of graduates go on to two-year colleges. On average, Green Dot schools scored 92 points higher than their neighborhood school.

Green Dot is a unique charter school management organization in that we have experience serving entire attendance boundaries through our operation of Alain Leroy Locke High School in Watts. In September 2008, Green Dot re-opened Locke High School as a family of eight small schools, broken down in order to increase our ability to recruit and retain all of the students in the school attendance boundary. Since that time, Green Dot has shown record-level improvement in retaining and increasing rigor. We have seen a 36% increase in retention and 54% increase in 10<sup>th</sup> grade students passing the CAHSEE.

While other charter schools have limited capacity and waitlists for students who exceed school capacity, Green Dot understands and is well-versed in providing services for every student in the attendance boundary, regardless of individual needs or challenges.

Green Dot is particularly familiar with the community surrounding Clay Middle School. Since 2004, Green Dot has run *Ánimo South LA Charter High School*, which is located on Western and Imperial and which receives a majority of its students from Clay. Today, *Ánimo South LA* is one of Green Dot's strongest schools, with an API score of 730 (200 points higher than neighboring Washington Prep High School) and a four year graduation rate of 71%.

Based on our experience at *Ánimo South LA* and Locke, we have observed the following major needs among our students that we will address at *Ánimo Clay Middle School #2*: need for math and literacy intervention, need for safe haven for students after school, and writing intervention.

Based on our success serving a similar demographic group, Green Dot Public Schools will implement its successful model at *Ánimo Clay Middle School #2* because middle students in South Los Angeles deserve a quality education led by an organization with proven results.

- 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.*

ACMS #2 will follow implement the instructional strategies and practices that are effective in our 18 schools. ACMS #2 will be grounded in the belief that effective instruction is the most significant factor in achieving our mission. Teaching at Green Dot requires an ongoing commitment to student achievement, data driven-decision-making, professional growth, and collaboration to ensure all of the students we serve are prepared for success in college,

leadership, and life. Effective teachers actively engage students, facilitate collaborative learning, create safe learning environments and understand that all students can learn.

ACMS #2 will draw from the following continuum of research-based practices:

- Planning and Preparation: based on the “Essential Elements of Effective Instruction” by Madeline Hunter
- Assessment and Learning: Based on “Understanding by Design: Backwards Design,” by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins.
- Instructional Techniques: Based on “Teach Like a Champion” by Doug Lemov
- Classroom Environment: Based on Safe and Civil Schools, Randy Sprick.

Each strategy is discussed in greater detail in section 2.

- 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.*

Most students learn best in a nurturing, supportive environment where they are known and treated as individuals, and where their background is honored. Accordingly, personal attention to individual students and sensitivity to their backgrounds will be a cornerstone of the school.<sup>2</sup> The small, personal nature of Ánimo Clay Middle School #2 and the rigor of its academic program nurtures students and helps them develop a willingness to work hard to achieve an excellent education; these student characteristics are typically more difficult to foster in a large, traditional public middle school.<sup>3</sup>

Ánimo Clay Middle School #2 will utilize the middle school model that Green Dot Public Schools has developed based on our experience operating successful schools. Green Dot’s school model has been created to ensure that the organization can consistently open high quality schools in which students are being prepared for college, leadership and life. The Six Tenets school model has resulted in 18 of urban Los Angeles’ most successful public schools. Green Dot schools have demonstrated that learning best occurs in schools that follow the Six Tenets of High Performing Schools.

The Six Tenets are a set of six core principles that all Green Dot schools (including Ánimo Clay Middle School #2) must follow. They are:

- 1.) Small, Safe, Personalized Schools
- 2.) High Expectations for All Students
- 3.) Local Control with Extensive Professional Development and Accountability.
- 4.) Parent Participation
- 5.) Get Dollars into the Classroom
- 6.) Keep Schools Open Later

Each tenet is described in further detail in section 3.

Additionally, below are the key ingredients to Green Dot’s success that will be implemented at ACMS #2:

---

<sup>2</sup> “Taking Center Stage-Act II (TCSII): Ensuring Success and Closing the Achievement Gap for All of California’s Middle Grades Students,” California Department of Education, 21 July 2009  
<<http://pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/recommendations.aspx>>

<sup>3</sup> Meier, Deborah, In Schools We Trust (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

- A firm commitment to serve all students, including the highest need
  - We do what it takes to prepare the highest need students for college, leadership and life, which makes us better at serving all students
- A culture of transparency, reflection and performance
- Pioneers of leading edge practices to develop highly effective teachers
  - We are part of a \$60M, 7-year grant from the Gates Foundation to raise teacher effectiveness
- Unparalleled focus on strong principal leaders

Each ingredient is discussed in further detail in section 3.

*e. Accountability and Performance Goals. Briefly discuss how your organization will set and annually update targets for the indicators in the table below.*

The assessment of student achievement will drive *Ánimo Clay Middle School #2*'s program, discourse of evaluation and improvement, and the allocation and usage of resources. Student quarterly benchmark data in English, mathematics, science, and reading, student grade reports, and standardized testing scores in combination with student work discussion, and other assessment will be at the root of all decisions made on our campus.

The achievement of *Ánimo Clay Middle School #2* will be measured in both growth and absolute measures. Growth in student achievement is the primary measure that will be used to determine whether the school is an academic success. For API, *Ánimo Clay Middle School #2* shall maintain an API score above 600 and strive to meet all API growth targets. Clay Middle School currently has a 538 API. Under our leadership, the goal of for *Ánimo Clay Middle School #2* is to reach an 800 API within 6 years, (which is a goal that we have set and are holding all Green Dot schools accountable to). Additionally, we will significantly increase the number of students who are advanced/proficient in both Math & ELA in the next five years. In order to monitor cultural indicators, we will strive to have 95% attendance rate to demonstrate increased student engagement and at least a 70% satisfaction rating on student and parent surveys. We are currently meeting these cultural metrics at all schools in our portfolio and are confident that ACMS #2 will achieve similar results.

*f. 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.*

Green Dot Public Schools would like the opportunity to transform Clay Middle School as we have an existing presence in this community and proven track record serving similar students. Many students from Clay Middle School have matriculated to our *Ánimo South Los Angeles Charter High School* and the *Locke Family of High Schools*. These schools are located 1.1 miles away and 3.5 miles respectively from Clay Middle School.

*Ánimo Clay Middle School #2* is located in a community where the neighborhood schools suffer from high dropout rates, low standardized test scores, and overcrowding and violence. It is located in a residential, urban, economically challenged area where ethnic distribution in the 90047 zip code is 73.2% of the population is African American and 24.1% Latino. The median household income is \$35,142 and the per capita income is \$14,527. In this community, 20.6% of

families and 23.3% of individuals live below the poverty line. This community has historically high levels of poverty and unemployment which have facilitated generational gang affiliations, crime, and violence.

Providing a quality education to ACMS #2 students is the first critical step needed to not only dramatically improve student achievements but to transform an entire community. Please see section 8 for a detailed explanation of community assets.

Green Dot is currently engaging the South Los Angeles community through Back to School Nights, participating in community events such toy drives, community leader breakfasts and hosting community resource fairs.

Green Dot has a vested interest in the success of Henry Clay Middle School, as 50% of the students at *Ánimo* South LA and 3% of the students at Locke graduate from Clay. We understand the real need for a change at Clay. Our students who enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade at *Ánimo* South LA perform far below grade level in all core subjects; in 2009, only 30% scored proficient or advanced in grade level English on the CST exam, and only 16% scored proficient or advanced in math. The students entering our schools from Clay are far behind where they need to be. We spend all four years of high school working hard to get our students to perform just up to grade level; if we had the opportunity to intervene in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade instead of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, we would be able to address academic misconceptions and weaknesses earlier, and better prepare our students to graduate high school and go on to four year colleges.

- 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.*

Green Dot has the track record and capacity to successfully perform all task required to lead *Ánimo* Clay Middle School #2. Green Dot's leadership team has extensive knowledge of the following key areas: curriculum and leadership development, instructional strategies, data analysis, financial management and school culture.

Our governance structure is a reflection of our belief that students, staff members and parents are all collaborators in the educational process. *Ánimo* Clay Middle School #2 will be an independent charter school and will be governed by Green Dot Public Schools, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit benefit California Corporation. The structure of *Ánimo* Clay Middle School #2's governance and its relationship to Green Dot's home office is outlined in Appendix A.

Ultimate responsibility for the governance of *Ánimo* Clay Middle School #2 will rest with Green Dot's Board of Directors. *Ánimo* Clay Middle School #2 is also governed by a School Advisory Board, comprised of teachers, students, parents and administrators. Its role is to ensure fair representation of diverse thoughts and oversight of the school.

The School Principal is responsible for the school's academic and financial results and has hiring and firing power over the entire staff. The hiring of the *Ánimo* Clay Middle School #2 Principal will follow the standard Green Dot principal hiring process. The first step will be an interview with the Vice President of Education. Next, the candidate will participate in a panel interview that includes a team of cluster directors and campus leaders. At this panel interview, the candidate will model a professional development presentation, respond to a series of scenario

questions, and produce an on-demand writing sample. Third, the candidate will watch a short video of a teacher's lesson and then debrief with the Cluster Director on feedback and next steps for support to be given to that teacher. On the same day the candidate will spend a half-day shadowing a current Green Dot Principal and then write a reflection identifying school strengths and weaknesses in the following areas: instructional leadership, resource management, people management, problem solving, and community leadership.

Any candidates who successfully move through these phases of the interview process will participate in a community panel made up of students, parents, teachers and classified staff members. The cluster director will facilitate the community panel. The panel will provide input into the process but Green Dot management will make the final decision on hiring. The timeline for recruiting and hiring is March-April. The Principal will need to be hired as soon as possible as they are responsible for selecting the rest of their staff.

*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 (ESBMM), Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school? Please reference Appendix B for more information on the governance models listed above.*

Green Dot Public Schools operates 18 successful charter schools including the Locke High School Transformation, a radical restructuring of a chronically failing school. All schools that Green Dot opens and operates are based on the school model that Green Dot has developed over the past ten years. Our school model has been created to ensure that Green Dot can consistently open high-quality schools in which students are being prepared for college, leadership and life.

Our independent charter school model, has given us the necessary flexibility and autonomy needed to tackle a legacy of neglect and transform Locke High School. Our student-focused strategy has 5 essential components. We will follow the same successful strategy to transform Ánimo Clay Middle School #2. The strategy requires the following:

- Establish an early presence on the campus to manage the transition
  - Find and enlist student and teacher ambassadors to generate support for the new operator
- Assemble a high performing and aligned team by requiring all staff to reapply for their positions—teachers and classified employees
  - The single greatest success factor is getting a strong team in place- a turnaround operator must have the ability to choose its own staff
- Divide the campus into two small schools to increase personal attention and allow for accountability
  - Yet, also establish a structure that allows for collaboration and shared resources
- Establish a dramatically improved school climate and culture from day one
  - Create clear and consistent expectations for students and provide a safe, clean and respectful environment focused on learning
- Increase interventions for highest-need student populations.
  - Special education, English learners, credit deficient students, juvenile detention returnees, and foster care students





LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Clay Middle School

Keri Lew

Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

### 1a: Mission and Vision

The mission of Henry Clay Middle School is to focus on improving educational outcomes through a set of meaningful, manageable and measurable priorities. Based on a comprehensive needs assessment of the instructional program, our mission, with consideration to the longstanding “Just Can’t Hide That Majestic Pride” motto, is centered on ensuring the following:

- **Proactive Participation and Preparation**
- **Responsible, Relevant and Responsive Education**
- **Industrious, Innovative and Illuminative Instruction**
- **Dedicated, Data-Driven and Dialogic Discourse**
- **Enhanced, Enriching and Educational Experiences**

It is our firm belief that in order to prepare the students for high school, college and beyond, we must provide a nurturing, wholesome, and safe environment where students are able to thrive academically and socially. We further believe that collaboratively constructing a highly rigorous, standards-based instructional program will prepare students to become proactive, positive and productive citizens in society. Moreover, we believe that students require instructional supports to ensure their academic success.

Clay Middle School is committed to providing a student-centered, student-friendly and supportive environment for all students. Clay Middle School fosters a nurturing environment for all students by sustaining a culture of high standards for academic excellence and providing a rigorous and culturally relevant learning environment.

The vision of Clay Middle School is to produce healthy, well-rounded students who are academically engaged in all subject areas; with a love for literature, a passion for science, a hunger for math, an appreciation for the arts and awareness of one’s place in history in order to produce positive and active members of society who:

- **Participate and contribute to their community**
- **Resolve problems using positive and proactive approaches**
- **Incorporate critical thinking throughout the school day**
- **Develop inter and intrapersonal skills**
- **Evolve into successful college and/or career bound adults who are prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Clay Middle School is committed to preparing students to aggressively pursue higher academic and/or career aspirations by:

- **Preparing and presenting curriculum and instruction to ensure student readiness for the academic rigor of the A-G course sequence in high school.**
- **Restructuring the classroom culture and climate to create a comprehensive educational program that is culturally relevant and responsive to individual student needs**
- **Integrating technology into all classrooms to enhance student learning**
- **Dialoguing and collaborating with colleagues on a variety of pedagogical teaching and best practices to enable students to matriculate to high school with the academic foundation necessary to pass the California High School Exit Exam**

(CAHSEE).

- Elevating our practices by acquiring new strategies through ongoing professional and personal development

We believe that Clay Middle School can be transformed into a model school within LAUSD by empowering all students to discover their interests in the global community and take part in activities to increase their awareness and participation in improving the surrounding neighborhoods and beyond. Clay students will enjoy learning, which results in academic excellence and active engagement in the school community.

Henry Clay Middle School is further committed to:

- Partnering with parents and the community to collaborate on ways to meet the needs of all students
- Reinforcing relationships between both parents and staff for optimal student benefits
- Implementing programs with the whole family in mind
- Discovering new ways to partner with local community services to provide service projects for our students
- Enhancing the effectiveness of community partnerships through communication, collaboration and cooperation

### 1b: Student Population

Clay Middle School services approximately 1,000 students in the Westmont-West Athens community of unincorporated Los Angeles. This South Los Angeles neighborhood is an urban area with over 56,000 residents. The median income of its residents is roughly half that of the state of CA, and only 54.9% have a high school education or higher.

Based on the 2010 – 2011 California Basic Educational Data Survey (CBEDS), student body demographics are 56% Hispanic, 43% African American and 1% Other. Of the Hispanic population, 24% are identified as English Learners and 19% are Reclassified as Fluent English Proficient. Schoolwide, 19% of students receive Special Education services and 5% are part of the Gifted and Talented program. Student attendance is at close to 91%; student transiency is at 38%. Clay Middle School is a schoolwide Title I school, with 90% of the students identified as Economically Disadvantaged.

Student test scores, as measured by the Academic Performance Index (API), has increased by 22 points in the past 2 years. On the California Standards Test (CST) for English-Language Arts, 17.8% of students score at the Proficient or Advanced range, averaging a 1.5% increase annually for the past 5 years. On the CST for Mathematics, 9.9% of students score at the Proficient or Advanced range, averaging a 0.6% increase annually for the past 5 years.

### 1c: Instructional Program

Clay Middle School is committed to providing all students a high quality, rigorous academic program based on providing the best, first instruction using research-based pedagogical techniques that ensure access to a guaranteed viable curriculum. Our proposed curricular and instructional program is explicitly student-centered and grounded in research of effectiveness with similar populations.

Clay Middle School will employ programs and set goals for improved student outcomes on standards-based tests. The curriculum will provide clear expectations and goals with student progress measured by summative and formative assessments. The staff will deliver and implement standards-based curricula and instructional practices.

Teachers will be held accountable for demonstrating high levels of expertise and competence in terms of their knowledge of state standards and their utilization of assessment data. Teachers will be able to adapt the curriculum and have an understanding of adolescent development issues in order to meet the learning needs of all students.

The school will expand and strengthen the Professional Learning Community model where teams of teachers work collaboratively (e.g. course-level and interdisciplinary) on a consistent basis which supports and augments student learning and augment a more focused, rigorous academic regimen.

Clay agrees with the findings of the United Way study which emphasizes the need for providing youth with small, personalized learning environments where teaching and learning supports student success. Teaching youth in smaller groups allows each student to feel more recognized and valued by staff and their peers. Key to the implementation of our instructional plan is the creation an advisory period which will function as set-aside time for on-going personalization between students and a faculty advocate. To reduce the student to teacher ratio the advisory teachers will be drawn from all certificated staff, including support staff and administrators. Each student will receive support from the same advisor throughout their attendance at Clay.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education (CRRE) will ensure that the heritage of the diverse cultural communities of Clay students is equitably acknowledged, responded to and celebrated. Students will participate in structured peer-to-peer interactions and engaging instructional conversations that will facilitate pluralistic manners of pedagogy. Central to the development of CRRE is the communication of high expectations, cultural sensitivity, active teaching methods, small group instruction and classroom discourse. Students will have opportunities to participate in hands-on Project-Based Learning that allows connection to learning across content areas that is culturally relevant.

Clay Middle School will implement a comprehensive Response to Intervention and Instruction program to meet the needs of all students. This framework is based on the predication of quality first instruction and the use of data to identify students for appropriate acceleration and intervention.

Clay will utilize research-based strategies to support the instructional delivery. The “typical” Clay student needs additional instructional support and overt scaffolding in order to be successful in the core academic instructional program. All students at Clay Middle School will receive an instructional program that incorporates the regular use of the following research-based instructional strategies.

- **Access to Core Strategies** support language acquisition and learning for Standard English Learners through academic language, cooperative grouping, graphic, instructional conversations and comparison/contrast.
- **Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)** focuses on scaffolded and differentiated lessons through modified speech, explicit modeling, frontloading of academic vocabulary, multi-sensory experiences, cooperative

learning, graphic organizers, frequent checking for understanding, prewriting activities and design of formative assessments.

- **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)** is a college-readiness program based on raising expectations and providing academic and mentoring support including **WICR** – writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading.
- **Reciprocal Teaching** is a problem solving process of reading comprehension which provides students with specific reading strategies including clarifying, predicting, questioning and summarizing.
- **Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)** is based on the principles that: writing promotes learning, increases student participation, encourages a diversity of student voices, engages students as critical thinkers and integrates subject area disciplines.
- **Project Based Learning (PBL)** involves the students' problem solving, decisionmaking, investigative skills and reflection that emphasizes teacher facilitation of learning rather than directed teaching. PBL also provides the basis for students to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the areas of information, media and technology, life and career skills and learning and innovation.

### 1d: School Culture

Clay Middle School embraces a diverse cultural, multiethnic experience for all students, teachers, staff and community members. We seek collaboration and mutual respect among stakeholders in order to provide a safe and nurturing environment that is extensively involved with the local community. As a school facing the challenges of working with students from an economically disadvantaged community, and in a neighborhood that experiences high rates of transiency we are committed to becoming a center of culture and education that provides an anchor for the community.

Clay Middle School will create a collaborative environment where all stakeholders share accountability for student success. Successful partnership is predicated upon mutually beneficial relationships where the collective whole is exponentially stronger than its individual components. This more personalized focus will be exemplified in the implementation of an advisory period. As part of this, every student will have an advocate responsible for monitoring student progress. Throughout the instructional program, teachers and students will interact with each other to develop protocols and procedures that build trust, promote order, assure safety, and support the growth of knowledge. In establishing a collaborative environment we will be able to support the success of our students, focus on their emotional needs, create an environment that is college and career ready and increase parental involvement.

### 1e: Assessments and School-wide Data

Comprehensive school reform requires assessments that are data-driven, results-oriented and committed to equity and excellence through an on-going data analysis and inquiry tied to student achievement results. Clay Middle School's data driven accountability will transform data into reports that provide the information necessary for concrete action that results in continuous program improvement. The foundation of our assessment philosophy is the need to move from the assessment **of** learning to the assessment **for** learning in order to inform instructional decisions and motivate students toward increased academic achievement. The foundation of our assessment philosophy will be student-centered, providing multiple opportunities for students to showcase their skills.

Clay Middle School will implement innovative practices that use assessments to target instructional resources that maximize student learning. Course-level PLCs will develop common assessments (e.g. diagnostic and weekly formative) that, in connection with LAUSD's periodic assessments, will guide and modify instructional planning. These multiple measures of formative and summative assessments will be aligned to the State standards and will be designed for the benefit of student success.

Clay will refine and strengthen its teacher-developed formative assessments through a process called the Cycle of Continuous Improvement (CCI). These formative assessments check for understanding on a weekly basis. This authentic, data-driven assessment model will allow for creation of weekly, specific achievement goals that will inform students and teachers about learning gaps and measurable progress in order to identify effective instructional practices as well as correct gaps in instructional delivery.

Moreover, Clay Middle School will design an 8th grade project as a culminating assessment that is a performance-based presentation of student learning. In this way, the 8th grade project (and mini-projects at grades 6 and 7) will demonstrate student mastery of skills and concepts learned in the interdisciplinary program while allowing student choice in the the topic of the project.

#### 1f: Community Analysis and Context

Over fifty years Clay Middle School has served the predominately residential, unincorporated area of Westmont-West Athens and has strived to create a number of partnerships that provide services for students and families. The school has academic partnerships that aid in improving student learning through support for Standard English Learners, support for middle range students and the donation of technological equipment and services. There are also community partnerships that provide opportunities for students such as mentoring, field trips and affiliations that assist with community improvement actions. Social and mental-health partnerships provide services to students that are beyond the scope of what middle schools provide. These partners assist with peer and family mediation, social work, the offering of probation officers for students on voluntary probation and support for students with substance abuse issues. Some of the key community partnerships that provide services to the students and staff include: AEMP, the CA League of Middle Schools, Leadership Matters and Washington Involving Neighborhoods

One of the greatest impacts on student achievement is parent participation. Clay's community engagement plan focuses on empowering parents as leaders and decision makers. Clay provides a variety of avenues for communication such as parent packets, progress reports, classroom visits, home visits, parent conferences, Back to School Night, teacher messages using ISIS and Connect Ed messages to the home. Families and neighbors rely on the school for the academic, career and social information they need for themselves and their children.

#### 1g: Leadership

The importance of principal leadership to the construction of an effective school cannot be underestimated. Clay Middle School needs a transformational instructional leader capable of relentlessly aligning the school with student-centered philosophy, based on a shared vision of all students becoming college prepared and career ready graduates.

Based on the research of effective schools, the following are the most important attributes of a transformation leader: situational awareness, knowledge of curriculum and instruction, ideals and beliefs about what a school stands for, a shared belief regarding the sense of community, communication, monitoring, evaluation and discipline.

Clay Middle School has a principal who has a wide range of experience as an administrator in both middle and high schools within LAUSD. This person has the capacity to be a transformational instructional leader based on a proven track record of accelerating student achievement with similar populations, as both a National Board certified teacher and administrator.

The Instructional Leadership Team will serve as the Data and Leadership Teams in making decisions regarding curriculum, instruction and assessment. Membership in Instructional Leadership Team includes department chairs, program coordinators, instructional coaches, and administrators. This Council will report to the School Leadership Council under ESBMM all key findings and recommendations for action.

Clay Middle School will develop and train a committee representing all stakeholders who will be responsible for interviewing and hiring both certificated and classified staff. Clay will look for committed individuals who support the school's mission, vision and instructional goals. All teachers will be fully credentialed and NCLB highly qualified teachers. In addition to new processes for hiring teachers Clay will design a new evaluation tool to complement and supplement the current STULL evaluation. This new evaluation tool will be modeled on subject specific teacher standards and the teaching performance expectations of the California Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for the teaching profession. It will incorporate self-evaluation, professional growth activities, portfolio documentation, peer observation and demonstration lessons.

### 1h: School Governance Model

School governance is charged with the task of improving instruction to meet the needs of the students. The staff of Clay Middle School has determined that the Expanded School Based Management Model (ESBMM) best ensures that the instructional plan is implemented and sustained. ESBMM offers a way to promote individual student growth in a way that aligns most directly with the needs of the students by moving control from district offices to the school sites.

### 1i: New Commitments

Clay Middle School is committed to taking advantage of the autonomy provided under the Public School Choice process to implement innovative practices aimed at maximizing students learning, as evidenced on standardized test scores (i.e. CSTs) through implementation of the following:

- New Governance via ESBMM
- Elect to Work Agreement
- Weekly Professional Development and Common Planning Time
- Advisory Period
- Individual Learning Plan
- Six key research-based instructional strategies schoolwide (Access to Core, Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English, Advancement Via

Individual Determination, Reciprocal Teaching, Writing Across the Curriculum, Project-Based Learning)

- Professional Learning Communities
- Focus on Response to Instruction and Intervention
- Lesson Plan Template
- Block scheduling
- Student portfolios
- Student-Led Conferences
- Observation Rounds
- Teacher portfolios
- Community Advisory Committee
- 8th grade Culminating Project





LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE MOTION

Western Academy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Team Koppersmith

Executive Summary

## 1. Executive Summary

- 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.

Western Academy for the 21st Century's mission is to significantly increase the percentage of students in our ethnically diverse population that are prepared to attend college, develop career enhancing skills and become productive, thoughtful citizens of the 21st century.

Our school will guide and mentor students in the construction of habits and academic skills that will allow them to build a successful future. We labor towards a curriculum that reaches across academic disciplines, providing dynamic learning experiences, in a small school setting, based upon meaningful, project-based assessments. By providing a safe environment that promotes intensive academic and personal exploration, the tools to build that future are at hand.

Our vision is that children leave our middle school with:

- A complement of academic skills – linguistic, mathematical, scientific, artistic, physical and social that will directly foster success in high school, college, and beyond.
- Enhanced development in critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and innovation, and discriminating intellectual skills – which creates a life-long desire for knowledge.
- A greater understanding of 21<sup>st</sup> Century concepts such as global awareness, financial literacy, civic responsibility and environmental literacy.
- Expansive information and communication technology (ICT) literacy.
- A strong understanding of graduation requirements from high school and the academic and emotional skills needed to succeed in college.
- High personal expectations for themselves and their future.
- Respect and tolerance for others in our diverse, global community.

We deeply respect the critical partnership, which exists between school, parents and community. Teachers will labor hard toward the common goal to which we all strive, the intellectual and social growth of the children with which we are entrusted.

- 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 expected student population of Western Academy mirrors that of Henry Clay Middle School. Clay has approximately 55% Hispanic and 45% African American students. Clay is a school-wide Title I School, with 89% of the students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. A significant number of our students are in formal foster care or live with relative. Clay also has a high transiency rate and student daily attendance is only 90.1%, well below the District goal. Henry Clay Middle School also has a poor record in creating a safe, academic culture as the school had a 64% suspension rate in the 2009-2010 school year, which represents a 41% increase.

In terms of academics, Clay has consistently provided a substandard education for the vast majority of students. API has fallen from a high of 555 in 2005 to 538 in 2010. Current proficiency levels have marginally improved over the last year, but scores are far below similar, local schools. The proficiency levels for African American students in English are 17% (6<sup>th</sup>), 16% (7<sup>th</sup>) and 14% (8<sup>th</sup>); proficiency levels in Math are 10% (6<sup>th</sup>), 7% (7<sup>th</sup>), and 2% (8<sup>th</sup>); proficiency levels for 8th grade History are 8% and proficiency levels for 8th grade Science are 14%. The proficiency levels for Hispanic students in English are 22% (6<sup>th</sup>), 16% (7<sup>th</sup>), and 21% (8<sup>th</sup>); proficiency levels in Math are 20% (6<sup>th</sup>), 9% (7<sup>th</sup>), and 1% (8<sup>th</sup>); proficiency levels in 8<sup>th</sup> grade History are 15% and proficiency levels for Science are 20%.

Critical needs for our students include access to committed, successful teachers, intervention classes to build academic skills, a school culture that promotes individual responsibility and a caring environment, as well as strategies to build goal setting and valuable life skills.

Our team has a proven track record of academic success at Henry Clay (Appendix 1) serving in diverse learning communities for over 50 years. Our team is heavily involved in official committees like School Site Council, the Technology Committee and Curriculum Council, as well as extra-curricular activities like Journalism, the Clay Fencing Team and the Environmental Club. We know that our personalized methods to improve student learning are effective and can be replicated in a Pilot School environment.

- 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.

Our instructional program, using the frameworks from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) will motivate students to develop a broad range of academic and critical thinking skills, which foster enhanced opportunities for success in school and in the workforce.

Our first focus is to provide access to and opportunities to master the State Content Standards through project-based assessments and differentiated activities. Our inclusive model will create appropriate interventions for those struggling with mastery, as well as provide opportunities to develop a greater depth of understanding for our advanced learners. We endeavor to effectively use student data to tailor our instructional programs to meet the needs of every student.

To that end we have created grade-level Personal Learning Environments (PLE's). Our faculty, along with our Curriculum Development Team, will design and implement a cohesive instructional plan using the 21<sup>st</sup> Century interdisciplinary themes of Global Awareness; Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy; Civic Literacy; Health Literacy; Environmental Literacy. We will further weave into our programs the concepts of Life and Career Skills; Learning and Innovation Skills; Information, Media and Technology Skills. Our teachers will have the opportunity to instruct and actively mentor their students through core classes, content-related and motivational electives, as well as Study Hall Advisory periods.

Our faculty will engage in targeted professional development with effective common planning time built into our weekly and daily schedules. Additional Instructional Program Highlights:

- Study Hall Advisory period, which focuses on tutoring and developing the 21st Century skills of Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Productivity and Accountability, Leadership and Responsibility, in a close-knit, mentoring environment
- A eight (8) period, extended day schedule to support our multi-level approach to learning
- School-created Benchmark Exams to monitor content mastery and develop test-taking skills to improve our Advanced and Proficient rates on CST exams
- Research-based curriculum development and implementation strategies created by a true Professional Learning Community
- P21 themed electives tied to core curriculum to provide skill development and motivation
- Effective and dynamic use of Accelerated Reader
- Successful implementation of the ALEKS math assessment and learning system
- Expanded use of the AVID college readiness program
- Greater access to community programs and resources

Our instructional program is grounded in educational research spearheaded by the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, Center for Collaborative Education, and the California Department of Education's guidelines in Taking Center Stage - Act II.

**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.

Henry Clay Middle School has, generally, provided a sub-standard education to the community for several years. This is why we are requesting a new name for our campus. We feel this step is important in creating a culture of success and excitement for our students, parents, community, faculty and staff.

Our new school culture will reflect our commitment and passion for progressive education by emphasizing collaboration, accountability and high expectations from all stakeholders. In turn, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to grow and develop new skills to ensure student achievement. Our excitement and dedication to creating a great 21<sup>st</sup> Century focused school will be immediately evident upon entering our campus.

Students can expect to learn in a safe, creative, and supportive environment. Our school will encourage, at all levels, a desire for greater knowledge. Personal accountability and respect for diversity will be a cornerstone to our students' experience on campus.

Our school will be a welcoming place for families and community members, as well. A focus on meaningful communication, faculty accessibility, and supportive programs and resources will guide our school practices.

Faculty and staff can expect a completely new paradigm on campus as we start anew. Effective communication and team building opportunities, at the outset, will help establish a new tradition of collaboration and success. Team-developed protocols will be in place to reflect and build on our instructional and operational practices, ensuring effective program implementation.

While accountability is high, well-defined support structures for the socio-emotional needs of our stakeholders will be in place to guarantee the achievement of our goals. These supports include adopting elements from the LAUSD Blueprint for Wellness, coordinating programs with local agencies through the Healthy Schools Grant and Wellness Centers, and the LAUSD Employee Assistance Program.

**IE. Accountability and Performance Goals - to be completed after school selection.**

**f. 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.

Our school community comprises the West Athens-Westmont region of unincorporated Los Angeles. The median income for the area is approximately \$39,500 (according to the LA Times Mapping LA project) and the population for the area is about 40,000 residents. Over a quarter of the adults in the area have less than a high school diploma and only about 4% have a college degree or higher.

Our community's strengths include deep cultural pride (Latino and African American, predominately), a steadfast belief in the family as a cornerstone for society, and a hope for a brighter future. There are many physical assets in the area as well, with several parks, two libraries and numerous places of worship surrounding our school.

The critical needs for the area include creating a true partnership with stakeholders to not only provide an excellent education for their children, but also provide valuable resources and information to improve everyone's quality of life.

As long-time teachers at Henry Clay Middle School, we feel deeply connected to our students and the community. We have reached out to community groups like the Westmont-West Athens Task Force and RUACH Christian Community Fellowship to share our plans for Western Academy. We share their frustration at being neglected by the local school district for so long and we are excited to have the opportunity to improve the school and the community through the PSC process. We know that Western Academy will have expanded opportunities to make a lasting impact on the lives of the communities we serve.

**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.

The leadership and governance structure for our Pilot School reflects our commitment to progressive reform and our mission to provide our students with a meaningful 21st Century education. Our school will be led by a Board of Regents (expanded School Site Council) and supported by the:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Curriculum Development Team             | Faculty Leadership Team                           |
| Counseling & Administrative Team        | PTSA - Parent/Teacher/Student Association         |
| ELAC - English Learner Advisory Council | CEAC - Compensatory Education Advisory Council    |
| Community Partners                      | GoldStar (our affiliated non-profit organization) |

## Our Design Team

Our design team possesses a host of academic, business and creative skills along with a strong desire to create an excellent school for our community.

**Walter Bambrick:** With over 20 years in LAUSD as an English Teacher and Technology Coordinator, Walter is our most experienced team member. He has taught at Locke High School, Horace Mann Middle School, and has been at Clay for seven years. His strong background in reading pedagogy, young adult literature and new technologies serve our students well.

**Yesenia Enriquez:** Our newest teacher with three years experience in LAUSD, Yesenia, has taught 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English. She has already served as Leadership Coordinator, creating our 2010 Yearbook, and is currently our Journalism Instructor. Fluent in Spanish, Yesenia provides our translation services and a deep understanding of the local community as a Fremont High School alumna.

**Jennifer Horton:** A six-year veteran of Henry Clay, Jennifer teaches 7th Grade Science and Health. She has served as School Site Council Chairperson, Science Department Chairperson and Science Lead Teacher. She is currently working on her Master's Degree in Education Administration from UCLA.

**Adam Koppersmith:** Mr. Koppersmith is a 12-year veteran of Henry Clay Middle School. He has served as English Department Chairperson, Lead 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher and as a member of the Literacy Cadre. With a strong background in the sciences and technology, he shares his passion for learning with his students everyday.

**Joseph O Neil:** Joseph is a six-year veteran of Henry Clay and has over 11 years experience teaching in Los Angeles area middle schools. Credentialed in Math and Social Studies, he brings an interdisciplinary focus to his teaching. Having 21 years of managerial and supervisory experience in the private sector, he knows what skills students need for success.

**Karen Orpe:** Karen is a ten-year veteran of Clay serving as GATE Coordinator, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Lead Teacher in History, and Garden Coordinator. Earning several History and Garden grants over the last few years, she is dedicated to bringing the best educational experience to her students. Karen was honored as a LAUSD Teacher of the Year for 2010.

## Our Principal

Western Academy and the community demand a creative, efficient, and caring leader, as well. Our Principal will have a varied background highlighting a commitment to students, as well as a passion for progressive education reform. Our Principal will also appreciate and dedicate himself/herself to the cause for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill development. A fine understanding of budgeting and creative resource management will also serve our future Principal well.

- 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 (ESBMM), Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school? Please reference **Appendix B** for more information on the governance models listed above.

We have selected the Pilot School model for Western Academy for the 21st Century, to share the Henry Clay site. Our community deserves bold, innovative reform that creates real educational opportunities for success (Center for Collaborative Education, 2006). Our rationale for choosing this model is clear; traditional, large-scale, impersonal schools do not adequately serve our community.

What "traditional" education has meant at Henry Clay:

- "Neglected by the district" according to a local Superintendent in a June 2010 meeting
- Program Improvement 5+ status, 2010
- API has fallen from 555 to 538 over the last six years
- A 64% suspension rate in the 2009- 2010 school year
- Four principals in ten years
- 54% of staff have acceptable attendance rates over the last two years
- 37% of students have acceptable attendance rates (96%) over the last two years
- Years to finally implement the Accelerated Reader program
- Faculty late to meetings and slow to implement effective classroom strategies

How becoming a Pilot School will completely transform our campus:

- Small schools demand higher accountability from all stakeholders.
- Yearly evaluations of staff and school policies by the Board of Regents (An expanded School Site Council with local community and educational leaders) will ensure a commitment to the mission and vision of our school.
- Progressive redesign of core curriculum and electives and will improve academic outcomes, as well as developing critical thinking skills and life-long learning habits.
- Research indicates that small schools are safer schools
- Adoption of relevant 21<sup>st</sup> Century focus will aid in student motivation and self-reflection.
- Advisory Study Hall periods and PLE's will provide ample mentoring opportunities
- True collaboration and innovation from all stakeholders will improve school culture and improve attendance rates
- Transparent and effective budgeting of resources and time will inherently support our school's mission.

Western Academy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is committed to making a difference in our students', parents' and stakeholders' lives. Failure will be no longer be tolerated. Barriers to success will be dismantled and a new era of commitment to education will begin.