



Public School Choice School Plan Guide for Sankofa STEM Academy

Guiding Questions	Explanation	Rationale	Glossary of Terms
<p>Section 1: Vision of the Student</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What skills and knowledge will students gain to prepare them for the next level of learning? • What will students know and be able to do when they leave this school? 	<p>The Sankofa STEM Academy (SSA) uniquely combines the focus of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with the innovative integrated practices of Artful Thinking. SSA will enable students to become reflective, constructivist learners who can evaluate and synthesize new information, understand the natural world, the built environment, systems of society, and the interactions among them that will determine the future of our nation and planet. For discerning meaning that enables students to learn deeply and critically in all areas, students will be engaged in learning that is interesting and rigorous. SSA will provide authentic learning that embodies habits of mind for connecting math and science with technology and engineering through artful thinking. They will be taught using culturally responsive educational practices that enhance instruction and promote higher levels of learning for all students. In preparing students for the next level of learning, along with good character traits, the core concepts (skills) and crucial capacities (knowledge) they will develop while attending SSA are: knowing, using, and interpreting scientific explanations of the natural world; generating and evaluating scientific evidence and explanations; understanding the development and use of 21st Century technology knowledge and basic engineering principles; participating productively in mathematical practices and discourse; and using creative thinking to explore artistic works and subjects across the curriculum.</p> <p>When students leave SSA, they will move into high schools as Socratic and collaborative learners who use deductive and inductive reasoning; as effective communicators with the ability to appropriately articulate thoughts using oral, written, and non-verbal languages; and as service and community-minded individuals who are skilled in social civility. They will graduate as knowledgeable, principle-centered young adults who are creative, critical, independent, and productive thinkers with a passion for excellence, open to cultural differences with grade-level proficiency in the practices of the various STEM disciplines as well as understand and master subjects such as history, geography, music, and art. Students will have a sense of exploration, be open and receptive to new ideas, capable of resolving conflicts and solving complex problems.</p>	<p>The health of a community can be measured by its success in developing all of its children. Just as our nation once transformed its school system to enable the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy, we must reinvent our educational system again today, this time for a rapidly changing and increasingly technological global economy. Math and science learning belong at the center of that transformation. They are essential components of a liberal education, the backbone of logic and analytic thinking from early childhood through the most advanced levels of learning across the academic disciplines. In preparing our students to be global, productive citizens, and independent, reflective learners who are technologically advanced in science, math, and art, our highest priority is student achievement through the education of the whole child and the integration of academic, social, and civic development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ SSA – Sankofa STEM Academy ▫ Constructivist – learner who actively makes meaning out of the information provided by creating new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge ▫ Socratic – asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to illuminate ideas ▫ Character traits – responsibility, respectful, trustworthiness, caring, fairness, and citizenship ▫ Social Civility – politeness, courtesy, display of empathy for others, and value community ▫ Deductive – drawing conclusions from a set of premises or facts ▫ Inductive – leading or influencing the outcome



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<p>Section 2: Vision of the School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the school feel like for students and parents at your school? • What must the school do to make sure all students are successful and prepared to be successful at the next school level and beyond? 	<p>The Sankofa STEM Academy (SSA) is committed to creating a safe, innovative, communal, and culturally responsive healthy learning environment where <i>all students and their parent as well as faculty and staff feel a sense of belonging</i>. It will be a place where every child in every classroom excels academically and socially; every teacher succeeds professionally; and every parent and/or caregiver is welcomed and valued. Orientation meetings will help students and their families understand the focus and expectations of SSA; its policies, procedures, and programs; and academic and disciplinary plans; and they will allow them to meet administration, teachers, and counselors. The Parent Innovative Center will be a home base for parents and caregivers to plan parent and community social activities, and provide assistance to faculty and staff. A “Communiversity” will be established to provide training and workshops in areas of: parental practices that help increase student attendance and academics; parental rights under Title I; leadership and student advocacy; and specific topics requested by parents. This holistic, personalized school culture, created through the STEM-Artful Thinking learning environment, will lead students in becoming visionary leaders empowered to be active members of the current knowledge-based society, while co-creating a world beyond expectation.</p> <p>The SSA will seek to educate students to their full capacity while recognizing that preparedness for real-life experiences begins now. To change the academic experiences, outcomes, and life-options for our students, SSA will provide a personalized environment with an Individual Success Plan for each student created with input from the parents and students. It will equip every classroom with 21st Century technology; provide ongoing and meaningful professional development to equip teachers with instructional strategies that are culturally responsive and differentiate learning; and provide STEM lab opportunities for students to learn through interdisciplinary, hands-on inquiry-based learning that bridges 8th and 9th grade concepts. Electives will include opportunities like leadership development and service learning. Mentoring partnerships with high school students will help them mature socially and learn how to handle peer pressure positively. SSA will provide after-school tutoring and seek support for Saturday Enrichment Sessions to address needs of the transient students. To enhance students’ social experience, SSA will modify the schedule to include nutrition, separate lunch times, and school-wide character development during advisory/home room.</p>	<p>Sankofa STEM Academy believes that parents are co-constructors of their children’s education and understands the importance of establishing a supportive and professional relationship between parents and teachers. This relationship will in turn help students meet their academic and social goals. We will create a “space” for conversations that supports and maximizes student learning such as regularly scheduled parent-teacher “teach-ins” that allow parents to share their ideas, concerns, and strategies for improving the way the SSA functions on behalf of their children.</p> <p>Parents and caregivers who participate in the “Communiversity” will receive instructional support strategies they can use at home to create a college-going/career ready culture that reflects that of the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Communal – relating to family; belonging to the people of a community; a place shared by the public ▫ Co-constructors – equitable partners who take part in forming, building, and/or creating structures, policies and/or procedures ▫ Communiversity – a communal learning place that provides academic, social, and personal development training opportunities for parents, caregivers, and community stakeholders



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<p>Section 3: Where is the School Now? Student Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current reality of the school? • What areas of the school show strength? • What areas of the school are of concern and require growth? • What information was used to determine where the school is currently in terms of student’s school performance? • How will you address the needs of each subgroup of students? 	<p>The current reality of Harte Prep is what led to the submission of this proposal for a Sankofa STEM Academy (SSA). As a school-wide Title I school, Harte entered Program Improvement (PI) in 1997-98. Unfortunately, this is the 7th consecutive year it has been in PI status which means it did not meet the Annual Yearly Progress/AYP in 2010-11, nor did it meet the Academic Performance Index (API). There were minimal gains in all content areas, but a significant decline in Algebra. The data show a high percentage of all student cohorts – ELs, SELs, and SWDs – continue to perform at the below/far below basic level on the CST with a 2.6% decrease in passing Eng./Adv. ESL with a C or above.</p> <p>Even though the gain has been minimal, it is important to note that there has been a consistent 3% yearly gain in the content areas of ELA, social studies, science, and general math. Harte did meet its AMAO 2 with the data for EL Progress from 2010-11 to 2011-12 showing an increase of 4.4% in scoring proficiency on the CELDT; 6.3% increase in basic or above on the CST ELA; and 6.7% increase in their reclassification rate trend.</p> <p>Neither the AMAO 1 (CELDT annual growth) nor the AMAO 3 (Proficiency in ELA & Math) was met. As much as fifty percent of the student body performed below/far below basic in general math, while seventy percent of its LEP students performed at below/far below basic level. In short, all student cohorts need support to increase their scores in math, science, and English.</p> <p>SSA used the School Performance Framework/Performance Meter to demonstrate the academic status of Harte Prep MS.</p> <p>Differentiated instructional strategies that accelerate the learning of English Learners (ELs), Standard English Learners (SELs), and Student with disabilities (SWDs) while supporting all students will be implemented. Along with SDAIE, they support the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in academic English content instruction. The District’s EL Master Plan will be used as a guide to ensure alignment with the California Common Core Standards. Areas impacting achievement – teacher apathy and low expectations, non-rigorous teaching practices, discipline referrals, and high absenteeism of both teachers and students – will be addressed through meaningful professional development.</p>	<p>Students are equipped with both the intellectual curiosity to keep learning and the tangible skills that make them critical thinkers and more successful in life.</p>	<p>AMAO - Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives - English language proficiency and academic achievement</p> <p>AYP - how a school is performing academically according to results on standardized tests</p> <p>API - a measurement of a school’s academic performance and progress</p> <p>CELDT – California English Language Development Test</p> <p>CST – California Standardized Tests</p> <p>Differentiate – to vary instruction; use of different learning styles and modalities</p> <p>SDAIE – Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English</p>



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<p>Section 4: School Plan Priorities To Turnaround Student Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the top three to five priorities must the school address to improve student achievement? • What is required to achieve the growth needed to get to the school of the future where all students are high achievers? • What type of academic strategies will be implemented? • What type of support is needed for faculty and staff to turnaround the school? 	<p>Our top four priorities for increasing student achievement through the education of the whole child and the integration of academic, social, and civic development are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A strong academic literacy program that embodies habits of mind and methods for discerning meaning that enable students to learn deeply and critically in all areas; 2. Meaningful professional learning opportunities for staff & administration that are culturally and linguistically responsive and address teacher beliefs & expectations. 3. Creating multiple programs and opportunities for parents to become directly involved in their children’s learning 4. A safe and healthy learning environment where children excel academically and personally. <p>To accomplish the growth needed for all students to become high achievers requires an unwavering commitment to student achievement by all teachers and staff, and increased parent engagement. Inevitably, this entails extending ourselves beyond the stipulations of our current union contracts, (i.e. supervision, planning time, additional instructional time, modification of bell schedule, etc.). Non-negotiables also include: 21st century technological learning tools; an increase in academic rigor; raised expectations; change in deliver of instruction; increased parent engagement; administrative accountability for creating a safe and personalized environment; service-learning; character development; and community partnerships.</p> <p>Students will need to be taught using differentiation and culturally & linguistically responsive educational strategies that enhance instruction, make real-life critical connections, and promote higher levels of learning for all, i.e. making cultural connections, instructional conversation, academic language development, contrastive analysis, cooperative & communal learning environment, and advanced graphic organizers. SDAIE and RtI² practices must also be integrated into daily instruction.</p> <p>To successfully turnaround the school necessitates the authentic desire, professional will, flexibility, and energy to ensure all programs are given the necessary time, space, and right people to be successful. SSA’s belief is consistent with the finding in Jim Collins’ five year study, <i>From Good to Great</i> (2001). Collins explains that, “In fact, leaders of [organizations] that go from good to great start not with ‘where’ but with ‘whom’. [We] have to start by getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus and the right people in the right seats”.</p>	<p>These priorities will shift the culture and climate within the school and provide training needed for developing behavior that: moves all stakeholders toward cultural proficiency; changes teacher practice; and positively impacts student success. They prepare students to be successful in society; honor what parents bring about their children; and acquire outside resources for perimeter patrol/safety.</p> <p>These strategies accommodate and validate the learning styles, communication styles, and unique modalities in which all students process information and interact in social contexts. We connect learning to life and life to learning through an interdisciplinary approach.</p> <p>The summer and year-long professional learning will focus on the integration of the STEM disciplines with Artful Thinking; meeting socio-cultural needs of diverse students; implementation of the EL/SEL Master Plan; and California Common Core Standards.</p>	<p>RtI² – Responsive to Instruction and Intervention</p>