STELLA MIDDLE CHARTER ACADEMY

A BRIGHT STAR SCHOOL

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Be conscientious.

Be compassionate.

Be creative.

Charter Renewal Petition Submitted October 15, 2012
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AFFIRMATIONS AND ASSURANCES

Stella Middle Charter Academy (also referred to herein as “SMCA” and “Charter School”) shall:

★ Be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.
★ Not charge tuition.
★ Not discriminate against any student on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code.
★ Admit all pupils who wish to attend the school. EC 47605(d)(2)(A)
★ Determine admission by a public random drawing, if the number of pupils who wish to attend the school exceeds the school capacity, and preference shall be extended to pupils who currently attend the Charter School and pupils who reside in the District. EC 47605(d)(2)(B)
★ Not enroll pupils over nineteen (19) years of age unless continuously enrolled in public school and making satisfactory progress toward high school diploma requirements.
★ Not require any child to attend the Charter School nor any employee to work at the charter school.
★ In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)], if a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without graduation or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information.
OUR SCHOOL

Stella Middle Charter Academy, located in Los Angeles' Mid-City neighborhood, serves approximately 630 fifth through eighth grade students, most of whom are Latino, low-income, and English Language Learners. Our school community has been incredibly successful by both external and internal measures, showing academic performance that far exceeds that of students’ home schools. Having opened our doors for the first time in September of 2003, Stella has had plenty of opportunity to thoughtfully reflect upon and refine its program.

OUR RESULTS

Stella Middle Charter Academy (SMCA) utilizes multiple measures to hold ourselves accountable to our students and the community we serve. Each year administration guides teachers through a thoughtful analysis of our API, CST, AYP, and benchmark data. Before the school year this data is used to refine the instructional program and create challenging academic goals.

The graph above outlines our success and our responsiveness to the needs of our population. During the 2006-2007 school year, the school earned its highest API to date. Subsequently, our school network went through a major reorganization and our scores fell drastically. We used this drop as an opportunity to analyze our program, research new instructional strategies, and become...
versed in best practices in school management. Consequently, we have seen steady growth in our API over the last three years, and, since 2007, our API has never fallen below 800.

Our goal is to continue to increase overall student proficiencies and eventually exceed our score from the 2006-2007 school year. Though we have pursued this goal, our API from 2011-12 does indicate a drop in achievement. One major factor in this drop is that, as the organization has continued to grow, we find ourselves with a larger number of new teachers each year. We acknowledge that our pre-service training needs to be more robust and strategic in order to better prepare teachers for the high expectations of our program. In the 2012 school year, our math teachers did not receive adequate support and/or training and, as such, were not as successful. That being said, our API score continues to drastically exceed other middle schools within close proximity.

**SCHOOLWIDE PERFORMANCE GROWTH**

This first graph highlights burgeoning proficiencies in our English Language Arts department. Perhaps due to our emphasis on literacy, the school has consistently outperformed demographically similar schools. In our continuing efforts to ensure all students are college and career ready, this year we piloted an intervention program during the academic day for struggling...
students. Using CST data from the previous school year, students with below proficient ELA scores were scheduled for a period of support during the academic day. It is this kind of discriminating attention to student mastery that has yielded positive results for our school. During the 2012 year a vast majority of our grade levels saw an increase in number of proficient and advanced students. Unfortunately, our seventh grade cohort was not as successful as in years past and this is perhaps one reason our overall percentage of proficient students was lower than the previous year.

Relative to our neighboring schools, Stella students continue to exceed similar schools. However, recruiting and maintaining quality math teachers has been a challenge over the course of the school’s operation. The 5th grade and 7th grade programs have yielded high academic achievement, while we have struggled to get our bearings within the 6th and 8th grade. In fact, due to the subpar math results of the 2010-2011 academic year, SMCA fell into program improvement status. Inconsistencies between grade levels were cause for alarm and a comprehensive math intervention plan was drafted by a team of administrators, teachers, and parents. A thorough single plan for student achievement was developed in conjunction with the school site council; and, components of
this strategic plan include hiring single subject math teachers, incorporating a period of intervention for students during the academic day, reducing class size in core classes such as math, and completing a math department study. While all of the programs were implemented, we did not set incremental, measurable benchmarks to track our progress towards academic achievement. Without this data review, we did not meet the 5th and 7th grade targets, but as we move into the new school year, we are incorporating objectives and systems for an ongoing review of student progress.
COHORT ANALYSIS: 8TH GRADE CLASS of 2012

Our longitudinal data for cohorts of students is the strongest evidence that our program is successful. The longer a student remains in our program, the more likely he is to obtain academic success. Due to the complex nature of our program and incoming students’ gaps in knowledge and skills, it often takes students multiple years to realize the support resources available to them and acclimate to a culture of high expectations and accountability. Beginning in 5th grade, teachers directly promote this culture as it relates to both academics and behavior. However, because most of the students are not yet eleven, they struggle to draw the connection between their effort and their academic achievement. As students move into the 6th grade, the academic rigor increases and more responsibility is placed on the student. By their eighth grade year, students have internalized the culture and understand that academic success is directly correlated to hard work. Teachers provide a number of projects for students to extend their learning throughout our program, and student choice drives these opportunities heavily in the 7th and 8th grade.

ASSESSMENTS FOR LEARNING

Stella Middle Charter Academy utilizes an adaptive curriculum map informed by both formative and summative data. Aligned to the expectations for student learning, all assignments are rooted in the California state standards or the California Common Core standards. As a result of these measures the school is able to meet the following objectives:

1) Assist teachers’ in revision of curriculum and instruction according to student needs.
2) Provide parents and students meaningful, useful feedback on student progress.
3) Compare the school’s progress to that of schools with similar student demographics.
4) Monitor the school’s fidelity to the mission, and revising programs as necessary.

It is our belief that all children regardless of their entering academic level, can perform at high levels and be held to rigorous standards of achievement. Thus, it stands to reason that the school must develop accurate measures for analyzing students’ mastery of core skills and essential content. To do this, we establish a baseline measure of student achievement, continuously assess growth from that point, and culminate the year with summative exams. Additionally pupils take a variety of objective assessments created by outside companies through Study Island, ReadiStep, Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project, and Scholastic Reading Counts.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT
In years past the school administered a baseline assessment to better understand student skills and abilities. Relying too heavily on one data point led to misconceptions and as such the school moved to student profiles which included multiple pieces of information. Diagnostic academic information is now obtained using data from external assessments such as the previous school’s report cards, STAR, CELDT, other state exams, and initial reading and math surveys. This evidence is compiled as an academic profile for each student and assists the administration in scheduling students into the appropriate classes. Throughout the year data from internal benchmarks and external assessments is compared to this profile and progress is tracked. In this way, the school has multiple measures regarding the effectiveness of instruction during that year.

IN-HOUSE BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS
There are two major types of assessments at SMCA: (1) Teacher created exams which measure the extent to which students understand and master standards based lessons presented by the teacher; and (2) External tests that measure proficiency of the California state standards and the California Common Core Standards.

TEACHER CREATED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS
IWOC
The most common student performance measure utilized on campus is the nightly Independent Work Outside of Class (IWOC) also known as homework. IWOC is given daily in each core class to ensure students have ample practice at key skills. IWOC is regularly recorded and serves as an invaluable tool, enabling teachers to make immediate remediation decisions. For example, when an entire class performs poorly on assignment the teacher realizes his/her lesson missed the objective target; he/she will need to re teach the content. If a majority of the students successfully complete
the IWOC, the teacher may choose to select only a small group for review. In this way, daily assessments drive instruction.

UNIT TESTS
In addition to IWOC, teachers create course assessments. These unit tests occur more frequently than benchmarks and may take place on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the length of the unit. Unlike IWOC, unit tests provide a breadth of information on a range of standards and skills. Teachers generally develop these assessments to correlate with specific subject objectives. While teachers are not mandated to follow a school-wide pacing plan, teachers meet at the beginning of the year to co-create a common curriculum map. They decide when standards are introduced and how concepts are spiraled throughout the school year. In departments teachers evaluate the data after each benchmark cycle. During this analysis students are grouped by proficiency level which in turn enables teachers to set rigorous, individualized goals and tailor instructional strategies to a group’s specific needs.

WRITING EXAMS
School-wide writing exams are administered four times a year and encompass the following genres: Narrative, Expository, Response to Literature and Summary. As 4th, 7th and 11th graders must take a standardized California writing exam, we at SMCA believe that everyone should be assessed in their writing several times a year in order to improve in their skill and become college-ready writers.

Exams and rubrics are prepared before the school year begins by the English Language Arts (ELA) department. While the genres are consistent across grade levels, the expectations for quality and complexity of writing increase with each year. We also strive to provide accurate feedback to each student. As such, all exams are double blind graded on a 4-point rubric by faculty that have obtained at minimum a college degree. Each year exam readers are trained on a variety of sample anchor papers; this calibration reduces reader bias. If ever there is a significant discrepancy between the two scores, a third teacher will read and assess the piece of writing. Students must earn a 3 on a 4-point rubric scale in order to pass this exam.

The ELA teachers input the scores into the gradebook and review comments and suggestions with students in the days that follow the exam. SMCA expects that students pass at least 3 out of 4 writing exams over the course of the school year. Multiple times throughout the year writing workshops and retakes are offered to students who have yet to meet the expectations.
ON-TARGET/ CATCH-UP REPORTS

On-Target/Catch-Up (OTCU) reports describe the progress a student is making toward their annual promotion goals. This report is collated and printed quarterly to maintain ongoing communication with families. Advisory teachers monitor and mentor a group of students as they continue to work towards completing each goal. This report measures how “on-target” (OT) a student is in terms of promoting to the next grade level. If a student’s progress is deemed “catch-up” (CU), this serves as the catalyst for a student success team meeting. The student along with his or her teachers, family and administrators convene to create a plan of action in order to move the student to on-target status.

Receiving On-Target status is akin to the Dean’s List. Students’ hard work is celebrated and privileges are earned. Students on the catch-up list are monitored closely as they may be in danger of not passing the grade level. These students will have more parent conferences and are offered more opportunities to receive tutoring in smaller group settings. As will be explained in depth later, specific grade levels began implementing standards based grading during the 2011-2012 school year. As such, the promotion goals have lessened in number from our previous charter but increased in academic rigor.

The following is a list of all promotion goals:

1. **ELA or History Proficiency**: A student must earn a 70% or greater in their English Language Arts or History course.
2. **Math or Science Proficiency**: A student must earn a 70% or greater in their Mathematics or Science course.
3. **Combined Class Average (CCA)**: A student must maintain a class average of 70% or greater.
4. **Independent Reading**: A student must independently read and comprehend 5 novels in 5th grade, 6 novels in 6th grade, 7 novels in 7th grade, and 8 novels in 8th grade at their assessed reading level.
5. **Writing**: A student must pass 3 out of the 4 genre writing exams.
6. **Study Island**: A student must master 80% of the assigned independent practice in ELA, math, science, and history.

The school calendar is intentionally structured to provide significant catch-up time for all students that might fall behind. Additionally, the welcome meeting at the beginning of the year, ongoing parent workshops and family meetings are utilized to communicate clear expectations of the
academic program. This system of accountability encompasses the rigor of our programs and is the reason why our students work hard and achieve highly on our state assessments.

**STANDARDIZED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

Throughout the year Stella Middle Charter Academy emulates the state exam experience multiple times. Our greater organization, Bright Star Schools, has a strict policy of “no social promotion” and believes that standardized testing assesses whether students are ready for advance content at the next grade level. To this end, SMCA utilizes multiple external assessments, the two most important being Study Island and DataDirector.

**STUDY ISLAND**

Students are tested on a weekly basis on their standards mastery through an online program called Study Island. Each state standard is broken down into lessons and practice questions. Teachers are easily able to incorporate these assignments into their curriculum maps because each Study Island lesson is aligned to a standard. Teachers instruct on a particular topic and then require students to practice the skill via the online lesson and assessment. Study Island provides immediate feedback to the student about their understanding of the given standard. A blue ribbon signifies that the student has practiced sufficiently to obtain at least 70% proficiency for a given concept. Throughout the year, students are held accountable for reaching certain benchmarks and are often rewarded with field trips or other incentives for completion. When students fail to meet their benchmarks, they are provided with additional tutoring help and support until the goal is met.

Additionally, some teachers utilize Study Island to create quizzes to assess students at the end of a unit. When students work on Study Island as IWOC, they are able to use the program at home. If a teacher has decided to use the program as an assessment, students must complete the session within the classroom under the supervision of their teacher. During the administration of the test account the goal is not to earn a blue ribbon, but rather to capture the student’s most current understanding. As such, each child takes ten questions and their session score is converted to our 4 point standard based grading scale. This efficiently provides a pulse on the class’s standard mastery.

**BENCHMARK EXAMS**

At the closing of each quarter common benchmarks are administered for each grade level and subject. The midterms and finals regulate the quality of instruction across multiple sections of the same subject. Additionally, these quarterly exams are used to help predict academic achievement as measured by the STAR assessment. Our process begins with each teacher creating an annual
standards map defining the sequence in which standards are taught. Then time is allotted during professional development for teachers to create midterms and finals before the school year even begins. Exams are intended to be objective and thus are built by using questions from an item bank available through Data Director.

Scaffolds are in place so that the number of questions per benchmark increases so that the spring final mirrors the CST blueprint. Generally students take the final Data Director exams about a week before the STAR tests. Teachers analyze the data, review the assessments with the students, and re-teach content that has not been adequately covered. It has been our experience that the exams results are accurate estimates of how students perform on state tests. The results of these assessments can also provide a longitudinal analysis of ongoing performance.

ATTENDANCE

ENSURING ALL STUDENTS CAN AND WILL LEARN

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In order to meet the needs of students receiving special education services, SMCA has three full time Resource Specialists, a teaching assistant dedicated to providing in classroom support, and a Special Education Director who monitors program compliance and delivers professional development for all teachers. Additionally, SMCA contracts Direct Ed Solution to provide services such as speech and language. Throughout the year we hold student success team meetings to support struggling students and/or discuss if a student should be assessed for special education services. Our Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) meet compliance guidelines always ensuring the student receives an appropriate education. All students with IEPs and 504 plans receive support within their academic classes and are offered pull out support for IWOC and schoolwide assessments. As mentioned our Special Education Director provides a variety of workshops for teachers throughout the year focused on the needs of our school community. These events are an avenue by which teachers collaboratively problem solve the more challenging academic and behavior related scenarios.

As much time as we have devoted to supporting our students with disabilities, the data below indicates much more work needs to be done to strengthen the program. One explanation may be that our efforts have been focused on meeting the student at their current levels with not enough attention placed on grade level expectations. In attempt to remedy our mistakes we have revamped various components of the program. For one, we have increased the rigor of promotion goals
including the minimum passing percentage for each core class. Additionally, our special education staff has begun co-teaching with our general education teachers in the hopes of creating more robust lessons for all students. General education staff and special education staff alike are visiting campuses with proven success with similar populations of students with disabilities.

**SOCI0-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS**

The vast majority of SMCA students come from a socio-economically disadvantaged background. The school continues to meet their needs in numerous of ways, including the following: providing a rigorous academic day aimed towards college readiness, hosting numerous community building events locally, offering longer school hours, providing a free after school program, and serving a high quality food program. As virtually all (93%) of SMCA students qualify for Title 1, our school essentially serves an entirely socio-economically disadvantaged population. Schoolwide performance results serve to show how SMCA is meeting the needs of students in this sub group.
AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

The graphs below highlights the CST proficiency rates in ELA and Math among SMCA’s African-American students in 2012. More than half of our students are performing above the proficiency benchmark in English Language Arts. This is a result of intensive data analysis, rigorous instruction, and ongoing support for students. As noted earlier, math has been an area of improvement to which end we have undertaken a rigorous efforts to reform our math program. Our improvements started by releasing ineffective math teachers from our program and hiring single subject teachers or educators with multiple years of experience.

HISPANIC/LATINO STUDENTS

Bright Star’s Latino students are performing at high levels compared to students attending resident, demographically similar, and District schools. As the 2012 graphs below indicate more than 60% of students are performing proficiently on ELA state exams. As the majority of our students are Latino (87%), as is true with LAUSD, these results speak to how well our program is bridging the academic gap in Los Angeles. The strong ELA growth is attributed to a number of factors, most notably our rigorous Independent Reading Program. As we also steadily improve our Math scores, SMCA will have a secure academic program in place that serves the needs of all low-performing students in the two main content areas of ELA and Math. As mentioned previously, we intend to implement structures so that our math scores are on par with ELA achievement.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
The standards for reclassifying an English Language Learner (ELL) in our program are very high in, as is described in Element 1. Our reclassification rate of ELLS is 14% in a population of 630 students. Early on in the year each student that has been designated an ELL must complete the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). The results are later disseminated to the teachers who are able to accommodate their instruction to a wide range of needs. The graph below reflects the ongoing work to provide meaningful instruction to our English as a second language learners. As we have continued to develop the program our ELL students are improving their skills and outperforming their peers in other demographically similar schools.
Ten years ago our founder wrote the charter for Stella Middle Charter Academy in the hopes of providing greater opportunities for the children in Los Angeles. As is apparent from the above subgroup analyses, the school has been responsive to the annual STAR results. Our students’ scores have often exceeded their peers and when scores waned the administration and teachers have worked diligently to adjust the program.

**SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES**

Our middle school strives to prepare students for college and life beyond. This is accomplished by setting rigorous goals and holding both ourselves and students accountable to these expectations. We endeavor to develop conscientious, compassionate, and creative citizens who will be leaders in whichever profession they choose. Our small learning community affords students and staff many opportunities not as easily attained in larger district schools. At other times, however, our size has limited our access to resources to enhance the educational program.

As is evident from the quantitative ELA data provided, Stella students enter high school with proficient and often advance literacy skills. From inception our founder knew that weaving reading into each subject would be critical to student achievement. To this end we have maintained rigorous independent reading goals each year, fostered the love of classic literature through engaging classroom instruction, and promoted reading and writing in our math, history and science courses. Of all the departments, language art teachers have most successfully collaborated to build a scope and sequence across grade levels. Over the years, classroom novels were carefully chosen and when writing rubrics were created, leaders sought advice from nearly all instructors. We overtly tell our students that success in college will be correlated to their reading ability. College is the motivational carrot employed to push students to their capacity and the reason our teachers stay long beyond their contracted hours. In the upcoming years we will implement similar opportunities for collaboration so that all subjects have as much structure as language arts.

Although not a new concept to Stella, data driven instruction has recently become more consistent across grade levels and school sites. At the beginning of each school year teachers analyze the STAR data for their incoming students. Administrators first guide teachers to arrange the data so that each student is categorized into an overall proficiency band for each test taken. Collaborating as department teams general trends and group strengths and weaknesses are assessed. As an example, let us suppose that our advanced 6th grade math students did exceedingly well with the measurement and geometry cluster but had less success in the statistics and probability cluster. Teachers would adapt their standards map to include more depth for the measurement and geometry topics and adjust the pacing for the statistics and probability unit to account for more
remediation. Additionally, teachers set goals for each performance band to be accountable to continually using the data to inform classroom practice. Throughout the year teachers will continue to evaluate the data informally each week, but formally after every benchmark exam. The results of these tests are aligned with the incremental goals set at the beginning of each year and plans are adjusted accordingly. When the teachers are consistent from year to year these types of data reflections yield positive results. However, when there is turnover from one year to the next, the analysis is not as meaningful nor the data as strong. Aside from recruiting and sustaining a quality faculty, the organization should also dedicate time understanding how to better facilitate data analysis for new teachers.

Now in our tenth year of operation Stella Middle Charter Academy has a well defined culture. From the very beginning it was a goal not only to empower children to go to college, but to also teach them to be conscientious, compassionate, and creative people. Both the Life Experience Lessons (LELs) and the culture of high expectations for behavior have been critical factors in shaping this safe and stimulating environment. Teachers and students develop unparalleled rapport during the beginning of the year trips and orientation activities that is then transferred into the classroom. The common experience is used not only as a source of prior knowledge for academic lessons; it encourages staff to teach to a whole person not just the student. While an outside observer might simply label LELs as field trips, the objective far exceeds exposure to new places. Our students engage in challenging team building experiences, reflect upon their identities, and form diverse perspectives about the world. On campus our teacher leaders seek to extend these principles by holding all students to high levels of accountability. Utilizing Glasser’s choice theory students analyze their behavior as a result of an imbalance in power, fun, love and belonging, freedom, or survival. This common language enables teachers and students to have difficult conversations in an emotionally safe space. As new teachers have come into the organization, training and coaching in this area have not been consistent. Along the way accountable became synonymous with punitive consequences. Moving into the 2012-2013 school year the administrative team, including a Director of Student Services (a position created solely for the endeavor of furthering the positive school culture), has put structures in place to reaffirm our founding values.

An ongoing challenge for SMCA has been facilities that effectively meet the needs of the program and the families served. During the 2006-2007 school year the St. Agatha’s campus became too small to house all students in fifth through eighth grade. Fortunately the elementary school down the block had a wing of classrooms that were unoccupied. The classrooms were unkempt but the proximity to our original location was desirable. After only a year there, our 7th and 8th graders were moved again as we outgrew the space. At that point half of the school was relocated to a
church campus nearly 7 miles away. As a result of the move, the school faced additional transportation challenges in delivering students from our home community to the new campus. Over the last four years we have stabilized our locations with our fifth and sixth graders at the St. Agatha’s campus and our 7th and 8th graders at the 98th street campus. However, we have yet to eliminate the costly transportation to bridge the two communities.

Early on the school had a well established literacy program as it was a researched based need of the community. We did not accurately predict that many of our students would also have gaps in their basic number sense. As such the recruitment of math teachers was not as rigorous as it could have been. While there have been quite a few phenomenal math teachers, more commonly our students were taught by novice instructors who lacked experience. Analyzing the data it seems that our greatest challenge has been our 6th grade math students. Excellent teachers at the 5th grade level do not offset the inconsistent delivery of curriculum in the other grades. Since the initial dip in math scores the administration has sought outside resources to provide professional development, offered additional tutoring opportunities to students, and focused our recruitment to single subject math teachers who have had substantial time in the classroom. During the 2011-2012 school year the math department did a self study which included developing a scope and sequence for numeracy skills at Bright Star schools. As it is implemented this school year, our intent is to reboot our math program.

It should also be noted that our average career span at Bright Star is about three years. While this is true for a number of charter schools, it is our hope to establish a stable school community and develop our leadership capacity from within. A number of our teachers have been hired from the Teach For America Los Angeles cohort. Though committed to improving education for our students many of them do not plan to be career teachers. As such we find ourselves replacing up to half our staff each year. One structure that has helped to sustain our teaching staff is promoting within the organization. After working in Bright Star classrooms, a few teachers’ assistants have elected to enroll in credentialing programs and were offered positions after completion of their coursework.

FIDELITY TO THE MISSION

Mission

The mission of Stella Middle Charter Academy and Bright Star Schools is to open minds and doors by providing a rigorous college-preparatory education, offering individual attention and teaching skills necessary for students to make good life choices. Through SMCA’s culture of personal responsibility, respect and accountability, students learn to be conscientious, compassionate and creative members of our diverse communities.
SMCA’s rigorous promotion requirements ensure the school is held accountable for preparing students for college and beyond. Students must attain five out of the six promotion requirements in order to promote to the next grade level:

1. Students must earn a Cumulative Class Average (CCA) of 70% or above in all of their classes.
   
   Alignment with the Mission: As we aim to prepare students for college completion, students must strive for high grades in all classes to truly prove content mastery. Thus rigorous grading standards aligns with the majority of college grading systems, as most colleges do not accept grades below 70% as passing.

2. Students must pass their English or History class with a 70% or above.
   
   Alignment with Mission: Though students have a CCA goal it is also imperative that students focus on individual class grades tied to the Humanities Discipline.

3. Students must pass their Math or Science class with a 70% or above.
   
   Alignment with Mission: Though students have a CCA goal it is also imperative that students focus on individual class grades within the STEM field.

4. Students must independently read at their individual reading level (5 books for 5th, 6 books for 6th, 7 books for 7th and 8 books for 8th).
   
   Alignment with Mission: Literacy is a strong predictor of both college and career success. Students must be able to independently read and comprehend text at their appropriate grade level; intervention classes for struggling readers are provided to help students to read on grade level.

5. Students must pass three out of four schoolwide writing exams.
   
   Alignment with Mission: Literacy is a strong predictor of both college and career success thus the ability to write coherently and think critically is an essential component of the Bright Star program.

6. Students must complete at least 80% of their Study Island for English, History, Math and Science.
   
   Alignment with Mission: This is a non-teacher created, objective measure of student proficiency in the core content areas, providing yet another measure of academic readiness.
In order to ensure that students are on track to attaining the promotion requirements, each student is paired with an advisory teacher who helps monitor student progress. Quarterly promotion reports are provided to students and families and are the main focus at parent conferences. The chart below enumerates the percentage of students meeting the promotion requirements at each grade level in our previous year of operation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Meeting Requirements (2011-2012):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though we have consistent promotion percentages for our fifth and sixth grade students, the data shows a dip for students in our seventh grade program. SMCA has identified the seventh grade year as transitional primarily because our students make the switch to the larger 98th street campus. In order to help seventh graders, SMCA has added a “Life and Study Skills” course to better prepare our students for the rigorous promotion criteria. The data also shows that we have the highest percentage of students promoting in their eighth grade year, once they have completed our entire middle school program. Compared with the CST data for students in fifth through seventh grade, the CST performance data for our eighth grade students is most strong, mirroring the higher percentage of eighth grade students who attain the promotion requirements.

**Innovative Programming**

*Independent Reading Program*

As was the original intent of the mission, literacy is an integral part of the school culture. A thoughtful and balanced approach is implemented across grade levels to increase appreciation of literature and reading competency. Each student is assessed at the beginning of the school year so that advisors are able to guide students towards appropriate novel choices throughout the year. Additionally, this screening identifies children who need interventions to improve their decoding and/or their comprehension ability. To meet the needs of these struggling readers we employ a structured corrective reading program where the curriculum delivered is tailored towards improving a specific reading skill set. Our reading promotion goal is also aligned so that each student works towards a challenging yet attainable expectation. As students matriculate through the grades the number of books expected per year increases.
Aside from the interventions provided, our program strives to foster a love of reading in our students. This is achieved through monthly reading celebrations to acknowledge the top readers at each reading level. Each month we find students with a renewed excitement to read the most books. By developing students’ skills and instilling an appreciation for literature, Bright Star students exit the program with a well rounded literacy background.

*Study Island*

Study Island, described earlier in this reflection, is an objective metric teachers use to supplement their curriculum. With a limited number of school days and an array of topics to cover, it is common for teachers to prioritize the standards. This means that certain concepts are not covered as fully as others. Study Island enables teachers to deliver mini lessons and direct students to further their knowledge using the software as a vehicle. SMCA is not a blended learning school; we do however take advantage of the technology that is readily accessible. An essential 21st century skill, computer literacy becomes a component of our everyday program via Study Island. Each student is provided a practice account to encourage ownership of their education. Teachers use the software to assign standards aligned quizzes as homework, create benchmark assessments, post writing prompts, and use the sharing platform to see how other California educators teach the same content. Our firm belief is that there is no substitute for quality teacher led instruction, however, we do value accountability and Study Island enables us to measure the academic progress of our students.

*ASES*

We support our students to find their voice within our program and provide them multiple opportunities to showcase their talents. Our After School Enrichment and Safety program brings in experts from various fields to share their passion with our middle school students. This mentorship provides not only career guidance but academic assistance as well. Examples of classes taught include music, cheer, wrestling, student government, photography, and volleyball. Many schools have chosen to outsource this grant, SMCA on the other hand has carefully crafted a program that blends well with our academic day. For example, many of our teacher’s assistants also teach afternoon electives. While there is a clear delineation of work and responsibilities, the continuity of staff provides a nurturing environment for our students in the program.

*Life Experience Lessons*

Perhaps the most unique element of our program is our Life Experience Lessons (LELs) which are designed for our students to explore the world beyond Los Angeles. Throughout the year students
participate in academic and social trips within the confines of the city. Our end of the year field trips are earned by performing well on a series of metrics. These LELs include both celebratory activities and exposure to academic content. Fifth and sixth grade students typically immerse themselves in California culture. In the seventh grade students visit the canyons of Utah, Arizona, and Nevada. Our culminating trip is the nearly two week long trip to the nation's capitol. Students observe a session of congress, attend a number of museums, and learn about the roots of the United States. Students are able to form lifelong bonds with their peers as well as their teachers. Additionally these trips are used to familiarize students with colleges and universities outside of the Los Angeles area. Later when students write their college essays we hope they draw on these once in a lifetime experiences with Bright Star.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Meeting the Needs of Teachers**

Just as every student has unique learning needs and growth areas, so too does every teacher. To best improve student outcomes, teachers in different stages of their career cycle receive different types of support. Teachers new to SMCA have an additional week of orientation to devise the scope and sequence of their respective curricula, to learn the philosophy and structures of the school culture and to become familiarized with school policies and procedures. Following new teacher orientation, all teachers have at least one week of professional development sessions to plan for the upcoming year.

During the school year, our Senior Data Manager helps train and supports all staff on meaningful use of data. There is one day a quarter that is a pupil-free day where the teachers and administrators gather and assess student data on achievement, discipline and exam scores. With this information, teachers amend their instruction accordingly; student intervention placements are made along with more follow-up meetings with families.

Many growth opportunities exist for more veteran teachers looking to expand their craft; one such growth opportunity is the department leader position. Department leaders play a critical role in providing support for teachers in their specific content area; they deliver meaningful feedback on teacher lesson plans and standards maps, observe and provide feedback to teachers throughout the school year, and lead professional development sessions with the teachers. Furthermore, department leaders support teachers during SMCA’s district wide content meetings and help facilitate conversations surrounding best practices within their content areas.

SMCA believes that one of the most critical factors of student success is the classroom teacher, thus a large area of teacher support comes from instructional feedback and coaching. Administrators,
teacher leaders and teachers have all been trained on SMCA’s research based teacher evaluation rubric. All teachers receive informal feedback at least once per month and formal feedback once per semester. The data gathered from the observations is used to provide individualized professional development plans for all teachers. Through the data collection process, both high performing teachers and struggling teachers are identified. High performing teachers help coach their peers and provide instructional strategies for their colleagues, while struggling teachers are given additional support, and, if necessary, are placed onto an improvement plan.

**Meeting the Needs of Parents**

Parents play a critical role in the ultimate success of our students; systems are in place to ensure that parent voice is actively incorporated into school decision making. Yearly parent surveys serve as a tool for parents to address their concerns and commend school practices. The data gleaned from the surveys allows administration to modify school policies and practices. Monthly parent meetings serve as a forum for parents to come together as a community to build structure and review upcoming school events. Furthermore, the school hosts at least two parent conferences per year for parents to meet with their students’ teachers to discuss promotion goals and student achievement. Parents can also meet with teachers during their conference period and elect to audit classrooms. Lastly, SMCA offers monthly parent workshops that focus on a range of topics where parents are provided with resources to guide and support students.

Leadership opportunities are available to parents who have demonstrated a desire to influence organization wide decision making. The parent ambassador group actively recruits volunteers to support many schoolwide initiatives including fundraising, traffic duty, and school/family events. Other parents chose to lend their support to the School Site Council. This group meets once a month to review progress on our single plan for student achievement. Both of these avenues encourage parents to play an active role in their child’s education.

**GOVERNING BOARD**

The Bright Star Schools Board of Directors has played an integral role in ensuring the success of Stella Middle Charter Academy through oversight of the financial and academic program, participation in the Faculty Academic Committee, and defining the Stella Middle Charter Academy metrics for success. The Board of Directors remains committed to the financial health of the organization and school site; and, as such, the finance committee meets regularly to discuss and review budgets, major expenditures, and cash flow. While the financial landscape for California public schools, especially charter schools, remains challenging, it is the oversight and fiscally
conservative decisions of the BSS Board that has allowed Stella to face these challenges in a much stronger position than other similar schools.

While the BSS Board has given schools the autonomy to manage the daily operations of the school site, two board members hold seats on the Faculty Academic Committee (FAC) which is largely responsible for making larger policy decisions which affect the operations of the school. Most recently, FAC has discussed and defined policy relating the Life Experience Lesson program, holistic GPA, the independent reading program, and school safety plan.

Additionally, the Board of Directors has been very involved in the clarifying the essential elements of the Bright Star Program. Through the creation of the Bright Star Universe, senior management along with the support of the Board of Directors has made explicit the essential elements and structures that define the Bright Star educational experience. To that end, the BOD has collaborated with CMO staff to create the Bright Star Schools Performance Dashboards. This document clarifies the metrics by which the Board of Directors will deem a school has been successful and includes both quantitative and qualitative data.

**OUR BROADER IMPACT ON THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY**

Stella Middle School has positively impacted the Los Angeles Public School system. The achievement of our students has drawn much attention within the local education reform movement and our teachers and administrators share best practices with other local charter schools through school visitations, speaking on panels, presenting at conferences, and participating in continuing education. We are most proud, however, of our ability to demonstrate that low income, minority students in urban Los Angeles can achieve at very high levels. Stella Middle has significantly outperformed its resident district schools in almost all areas on the 2011 CST.
As illustrated below, the percentage of students scoring Proficient or higher on 2011 Math CST was significantly greater at Stella Middle School as compared to resident district schools. The exception to this is student performance on the Algebra I CST where students at Audubon outperformed Stella students. However, it should be noted that 100% of Stella students took the Algebra I CST; whereas, only 80 out of 289 student at Audubon took the Algebra I CST.
ELEMENT 1

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

“A description of the educational program of the school, designed, among other things, to identify those whom
the School is attempting to educate, what it means to be an ‘educated person’ in the 21st century, and how
learning best occurs. The goals identified in that program shall include the objective of enabling pupils to
become self-motivated, competent, and lifelong learners.” Ed. Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(A)

The address of the Charter School is: Grades 5-6, 2636 S. Mansfield Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90016.
Grades 7-8, 5431 W. 98th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90045

The phone number of the Charter School is (323) 954-9957.
The contact person for the Charter School is Melissa Kaplan, Head of Schools.
The term of this charter shall be from July 1, 2013 to July 1, 2018.
The grade configuration is 5th – 8th.
The number of students in the first year of the new charter term will be 630. The grade level(s) of
the students the first year will be 5th – 8th.
The admission requirements include: Please see admission requirements in Element 8
The enrollment capacity is 750 students. (Enrollment capacity is defined as all students who are
enrolled in Charter School regardless of residency).
The instructional calendar will be: August 27th – June 7th (178 instructional days)
The bell schedule for the Charter School will be: 7:30-3:30 (5th and 6th), 8-4:30 (7th and 8th)
If space is available, traveling students will have the option to attend.

Bright Star Schools consist of three schools, Stella Middle Charter Academy (grades 5-8), Bright Star
Charter Secondary Academy (grades 9-12), and Rise Ko Hyang Middle School (grades 6-8).

The mission of Bright Star Schools is to open minds and doors. The schools provide a rigorous
college preparatory education while paying individual attention and giving students the skills
necessary to make good life choices. Bright Star Schools’ culture of personal responsibility, respect,
and accountability encourages students to be conscientious, compassionate and creative members
of society.

In 2002, a group of concerned educators and local citizens led by our founder, Jeff Hilger,
recognized the need for a successful alternative to underperforming public schools in the West
Adams area of Los Angeles. With the support of community leaders, dedicated parents and a
committed Board of Directors, Bright Star Schools received a charter from Los Angeles Unified
School District. Stella Middle Charter Academy opened its doors in 2003, followed by Bright Star

Bright Star Schools serves a largely immigrant population. Of the more than 1,300 students enrolled with Bright Star, Latino students make up approximately 83% of the student population, African American students make up approximately 11% of the population and Asian students make up approximately 6% of the population. Over 93% of Bright Star Students receive free or reduced lunch.

Bright Star Schools continue to excel academically. Bright Star Secondary Charter Academy’s 2012 API is 820 while Stella Middle Charter Academy’s 2012 API is 807. In the Spring of 2011, Bright Star Secondary Academy was named a California Distinguished School.

STUDENT POPULATION SERVED

In partnership with parents and the community, Bright Star Schools prepares our students for success in college and life beyond. To achieve this goal, we provide a rigorous academic program, tools for good decision-making and a culture of accountability, creativity and compassion. Students at Stella Middle Charter Academy (herein referred to as “SMCA”) enjoy several educational benefits that are not currently part of many non-charter middle schools:

- Team building and character education development;
- Out-of-class Educational Opportunities including Service Learning and experiential field trips throughout the county, state and country.

All SMCA students are part of a school environment where at least one faculty personally knows each student and all the staff members know each other and the families they serve. Finally, students and parents have the assurance from the school that students are given all the time they need to complete their educational experience prior to being promoted to the next grade, class or level if they have not yet mastered the requisite skills.

SMCA Demographic data of the target population

Of the approximate 630 students served at SMCA, Latino students make up approximately 88% of the population, African American students make up approximately 10% of the population and Asian students make up approximately 1% of the student population. SMCA’s Free and Reduced rate is at 93%. At capacity, SMCA will enroll 750 students, with up to 150 students at each grade level.
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<th>PI?</th>
<th>Met SW Growth Target</th>
<th>Met all SG Growth</th>
<th>API Score</th>
<th>API State Ranking</th>
<th>Similar Schools Rank</th>
<th>% Students Eligible for FRL</th>
<th>% of Students in SPED</th>
<th>% of ELL Students</th>
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<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62 AA</td>
<td>36 His.</td>
<td>1 Asian</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>71.02%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>60 His.</td>
<td>27 AA</td>
<td>10 Caucasian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Characteristics of the Target Population**

SMCA educates students in grades 5-8 in mid-city Los Angeles who want to enroll in a school where they spend more time on task than a majority of their peers at other non-charter schools in the community. An extended school day and an extended school year ensure that students have multiple opportunities to master the rigorous California content standards. These students commit to an educational program where they work hard and endure long hours in exchange for a commitment from the school that all of its students will learn and will be prepared not only to be accepted to, but to be successful in college.

Additional hours spent outside of the basic curriculum are used for instruction in enrichment including structured co-curricular activities (athletic programs, clubs and the arts). Extra academic tutorial sessions are provided for those students needing to catch up academically so that they can compete with their peers for college admission privileges and scholarship awards. The majority of the members of the community are Latino (approximately 88%) and African American (approximately 10%) families. The percentage of socio-economically disadvantaged students at SMCA is approximately 93%. The percentage of English Language Learners is approximately 33%.
MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

The mission of Stella Middle Charter Academy and Bright Star Schools is to open minds and doors by providing a rigorous college-preparatory education, offering individual attention and teaching skills necessary for students to make good life choices. Through SMCA’s culture of personal responsibility, respect and accountability, students learn to be conscientious, compassionate and creative members of our diverse communities.

VISION

The vision of Bright Star Schools is to build exemplary tuition-free public schools that serve Los Angeles’ urban communities. By leveraging our core values and operating principles to achieve outstanding academic performance, Bright Star Schools establishes a model of scholastic excellence.

CORE VALUES

SMCA has developed a program in which students receive a high quality education including a challenging academic program, a number of life experiences exposing students to a world beyond Los Angeles, and a meaningful character development curriculum.

21ST CENTURY PUPIL

An educated person is a self-motivated, competent, lifelong learner who possesses the academic, intellectual, emotional, technological and character skills necessary for success in high school, college and the world beyond.

For academic skills, such a person has a mastery of the English language along with a mastery of at least one other language. An educated person has the ability to think both critically and creatively. Basic knowledge about the world and deep knowledge about subjects of interest and importance are essential, as are skills for effectively using technology and gathering information.

Being educated in the 21st Century requires an ability to work cooperatively and to understand and respect cultural and socio-economic differences between all people. An educated person understands the concept of global interdependence and sees clearly the need for greater social justice in the world.

An educated person in the 21st Century also must have developed an ability to monitor and maintain emotional and physical fitness. A quality education also instills habits that help one to have control of one’s life: to solve problems, to set and attain goals, to learn from experiences and to
know when and how to follow social norms. Self-awareness involves recognizing one’s strengths and limitations, knowing what one wants to achieve in life and being reflective about one’s interactions and relationships with others.

An educated person participates constructively in society, for one knows that such participation is necessary for the benefit of society and for the individual as well. Such a person has developed a broad knowledge base and has acquired skills which allow one to enter the economic mainstream. Such a person works cooperatively to achieve constructive answers to difficult questions for the benefit of society. Such a person understands that every problem has some solution, although it often may not be a perfect solution.

An education person is well versed in utilizing various technological resources at hand to extend learning opportunities. During this day in age it is absolutely essential to teach students basic word processing skills and to help them develop a critical lens by which to analyze online resources. 21st century students understand that technology is not the only means to end but use the tools to supplement gaps in learning and to enhance the aesthetics of information presented.

An educated person in the 21st Century understands that character counts, and that we live on a planet where everybody and everything is interconnected, often in ways that we cannot see or comprehend. Such a person knows that one’s actions cause many further actions and reactions. Because of this, an educated person refers to and utilizes one’s own belief and value systems prior to making important decisions about oneself and about others.

**HOW LEARNING BEST OCCURS**

Here at Bright Star Schools, we believe that learning best occurs when students learn in an environment where they feel safe, where expectations for all students are clear and high and students are given the opportunity to make mistakes, learn from them, work hard and achieve their goals. In accordance with John Dewey's theory of education, we believe that all students can succeed academically when given the opportunity to learn through active participation in engaging activities. As such we have tried to infuse our classes with multiple opportunities for project based learning. We further believe that all middle school students need to develop high standards of compassion, conscientiousness and creativity.

Learning best occurs when learners start with their own knowledge and experiences as the basis for learning. Students must feel that new ideas, information and skills are relevant, useful or important. They must be motivated by genuine interest or purpose, and should be challenged to work to high expectations. The constructivist frame of thought attributes learning to students
constructing meaning through their learning experiences by doing more often than seeing or listening. Additionally, students learn best when they practice and apply new skills and concepts to real-life situations.

A school culture where learning is fun, exciting and essential helps all students in that environment. When academic learning is coupled with emotional and physical development, students come to feel comfortable in their environment and thus work harder to achieve academic goals.

Learning best occurs when educational objectives are rigorous, measurable and attainable. Clear definitions of what students should know and be able to do in each academic content area at grade level determines the content of the curriculum, affect teaching strategies, provide a perspective for selecting and training teachers and help parents understand what is expected of the children.

Learning best occurs when class size and school size are manageable. Although there are no magic numbers or solutions for what is manageable, it is imperative that the members of the school community know one another as individuals. We also believe that learning is most effective when parents understand and are involved in the educational goals of the school.

LIFELONG LEARNERS

The fundamental goal of Bright Star Schools is to help its students become self-motivated, competent, life-long learners. SMCA creates an environment in which students understand how they learn and advocate for themselves to get the support needed to be successful.

The school’s program is rigorous and challenging. Students start school early, stay for at least 8 hours and have about 2 hours of homework to do each night after they get home. Another goal of the program is that nobody falls behind. Immediate interventions occur for students who start to develop ineffective study habits early on in the year. We know that if students put in the required time and effort, and get the additional support and resources they need, they can be successful in the academic program.

Students work toward mastering skills: developing concepts, critical thinking and problem solving. Students develop self worth and respect for their heritage and the cultural heritage of others through arts, literature, social studies, science and math. Students receive an enriched curriculum in language arts, math, history and science. Students work towards demonstrating cooperative social behavior with a sense of responsibility toward their school, home and community. Student performance increases as demonstrated by standardized, criterion-referenced and performance-based tests.
SMCA fosters children’s sense of wonder and inquiry so that long after students exit our program they are curious about the world in which they live. Through a curriculum that emphasizes critical thinking, our students understand how to seek out resources to quench their thirst for knowledge. In addition, SMCA offers many expanded options to meet the needs of all of its diverse students. Some of these options include after school electives such as art, sports, and music where students can augment their ability or learn a new skill. Furthermore, children are afforded opportunities to learn in environments other than our school campus. SMCA students spend time at museums, colleges, and other local attractions to better understand curriculum presented in the classrooms. Those who chose to go above our baseline expectations may also be eligible for learning experiences throughout the state and the country.

A TYPICAL DAY
Despite the program being housed on two different campuses, the daily schedule runs similarly. The campuses open before the school day begins so that students can take advantage of the breakfast program. Staff members are on site to greet students and families as they arrive for the day. Following breakfast, students will rotate through classrooms as they take their classes in English language arts, mathematics, science, and history. We also dedicate an entire period to character development in advisory. Each student is paired with a staff member who facilitates class meetings and helps them navigate the goals of our program. In addition, struggling students are able to receive interventions during the academic day by alternating electives and remediation.

Our individual classes are structured based off research regarding effective teaching strategies. Students are ushered into the classroom by the teacher and immediately begin to work on the posted warm up. A lesson cycle follows with the teacher introducing content and then allowing students to practice and apply the material. Typically a teacher will end a class with some form of check for understanding such as exit tickets. While the administration requires that all faculty post an agenda and a daily objective, the rest of the class is shaped by the teachers’ individual style.

After school we operate our own enrichment program for students to develop their extra-curricular repertoire. Students are not mandated to participate in an afterschool class, but we strongly suggest that they sign up for at least one semester of an elective each year.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
CURRICULUM
In 5th-8th grades, students receive approximately an hour and half of daily instruction in reading, writing and language and one hour of daily instruction in mathematics. A longer school day allows
for a full scope of instruction in history, mathematics, science, language arts, and physical education as well.

We do not believe in social promotion and students must meet grade level standards before they can matriculate to the next grade. Scholars must accomplish at least 5 of the comprehensive goals to be considered for promotion. Some of these goals are tied to their performance in their academic classes while others are earned through the students independently practicing and mastering content.

**Promotion Goals**

- ≥70% proficiency in ELA or History
- ≥70% proficiency in Math or Science
- ≥70% Combined Class Average
- Pass 3 out of 4 schoolwide writing exams
- Complete 80% of Study Island standards mastery in History, ELA, Math, & Science
- Read required novels at independent reading level

**Student Success Teams**

A Student Success Team (SST) is automatically formed for each student who repeats a grade level. SSTs are also conducted for any student that struggles in general, either academically, behaviorally, or both. We provide SSTs three times annually for any student who repeats a grade level or who struggles with annual goals. The SST consists of the Principal Teacher, the student’s grade level teachers and any other teachers or mentors interested in the child’s success. At least one member of the SST joins a repeating student’s parent/student conference each quarter. If any signs of a disability are present, the student is referred for an assessment process. A repeating student must attend all of the daily and additional supplemental programs, if s/he is not on target for the year in which s/he is repeating. Another primary assessment of the situation is to ensure the student is currently receiving academic support via enrollment in an RtI class (see Response to Intervention explanation on page 42).

We hold SSTs for approximately 20% of the students in each grade level. Students are typically referred by the classroom teacher, but any member of the school staff may request support from the SST for a student whose learning, behavior or emotional needs are not being met under existing circumstances. All SST meetings are documented, and student progress is reviewed in subsequent meetings. If a student is following the SST plan and achieving, than a successive meeting is not necessary; rather, the student will continue to work with the plan outlined during the SST meeting.
Proposed Teaching Methodologies

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

The mission of SMCA relies on outcome-driven, effective teaching. In order to support teachers to make strong academic gains with students, instruction is closely monitored, continuously improved upon and data driven. As certain practices in teaching have proven to engender student academic success, consistency in instruction is employed across classrooms to ensure a structured, safe and high performing environment. Structured lessons allow for clear expectations from students and teachers, effective evaluation and improvement of teaching practice and most importantly, strong academic outcomes. We model our instructional methodologies and data driven practices after approaches utilized at high performing schools which have consistently and successfully led to strong academic and behavioral outcomes.

SMCA subscribes to the following strategies in order to drive strong academic outcomes:

- Standards-based Curriculum and Instruction.
- Standards-based Grading.
- Organized and Systematic Approach to Instructional Delivery.
- Schoolwide systems and structures.
- Engagement Intensive Student-Teacher Interaction Techniques.

STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

SMCA's curriculum is currently based on the California State standards with the intent of fully implementing the California Common Core standards over the course of the next two years. All teachers analyze state content standards and internal school standards that correspond to their specific grade and content areas. They then frame their lessons to ensure that they align with the scope and sequence of their Standards Map. The frequent use of standards-driven assessment data assist teachers and administrators in ensuring that content mastery occurs at the appropriate pace and in accordance with state standards. As we move into the 2012-2013 year the school has begun to introduce the California Common Core standards. Teachers and SMCA administrators have all received an introduction via consultants at the Los Angeles County Office of Education and now have begun to develop lesson plans with increased rigor and complexity. These standards will be completely incorporated into the program in preparation for the release of the smarter balanced assessment in 2014.
Common Core Implementation Timeline

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<td>July 2012</td>
<td>LACOE Common Core Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>Implementation of Common Core 5th-8th</td>
<td>SMCA Administrators, SMCA Faculty</td>
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</table>

STANDARDS BASED GRADING

As the program has become increasingly refined we have decided to adopt a more meaningful grading system. Often times letter grades are based on effort and do not necessarily reflect a student’s understanding of content. SMCA sites have developed both quantitative and qualitative rubrics to assess mastery of content. Gradebooks no longer house grades for homework and projects, but rather the standards for the subject and grade level. While some might say this type of instruction is solely test prep, teachers have autonomy in deciding how students can provide evidence of proficiency. For example, if the teacher is covering a unit on cell structures it would be acceptable for a teacher to assign a project in which children select materials and build a clearly labeled cell model. A child who crafts a beautiful model but lacks knowledge of the various structures would not receive a proficient mark. Another benefit to this system of grading is that it helps teachers to immediately see patterns in their gradebook. In a traditional gradebook teachers can see that students score proficient on homework but average 50% on quizzes. How does the teacher adjust instruction with this information? In a standards based gradebook a teacher knows immediately with which skill students are struggling and can plan with intention for the next day’s lesson.

ORGANIZED AND SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

Consistent instructional approaches and strategies are part of our philosophy because effective classroom organization and management, along with strategic instructional planning are cornerstones of a well-run educational program. We establish a system that sets clear teaching expectations every day; this ensures that all students learn their grade level standards and receive quality instruction.
• **Standards Mapping** – all standards must be mapped out clearly and sequentially for learning to best occur with units that tie standards together.

• **Syllabus** – Each course must have a delineated syllabus that describes the course, lists teacher expectations, student outcomes, unit titles, key assignments, gradebook categories and breakdowns, along with teacher contact information.

• **Study Island (SI)**—if the subject taught has an aligned Study Island testable subject, teachers must assign practice tests and may schedule SI in-class assessments and benchmarks throughout the academic year.

• **Reading Counts**—All ELA teachers and advisors monitor, track, assess and support students with reading their independent novels once a month.

• **Weekly overviews**—Teachers are responsible for submitting lesson plans on a weekly basis. Teachers who teach the same content for the same grades are expected to common plan to ensure instructional consistency. Weekly overviews are submitted to the Principal Teacher and Department Leaders. S/he is responsible for the evaluation of the overviews and provides feedback to the teachers.

• **Common Whiteboard Configuration**—Teachers use a common whiteboard configuration both to provide instructional accountability and to streamline the content of that day’s lesson. The WBC includes minimally:
  - Daily Objective
  - Independent Work Outside of Class (IWOC)
  - Day’s Agenda
  - Warm-Up/ Do Now

The WBC sets clear academic expectations of what students learn during that lesson and also serves as a visual cue for the teacher to manage his/her instructional pacing more effectively. Administrators also use the WBC as a tool to identify how well the teacher follows the content, pacing and activities set forth in the lesson plan when they do their regular walkthroughs and evaluations.

Along with the WBC, some classrooms provide a space for students to grab missed assignments or enrichment assignments. As part of our standards based grading, we believe in allowing students multiple opportunities to assess on a standard. Each classroom teacher has an area designated for students to help themselves: find additional copies of all assignments, a schedule of all IWOC missed and a clear procedure for submitting a request to retest.
SCHOOL-WIDE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

There are a number of structures in place to support the challenging curriculum that has been designed for SMCA students. Each year a child's promotion to the next grade level is tied to their completion of a number of goals. To obtain a spot in the consecutive grade a student must complete five of the following six goals.

- ≥70% proficiency in ELA or History
- ≥70% proficiency in Math or Science
- ≥70% Combined Class Average
- Pass 3 out of 4 schoolwide writing exams
- Complete 80% of Study Island standards mastery in History, ELA, Math, & Science
- Read required novels at independent reading level

To ensure that students are accountable to these goals current progress is tabulated and compiled on a quarterly basis. This document is known at On-Target/Catch-Up (OT/CU) and is sent home to parents in conjunction with parent conferences. Students who are not meeting incremental benchmarks are provided opportunities after school and during the school day to get extra support from their teachers to catch up.

All students are enrolled in an Advisory class and assigned a mentor teacher who will guide them through the promotional goals during the year. This is the person who documents and updates progress towards the goals. The relationship formed helps to facilitate difficult conversations with families. Moreover, mentors help their students to be advocates for themselves in the classroom to get the additional support they need to be successful. It is also during advisory that we address the character development of our students. At the beginning of the year students are introduced to the schoolwide expectations as well as many of the natural and logical consequences of their behaviors. We know that a positive classroom environment is essential when providing quality instruction. As such Advisory serves as a time for students to reflect upon their behavior and how they contribute to the classroom experience.

Four times a year we formally invite parents to meet with their child's teachers. After the OT/CU report is sent home, an afternoon is set aside so that families can create a plan of action with the classroom teachers. We prioritize meetings with families of struggling students to ensure they receive interventions in a timely manner. Those students who are On-Target may attend conferences with their parents and these conversations help to plan the student’s trajectory for the remainder of the year. Families may also set up meetings throughout the year with teachers during their prep period. When basic interventions are not meeting the student’s needs a Student Success
Team (SST) meeting is scheduled so that a more comprehensive team can plan a common set of accommodations.

One accommodation may be that the student is enrolled in a Tier 2 intervention class. Response to Intervention classes focus on remediating skills in literacy and numeracy. We use a small group model to deliver instruction at the students’ level. For math we use supplemental programs such as Kahn Academy and Kuta software. With these tools we are able to differentiate instruction and individualize the program to a specific child’s progress. To help children become better readers we implement a structured reading program that focuses on both phonics and comprehension.

ENGAGEMENT INTENSIVE STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTION TECHNIQUES

Research indicates that students learn best in a stimulating environment – one that has a steady and consistently brisk pace, a high degree of teacher and student interaction and one that uses techniques that support a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations. We implement three components to ensure that teacher and student interaction is high:

- **Structured Lesson Cycles.** All teachers have a lesson introduction or hook that engages students in the content for the day, a guided practice sequence of the lesson, wherein teachers model how to work through the academic concepts, an independent practice component, wherein students are provided time to work through the material on their own, and a closing to the lesson, either in the form of an exit ticket or class wrap up.

- **Kinesthetic Learning.** Kinesthetic learning is an approach that uses physical activity to maintain student engagement and makes the learning process fun. Teachers strategically incorporate its use to teach students a new concept. It serves as a strong mechanism to provide physical movement during extended teaching blocks and extended school hours. Active student involvement also allows teachers to more effectively gauge the degree to which students are grasping the subject matter.

- **Proven Instructional Techniques.** We will also use a variety of academic and behavioral techniques that reinforce student expectations. SMCA strategically selects two to three instructional techniques as a focus in professional development sessions, such as the use of: effective student grouping techniques, strategies to increase academic discourse between students and the techniques to delivery of scaffolded questions to students. Teachers engage in training and simulated role plays, and they are observed and provided with feedback on their delivery throughout the school year by the administrator and fellow teachers.
LANGUAGE ARTS – INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES AND RATIONALES

Students work toward mastering word analysis, reading with fluency and systematically developing their vocabulary through weekly vocabulary and spelling lists of words that are taken from the literature and other texts they are reading. The English Language Arts department, with the approval of the Principal Teacher, selects the actual reading texts, with an eye to the Social Studies and Science thematic units to be covered at each grade level. As the students progress through the school, they learn to form book clubs and to read more interactively, thinking through the text, its symbols, the author’s intent, the characters, the historical context and other elements. Texts expand beyond novels to include poetry, lyrics, letters and non-fiction documents.

We supplement the standards-based reading program with grade-level appropriate literature that ties into the thematic units to be covered in our Social Studies and Science curricula. In addition, we plan to use the Reading Counts comprehension program to give students an engaging way to “test themselves” on the additional independent reading that they are required to do throughout the year. Students are taught to make reading a daily part of their lives, and are led to develop the habits of reflective readers and writers. Students are taught how to pick appropriate books, how to approach reading and how to analyze and learn from what they have read.

Our English writing program is based on teaching students both (1) the fundamental mechanics of the grammar of the English language and (2) the writing process and the necessary creativity inherent in that process. Writing instruction centers on discovering the student voice through responses to literature, correspondences, and expository, narrative, and persuasive essays.

Teaching students how to listen and speak is another important part of our program, therefore we reinforce correct oral English language skills in all subjects. Thus, even in Science and Math students are corrected on their grammar. We also believe that public speaking is a necessary skill for our students and we teach it through modeling, correcting and oral presentation skills during portfolios and other projects.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES - INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES AND RATIONALES

Students at SMCA expand their understanding of history by studying people and events of the past. We make sure our students learn geography and the important facts associated with geography. Map skills and the ability to identify the places they study in history on maps is an essential component of this study. Students are able to create Interactive Notebooks, or a form thereof to model their creative thinking and independent writing and study skills. Teachers in the 5th-6th grades supplement their curriculum with textbooks from McDougal Littell and Scott Foresman,
while teachers in the 7th-8th grades supplement their curriculum with TCI’s *History Alive!* This series has a Geography component that is supplemented with other map resources such as materials available from WorldAtlas.com on the internet.

Beyond geography, emphasis is placed on the everyday lives, problems and accomplishments of people; how developing social, economic and political structures are necessary to maintain a civilization and a standardized culture of living; as well as in establishing and spreading ideas that help transform the world forever—are some of the concepts that students learn. Students develop higher levels of critical thinking by analyzing the interactions among various cultures, emphasizing their enduring contributions and the link—despite time, between the contemporary and historical worlds.

Fundamental to our students’ understanding of history is the question of how the past relevant to their lives today. In order for history to “come alive” they are able to relate it to their own lives, experiences and situations. Several specific methods are used to help our students tie people, places and events of history to their lives today. Students build timelines and make comparative charts for each culture that they study. Their building of knowledge and understanding are cumulative as each society or series of events is then added to those that have come before. This knowledge is tested through mid-quarter projects and/or assessments and cumulative final exams. In addition, students study the “rites of passage” from each society and compare them to the rites of passage that exist in our own societies and cultures.

**MATHEMATICS – INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGIES AND RATIONALES**

Instructional methods and strategies used in our Math department include: direct instruction and lecture, teaching models and problem solving, demonstration, explanation and teacher-facilitated discussions, cooperative learning groups, students problem solving and student practice materials. Assessment methods and tools used include teacher-designed tests, publisher-made tests and assessments, class participation, notebooks, IWOC, performance tasks assessed using rubrics and summative final exams.

We believe that successful instructional strategies are contextual and practice-based in Math. Teachers employ instructional approaches appropriate for the material they are teaching. One hallmark of teaching at SMCA is student engagement. Teachers endeavor to create interactive classrooms, both in teaching basic skills and posing probing questions to develop more complex, higher-order thinking. Teachers are responsible for driving the student learning deeper than the mere accumulation of skills and knowledge to conceptual understanding. They are supported with
training and coaching on incorporating call and response, whole body “hands on” learning and role-playing to respond to kinesthetic-tactile learners. One might find students in a math class working in groups on mini white boards with their own Expo markers to solve one problem that the teacher posed.

Because math is best learned through practice, practice, practice and learning from one’s mistakes, daily IWOC in math is mandated from all math instructors. A large portion of the class is also spent in reviewing the skills, questions, answers and processes from the homework the night before. Students also frequently work in group settings so that they may also learn from each other.

We believe that assessment must be integrated into the instructional program, and is as fundamental to good instruction as is lesson planning and teacher preparation. At SMCA, every instructional unit must have a clear final assessment to measure students’ overall mastery of that unit. Additionally, every lesson must embed checks for understanding to inform the teacher about the student’s skills and knowledge in order to help move the student towards mastery. Since units are connected to state standards, the assessments of those units align with state standards. We use the DataDirector program to create standards-based benchmark exams to check student progress at various points throughout the year.

**RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RtI) MODEL**

At SMCA, Response to Intervention is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with possible learning and behavioral needs. Struggling students are identified by procedures established by each school site. These students are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity. These services are provided by a variety of personnel including paraprofessionals (i.e. Teacher Assistant). Progress is monitored to assess the students’ progress.

**RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION AS A RESPONSE TO DISPROPORTIONALITY**

A key goal to the SMCA RtI model is to improve the outcomes for all students. Through the RtI model instruction and intervention are aligned with students’ needs. High quality instruction is delivered with good fidelity. The RtI model allows SMCA to monitor disproportionality, not based solely on a head count, but rather through a focus on differences in outcomes experienced by various groups. At SMCA students receive math and ELA interventions twice weekly in groups organized by cohorts. Students were assessed and leveled by ability so that teachers can instruct on a particular set of skills. The focus skills for the math RTI program were developed based off an
analysis of CST results. Resource guides have been created for each level (basic, below basic, and far below basic) so that all teachers have a framework and can adapt lessons based on the needs of their students. Additionally, RTI math teachers meet on a bimonthly basis to collaboratively enhance lesson plans. For RTI reading the school has adopted McGraw-Hill’s Corrective Reading program which is backed by years of research.

STEELA MIDDLE CHARTER ACADEMY’S RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION MODEL:
SMCA use a three tier intervention model as its Response to Intervention. The three tiers are as follows:

**Tier One: Core Instruction:** Instruction can be improved through the use of an evidence-based curriculum where teachers differentiate their instruction to meet the specific needs of students. Research shows that there are five key components that are critical to effective and powerful instruction. They are:

A. Essential skills and strategies are taught regularly and in a timely manner.
B. Differentiated instruction based on assessment results is provided.
C. Explicit and systematic instruction includes lots of practice, with and without teacher support and feedback.
D. Opportunities are given to apply skills and strategies throughout the instructional day.
E. Student progress is monitored regularly with re-teaching given as needed.

At Stella Middle Charter Academy, teachers are required to incorporate these key components in their daily instruction.

**Tier Two: Strategic Interventions:** The use of a multi-tiered instruction based on student data allows teachers to differentiate instruction for all students. A teacher assistant works with the classroom teacher in the implementation of tiered instruction through small group and one to one instruction. The classroom teacher and teacher assistant work together to deliver specific instructional strategies that will differentiate concepts for students considered at risk for academic failure.

**Tier Three: Intensive Interventions:** Students enter the learning environment with different skill sets. An individual student’s Response to Intervention is unique and dependent on many factors. To reach desired outcomes in school, some students may require additional or unique instructional strategies or interventions beyond those typically available. This level utilizes a combination of personnel to meet the student’s needs and monitor progress.
Scope and Sequence

READING

Reading proficiency is essential to the mastery of all other academic subjects. Our graduating seniors are ready to read college-level textbooks and write eloquently. Their abilities and skills reflect intensive Language Arts study and training. Such ability is dependent on a strong English Language Arts curriculum that ensures reading fluency and comprehension of fiction and non-fiction texts and a strong writing ability in a variety of genres. SMCA students read classical texts from diverse cultures in fiction, non-fiction and poetry, in addition to a book a month independently.

SMCA consistently shares and communicates with the student his/her reading progress and reading level. Students take reading assessments such as the Burns and Roe Inventory to gauge general reading level and vocabulary knowledge. They also take a test of oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. Teachers develop unit plans based on the skill level of their students, including grade-appropriate novels, poetry, short stories and regular assessment of reading comprehension skills on Scholastic Reading Counts.

There is also blocked time for writing and grammar. Our English Language Arts program builds a strong foundation in the English Language. The reading class focuses on fluency and comprehension of both fiction and nonfiction texts. Students practice their fluency through guided group and individual reading of a variety of texts and genres. Phonics is not a focus of the later grades. However, based on research and pre-assessments, the majority of our students have a weak literacy foundation. They have not had exposure to or mastery of an in-depth phonics program, which we believe is fundamental for future academic success. Students who struggle with the fundamentals of phonics, fluency and comprehension are provided additional remediation during the academic day.

We are fully committed to ensuring our students are active and purposeful readers. Therefore, teachers and administrators develop a rigorous plan for introducing increasingly difficult texts and assignments to our students. Research indicates that the more reading materials children are exposed to, the easier it is for them to develop strong writing and comprehension skills. The diversity of our texts and novels support students’ development of their reading skills through many different contexts.
WRITING

Written expression is closely linked with success in college-preparatory and higher education. Students develop the writing of five-paragraph essays in four genres: expository, summary, persuasive and literary response. Students progress in their grammar and mechanics. Department leaders develop SMCA rubrics for assessing writing. Teachers use a combination of widely-accepted writing programs such as Step Up to Writing and Write Source.

Developed by Maureen Auman, Step Up to Writing is a logically sequenced writing program, commonly used in California schools. The direct instruction and modeling used by teachers to improve student skills is consistent with our instructional methods throughout the school. The guided practice and independent practice that follow appropriately match the sequence of activities in other SMCA classes. Further, Step Up to Writing includes many opportunities for teachers to lead students through an authentic writing process, including editing and revisions.

Write Source is published by Houghton Mifflin, but it is the product by educators and writers. It serves as a handbook for writing with rules, samples and challenges. It also includes components of the writing process, along with grammar and phonics lessons.

MATHEMATICS AND OUR APPROACH TO NUMERACY

The majority of SMCA students master algebra in the eighth grade. This goal requires intensive fifth and sixth grade courses in general mathematics that ensure a strong foundation in number sense, algebra and functions, data analysis and statistics, probability, measurement and geometry and mathematical reasoning.

In the seventh grade Pre-Algebra course, students continue expanding upon these areas of numeracy with a focus on preparing all students for algebra in the eighth grade. As a developmentally appropriate measure to get students prepared for high school and college, the seventh and eighth grade students will receive one block of mathematics which merges procedures and problem solving together. Standards for each year of the mathematics curriculum will be developed using the California Common Core standards and the item-analysis of all state and national assessments. To ensure teaching activities are consistent with best practices for math instruction, SMCA teachers will use CMAST formatted lesson plans, Singapore math conceptual understandings, and supplement these activities with mathematics textbooks approved by the California Department of Education.
Scope and Sequence of Courses

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Possible elective courses: advisory, life Skills, math or language arts intervention, or foreign language. *May vary from year to year.

Delineation of the Core Subjects

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS FOR 5th-8th**

**English Language Arts 5th**
This program introductory course is based on student mastery of the California Common Core standards for 5th grade English-Language Arts. The course covers the foundational skills including concepts of reading literature, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening, and language development. Students are exposed to classic, modern, technical and electronic works of literature and information. Some example novels include *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *James and the Giant Peach*, *Pinocchio* and *The Witch of Black Bird Pond*. In conjunction with our history course content students will also read excerpts from Hakim's *History of Us*. While there are no official textbooks for this course, teachers may use the following to supplement their instruction: *Write Source: A Book For Writing, Thinking, and Learning*, *Everyday Spelling*, and *Holt's Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics*. Implementation of the course is in keeping with the guidelines of the Reading/Language Arts and History/Social Science Frameworks for California public schools.

**United States History 5th**
5th History is a study of United States history and geography beginning from Pre-Colombian era through the Civil War. Using the California social science standards students achieve mastery by analyzing how geography, religion, politics, and social structures define the early American cultures. Students study the development and changes of the country using Scott Foresman's *History-Social Science for California: "Our Nation"* as the primary history text for this course.
Students identify and explore the similarities and patterns of the variety of peoples that make up America. The focus of this course is tracing the development of early democracy and how this evolved into the constitution. Students will learn about related careers in history/social science.

**Science 5th**

Fifth grade Science is a standards mastery and laboratory based program. Students spend approximately forty percent (40%) of their class time on hands-on activities. Introductory principles of Earth Science, Life Science and Physical Science are explored in detail; the fifth grade Holt Science textbooks are used to supplement laboratory activities and teacher created lessons. Science activities are based on the California Science Standards as delineated in the California Science Framework and utilize the skills and techniques outlined in the Investigation and Experimentation strand of the content standards.

**Math 5th**

5th grade math students take a comprehensive course to develop a firm foundation in numeracy and problem solving skills. For this course teachers utilize the California Common Core Standards for Mathematics when creating lessons. While the class does not have an adopted textbook they pull material from Singapore math curriculum and Harcourt Math Level 5. The lesson design allows for students to use manipulatives to deepen their understanding of concepts. This inquiry based curriculum is implemented to ensure students are prepared for the algebraic thinking and other abstract mathematical concepts.

**English Language Arts 6th**

Our second language arts course has students master the California Common Core standards for English-Language Arts with emphasis on the skills and knowledge that pertain to the sixth grade. The course covers the foundational skills including concepts of reading literature, reading informational text, writing, speaking and listening, and language development. Students are exposed to classic, modern, technical and electronic works of literature and information. Some example novels include *Bridge to Terabithia*, *Night*, and *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*. As part of the *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* and *Night* literature unit, students will also read informational texts such as *Freedom Walkers: The Story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott* to acquire a broader perspective of prejudice in America. While there is not an official textbook for this course teachers may use the following to supplement their instruction *Write Source: A Book For Writing, Thinking, and Learning*, *Everyday Spelling*, and Holt's *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics*. Implementation of the course is in
keeping with the guidelines of the Reading/Language Arts and History/Social Science Frameworks for California public schools.

**Ancient World History 6th**

6th History is a study of ancient civilizations including early humans, Egypt, Greece, and China. Using the California social science standards students master these standards by analyzing how geography, religion, politics, and social structures define these civilizations. Students compare and contrast the achievements and downfalls of these cultures and evaluate their lasting impact over time. McDougal Littell’s *World History Ancient Through Early Modern Times* is used as the primary text for this course. The emphasis of this course is the effect of cultural diffusion on the various ancient societies. Students will additionally learn about related careers in history/social science.

**Earth Science 6th**

Sixth grade Earth Science is a standards mastery and laboratory based program. Students spend approximately forty percent (40%) of their class time on hands-on activities. Introductory principles of Earth Science are explored in detail, with some related topics from life science included; the *Holt Earth Science* textbook is used to supplement laboratory activities and teacher created lessons. Science activities are based on the California Science Standards as delineated in the California Science Framework and utilize the skills and techniques outlined in the Investigation and Experimentation strand of the content standards.

**Math 6th**

6th grade math students take a comprehensive course to develop an understanding of algebraic thinking skills. For this course teachers utilize the California Common Core Standards for Mathematics when creating lessons. While the class does not have an adopted textbook they pull material from Singapore math curriculum and Harcourt Math Level 6. The inquiry based lessons allows for students to use real world situations to deepen their understanding of concepts. This inquiry based curriculum is implemented to ensure students are prepared for the algebraic thinking and other abstract mathematical concepts. While there may be some general remediation in basic math skills, math at the 6th grade level becomes increasingly complex and students work with irrational numbers.
**English Language Arts 7th**

7th ELA is based on the California Common Core standards for English-Language Arts and History/Social Science with emphasis on the skills and knowledge that pertain to the seventh grade. The course covers the skills included in the concepts of word analysis and fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension of informational material, literary response and analysis, writing strategies, writing applications, written and oral English language conventions, listening and speaking strategies and speaking applications. Students are exposed to classic, modern, technical and electronic works of literature and information. Some example novels include *The Bronze Bow*, *Catherine, Called Birdy*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Paired with their pre-algebra course students will also explore numbers from the literary perspective by reading *Math Trek: Adventures in the Math Zone*. Implementation of the course is in keeping with the guidelines of the Reading/Language Arts and History/Social Science Frameworks for California public schools.

**Medieval World History 7th**

7th History is a study of world history and geography during the medieval and early modern eras. This follows the study of ancient world history which is studied in 6th grade according to the California standards. Students study the development and changes of complex civilizations. TCI’s *History Alive* series is used as the primary history text for this course. Students identify and explore the similarities and patterns of these civilizations. Emphasis is placed on the fact that many of the civilizations developed concurrently and impacted each other. All units include an examination of the impact of religion, economics, politics and social history on the medieval and early modern eras. The Five Themes of Geography (location, movement, region, place and human-environmental interaction) are woven into all the units, with emphasis on how geography affected the development of these civilizations. Students will learn about related careers in history/social science.

**Life Science 7th**

Seventh grade science is a standards mastery and laboratory based program. Students spend approximately forty percent (40%) of their class time on hands-on activities. Introductory principles of life science are explored in detail, with some related topics from physical and Earth sciences included; the *Holt Life Science* textbook is used to supplement laboratory activities and teacher created lessons. Science activities are based on the California Science Standards as delineated in the California Science Framework and utilize the skills and techniques outlined in the Investigation and Experimentation strand of the content standards.
Mathematics 7th/Pre-Algebra

7th grade students take the Math 7/Pre-Algebra course covering the California 7th grade math Common Core standards. Problem-solving is an essential skill taught throughout our math program. SMCA has partnered with Loyola Marymount University to train teachers on the Center for Math and Science Teaching (CMAST) framework. In 7th grade students master pre-algebra through inquiry based activities using the CMAST lessons and supplementing with the *Glencoe pre-Algebra* textbook. Those students who master the standards take Algebra in 8th grade, while those who do not have an additional year to master the pre-algebra standards in a Math 8/Algebra Readiness course.

English Language Arts 8th

8th ELA is based on the California Common Core standards for English-Language Arts and History/Social Science with emphasis on the skills and knowledge that pertain to eighth grade. The course covers the skills included in the concepts of word analysis and fluency, vocabulary development, comprehension of informational material, literary response and analysis, writing strategies, writing applications, written and oral English language conventions, listening and speaking strategies and speaking applications. Students are exposed to classic, modern, technical and electronic works of literature and information. Some example novels include *Of Mice and Men*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Red Badge of Courage* and *Raisin in the Sun*. Additionally students read informational texts like *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave* to enhance their understanding of American history through and beyond the Civil War. Implementation of the course is in keeping with the guidelines of the Reading/Language Arts and History/Social Science Frameworks for California public schools.

United States History 8th

8th History is a study of the critical events, issues and individuals in United States History. TCI’s *History Alive* series is also used as the primary history text for this course, which begins with a selective review of the Age of Exploration, the colonial period and the American Revolution. The major focus of the year is the development of the Constitution, the impact of the Westward Movement and the struggles of the Civil War and Reconstruction. All units include an examination of the impact of economics, politics and social history on the development of the United States. The five themes of geography (location, movement, region, place and human-environmental interaction) are woven into all the units, with emphasis on how geography affected the development of the growing nation. Students learn about related careers in history/social science.
Algebra I 8th

8th Algebra is based on the California Common Core standards for grades 8-12. The course is designed to extend students' experience with patterns to a formal understanding of relations, function, and the symbolic language and structure of algebra. Students will perform symbol calculations accurately and flexibly move between symbolic, graphical and real numerical representations. Algebra mastery is accomplished through inquiry based lessons, using the content standards as a guideline; the Glencoe Algebra textbook is used to supplement teacher created lessons. The successful completion of Algebra I prepares students for Algebra II and Geometry. Following the middle school math course of study, a large number of our students are ready for Geometry in 9th grade, while some take algebra.

Physical Science 8th

Eighth grade Science is a standards and laboratory based program. Students spend approximately forty percent (40%) of their class time on hands-on activities. Introductory principles of physics and chemistry are explored in detail, with some related topics from earth and life sciences included; the Holt Life Science textbook is used to supplement laboratory activities and teacher created lessons. Science activities are based on the California Science Standards as delineated in the California Science Framework and utilize the skills and techniques outlined in the Investigation and Experimentation strand of the content standards.

Addressing the California Content and Common Core Standards

RIGOROUS STANDARDS BASED CURRICULUM THAT BUILDS SKILLS

The mission of SMCA is to prepare students for educational success in college and life beyond. The most important component of this mission is academic preparation. Regardless of their level of proficiency upon entrance, students must complete the eighth grade ready to successfully enter ninth grade programs. Certain exit outcomes ensure this preparation as we do not socially promote. In English students are able to read and comprehend classical texts and effectively compose various types of five paragraphs essays. In math, students have completed a comprehensive Algebra I course or Algebra Readiness course.

SMCA is grounded in a deep understanding of foundational skills and problem solving built in the prior grades. In science, students develop a foundational grasp of earth, life and physical sciences that prepares them for the demands of high school Biology, Chemistry and Physics. In history, students build a broad understanding of United States and World History, which is influenced by literature in the earlier grades, allowing students to contextualize various historical events.
 Academic achievement in core academic subjects as directed by the California State Standards as well as the California Common Core standards are the primary vehicle by which we accomplish the mission of SMCA. As a result, the schedule and entire program structure are designed to promote maximum success in these courses. All students take reading, writing, math, science and history every day.

ALIGNING CURRICULUM AND INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS TO STATE STANDARDS

As we transition to the common core standards we have opted to do so slowly and with intention. Thus, our 5th and 6th grade math and ELA courses have aligned their curriculum to the California Common Core standards. Once we have solidified a strong transition plan for these grade levels, 7th and 8th grade will too align their curriculum. Where necessary for college preparation, SMCA’s curricula exceed these standards in a manner that is age-appropriate and simultaneously ensures the mastery of basic skills. For example, the majority of SMCA students complete Algebra by the eighth grade, a ninth grade requirement according to the California guidelines. SMCA students must also read much more than an average student. More instructional time and a focused, accountable school culture allow for this intensified pace.

To accomplish our goals, we utilize Understanding by Design (UbD) as a framework for designing curricular units, assessments, and instruction. UbD is the framework that enables teachers to “plan backwards” to design a curriculum and lessons that are tied to state standards. We believe in using the California Performance Standards, national standards, other challenging state standards, and the knowledge of our faculty to design specific internal standards informed by these external standards that clearly identify the content and skills that students should master in each grade level.

During our summer orientation, school leaders supply incoming teachers with sample scope and sequences. Teachers are then guided to critically analyze assessments from the CST to identify the skills and content areas needed for mastery at a specific grade level. Teachers blend the CA standards with the identified skills and content into smaller, measurable goals to create student-friendly objectives. These objectives drive the creation of quarter and semester-end assessments.

WEEKLY LESSON PLANS

In addition to designing unit plans, teachers complete weeklong outlines in advance to ensure that they are prepared and organized prior to teaching a lesson. Each weekly plan contains the standard for the week, IWOC, correlating Study Island objectives and/or Reading Counts goal.
Under the supervision and support of the Principal Teacher and grade level cohort and department teams, all teachers have appropriately paced standards maps with careful attention to pacing. Professional development is scheduled after each quarter assessment for teachers to realign their pacing plans with the speed and accuracy of student achievement.

**Teacher Recruitment**

We take a local and national approach towards recruiting our teaching staff; we recruit at all of the major colleges and universities in the area such as: UCLA, Loyola Marymount, USC, Pepperdine and the Cal State Universities. In addition, we rely on word of mouth, advertise in the local papers, participate in annual charter schools job fairs, visit private schools, and post on websites such as Edjoin. Additionally, we subscribe to headhunting services that recruit for charter schools such as Teach California Charter. Nationally, we contact the alumni networks of colleges and universities and organizations such as New Leaders for New Schools and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Teacher candidates are required to submit a resume, reference sheet and cover letter. Once these items have been screened by our Human Resource department and administration, teacher candidates are required to teach a standards based demonstration lesson to a group of SMCA students. At least one administrator is present during the lesson to record observations and to debrief with the teacher candidate upon completion of the lesson. Preferential teacher candidate qualities include, but are not limited to: strong classroom management ability, advanced student engagement strategies, the capability to build connections with students and the creation and facilitation of a standards based lesson. Furthermore, applicants spend time with administration or other staff member(s) to ensure that they are reflective individuals that share the school's mission and vision.

**Professional Development**

Just as every student has unique learning needs and growth areas, so too does every teacher. To best improve student outcomes, teachers in different stages of their career cycle receive different types of support and development. Teachers new to SMCA have an additional week of orientation to devise the scope and sequence of their respective curricula, to learn the philosophy and structures of the school culture and to become familiarized with school policies and procedures. Following new teacher orientation, all teachers have at least one week of professional development sessions to plan for the upcoming year.
During the school year, our Senior Data Manager helps train and support all staff on meaningful use of data. There is one day a quarter that is a pupil-free day where the teachers and administrators gather and assess student data on achievement, discipline and exam scores. With this information, teachers amend their instruction accordingly; student intervention placements are made along with more follow-up meetings with families.

Many growth opportunities exist for more veteran teachers looking to expand their craft; one such growth opportunity is the department leader position. Department leaders play a critical role in providing support for teachers in their specific content area; they deliver meaningful feedback on teacher lesson plans and standards maps, observe and provide feedback to teachers throughout the school year, and lead professional development sessions with the teachers. Furthermore, department leaders support teachers during SMCA’s district wide content meetings and help facilitate conversations surrounding best practices within their content areas.

SMCA believes that one of the most critical factors of student success is the classroom teacher, thus a large area of teacher support comes from instructional feedback and coaching. Administrators, teacher leaders and teachers have all been trained on SMCA’s research based teacher evaluation rubric. All teachers receive informal feedback at least once per month and formal feedback once per semester. The data gathered from the observations is used to provide individualized professional development plans for all teachers. Through the data collection process, both high performing teachers and struggling teachers are identified. High performing teachers help coach their peers and provide instructional strategies for their colleagues, while struggling teachers are given additional support, and, if necessary, are placed onto an improvement plan.

A variety of other collaborative staff activities are scheduled regularly to provide time and space to implement strategies from organization wide professional development. Weekly Professional Learning Communities provide teachers an opportunity to digest teaching strategies and together plan robust lessons. Bimonthly faculty meetings ensure that everyone is apprised of upcoming events and any schoolwide changes. Grade level teams (or cohort teams at the 5th and 6th grade level) meet at least once monthly to problem solve any challenging behavior or curricular issues presented that month, in either their primary core classes or their supplementary intervention courses. Department leaders will also hold bimonthly meetings with their teams to analyze data and discuss progress of scope and sequence skills in our student population. Lastly, administrators provide bimonthly one-on-one time with teachers to discuss personal classrooms goals and challenges.
Academic Calendar

2013-2014

Academic Year Calendar

August 13

September 13

October 13

November 13

December 13

January 14

February 14

March 14

April 14

May 14

June 14

July 14

August 14

September 14

Notes

Aug 5-7: New Teacher Orientation
Aug 8-14: BSS PD
Aug 15: Staff Team Building
Aug 19: First Day of School
Sept 2: Labor Day
Sep 20: PLC Rick
Nov 15: Parent Engagement
Dec 11: End of Qtr 1
Dec 14: PD Common Core Data
Nov 11: Veteran’s Day
Nov 22: PLC Difficult Behaviors
Dec 13: PLC Common Core Data
Dec 31-Jan 3: Winter Break
Jan 6: First Day of Semester 2
Jan 20: MLK
Jan 21-PLC: Continuing
ELL Support
Feb 17: President’s Day
Feb 21: PLC CELD Rubric
Feb 28: End of Qtr 2
March: BSS PD Project
Based Learning
Apr 14-18: Spring Break
Apr 25: PLC Cross Curricular Math
May 18: PLC Common Core Data
May 26: Memorial Day
May 30: Last Day of School
Jan 13: PD End of Year Closout

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### Bell Schedule and Instructional Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday-Thursday Schedule (5th/6th)</th>
<th>Friday Schedule (5th/6th)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time- 60 mins</strong></td>
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### Instructional Minutes (5th/6th)

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<th><strong>Number of Days:</strong> 178</th>
<th><strong>Total Minutes:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>37</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Minutes:</strong></td>
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### Monday-Thursday Schedule (7th/8th)

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
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### Instructional Minutes (7th/8th)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Minutes per Day</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Monday</td>
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<td>13320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
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<td>9720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Minutes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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### MEETING THE NEEDS OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS

#### English Language Learners

English Language Learners are supported through a combination of modified instruction, a supportive school culture, and additional academic support as needed. Upon acceptance into our program families complete an enrollment pack so that we can best serve their needs. One of the documents included is a language survey in which the families can indicate what language was first spoken and what language is currently spoken at home. This helps us to identify which children will need more targeted support in our inclusive classrooms. Using the information from the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and previous school's information, students' ELD level is identified. SMCA does not group students by their language ability but instead believes in an integrated classroom. Teachers provide sheltered instruction using SDAIE techniques when students have difficulty understanding English. For example, an English teacher may begin the day's lesson with an anticipatory guide. This strategy helps to front load vocabulary so that English language learners have confidence to participate in class discussion thereby augmenting their cognitive academic language proficiency. The school also promotes the success of English Language Learners by valuing the Spanish language as a critical resource and fostering a bilingual culture.

In our past charter term SMCA did not adequately monitor English language learners’ progress towards mastery of the English Language Development Standards. Moving forward we have adapted our master plan to include a tool that will allow us to use existing school systems to monitor student growth. Using both writing exams and products from our project based learning cycles we plan to assess their listening, reading, and writing skills. This in conjunction with ongoing professional development teachers will become more effective at differentiating their lessons to
support language development. Students who are classified as early intermediate and below are further scheduled into RTI reading groups to be provided additional language support in a smaller, structured group.

In accordance with the education code, SMCA uses the Home Language Survey and California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to identify new enrollees with a home language other than English, to monitor their progress in learning English, and to help reclassify them in regards to proficiency in English. New enrollees are tested within 30 calendar days of enrollment. The following are procedures used to reclassify a student:

- Score of Basic or above on the most recent California Standards Test (CST) or California Modified Assessment (CMA) in English-language arts
- English proficiency on the CELDT: Overall level of Early Advanced (level 4) or Advanced (level 5) with each domain score (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) Intermediate (level 3) or higher
- Teacher evaluation based on student grades/progress report marks
- Parent consultation and approval
- Pass one writing exam with a score of 3 and above.

**Socioeconomically Disadvantaged Students**

SMCA, through its mission and vision seeks to empower socio-economically disadvantaged students and allow each and every student to succeed in demanding colleges and work forces. SMCA provides enrichment evenings, weekend and multiple Life Experience Lessons (LELs) throughout the school year in order to provide socio-economically disadvantaged students with firsthand experience outside of the classroom in order to strengthen their “cultural currency” which ultimately enhances their understanding of their grade level curriculum inside the classroom. During the year students participate in experiences such a team building scavenger hunt at the Los Angeles Zoo, a lesson on energy at the California Science Center, and visits to local universities like UCLA and USC. For many years we have provided earned trips such as a weekend trip to Big Bear so that inner city students can learn to ski and snowboard. For more detailed information about life experience lessons see the section in Element 1 titled Out-of-School Educational Opportunities. Additionally, SMCA employs a longer school day and year, as well as a heavy focus on core subjects in the early grades to bolster all students’ skills and content knowledge. Additionally, multiple supports, afterschool intervention, and End-of-Year Remediation are provided for all students.
**Gifted Students**

SMCA truly believes that all students are gifted and capable of academic excellence. Thus, any student who comes out of a GATE program and chooses to enroll at SMCA finds that the academic standards and expectations that they have grown accustomed to in their individual classrooms are now prevalent school-wide. Students working at different paces are sometimes paired so that students excelling in a particular subject can help students struggling with that same subject. Research shows that people deepen understanding through the process of teaching others, and students may develop greater curiosity as they consolidate their own learning. Furthermore, as other students benefit from the help, paired learning helps keep up the pace.

Teachers receive professional development in identifying exceptional students and may recommend a student for assessment, as may an administrator or parent. Students are then assessed by a contracted school psychologist. Students who are identified as gifted are monitored biannually by school administration to ensure that the student is working according to his potential. While SMCA does not offer a pull out gifted program, gifted students have opportunities to extend their learning through more rigorous reading and wider choice in the independent reading program, expanded options within the project based learning cycles, course compacting, and course acceleration, where appropriate. Additionally, teachers integrate best practices for teaching students gifted students within the regular classroom, including Kaplan’s elements of Depth and Complexity, Accountable Talk, and project based learning.

**ACHIEVING BELOW GRADE LEVEL**

SMCA main goal is to ensure that all students are prepared for success in demanding colleges and work forces. Hence, our goals for academically low achieving students are the same as our goals for the entire student body. Our program and supports ensure that all students identified as low achieving have equal access to a rigorous, college-preparatory education. Based on the academic data of the elementary schools in the area, SMCA expects that a great number of its students may be classified as “low achieving.” As such, SMCA entire curriculum, program, and supports have been adapted to improve performance for traditionally low achieving students.

Upon entering our program we assess all students after enrollment to determine learning strengths and weakness, as well as overall proficiency in core subjects. We use classroom diagnostics and available STAR data to better understand students’ entering capabilities. Throughout the year we use benchmark exam scores to monitor progress. Fortunately the use of Data Director allows us to keep digital portfolios of students’ mastery of the standards and better track growth. Teachers use...
this information in their classrooms to both scaffold and extend their lessons. Additionally, we offer a number of supports to accelerate learning such as intervention classes built into the academic day as well as tutoring and homework help afterschool. Precedent has proven that many time students lack the studying habits and other dispositions to realize their full academic potential. To propel our students to success they all receive a class about character development and life skills. Lastly, we know that time is our greatest enemy in catching students up to the high expectations. Low achieving students are also provided remediation during afterschool, vacation, and the last weeks of school where they participate in an intensive remediation program and retake assessments in each course they have not yet mastered.

Parents are a critical element in the achievement of their students. Thus, the school communicates frequently with the families of our students not meeting their progress goals. Students are assessed on standards on a weekly basis. When they perform poorly, it is not uncommon for teachers to reach out to parents to discuss plans for improvement. On a quarterly basis their overall scores are accumulated in a document called the On Target Catch Up report. This tool organizes the way in which the school monitors student progress towards their promotion goals. We set quarterly expectations and when these are not met a series of interventions are triggered. For example, we might enroll a child in an intervention class or offer Saturday opportunities for additional academic assistance. If a child struggles in two consecutive quarters a student success team will be formed. Low-achieving students are referred for an SST (Student Success Team) if they meet the following criteria:

1. Performing more than one level below his/her actual grade level.
2. Not on track to make at least one grade level of growth in reading, writing, and math.
3. Earning below 70% in one or more core subjects and therefore in danger of failing the grade and not on track to make at least one grade level of growth in reading, writing, and math.

As students respond to interventions we modify their individualized plans so that they can reach their full academic capacity. The eventual goal is that students become self advocates who can identify when they need additional help and seek out resources to improve their circumstance.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

All charter schools must adhere to all terms and conditions of the Chanda Smith Modified Consent Decree ("MCD") and any other court orders and/or consent decrees imposed upon the LAUSD as they pertain to special education. Charter schools must ensure that no student otherwise eligible to
enroll in their charter school will be denied enrollment due to a disability or to the charter school's inability to provide necessary services. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure the recruitment, enrollment and retention of students with disabilities at charter schools.

Prior to Los Angeles Unified School District ("LAUSD" or "District") Governing Board approval, Stella Middle Charter Academy will either execute a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") by and between LAUSD and Stella Middle Charter Academy regarding the provision and funding of special education services consistent with the requirements of the LAUSD Special Education Local Plan Area ("SELPA") Local Plan for Special Education.

5. SELPA Reorganization

The Los Angeles Unified School District is approved to operate as a single-District SELPA under the provisions of Education Code § 56195.1(a) and intends to continue operating as a single- District SELPA as in the current structure but has created two school sections (District-operated Programs and Charter-operated Programs) under the administration of one single Administrative Unit pursuant to a reorganization plan approved by the Board of Education on January 4, 2011 (149/10-11). Full implementation of the reorganized LAUSD SELPA will begin in the 2013-2014 school year requiring all District-authorized charter-operated schools to elect one of the three options available under the LAUSD SELPA. Prior to an Option election, all District authorized charter schools shall participate as a school of the District under the District-Operated Programs Unit. Prior to the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, all District-authorized charter schools, other than those that have previously executed an Option 3 Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU"), will be required to execute a new MOU setting forth the LAUSD SELPA option election for the remainder of the charter petition term. The Charter-operated schools will not have a LEA status but will function in a similar role in that each charter school will be responsible for all special education issues including services, placement, due process, related services, special education classes, and special education supports. Charter schools may apply for membership in the Charter-operated Program section of the SELPA. These schools will receive support from a Special Education Director for the Charter-operated Programs.

*Modified Consent Decree Requirements*

All Charter Schools chartered by the Los Angeles Unified School District ("LAUSD or the District") Governing Board are bound by and must adhere to the terms, conditions and requirements of the Chanda Smith Modified Consent Decree ("MCD") and other court orders imposed upon District
pertaining to special education. The MCD is a consent decree entered in a federal court class action lawsuit initially brought on behalf of students with disabilities in LAUSD. It is an agreement of the parties approved by the federal court and monitored by a court-appointed independent monitor. The MCD includes nineteen statistically measureable outcomes and facilities obligations that the District has to achieve to disengage from the MCD and federal court oversight. All charter schools are required to use the District’s Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual and Welligent, the District-wide web-based software system used for online Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and tracking of related services provided to students during the course of their education.

As part of fulfilling the District’s obligations under the Modified Consent Decree, data requests from charter schools that are not connected to the District’s current Student Information Systems (“SIS”) are made on a regular basis. The requested data must be submitted in the Office of the Independent Monitor’s required format and are as follows:

- The Independent Charter School Suspension/Expulsion Report, due monthly throughout the school year.
- Paper SESAC Report and Welligent Student Listing Verification, due monthly throughout the school year.
- CBEDS, which is due at the end of October of Each School Year.
- All Students Enrolled December 1 of Each School Year, due at the end of December every school year.
- Graduation Status of 12th Grade Students Enrolled on December 1, due at the end of June every school year.

The MCD requires charter schools to implement the District’s Integrated Student Information System (ISIS). ISIS is a suite of applications which is designed to capture all District student data.

**ENGLISH LEARNER INSTRUCTION**

Stella Middle Charter Academy is required to timely identify potential English Learner students and provide them with an effective English language acquisition program that affords meaningful access to the school’s academic core curriculum. Instructional plans for English Learners (EL) must be (1) based on sound educational theory; (2) adequately supported with trained teachers and appropriate materials and resources; and (3) periodically evaluated to make sure the program is successful and modified when the program is not successful.

On an annual basis (on or about October 1), Stella Middle Charter Academy shall submit a certification to the District that certifies that they will either adopt and implement LAUSD’s English
Learner Master Plan or implement the Charter School's own English Learner Instructional/Master Plan. If Charter School chooses to implement its own EL plan, the instructional plan shall encompass the following, including but not limited to:

- How ELs' needs will be identified;
- What services will be offered;
- How, where and by whom the services will be provided;
- How the program for ELS is evaluated each year and how the results of this assessment will be used to improve those services (annual report of the assessments)

Stella Middle Charter Academy shall provide to CSD a copy of its entire, current plan upon request such as during the annual oversight review process.

SMCA shall administer the CELDT annually. Stella Middle Charter Academy shall also ensure that it will provide outreach services and inform parents with limited English proficiency with important information regarding school matters to the same extent as other parents.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Bright Star Schools believes that all students are kinesthetic learners. We agree with the following adage: "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

We believe that our students must be given the opportunity to enhance their education with real-life experiences. These experiential learning trips are called Life Experience Lessons or LELs. LELs include physical challenges in other cities (biking from downtown Washington D.C. to Mt. Vernon along the Potomac River, walking from Central Park to the Brooklyn Bridge or hiking to the Havasupai Indian Reservation in Arizona). They also include visits to multiple universities as well as to national and historical sites. We want our students to come out of their “comfort zones” and become explorers of knowledge and new experiences. In the past they have included the following:

- A camping trip at the beginning of the year to Big Bear, Catalina, Arizona or Utah, focusing on team-building and creating bonds.
- A mid-year trip to the local mountains for experiencing the snow, skiing and snowboarding, designed to create new experiences and gain confidence.
- End-of-the-year journeys to places such as King’s Canyon, Washington D.C., Northern California or the Southern states, bringing science and history lessons to life while touring colleges and allowing students to envision the possibilities for their futures.
SMCA believes the education of students comes from many varied sources, many of which are outside the school facility. At least once each quarter (preferably during orientation week and at year’s-end) students should either be given or be able to earn a meaningful off-campus experience where they will have the opportunity to

1. Experience something out of their daily, city-life routine that will involve both mental and physical challenges;
2. Build bonds with fellow classmates and teachers;
3. Share stories, songs, cheers, skits, and (preferably) campfires of some sort.

The most ancient human tradition is sharing these things at night around a fire. Based on past experiences, we have found that organizing the trips ourselves can cost about one half the price of having them organized by outside agencies. Self-organization also allows us much more time for the bonding experiences that we strive to offer our students.

All of SMCA’s co-curricular programs enrich and enhance students’ classroom experiences while encouraging personal creativity and understanding as well as confidence to actively participate in society. Through these experiences, our students learn to strive for happiness and meaning in a diverse and broad world-view.
ELEMENT 2
MEASURABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES

“The measurable pupil outcomes identified for use by the charter school. 'Pupil outcomes', for purposes of this part, means the extent to which all pupils of the school demonstrate that they have attained the skills, knowledge, and attitudes specified as goals in the school’s educational program.” Ed. Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(B)

PAST PERFORMANCE

Over the past four years, Stella Middle Charter Academy has seen significant gains in its API scores due to the dedication and hard work of the administrators, teachers, students and parents. SMCA’s growth average over the last four years is almost 40 points. Unfortunately, the 2011-2012 scores were not as strong as we would have expected. We acknowledge this decrease in performance to flaws in teacher recruitment and new teacher training, as well as flaws to our ongoing professional development plan. Special attention has been paid this year to streamline our teacher recruitment and professional development, as outlined in Element 1, sections titled “Teacher Recruitment” and “Professional Development”.

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We did not meet AYP for either math or English for the 2011-2012 school year, thus we have actively worked to improve the structure of our English and math RTI programs at the 5th-6th grade campus and have introduced structured English and math RTI programs at the 7th-8th campus, as evidenced in Element 1, section titled “Response to Intervention (RtI) Model”.

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QUANTITATIVE GOALS

In reflecting on our areas for improvement, we have created measurable schoolwide goals in a number of areas. Paired with each goal is an action plan and implementation timeline to ensure we reach our internal targets. In accordance with SB1290 we will demonstrate improved student achievement schoolwide and for numerically significant subgroups, for renewal, using the action plan below.

Attendance rate goal:

Our Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rate has historically been at or above 95%. We continue to aim for an ADA rate of at least 95%, as we know that students must be present to learn and achieve on grade level. In order to meet this goal, our Student Data Coordinators pull monthly attendance reports, and our office staff reaches out to students and families who show a trend of decreased attendance.

CST goals:

We aim to increase the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the English and mathematics CST by three to five percent annually until we reach an overall proficiency rate of 90%.

English Language Arts CST Goals by grade level:

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<td>66%</td>
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In order to ensure that we are on track to increasing the number of proficient students at each grade level, we have a threefold approach to meet this goal: increased teacher effectiveness through ongoing professional development and coaching, support for students struggling to attain English proficiency through English RtI classes and implementation of instructional strategies to support our English language learners with vocabulary acquisition and academic discourse.
Mathematics CST Goals by grade level:

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<td>60%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>** 67%</td>
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<td>42%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>** 67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Algebra Readiness</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>** 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Algebra</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>** 81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to ensure that we are on track to increasing the number of proficient students at each grade level, we have a twofold approach to meeting these goals: increased teacher effectiveness through ongoing professional development and coaching and support for students struggling to attain math proficiency through math RtI classes.

Schoolwide (5-8) English and Mathematics CST goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>ELA Proficiency</th>
<th>Math Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>47.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>52.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>57.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>73.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>73.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we increase the percentage of proficient students at each grade level, the schoolwide percentage of students scoring proficient and above will naturally increase to the quantitative targets listed. By hitting the proposed schoolwide targets for the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on the CST exam, we will meet our AYP goals for the 2012-2013 school year.

API Goal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>API Score</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>852</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**English Learner Reclassification Goal:**

Our 2012-2013 administration of the CELDT exam shows that 33% of our students are classified as English language learners. SMCA’s RFEP rate from 2011-2012 was 7.35%. Due to the changes in our reclassification process, we now have a schoolwide RFEP goal of 10%.

**ANTICIPATED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OUTCOMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricular Focus</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Assessment Tools</th>
<th>Benchmark Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Arts</strong></td>
<td>Mastery of grade level standards (Common Core). Students will read with comprehension, speak with meaning, and possess familiarity with literary works per their grade level equivalent. All students will develop enhanced language skills and understanding. Students will be able to demonstrate their written ability through research and through responding to text (both informational and literary). Students will be able to grow in their reading ability, both in terms of comprehension and complexity of text read.</td>
<td>Annual Portfolios Weekly Quizzes Monthly Unit Exams Quarterly Schoolwide Writing Exams Weekly Study Island Assessments Annual STAR Exam Bi-Annual Project Based Learning Cycles Weekly Reading Counts Assessments Quarterly Midterms Bi-Annual Finals</td>
<td>Percentage of students achieving at proficiency in ELA will increase by three to five percent annually on the CST, with a schoolwide proficiency rate of 85% by the end of the charter term (2017-18). Students will accomplish seventy percent proficiency in annual end-of-course finals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>Mastery of grade level standards (Common Core). Students will reason abstractly and quantitatively in order to make sense of real world problems. Students will persevere</td>
<td>Annual Portfolios Weekly Quizzes Monthly Unit Exams Weekly Study Island Assessments Annual STAR Exam Bi-Annual Project Based Learning Cycles Quarterly Kuta Software Exams</td>
<td>Percentage of students achieving at proficiency in math will increase by three to five percent annually on the CST, with a schoolwide proficiency rate of 73.8% by the end of the charter term (2017-2018).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Area</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Assessments</td>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Through difficult math problems to construct sound arguments and to critique the reasoning of others. Students will discern patterns and structures and find trends in math reasoning.</td>
<td>Bi-Annual Finals</td>
<td>Students will accomplish seventy percent proficiency in annual end-of-course finals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Mastery of grade level standards (Common Core). Through investigation and experimentation, students will demonstrate proficiency of the principles of Physical Science, Earth Science, Life Science, Ecology and Environmental Awareness.</td>
<td>Monthly Lab Write-Ups, Monthly Experiments, Weekly Quizzes, Monthly Unit Exams, Weekly Study Island Assessments, Annual STAR Exams (when applicable), Bi-Annual Project Based Learning Cycles, Quarterly Midterms, Bi-Annual Finals</td>
<td>Percentage of satisfactory lab write-ups will increase by three to five percent annually. Students will accomplish seventy percent proficiency in annual end-of-course finals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>Mastery of grade level standards (Common Core). Students will demonstrate intellectual reasoning, reflection, and research skills related to chronological thinking and historical interpretation. Students will be able to recognize most countries on a world map. Students will understand what it means to &quot;learn from the past.&quot; Students will be able to identify and demonstrate understanding of key events in U.S. and world history.</td>
<td>Annual Research Projects, Weekly Quizzes, Monthly Unit Exams, Weekly Study Island Assessments, Annual STAR Exam (when applicable), Bi-Annual Project Based Learning Cycles, Quarterly Midterms, Bi-Annual Finals</td>
<td>Students will accomplish seventy percent proficiency in annual end-of-course finals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative Practices</td>
<td>Students will act with compassion, creativity and conscience.</td>
<td>Quarterly OT/CU Reports, Weekly advisory lessons and discussions</td>
<td>90% of students will be on target with their OT/CU reports by the end of the school year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students will demonstrate satisfactory and above citizenship and work habits practices.

Students will critically analyze and begin to develop an individual college and/or career plan.

Students will reflect on the world in which they live and appreciate and accept the diversity within our world.

Quarterly Citizenship and Work habits grades (based on schoolwide rubrics)

Naviance student profiles

Annual Readistep Exam

Monthly off campus field trips and reflections

Yearly schoolwide service learning projects

70% of students will earn outstanding and satisfactory citizenship and work habits scores by the end of the school year.

70% of students will create a Naviance profile by the end of the year.

90% of students will participate in off campus trips and service learning projects.

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTING & COMMUNICATION

Student OT/CU reports are the primary record of student progress, where promotion requirement progress is clearly, meaningfully and consistently laid out for all students and families. OT/CU reports are distributed four times a year, after exams and portfolios have been evaluated. Student OT/CU reports create a succinct written record of student performance by compiling data from multiple markers of student performance.

Parent conferences and teacher meetings follow the publication of OT/CU reports to ensure communication between all parties. Furthermore, informal parent conferences occur on a weekly or monthly basis as requested by teachers and/or parents.

Students also conduct ongoing self-assessments and participate in assessments of their peers and of their teachers. Teachers meet throughout the year in Professional Learning Communities to discuss assessment results within subject areas, by grade levels, as a whole staff, and in dialogue with students, parents, and administrators. These conversations are used to improve curriculum and instruction as well as to evolve the assessment process itself.

PROFICIENCY-BASED GRADING SYSTEM

Combined Class Average Passing Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Scores</th>
<th>Non Passing Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced</strong></td>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97.5 - 100 = A+</td>
<td>86.5 – 89.49% = B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92.5 – 97.49% = A</td>
<td>82.5 – 86.49% = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.5 – 92.49% = A-</td>
<td>79.5 – 82.49% = B-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WORK HABITS AND CITIZENSHIP RUBRICS

### Work Habits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outstanding (4)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (2)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSISTENTLY:</td>
<td>USUALLY:</td>
<td>SOMETIMES:</td>
<td>RARELY:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes homework</td>
<td>Completes homework</td>
<td>Completes homework</td>
<td>Completes homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completes class assignments</td>
<td>Completes class assignments</td>
<td>Completes class assignments</td>
<td>Completes class assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does quality work/shows effort (takes time to proofread/check answers, puts name on paper)</td>
<td>Does quality work/shows effort (takes time to proofread/check answers, puts name on paper)</td>
<td>Does quality work/shows effort (takes time to proofread/check answers, puts name on paper)</td>
<td>Does quality work/shows effort (takes time to proofread/check answers, puts name on paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turns work in on time</td>
<td>Turns work in on time</td>
<td>Turns work in on time</td>
<td>Turns work in on time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes adequate use of the agenda</td>
<td>Makes adequate use of the agenda</td>
<td>Makes adequate use of the agenda</td>
<td>Makes adequate use of the agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains a well organized binder and backpack</td>
<td>Maintains a well organized binder and backpack</td>
<td>Maintains a well organized binder and backpack</td>
<td>Maintains a well organized binder and backpack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Citizenship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outstanding (4)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (3)</th>
<th>Needs Improvement (2)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSISTENTLY:</td>
<td>USUALLY:</td>
<td>SOMETIMES:</td>
<td>RARELY:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends class</td>
<td>Attends class</td>
<td>Attends class</td>
<td>Attends class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comes to class on-time</td>
<td>Comes to class on-time</td>
<td>Comes to class on-time</td>
<td>Comes to class on-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes adequate use of class time</td>
<td>Makes adequate use of class time</td>
<td>Makes adequate use of class time</td>
<td>Makes adequate use of class time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respects the rights, property and opinion of others</td>
<td>Respects the rights, property and opinion of others</td>
<td>Respects the rights, property and opinion of others</td>
<td>Respects the rights, property and opinion of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes advantage of opportunities to improve (attends tutoring, seeks help from teachers)</td>
<td>Takes advantage of opportunities to improve (attends tutoring, seeks help from teachers)</td>
<td>Takes advantage of opportunities to improve (attends tutoring, seeks help from teachers)</td>
<td>Takes advantage of opportunities to improve (attends tutoring, seeks help from teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes responsibility for decisions and behavior</td>
<td>Takes responsibility for decisions and behavior</td>
<td>Takes responsibility for decisions and behavior</td>
<td>Takes responsibility for decisions and behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows directions</td>
<td>Follows directions</td>
<td>Follows directions</td>
<td>Follows directions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ELEMENT 3
MEANS TO ASSESS PUPIL PROGRESS

“The method by which pupil progress in meeting those pupil outcomes is to be measured.”

Ed. Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(C)

METHODS FOR ASSESSING STUDENT OUTCOMES

ASSESSMENT

The assessment plan for Stella Middle Charter Academy (SMCA) is designed to be a tool for external accountability as well as to improve instruction and student achievement. To assure that the school is measuring what SMCA expects students to learn, assignments are aligned with the school’s pupil outcomes and curriculum. All curriculum and assessments are standards-based as mentioned in Element 1. Ongoing benchmark assessments (created using the Data Director program or similar tool) are used to meet the following objectives:

1) To help teachers revise curriculum and instruction according to student needs.
2) To give parents and students meaningful, useful feedback on student progress.
3) To compare the school’s progress to that of schools with similar student demographics.
4) To monitor the school’s progress in meeting its mission and to revise its activities accordingly.
5) To be accountable for the students meeting exit outcomes.

We believe that all children can learn at high levels and can be held to the same high standards regardless of their academic level when they enter our school. In order to ensure that all students reach these goals, we must be able to accurately measure how well students are mastering core skills, content and standards. To do this, we establish a baseline measure of student achievement and then continuously monitor and assess progress from that point. This allows teachers to gauge content mastery levels and adjust instruction as needed. Such data allows us to measure academic growth longitudinally from year to year per cohort and per individual student after they have been accepted into our schools. In addition, this comparative data provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of our academic program and is used to modify and improve content delivery and instructional decisions from year to year.
TESTING
The Charter School agrees to comply with and adhere to the State requirements for participation and administration of all state mandated tests. If the Charter School does not test (i.e., STAR, CELDT, CAHSEE) with the District, the charter School hereby grants authority to the state of California to provide a copy of all test results directly to the District as well as the Charter School.

IN-HOUSE BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS
There are two major types of assessments at SMCA: (1) Teacher created exams which measure the extent to which students understand and master standards based lessons presented by the teacher; and (2) External tests that measure proficiency of the California state standards and the California Common Core Standards.

TEACHER CREATED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS
IWOC
The most common student performance measure utilized on campus is the nightly Independent Work Outside of Class (IWOC) also known as homework. IWOC is given daily in each core class to ensure students have ample practice at key skills. IWOC is regularly recorded and serves as an invaluable tool, enabling teachers to make immediate remediation decisions. For example, when an entire class performs poorly on assignment the teacher realizes his/her lesson missed the objective target; he/she will need to re teach the content. If a majority of the students successfully complete the IWOC, the teacher may chose to select only a small group for review. In this way, daily assessments drive instruction.

UNIT TESTS
In addition to IWOC, teachers create course assessments. These unit tests occur more frequently than benchmarks and may take place on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the length of the unit. Unlike IWOC, unit tests provide a breadth of information on a range of standards and skills. Teachers generally develop these assessments to correlate with specific subject objectives. While teachers are not mandated to follow a school wide pacing plan, teachers meet at the beginning of the year to co create a common curriculum map. They decide when standards are introduced and how concepts are spiraled throughout the school year. In departments teachers evaluate the data after each benchmark cycle. During this analysis students are grouped by proficiency level which in turn enables teachers to set rigorous, individualized goals and tailor instructional strategies to a group's specific needs.
WRITING EXAMS
School wide writing exams are administered four times a year and encompass the following genres: Narrative, Expository, Response to Literature and Summary. As 4th, 7th and 11th graders must take a standardized California writing exam, we at SMCA believe that everyone should be assessed in their writing several times a year in order to improve in their skill and become college-ready writers.

Exams and rubrics are prepared before the school year begins by the English Language Arts (ELA) department. While the genres are consistent across grade levels, the expectations for quality and complexity of writing increase with each year. We also strive to provide accurate feedback to each student. As such, all exams are double blind graded on a 4-point rubric by faculty that have obtained at minimum a college degree. Each year exam readers are trained on a variety of sample anchor papers; this calibration reduces reader bias. If ever there is a significant discrepancy between the two scores, a third teacher will read and assess the piece of writing. Students must earn a 3 on a 4 point rubric scale in order to pass this exam.

The ELA teachers input the scores into the gradebook and review comments and suggestions with students in the days that follow the exam. SMCA expects that students pass at least 3 out of 4 writing exams over the course of the school year. Multiple times throughout the year writing workshops and retakes are offered to students who have yet to meet the expectations.

ON-TARGET/ CATCH-UP REPORTS
On-Target/Catch-Up (OTCU) reports describe the progress a student is making toward their annual promotion goals. This report is collated and printed quarterly to maintain ongoing communication with families. Advisory teachers monitor and mentor a group of students as they continue to work towards completing each goal. This report measures how “on-target” (OT) a student is in terms of promoting to the next grade level. If a student’s progress is deemed “catch-up” (CU), this serves as the catalyst for a student success team meeting. The student along with his or her teachers, family and administrators convene to create a plan of action in order to move the student to on-target status.

Receiving On-Target status is akin to the Dean’s List. Students’ hard work is celebrated and privileges are earned. Students on the catch-up list are monitored closely as they may be in danger of not passing the grade level. These students will have more parent conferences and are offered more opportunities to receive tutoring in smaller group settings. As will be explained in depth later, specific grade levels began implementing standards based grading during the 2011-2012 school
year. As such, the promotion goals have lessened in number from our previous charter but increased in academic rigor.

The following is a list of all promotion goals:

1. **ELA or History Proficiency:** A student must earn a 70% or greater in their English Language Arts or History course.

2. **Math or Science Proficiency:** A student must earn a 70% or greater in their Mathematics or Science course.

3. **Combined Class Average (CCA):** A student must maintain a class average of 70% or greater.

4. **Independent Reading:** A student must independently read and comprehend 5 novels in 5th grade, 6 novels in 6th grade, 7 novels in 7th grade, and 8 novels in 8th grade at their assessed reading level.

5. **Writing:** A student must pass 3 out of the 4 genre writing exams.

6. **Study Island:** A student must master 80% of the assigned independent practice in ELA, math, science, and history.

The school calendar is intentionally structured to provide significant catch-up time for all students that might fall behind. Additionally, the welcome meeting at the beginning of the year, ongoing parent workshops and family meetings are utilized to communicate clear expectations of the academic program. This system of accountability encompasses the rigor of our programs and is the reason why our students work hard and achieve highly on our state assessments.

**CHARACTER EDUCATION**

SMCA measures the extent to which students are achieving the school’s character goals through student performance and participation in the advisory class and schoolwide performance on the Citizenship and Work Habits grades. Faculty and staff have collaboratively built specific criteria to determine the appropriate Citizenship and Work Habits grade for each student and it is expected that no more than 15% of students will score Unsatisfactory during any given marking period. Students who do receive a U in any area are referred to the Dean of Student Services to develop a personal plan using the Well Adjusted Learner rubric. Additionally, the school administration meets with the Director of Student Services on a quarterly basis to review behavior data and identify students who need additional interventions in order to succeed.
STANDARDIZED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Throughout the year Stella Middle Charter Academy emulates the state exam experience multiple times. Our greater organization, Bright Star Schools, has a strict policy of “no social promotion” and believes that standardized testing assesses whether students are ready for advance content at the next grade level. To this end, SMCA utilizes multiple external assessments, the two most important being Study Island and DataDirector.

STUDY ISLAND

Students are tested on a weekly basis on their standards mastery through an online program called Study Island. Each state standard is broken down into lessons and practice questions. Teachers are easily able to incorporate these assignments into their curriculum maps because each Study Island lesson is aligned to a standard. Teachers instruct on a particular topic and then require students to practice the skill via the online lesson and assessment. Study Island provides immediate feedback to the student about their understanding of the given standard. A blue ribbon signifies that the student has practiced sufficiently to obtain at least 70% proficiency for a given concept. Throughout the year, students are held accountable for reaching certain benchmarks and are often rewarded with field trips or other incentives for completion. When students fail to meet their benchmarks, they are provided with additional tutoring help and support until the goal is met.

Additionally, some teachers utilize Study Island to create quizzes to assess students at the end of a unit. When students work on Study Island as IWOC, they are able to use the program at home. If a teacher has decided to use the program as an assessment, students must complete the session within the classroom under the supervision of their teacher. During the administration of the test account the goal is not to earn a blue ribbon, but rather to capture the student's most current understanding. As such, each child takes ten questions and their session score is converted to our 4 point standard based grading scale. This efficiently provides a pulse on the class's standard mastery.

BENCHMARK EXAMS

At the closing of each quarter common benchmark exams are administered for each grade level and subject. The midterms and finals regulate the quality of instruction across multiple sections of the same subject. Additionally, these quarterly exams are used to help predict academic achievement as measured by the STAR assessment. Our process begins with each teacher creating an annual standards map defining the sequence in which standards are taught. Then time is allotted during professional development for teachers to create midterms and finals before the school year even
begins. Exams are intended to be objective and thus are built by using questions from an item bank available through Data Director.

Scaffolds are in place so that the number of questions per benchmark increases so that the spring final mirrors the CST blueprint. Generally students take the final Data Director exams about a week before the STAR tests. Teachers analyze the data, review the assessments with the students, and re-teach content that has not been adequately covered. It has been our experience that the exams results are accurate estimates of how students perform on state tests. The results of these assessments can also provide a longitudinal analysis of ongoing performance.

STATE ASSESSMENTS

ASSURANCE
SMCA administers tests required by California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program in each year and subject as required by the state in Education Code §60602.5. As required by Education Code section 47605(c), SMCA participates in all state mandated assessments. In compliance with this regulation, students are assessed using the CST.

REPORTING OF DATA
SMCA also uploads all data requested by the California Department of Education (CDE) to complete a School Accountability Report Card (SARC). The Board of Directors issue an annual report that includes demographic data, academic achievement, financial reports and a summary of other significant developments and accomplishments over the course of each academic year. The school's leadership reports the results of state assessments to all community members including parents. The annual report is a public document, published on the school's website (www.brightstarschools.org) and delivered to the District, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, CDE and any other parties who request it.

MANDATED ASSESSMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Name</th>
<th>Assessment Structure</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Grades Tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California Standards Test (CST)</td>
<td>• Standards-based&lt;br&gt;• Multiple choice&lt;br&gt;• Essay component in</td>
<td>• Measure proficiency with state content standards in English Language Arts&lt;br&gt;• Measure proficiency with state content standards in Math</td>
<td>• 5-8&lt;br&gt;• 5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Name</td>
<td>Grade(s)</td>
<td>Content Standards/Assessment Type</td>
<td>Determined by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) | 5 & 8    | • Measure proficiency with state content standards in Science  
• Measure proficiency with state content standards in History | 5 & 8             |
| California Modified Assessment (CMA)          |          | • Standards-based  
• Multiple choice  
• Performance assessment | Determined by IEP |
| Standards-Based Tests in Spanish (STS)        |          | • Standards-based  
• Multiple-choice | Measure achievement in ELA, math, science, and history. |
| California English language Development Test (CELDT) |          | • Multiple-choice  
• Performance assessment  
• Listening and speaking component | Administered to students whose primary language is Spanish and have been enrolled in U.S. school for less than 12 mos. |
| Physical Fitness Testing (PFT)                | 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade | • Criterion referenced  
• Performance assessment | Measure physical fitness based on 7 key elements |

**INFORMING INSTRUCTION**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Each year when CST data is released, school administration meets with the Head of Schools in order to determine areas of weakness and areas for growth. This data is used to develop a school improvement plan which informs the school’s professional development plan for pre-service and school year PD. Additionally, administrators use data from the diagnostics, benchmark exams, and formal and informal observations to adjust professional development offerings as necessary. Observations and student performance on benchmark exams especially are used to determine those teachers who need additional professional development beyond the whole school offerings. Those teachers are paired with a mentor teacher who works closely with them to provide additional support in the mastery of foundational teaching skills.
At least one day is dedicated before school during professional development and several times during the school year to discuss data results based on the STAR tests. This data is juxtaposed next to all the data points on the OTCU where one can search for trends and create intervention groups. Curriculum maps and assessments are thereby amended based on the findings that teachers conclude from aggregating the data through programs like DataDirector.

OT/CU reports combine academic achievement data, anecdotal records, attendance & discipline information about student participation in class and school life. These results are communicated to parents during parent conferences at least two times a year. Results of standardized tests are distributed during one of the first parent meetings, along with the student progress report with explanations designed to help students and parents interpret their relationship to other assessments. Effort and improvement levels are noted as well.

Teachers interact with each other on an ongoing basis through, standards-based professional development in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Teachers meet by grade-level and subject-matter areas to discuss common planning, student progress and assessment issues. Teachers throughout the organization meet at least once a month for structured, focused staff development instruction relating to standards-based subjects where the teachers themselves, have requested further instruction and support. These PLC sessions are led by the Head of Schools, Principal Teachers and lead teachers themselves.

Stella Middle Charter Academy uses every means possible to evaluate student achievement, including state-wide assessments as well as benchmark assessments unique to the charter. To help collect and analyze the information, DataDirector—a web-based, online assessment management system was selected as we were one of the pilot schools for “ZOOM!” through California Charter Schools Association (CCSA). During the first quarter of the school year, teachers are trained on how to use DataDirector. Using the reports the system generates, teachers and administrators analyze the CST results as a school, by subgroups and cohorts. From the data, teachers create power standards or objectives for richer, standard-based learning experiences.

Based on the power standards, four data cycles are time-lined throughout the year aligned with mid quarter assessments and finals. Teachers can then use the analysis to drive future instruction.
ELEMENT 4
GOVERNANCE

“The governance structure of the school, including, but not limited to, the process to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.” Ed. Code 47605 (b)(5)(D)

SMCA and/or its non-profit corporation is a separate legal entity and will be solely responsible for the debts and obligations of the Charter School.

SMCA will comply with the Brown Act.

Members of the SMCA’s executive board, any administrators, managers or employees, and any other committees of the School shall comply with federal and state laws, nonprofit integrity standards and LAUSD’s Charter School policies and regulations regarding ethics and conflicts of interest.

The District reserves the right to appoint a single representative to the charter school board pursuant to Education Code section 47604(b).

STATEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE

Stella Middle Charter Academy is an independent charter governed by the Board of Directors of Bright Star Schools which is responsible for ensuring progress toward the mission, faithfulness to the charter, and fiscal viability.

AFFIRMATION OF NON-PROFIT STATUS

Bright Star Schools is an independent non-profit public benefit corporation with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. Bright Star Schools is solely responsible for the debts and obligations of SMCA.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION (AOI)

Please refer to included document for the AOI of Bright Star Schools. Any amendments to the AOI, will be submitted to the District.

BYLAWS

Please see included document for the bylaws of Bright Star Schools. Any amendments to the organization’s bylaws will be submitted to the District.
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The work of Bright Star Schools’ Board of Directors is organized to accomplish the following objectives:

• Ensure the mission and vision of SMCA.
• Ensure adherence to all state and federal requirements as well as those requirements set forth by SMCA in its charter.
• Evaluate the Executive Director annually and hold him/her responsible for meeting the academic and fiscal goals of the school.
• Ensure effective organizational planning for the school.
• Provide support and assistance to the school in its fundraising efforts, as well as other needs as they arise.
• Ensure the long-term financial stability of SMCA.
• Establish broad support and future partnerships to further the mission of Bright Star Schools to prepare students for college and career.

The Board governs the school, holds the school to its mission, ensures its financial viability over time and ensures that the school remains true to the terms of its charter. The Board delegates all management decisions to the Executive Director, who oversees the Head of Schools and Culture & Accountability Officer. The Head of schools is responsible for the hiring, evaluation of principal teachers and for ensuring that the schools meet the performance benchmarks established by the Board of Directors. Day-to-day oversight of the school is the responsibility of the Principal Teacher or Assistant Principal, who hires, supports and evaluates all school staff, and monitors the implementation of the program. A strong working relationship between the Board Chair, Executive Director, Head of Schools and all administrators ensure the flow of information necessary for responsive, strong governance.

Board Members

The role of a member of the Board is as follows:

• Advocate for Bright Star Schools and its mission of preparing students for college and career;
• Adhere to the Brown Act;
• Attend board meetings, committee meetings and important related meetings;
• Serve with professionalism, integrity and enthusiasm;
Volunteer for and accept assignments and complete them thoroughly and promptly;

Stay informed about committee matters, prepare well for meetings and review and comment on minutes and reports;

Get to know other board and committee members and build a collegial working relationship that contributes to consensus;

Actively participate in the board’s professional development, annual evaluation and planning efforts;

Participate in fundraising for the organization, cultivate prospective donors and volunteers and give an annual financial gift to the best of personal ability;

Abide by all legal responsibilities and comply with applicable rules and regulations; and

Disclose any potential conflict of interest, whether real or perceived.

**Officers**

**Chair**

It is the duty of the Board Chair to preside at all meetings, to guide the Board in the enforcement of all policies and regulations relating to SMCA and to perform all other duties normally incumbent upon such an officer. The Chair helps to direct and mediate Board discussions about organizational priorities and governance concerns and to ensure that the Board engages in a self-evaluation at least once a year. In addition, the Board Chair works with the Executive Director, Board officers and committee chairs to develop the agendas for Board meetings.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer has a general understanding of financial record keeping, accounting systems and financial reports and works with the Executive Director and Controller to ensure that appropriate financial reports are made available to the Board on a timely basis. The Treasurer shall also assist in presenting the annual SMCA budget to the Board for review and approval and shall review the annual audit and answer Directors’ questions regarding the audit. In addition, the Treasurer will ensure that current records are maintained to reflect the financial condition of SMCA.

**Secretary**

The Secretary ensures that all actions of the Board are documented. The Secretary shall, in advance of all meetings of the full Board and Committees, serve or cause to be served all meeting notices and ensure that written agendas and support materials are provided to all members. The Secretary ensures that written minutes are provided to Directors within the
specified time, approved minutes are filed and official attendance and votes of Directors are maintained in accordance with procedure and adherence to the Brown Act.

All Board Members of Bright Star Schools receive a board orientation packet and sign member expectations agreeing to uphold the mission and vision of the school, advocate for SMCA and ensure organizational viability, student achievement and faithfulness to the terms of the charter.

BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Directors of Bright Star Schools meets monthly except in August.

SELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

The process of selecting members of the Bright Star Schools Board of Directors is described in detail in the Bylaws of the organization included in this document. In summary, this process includes an initial interview with the Executive Director and school tour; interview with current board members; submission and resume, written responses, and board member questionnaire; and, reference checks. The Board is currently comprised of fifteen members who serve three year staggered terms.

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION RELATED TO BOARD MEETINGS

The SMCA Board will meet in accordance with California Law and the Brown Act. The time, place, and dates of such meetings will be made available to the general public via posting on our school website, around campus and in school newsletters. Should a previously posted meeting time or location change, SMCA will give due notice by posting the new time and/or place in accordance with the Brown Act. Members of the public can request the minutes of any board meeting by directly contacting the SMCA Main Office.
Board Committee Structure and Committee Responsibilities

The Board of Directors may create or convene the following committees:

- **Governance Committee**
  - Recruit, nominate, train new directors;
  - Establish responsibilities and evaluate individual board members;
  - Review the performance of the Board as a whole;
  - Review Board Handbook;
  - Support and review performance of Executive Director;

- **Finance/ Budget/ Audit Committee**
  - Monitor budget implementation through periodic financial reports;
  - Approve accounting policies;
  - Provide for an independent annual audit by qualified CPA;
  - Ensure adequate insurance

- **Development Committee**
  - Identify fundraising opportunities;
  - Plan fundraising events or programs;
Develop and evaluate fundraising goals.

- **Academic/ Personnel Committee**
  - Review and support mission statement;
  - Ensure programs and services are consistent with mission & charter;
  - Develop and review measurable academic outcomes;
  - Review and approve guidelines for teacher evaluations;
  - Review and approve guidelines for administration/staff evaluations;
  - Monitor progress in achieving outcome and goals;
  - Develop and maintain adequate academic personnel policies and procedures.

- **Facilities & Strategic Planning Committee**
  - Review facilities maintenance requirements;
  - Review and negotiate lease agreements;
  - Develop and maintain adequate facility personnel policies procedures;
  - Supports Executive Director's efforts to explore growth and facility opportunities
  - Evaluate growth opportunities
  - Ensure growth implementations conform to mission statement.

**BOARD RESUMES AND QUESTIONAIRES**
Please see tab: Resumes of Board Members and Questionnaires.

**BROWN ACT ASSURANCE**
All meetings of the Board of Directors of Bright Star Schools have and will continue to comply with the Brown Act, Government Code 1090 and all applicable laws relating to charter schools.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE**
While parents of SMCA students do not serve as members of the Bright Star Schools Board of Directors, it is critical that they are invested in the success of the school and have a voice in matters critical to the school’s success. SMCA believes that parental support is an integral part of a student’s education, and makes every effort to ensure that parental input is considered in the Board’s decision-making process. We have recently created a position titled Dean of Student Affairs who is a full time employee dedicated to bridging the gap between the school and families.
In addition, representatives of the parent body are encouraged and invited to address the Board regarding any input, comments or concerns they have about the school. Time is reserved at the start of each Bright Star Schools Board meeting for this purpose.

Parents also have the opportunity to serve as members of the School Site Council (SSC). The SMCA SSC is comprised of ten members of the school community and includes the Principal teacher, teachers, parents, and other staff members. SSC members are nominated and elected by their peers and serve three year terms. As a member of the SSC, parents must attend monthly meetings and are responsible for examining student achievement data, revising and maintaining the Single Plan for Student Achievement, and for providing oversight of the Title I budget.

Other parent engagement strategies that we employ include:

- Parent education initiative featuring evening sessions on topics such as college admissions, financial aid, financial literacy, etc.
- Posting of Board agendas in the school’s main office.
- Mid-year Parent Satisfaction Survey.
- End-of-Year Parent Satisfaction Survey.
- Regular parent newsletters.
- Multi-media communication strategy including mail, e-mail, text messaging, “robocalls,” and regular parent meetings.
- Translation of all parent communication materials into Spanish.
- Frequent opportunities for parent involvement in school activities, including invitations to family dinners, Evening of Excellence, etc.
- Volunteer opportunities on campus including campus beautification and traffic duty.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Charter School will designate at least one employee to coordinate its efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) including any investigation of any complaint filed with Charter School alleging its noncompliance with these laws or alleging any actions which would be prohibited by these laws.

Charter School will notify all its students and employees of the name, office address, and telephone number of the designated employee or employees. Charter School will adopt and publish grievance
procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action, which would be prohibited by Title IX, or Section 504.

Charter School will implement specific and continuing steps to notify applicants for admission and employment, students and parents of elementary and secondary school students, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient, that it does not discriminate on the basis of sex or mental or physical disability in the educational program or activity which it operates, and that it is required by Title IX and Section 504 not to discriminate in such a manner.

LAUSD CHARTER POLICY
Stella Middle Charter Academy will comply with the District policy related to charter schools, as it may be changed from time to time after notice and reasonable opportunity for input from the Charter School Collaborative.

RESPONDING TO INQUIRIES
Stella Middle Charter Academy and/or its nonprofit corporation shall promptly respond to all inquiries, including but not limited to, inquiries regarding financial records, from the District and shall consult with the District regarding any inquiries. Stella Middle Charter Academy and/or its nonprofit corporation acknowledges that it is subject to audit by LAUSD including, without limitation, audit by the District Office of the Inspector General.

If an allegation of waste, fraud or abuse related to the Charter School operations is received by the District, the Charter School shall be expected to cooperate with any investigation undertaken by the District and/or the Office of the Inspector General, Investigations Unit.

NOTIFICATIONS
Notification is to be made to the Charter Schools Division in writing of any notices of workplace hazards, investigations by outside regulatory agencies, lawsuits, or other formal complaints, within one week of receipt of such notices by Stella Middle Charter Academy.
JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR POSITIONS, CREDENTIALS, REQUIREMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Job descriptions have been prepared by the Executive Director, Culture and Accountability Officer and the Human Resource & Operations Manager. The most updated descriptions are provided below. All job descriptions shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, the below duties specified per position.

BRIGHT STAR SCHOOLS—CHARTER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (CMO)

1. Executive Director

The Executive Director (ED) oversees and advances all Bright Star Schools. S/he embodies and advocates for the mission, vision, and strategic direction of the school. S/he is passionate and completely dedicated to Bright Star Schools’ mission and has a steadfast belief that all students deserve an excellent public education in preparation for high school and college. The ED has an unwaivering belief that all students, regardless of demographics, can achieve at the highest academic levels and can effectively communicate and inspire such beliefs to all aspects and positions of the schools. The ED directly manages all positions in the CMO.

Characteristics and Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree, Master’s Degree in similar field with several years of urban teaching experience preferred.
- Training or relevant experience in management and development of a business or a non-profit organization.
- Demonstrated significant business/academic gains in past experiences leading a company or a school, with a preference in low income/urban demographics.
- Experience and success in management of higher-level positions.
- Critical thinker and decision maker who has overcome complex organizational challenges.
- Inspirational leader who has a proven record of success in driving individuals and organizations to succeed.
• Strong communicator capable of effective public speaking as well as persuasive writing and able to attract and maintain support from a broad range of constituents, both within West Adams & Westchester, as well as among the greater landscape of Los Angeles.
• Openness to feedback, willingness to take personal responsibility, and desire to learn from mistakes.
• Capability to oversee the complex administrative and financial responsibilities associated with opening and operating highly successful charter schools.
• Ability to attract, screen, develop, motivate and retain an exceptional team of administrators and leaders.

Responsibilities:

• Monitor, and help sustain the high standards of a rigorous school climate and school culture.
• Ensure compliance with accountability requirements set by the school's charter and all relevant laws and requirements set forth by the Los Angeles Unified School District, State of California and No Child Left Behind (NCLB).
• Communicate as the primary spokesperson for the school and advocate to all external audiences, including investors, media, community partners, government agencies, educational organizations, and local leaders.
• Serve as member of board committees, providing them with the essential data, relevant reports and information necessary to effectively govern the school in a timely manner.
• Provide leadership and professional development for the CMO and all other school leaders.
• Coordinate with external grant writer for an integrated comprehensive internal and external fund raising effort related to a major capital campaign, and fiduciary responsibilities related to the foundation.
• Work directly with the Culture and Accountability Officer (CAO) and Head of Schools (HOS) to ensure academic success and employee and family safety and satisfaction.
• Locate, secure and improve facilities for current schools and for future sites.
• Analyze and negotiate funding and contracts for facilities.
• Manage strategic planning process for all schools.

2. Culture and Accountability Officer

The Culture and Accountability Officer (CAO) is the leader for the cultural programs of the school. The CAO reports to the Executive Director.
**Characteristics and Qualifications:**

- Bachelor’s degree, Master’s Degree preferred in similar field with several years of urban teaching experience.
- California Administrative Credential preferred.
- Training or relevant experience in teacher management and development of school programs.
- Passionate and completely dedicated to Bright Star Schools’ mission of preparing students for college and career and a steadfast belief that all students deserve an excellent public education in preparation for high school and college.
- Unwavering belief that all students, regardless of demographics, can achieve at the highest academic levels.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively with a diverse team of teachers.
- Ability to give constructive feedback on issues that will facilitate growth and achievement of both students and teachers.
- Professional demeanor, strong work-ethic, detail-driven work style with excellent organizational and communication skills.
- Ability to prioritize, multi-task, and lead by example.
- Ability to effectively set and communicate goals for teachers to achieve.
- An entrepreneurial spirit, who embraces the opportunity for creativity and hard work inherent in a start-up.
- Openness to feedback, willingness to take personal responsibility, and desire to learn from mistakes.
- Sensitivity to and respect for the great diversity of race, class, gender, ability and perspectives that come together in our school.

**Responsibilities:**

- Lead selected professional development sessions throughout the year.
- Collaborate with the Head of Schools and Executive Director concerning student achievement, student assessment, and student discipline.
- Communicate regularly with the Head of School & Executive Director regarding student achievement, curriculum development, professional development, staff evaluations, and the budgetary needs for each.
- Create a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations.
• Work with Head of School to plan and implement summer orientation for staff.
• Seek and share best practices from other schools and professional journals.
• Lead regular, school-wide staff meetings.
• Implement effective internal assessment systems and uses data to inform decisions.
• Implement external assessment systems and uses data to inform decisions.
• Maintain and develop relationships with school leaders to share and identify best practices and attempt to find solutions for similar small and independent school gaps and needs.

3. Head of Schools (HOS)

The Head of Schools is responsible for overall school performance and organizational management, and is the primary person responsible for the management of the school’s growth, culture and the viability of the school over time. He or she manages all external and non-operational issues, such as working with the Board, reporting to and interfacing with the authorizer, fundraising, public relations and ensuring the finance and operation of the school. The Head of School oversees the Principal Teachers, Assistant Principal, the Director of Student Services, and the Director of Special Education in their management and guidance of the SMCA staff. The Head of School is hired and evaluated by the Board of Directors of Bright Star Schools.

Characteristics and Qualifications:

• Bachelor’s degree, Master’s Degree preferred, and at least three years of urban teaching experience.
• California Administrative Credential preferred.
• Training or relevant experience in school management.
• Student-focused leader committed to implementing a standards based curriculum and using data and assessments to drive instructional decisions.
• Relentless achiever who works tirelessly towards achieving the school’s mission.
• Flexible and able to adapt as situations require.
• Organized, systems-oriented leader who has experience in managing several different projects simultaneously.
• Subscribes to a similar educational philosophy to that espoused by SMCA’s culture and curriculum.
• Capability to oversee the complex administrative and financial responsibilities associated with opening and operating a highly successful charter school.
• Ability to attract, screen, develop, motivate and retain an exceptional team of teachers, staff members and administrators.
• Competence at stewarding public funds responsibly.
• Openness to feedback, willingness to take personal responsibility, and desire to learn from mistakes.
• Sensitivity to and respect for the great diversity of race, class, gender, and perspectives that come together in our school.

Responsibilities:

• Ensure compliance with the school's charter and all relevant law and requirements set forth by the State of California.
• Ensure compliance with accountability requirements set by the Los Angeles Unified School District.
• Hire, coach, and evaluate Principal teachers.
• Serves as instructional leader with Principal teachers to oversee curriculum development and assessment.
• Ensure that schools meet performance benchmarks established by the Board of Directors
• Ensure curriculum alignment with California state standards and California Common Core Standards.
• Communicate regularly with the CAO & Executive Director regarding student achievement, curriculum development, professional development, staff evaluations, and the budgetary needs for each.
• Create a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations.
• Work with CAO to plan and implement summer orientation for staff.
• Seek and share best practices from other schools and professional journals.
• Lead regular, school-wide staff meetings.
• Provide daily coaching and feedback to instructional staff.
• Implement effective internal assessment systems and uses data to inform decisions.
• Implement external assessment systems and uses data to inform decisions.
• Set and monitor core subject grading policies and practices to ensure consistency across the school.
• Ensure that every student demonstrates achievement gains.
4. Controller

The Controller provides proper financial oversight for the organization. S/he is primarily responsible for ensuring that the school's financial records are accurate and up-to-date. S/he also ensures that programmatic guidelines for reporting and implementation are properly followed on a timely basis. The Controller reports to the ED.

Qualifications and Experience

- Bachelor’s degree; advanced degree preferred.
- Five years of experience in operations and/or finance preferred.
- Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve preparation for the college of their choice.
- Unwavering belief that all students can achieve at the highest academic levels.
- Results-driven business leader with experience in, and commitment to operational and financial excellence.
- Professional demeanor, strong work-ethic, detail-driven work style with excellent organizational and critical thinking skills.
- Ability to prioritize, multi-task, delegate and lead by example.
- Ambition and desire to grow as a leader.

Responsibilities

- Coordinate federal forms, checks, payroll and benefits for Bright Star Schools staff.
- Administer Department of Education grants.
- Oversee school financial controls.
- Provide accurate, updated financial statements to the ED.
- Ensure that the school is in compliance with all programs, including, but not limited to attendance, fiscal policies, and HR policies.
- Work with the ED to create school budgets.
- Coordinate annual financial review.
- Record and track all income and expenses.
- Record all cash receipts, invoices for accounts payable.
- Prepare vendor checks.
- Apply for and manage grants, disbursements, guidelines, and reporting.
- Apply for and manage Title I funding and other applicable financial aid.
• Pursue timely receipt of Block Grant, Title I, and other payments to the school.
• Oversee all auditing measures and ensure Bright Star Schools meets all financial compliance and mandates by Federal and State laws.

6. Human Resource Manager

The Human Resource Manager job description namely involves coordinating hiring, supporting, and evaluating Bright Star employees. The HRM also manages the day-to-day HR operations and is responsible for overseeing HR policies, programs, services, recruiting and selection, payroll processing, workers’ compensation claims, wage & hour, legal compliance and employee relations.

Characteristics and Qualifications:
• Bachelor’s degree in appropriate field from a regionally accredited university
• 2-3 years of experience in related area.
• Strong communication skills to reach different levels of employees and outside vendors.
• Excellent organizational skills and detail oriented.
• Ability to multi-task and create systems for follow-through of employee requests and needs.
• Dedicated to the privacy of employee complaints and files.
• Able to maintain consistent professional relationships with employees at all levels.
• Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve an excellent public education in preparation for high school and college.
• Unwavering belief that all students, regardless of demographics, can achieve at the highest academic levels.

HR Responsibilities:
• Oversee the organization’s personnel benefits program; payroll and benefits administration and teacher credentials.
• Handle workers compensation claims and Family Medical Leave of Absences.
• Provides leadership and daily support to managers and principals relative to:
  o Issue resolution;
  o Policy and process development;
  o Adherence to federal and state regulations to ensure legal compliance;
  o Exit interviews.
• Responsible for handling:
  o Escalated employee relations issues;
o Policy issues;
  o Answering questions about HR programs and practices;
  o Implementing company-wide HR programs;
  o Monitor unemployment claims and handles appeals process;
  o Monitors company attendance records (Personal Time Off).

- Coordinate recruitment process; facilitate activities attendant to management of Job Fairs; and provide technical assistance to administrators in the employee selection process in addition to processing all new employees and all change-of-status forms.
- Maintain job vacancy posting and Human Resources web page.
- Design personnel forms and direct the maintenance of personnel records by all departments and is responsible for the release of any confidential information such as verifying employment or requests from agencies.

7. Operations Manager (OM)

The Operations Manager (OM)’s job description is namely involved compliance with grants and programs as well as facilities. OM coordinates, participates and estimates time and material requirements for routine and special maintenance assignments and projects. S/he prepares contract specifications and requests for quotations; schedules maintenance work in accordance with labor, health and safety requirements. S/he also monitors the performance of contractors to assure compliance with contracts, timelines and perform various oversight functions concerning large facility construction and renovations.

Characteristics and Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree in appropriate field from a regionally accredited university.
- 2-3 years of experience in related area.
- Strong communication skills to reach different levels of employees and outside vendors.
- Excellent organizational skills and detail oriented.
- Ability to multi-task and create systems for follow-through of employee requests and needs.
- Dedicated to the privacy of employee complaints and files.
- Able to maintain consistent professional relationships with employees at all levels.
- Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve an excellent public education in preparation for high school and college.
- Unwavering belief that all students, regardless of demographics, can achieve at the highest academic levels.
Facility Responsibilities:

- Supervise the operations of the school in accordance with school policies.
- Plan, coordinate, evaluate and estimate time and material requirements for routine and special maintenance assignments and projects for school facilities, grounds and physical plant; plan specific projects to meet the needs of the District plan.
- Identify, schedule and oversee the removal of hazardous materials including asbestos and lead” added to the representative duties of his job description.
- Confer with administrators regarding work requests, priorities and maintenance needs at facilities; coordinate projects to cause minimal disruption to school activities.
- Conduct periodic building inspection to assure compliance with structural, roofing, painting, plumbing, heating and electrical requirements; make recommendations concerning needed repairs and appropriate priorities and follow up as needed.
- Maintain records relating to building projects such as architectural drawings, specifications, and construction cost breakdowns, bids, material and equipment specifications and job history files.
- Establish and maintain effective working relations with maintenance personnel.

8. Director of Student Services

The Director of Student Services (DSS) maintains lines of communication with parents and other family members to facilitate high levels of meaningful participation between the school and the communities we serve. The DSS acts as a liaison for family and community members to the Principal Teacher(s). S/he coordinates training of parents/guardians to act as partners in education and brings community members into the life of the school in ways that enhance the mission and vision of the school. The DSS directly leads the following outlets: The Connector Program, Counseling Services, Dean of Student Affairs, Parent Ambassadors and Parent Education. The DSS reports to the HOS.

Characteristics and Qualifications:

- College degree.
- At least two years working in a school environment or as a community organizer.
- Evidence of strong organizational and interpersonal skills.
- Desire to be a team player; ability and willingness to lead community outreach.
- Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve an excellent public education in preparation for high school and college.
• Unwavering belief that all students, regardless of demographics, can achieve at the highest academic levels.

**Parent Ambassador Program:**

• Work with the Head of School and PTs to create programs and initiatives to increase family involvement in the school.
• Develop and help coordinate parent and school activities, to improve communication between the school and families.
• Act as a liaison/moderator between parents and the school over issues of conflict.
• Provide appropriate support and resources to the parent group (lead parents) to ensure that it meets its commitment to coordinate parent volunteer hours that is aligned with the mission of the school.
• Work with the leaders of the parent group to define annual goals, conduct local fundraising activity.

**Parent Education:**

• Work with the Dean of Student Affairs to define the scope and breadth of the parent education curriculum.
• Coordination of parent education program including organizing materials, speakers, venue, etc. for monthly parent education meetings.
• Develop a parent education curriculum that addresses a variety of topics of interest to our parent community: college readiness, financial literacy, how to pay for college, etc.

**CAMPUS EMPLOYEES**

1. **Principal Teacher**

The Principal Teacher (PT) is responsible for driving the school’s mission and vision. The PT accomplishes this through frequent observations and coaching, requiring peer cross-evaluations and by positive, constructive communication among Board Directors, administrative staff, teachers, students, & parents, especially as related to curriculum, instruction and assessment. The PT is a student-focused leader committed to implementing a standards based curriculum and using data and assessments to drive instructional decisions. S/he creates, monitors and sustains the high standards of a rigorous school climate and school culture. The Principal Teacher is directly responsible to the Head of Schools.
**Characteristics and Qualifications:**

- Bachelor’s degree; Master’s Degree preferred.
- At least three years of urban teaching experience.
- California Administrative Credential preferred.
- Openness to feedback, willingness to take personal responsibility, and desire to learn from mistakes.
- Acknowledge praiseworthy efforts of staff, students, and parents.
- Collaborate with HOS and CAO concerning student achievement, student assessment and student discipline.
- Teach and lead one class per day when possible/necessary.
- Respond to complaints and suggestions from staff, students, and family members.
- Work closely with the Director of Student Services to ensure consistent and positive communication with all families.
- Communicate as the primary spokesperson for the school and advocate to all external audiences, including investors, media, community partners, government agencies, educational organizations, and local leaders.
- Along with the ED and Controller, oversee the school’s finances: managing the budget, financial relationships, and relationships with vendors.

**Staff Responsibilities:**

- Handle all matters regarding employment and dismissal of personnel; salaries and contracts; job assignments and performance evaluations; and orientation and training of new instructional staff.
- Facilitate collaboration among teachers in developing and implementing curriculum, instruction and classroom management.
- Support and evaluate the professional development and growth of all teachers and support staff.
- Support instructional practices through observation and discussion.
- Recruit, appoint, support, manage, and evaluate the Assistant Principal Teacher (APT), Student Data Coordinator (SDC), Principal Teacher in Residence (PTiR) and Office Support personnel.
- Recruit, appoint, support, and evaluate all instructional staff with support from the Assistant Principal Teacher.
**Student and Program Oversight:**

- Oversee staff and student scheduling.
- Day to day oversight of the school.
- Monitors implementation of the program through evaluating academic achievement and behavior through detailed data analysis of student and teacher performance.
- Oversee and assist with student discipline.
- Maintain and manage the enrollment, retention and attrition of students.
- Ensure that students are passing the academic programs and those that need additional resources and interventions are receiving set support.
- Oversee Testing Coordinator to ensure timely submissions of all deadlines related to mandated state exams.
- Coordinate with the school’s special education program Resource Teacher to ensure compliance with the school’s charter and all relevant law and requirements set forth by the State of California.

**2. Assistant Principal or Principal Teacher in Residence**

The Assistant Principal Teacher (APT) or Principal Teacher in Residence (PTiR) has proven experience working with schools as an advocate, organizer or staff person. These candidates should have experience representing a constituency or coordinating group activities. The candidate also drives the mission and vision of the school; s/he effectively communicates this understanding to any personnel that is not a teacher, and coordinates participation and supervision in ways that support the school’s charter. The Assistant Principal Teacher and the PTiR report to the Principal Teacher. Some of these responsibilities may be delegated to teachers interested in pursuing administration as their specialization track.

**Characteristics and Qualifications:**

- Bachelor’s degree, Master’s Degree preferred.
- At least three years of urban teaching experience.
- California Administrative Credential preferred.
- Acknowledge praiseworthy efforts of staff, students, and parents.
- Openness to feedback, willingness to take personal responsibility, and desire to learn from mistakes.
- Assist and collaborate with the Principal Teacher.
- Teach at least one subject or course to one group of students if possible/ necessary.
- Respond to complaints and suggestions from staff, students, and family members.
• People and activity/events planning oriented.

**Staff Responsibilities:**

• Handle all matters regarding employment and dismissal of teacher’s assistants (TAs); salaries and contracts; job assignments and performance evaluations; and orientation and training of new TAs and office personnel.
• Oversee staff to ensure safe and adequate departure and dismissal procedures.
• Supervise staff for transition into the afterschool program smoothly.
• Recruit, appoint, support, and evaluate all support staff with feedback from the teachers.
• Support the professional development and growth of all TAs.

**Student and Program Oversight:**

• Create supervision schedule for breaks and lunches.
• Create and manage individual TA schedules.
• Create, oversee and manage the cultural/extra & co-curricular programs i.e. Field Trips, Friday activities, Advisory Program and Dances.
• Oversee the lunch program, the people that serve and cater the food and all compliance issues with the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Program.
• Manage transportation if applicable, i.e. bus schedule, bus company liaison.
• Oversee, schedule, staff and manage the afterschool program.
• Ensure accurate attendance tracking and compliance related to all grants per the afterschool program(s).

3. Teachers

SMCA complies with the California Charter Schools Act with respect to teacher certification. All certified teachers teaching core subjects, and uncertified teachers teaching non-core subjects, comply with subject matter competency and all other requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Characteristics that add to the multilingual, multicultural nature of the faculty are valued as assets. Bright Star Schools’ believe that part of the equation for a successful teacher includes a teacher who is willing to go above and beyond the call of duty when necessary. Our teachers are meaningfully committed to protecting the safety, interests and rights of all individuals in the classroom. Teachers help develop and implement the curriculum. All teachers report to the Principal Teacher.
Characteristics and Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s Degree.
- NCLB Highly Qualified in core subjects.
- Two years of urban teaching experience preferred.
- Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve preparation for the college of their choice.
- Unwavering belief that all students can achieve at the highest academic levels.
- High level of professionalism.
- Willingness to engage in frequent dialogue and to be relentlessly self-reflective with regards to personal teaching practices.
- Commitment to developing professionally as a teacher and as a leader.
- Commitment to analyzing student’s academic achievement results and using assessment data to inform instruction.

Instructional Responsibilities:

- Ensure that the school’s academic standards are rigorous, clear, measurable and aligned with California State Standards.
- Use the school’s scope and sequence to develop unit plans and daily lesson plans when applicable i.e. for English Language Arts.
- Submit lesson overviews to the PT on a weekly basis.
- Work with grade level team, subject chair and PT to revise, edit and improve lessons.
- Develop curriculum that addresses different learning styles.
- Develop assessments that measure student progress.
- Create a course syllabus and write and introductory letter for students and families before the academic year begins.
- Use a variety of methods to engage students in the classroom.
- Assume responsibility for the progress of all students.
- Continuously use assessment data to refine curriculum and instructional practices.
- Communicate effectively with students, families and colleagues.
- Use planning periods for the advancement of student academics.

Whole School Responsibilities:

- Provide continual assessment of student progress and maintain accurate records of schoolwide promotion goals (OTCU).
- Support student discipline policies.
• Make meaningful connections with students who may engage in disruptive classroom behavior.
• Arrange for substitute teaching staff as needed.
• Communicate efficiently and timely with parents regarding child’s progress in order to maintain close relationships with parents and guardians and involve them in their children's education.
• Also acts as advisor to his/her advisory and supports the advisory through the school’s academic program.

4. Dean of Student Affairs

The Dean of Student Affairs (DSA) is the primary person responsible for the oversight of non-academic and behavioral concerns regarding students. S/he serves as the primary interface between the schools and the students' homes, ensuring consistent and timely communication from the school in regards to student discipline. The DSA must have experience with counseling students, supporting student discipline and instilling behavior interventions. S/he should have some experience working in a school. The DSA reports to the Principal Teacher and manages the Connecting Place Coordinators.

**Characteristics and Qualifications:**

- Bachelor’s degree.
- Fluency in Spanish preferred.
- At least two years of experience in the fields of Social Work, Counseling, Psychology or Family Therapy.
- Must have excellent communication and interpersonal skills for interaction with students, staff and parents.
- Able to supervise a classroom of 1 to 30 students.
- Proficient with Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Outlook.
- Highly organized and excellent with follow-through on tasks.
- Strong focus on the creation of an orderly academic environment.

**Disciplinary Duties:**

- Organize meetings with Principal Teacher, and teachers to strategize individual student cases.
- Develop specific mentoring and peer counseling programs.
- Provide intervention for student discipline issues.
• Develop programs to promote positive student behavior by coordinating school activities to enhance discipline.
• Communicate student disciplinary concerns to the student’s parent and staff timely and efficiently.
• Service as a liaison officer with community organizations, police and probation officers affected.
• Responsible for reports on investigations of offenses committed by students.
• Organize Staff Development Seminars and Workshops for parents on discipline.
• Perform other related duties assigned.

**Whole School Responsibilities:**

• Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve preparation for the college of their choice.
• Unwavering belief that all students can achieve at the highest academic levels.
• Create, evaluate and seek to constantly improve overall school culture, with an emphasis on academic achievement, structure, discipline, and fun.

**5. Student Data Coordinator**

The Student Data Coordinator (SDC) has two years of experience working with data entry. S/he has experience with student information systems. The SDC is a bilingual speaker; fluent in Spanish/English with some experience working in a school environment. The Student Data Coordinator must be highly proficient with Microsoft Excel, Word, Access and Outlook.

**Characteristics and Qualifications:**

• Generate reports by operating the Eagle Aeries Student Information System.
• Assist with monthly reports to be submitted to the district and home office (LAUSD Classification, LAUSD attendance, Federal Food program, After School Education and Safety Program (ASES), and internal student progress reports.
• Ensure student data accuracy by developing and implementing standardized process around data entry and reporting of student information.
• Assist and coordinate in distribution of data to schools and home office.
• Assist and coordinate with yearly mandated exams (STAR, CELDT).
• Assist yearly district and state reports (CBEDS, R30 Language Census, SARC, CALPADS, STAR data growth reports).
• Assist in completing quarterly reports (Annual survey oversight, prep/accounting).
- Support Lunch Supervision, Friday Activities, Open Houses, etc.
- Assist in translating projects.
- Efficiently and timely print all student related reports such as report cards and transcripts.
- Maintain an excellent accounting system of all student cumulative files in SMCA’s main office.
- Organize and aggregate data related to students including STAR scores/paperwork and schoolwide promotion goals.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Whole School Responsibilities:
- Passionate and completely dedicated to SMCA’s mission and a steadfast belief that all students deserve preparation for the college of their choice.
- Unwavering belief that all students can achieve at the highest academic levels.
- Create, evaluate and seek to constantly improve overall school culture, with an emphasis on academic achievement, structure, discipline and fun.

6. Teacher’s Assistant
SMCA’s teacher’s assistants (TAs) are of great value to the overall academic program of the organization. Not only do they assist the teachers, but many TAs also serve as tutors and lead individual classes during the afterschool program. TAs are not only fully committed to the vision and mission of the school, but they are our primary source for substitute teachers and some even matriculate to become full-time teachers in the general education classroom with Bright Star Schools. As teachers teach the academic curriculum, our TAs have their own unique duties to drive the cultural framework of the schools during Friday activities, while teachers are in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and when we go on our intensive Life Experience Lessons. Our TAs help our schools realize our extensive academic and cultural programs.

Characteristics and Qualifications:
- Must be enrolled in a college or university, BA degree preferred.
- Must be organized, creative, independent and self-motivated, enthusiastic, dependable, detail-oriented, flexible in scheduling and prioritization and driven by excellence.
- Must possess good communication skills to present facts and recommendations effectively in oral and written form, including accurate grammar and business correspondence knowledge.
• Interpersonal skills to establish and maintain effective relationships; demonstrated ability to communicate in situations requiring tact and poise; skilled in confidentiality and discretion.
• Must present a neat, professional appearance.
• Must be able to adjust tasks and focus with composure, and in accordance with changing deadlines and priorities.

Responsibilities:
• Supervise children in all indoor and outdoor activities ensuring a safe environment, especially during transitions and bathroom breaks.
• Supervise children during breakfast, lunch and snack time, encouraging good eating habits are developed.
• Assist in teaching children to become responsible for their decisions and actions.
• Guide children’s behaviors in a positive way that teaches self-respect along with respect for others and the community around them.
• Encourage children to interact positively with other children and people around them.
• Provide a wide variety of age appropriate activities that offers physical and emotional growth.
• Prepare instructional materials needed to implement the daily activity plans with the classroom teacher.
• Maintain open lines of communication with the classroom teacher and team to ensure individual needs of all children are met.
• Prepare and distribute healthy snacks as necessary for children.
• Lead the classroom if teacher is running late or requested a substitute.
• Help and supervise during any field trip and school-related activities.

7. Office Manager
The office manager of SMCA ensures the efficient operation of the school’s main office and work with members of the administrative team to ensure the success of the school. The office manager reports to the Principal Teacher. Office Managers should have at least two years of experience working as an office manager, administrative assistant, project manager or equivalent position. They effectively use standard office machines and computer software programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. They speak, comprehend, read and write fluently in English and Spanish. They effectively attend to the details of work, and conduct all job duties with accuracy and preparedness.
**Characteristics and Qualifications:**

- A minimum of an Associate’s Degree or two years of college.
- A minimum of two years experience in a similar position.
- Demonstrated proficiency with letter and report writing, accurate mathematical calculations, word processing, record keeping and data collection systems.
- Perform clerical and administrative procedures for daily school operations.
- Interact pleasantly and professionally with all members of the learning community and the public.
- Maintain a neat and welcoming atmosphere in the office.
- Prepare correspondence, forms, reports, memoranda, and student attendance and enrollment data in an accurate and timely manner.
- Assure that student data, permission slips, and other required paperwork are kept current for each student as needed.
- Prepare and mail correspondence to students’ parents.
- Exemplary communication skills in English and Spanish, including impeccable grammar and fluency in order to translate school documents and communications to Spanish or English as needed.
- Answer high volume of calls, return general voicemails or emails.

**Responsibilities**

- Monitoring the school’s entryway, greeting parents and visitors to the school and maintaining school safety.
- Contacting parents regarding absences, missing assignments, teacher concerns or student illness.
- Implementing systems to support the work of teachers and administrative staff.
- Independently, or in accordance with administrative instructions, developing school communications in English and Spanish based on a thorough knowledge of school policies, programs and systems.
- Translating for parent meetings and school events.
- Preparing and maintaining a variety of student, personnel and school records.
- Maintaining and operating a variety of office equipment, such as the copy machine, printers, fax machine and scanners with speed and accuracy.
- Assisting in the coordination of special events.
- Place orders for office and classroom supplies.
• Collect necessary paperwork and assist in the full enrollment of a new student.
• Assist the Principal Teacher and members of the administrative team, as directed.

RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

SMCA takes a local and national approach towards recruiting our administrative and teaching staff. A major resource for recruitment is the Teach for America Los Angeles office. We recruit at all of the major colleges and universities, such as: UCLA, Loyola Marymount, USC, Pepperdine and the Cal State Universities. In addition, we rely on word of mouth, advertising in the local papers, participation in annual charter schools job fairs, visits to private schools and postings on websites such as Edjoin and Craigslist. Additionally, we subscribe to headhunting services that recruit for charter schools such as Carnie, Sandoe & Associates or Teach California Charter. Nationally, we contact the alumni networks of colleges and universities and organizations such as New Leaders for New Schools.

SELECTION OF STAFF

Our selection process is designed to be rigorous and comprehensive to minimize the risk of hiring staff that are not suited for the unique responsibilities and demands of SMCA. The HROM is responsible for recruiting and posting the job openings; reviewing the applications and conducting the first informal phone interview. The hiring process consists of a multi-step application and interviewing process.

1. Application, resume and cover letter submitted by candidate.

2. HROM reviews and separates the applications into three categories: strong, proficient, and weak.
   a. Weak candidates will receive a notice of acknowledgement.

3. Proficient and strong candidates are invited to a demonstration lesson or depending on the position, an interview.
   a. A teacher will be scheduled for a demonstration interview observed by Principal Teacher and possibly the grade level of subject level chair.
   b. A teacher's assistant will do walkthroughs with the Assistant Principal and do a series of questions and answers.
   c. A full-time exempt classified position consists of a series of interviews ranging from the Board of Directors to the Principal Teacher(s).
4. Candidates whose mission is aligned with SMCA’s values and needs are then assessed by all relevant members of the hiring team. The HROM requests for references from the candidate and follows-up on them.

5. Any candidates who show potential, but are not hired for the year are placed in an internal database for possible future recruitment for six months.

EMPLOYEE APPLICATION PROCESS AND AGREEMENTS

The application procedure includes a written application, review of references and a demonstration lesson for teachers. Prior to signing the agreements, applicants spend time with the Principal Teacher or other staff member(s) to ensure that they share the school’s mission and vision.

Employee’s job duties and work basis are negotiated in individual employment agreements. Full-time staff is hired for a one-year term. Agreements may be renewed based on demonstration of meeting or exceeding the requirements of individual contracts and adhering to policies, procedures and expectations. These expectations are designed to support the mission and vision of the school and comply with state laws.

These agreements may take the form of employment contracts, at-will employment agreements or other agreements. All agreements not specifically stating that they are Employment Contracts are deemed to be at-will employment agreements.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

SMCA utilizes “360°/upward evaluation” where students, parents and staff members have an opportunity to provide feedback to the teachers, other staff members, the administrators and ultimately each other. These evaluations are within the formal evaluation process that is the responsibility of the Principal Teacher, Assistant Principal or Head of Schools. All evaluations—informal and formal, are based on a rubric that all employees understand and acknowledge.

The senior management team that consists of the Head of Schools, Principal Teachers, Executive Director and the Culture and Accountability Officer has all contributed to the development of a comprehensive rubric that encompasses both the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and employee qualities that are of value to the organization. Bright Star Schools has also adopted a new program called Echospan to streamline the evaluation process. New teachers and teachers that need improvement are assessed by their site-supervisor at least two times formally throughout a calendar year. Returning and high-performing teachers are evaluated formally at least once by their
site supervisor. The Principal Teacher however, conducts many and frequent classroom visits and observations annually.

All teachers participate in classroom observations, walkthroughs and peer evaluations of each other. In addition to a formal assessment conducted by the Principal Teacher, the teaching staff continuously engages in reflection and discussion about instructional and management practices during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Professional Development (PD). Teachers are also responsible for partially evaluating their TA's performance. When the feedback is critical and there are unsatisfactory marks by a fellow teacher or the supervisor, the Principal Teacher provides appropriate measures for improvement and place interventions as needed.

The Assistant Principal is responsible for evaluating all non certificated staff, based in part on the evaluations by the teachers. The Principal Teacher is responsible for annually evaluating all certificated teachers and the Assistant Principal, based in part on evaluations by staff, parents and students. The Head of Schools is responsible for evaluating the performances of the Principal Teacher(s), based in part on the evaluations by staff, students and parents.

**SALARIES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

Bright Star Schools has developed its own salary scale that is on average 5 – 15% above the LAUSD scale. The difference in salary is contingent upon the number of years serviced as a Bright Star Schools teacher. As Bright Star Schools teachers work more calendar days (on average 205 days) as opposed to the District's 175 days, and work longer hours during a regular school day (8 hours vs. 6 hour days), Bright Star Schools believes in compensating for how much our teachers go “above and beyond” the normal call of duty as best we can monetarily.

Teachers and administrators are also eligible for merit-based bonuses; it is an effective tool that drives staff achievement and morale. Bonuses are available to teachers approximately halfway through their second year of teaching. It is based on subject cohort growth or schoolwide growth coefficients (for teachers who teach a non-testable subject), and as long as the school budget allows. These bonuses do not track the typical school year, but instead are granted in December, based on a teacher’s track record for the prior school year and improvements observed during the first quarter of the following school year. Bright Star Schools believes that every employee has areas for potential improvement and that bonuses should be based on those efforts.

At full capacity, we envision the school personnel to include the following positions:

1. Principal Teacher;
2. Assistant Principal;
3. Dean of Student Affairs
4. Student Data Coordinator;
5. Subject and Grade level Department Chairs;
6. Teachers;
7. Teacher's Assistants; and
8. Office Manager.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHERS

ASSURANCE

SMCA conforms to the legal requirement that all charter school teachers shall hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing certificate, permit or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold.

PROCESS FOR STAFF SELECTION

SMCA believes that all persons are entitled to equal employment opportunity. SMCA shall not discriminate against qualified applicants or employees on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, or any other characteristic protected by California or federal law. Equal employment opportunity shall be extended to all aspects of the employer-employee relationship, including recruitment, hiring, upgrading, training, promotion, transfer, discipline, layoff, recall, and dismissal from employment.

SMCA adheres to California laws, including fingerprinting, drug testing and prohibitions regarding the employment of any person who has been convicted of a violent or serious felony. All employees must furnish or be able to provide:

1. Proof of negative tuberculosis (TB) testing or negative chest x-ray for TB.
2. Fingerprinting for a criminal record check. Bright Star Schools will process all background checks as required by Education Code Section 44237.
3. Documents establishing legal employment status.

The HROM is responsible for monitoring and maintaining documentation of medical and criminal investigation clearances, as required by California and federal laws.
CURRENT TEACHER CREDENTIALS

ASSURANCE

In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(l), SMCA conforms to the legal requirements that all charter school teachers shall hold a Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) certificate, permit or other document equivalent to that which a teacher in other public schools would be required to hold. The school maintains current copies of all teacher credentials and/or proof of credential clearances. Since starting on January 1, 2006, the CTC no longer issues paper certificates of clearance, but instead it posts such information on its website.

Appropriate record keeping of credentials held by teachers as well as other documentation are monitored and maintained on file by the Office Manager. Credentials are reviewed on an annual basis by the Principal teacher in order to ensure that teachers carry the necessary certifications, as required by law. Teachers’ credential information are readily available for inspection by the school’s charter authorizer with the understanding that the charter authorizer agrees to uphold the confidentiality of the teachers’ information in the same manner that the school is required to maintain the confidentiality of personnel records by law. Employees are responsible for monitoring and updating the status of their own credentials. Employees are also responsible for their own fees related to their credentials.

NCLB COMPLIANCE

SMCA shall comply with the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act as they apply to certificated personnel. All core subject teachers are highly-qualified as defined by No Child Left Behind:

- Have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education;
- Hold full state certification; and
- Demonstrate subject-matter competence for each NCLB core academic subject they teach.

SMCA furthermore assures that all paraprofessionals are also NCLB compliant in accordance with Title I funding parameters. All paraprofessionals have:

(1) Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; (2) Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or

(3) Met a rigorous standard of quality and are able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics (or as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness and mathematics readiness).
The above requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities. Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services and non-instructional computer assistance are not considered to be paraprofessionals for Title I purposes. All paraprofessionals however, in accordance with Title I funds respectively, have a secondary school diploma or equivalent.
ELEMENT 6

HEALTH AND SAFETY

“The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of pupils and staff. These procedures shall include the requirement that each employee of the school furnish the school record summary as described in Section 44237.” Ed. Code Section 47605(b)(5)(F)

FACILITIES

SCHOOL ADDRESS

2636 Mansfield Ave 5431 W. 98th St.
Los Angeles, CA 90016 Los Angeles, CA 90045

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees are responsible for their own safety, as well as that of others in their workplace. SMCA relies upon its employees to ensure that the work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions. Employees report any unsafe conditions or potential hazards to their supervisor or the HROM immediately. If an employee suspects a concealed danger is present on the premises, or in a product, facility, piece of equipment, process or business practice for which the school is responsible, the employee brings it to the attention of the Principal Teacher, HROM or another member of the administration immediately. The school’s administration arranges for the correction of any unsafe condition or concealed danger immediately and contacts the Head of Schools regarding the problem.

Periodically, SMCA may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health. All employees familiarize themselves with the rules and guidelines, as strict compliance is expected. Failure to comply with rules and guidelines regarding health and safety or work performance is not tolerated. All employees are required to maintain current First Aid and CPR certification. Annual trainings are provided on site by the American Red Cross or other authorizing agency.

FINGERPRINTING AND TB TEST

Prior to employment and within thirty (30) days of hiring, SMCA shall require each employee to submit a criminal background check and furnish a criminal record summary as required by Education Code §44237 and 45125.1. SMCA adheres to California laws including fingerprinting and prohibitions regarding the employment of persons who have been convicted of a violent or serious felony. Fingerprint clearance for new employees are acquired through submitting the employee's
fingerprints to the California Department of Justice. Employees may be fingerprinted at any local police station or at a site where "Live Scan" is utilized.

No employee is permitted to commence employment at SMCA until that employee has been cleared by the Department of Justice. This ensures that employees with prior criminal histories do not commence employment with SMCA. Additionally, no person shall be employed by SMCA unless the employee has submitted proof of an examination, as described by Education Code section 49406, that the employee is free of active Mantoux Tuberculosis (TB) within sixty (60) days prior to employment. This examination shall consist of an X-ray of the lungs or an approved intradermal tuberculin test, which if positive, shall be followed by an X-ray of the lungs.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES
SMCA shall comply with the Child Abuse Reporting Laws set forth in the California Penal Code. In accordance with state law, all SMCA teachers and staff are mandated to report any suspected child abuse. The report is filed with either the Police Department Child Abuse Unit or the Department of Children and Family Services. The mandated individual meets with the appropriate authorities accordingly. Teachers and staff receive in-service training and sign documentation verifying notification and understanding regarding this responsibility.

IMMUNIZATIONS
SMCA requires all enrolling students to provide documentation of immunizations for polio, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and Hepatitis B as described in California’s Department of Health Services Document IMM-231. The immunization requirements of pupils as a condition of school attendance are applied to the same extent that it would be applied if the pupils attended a non-charter public school.

DRUG FREE/ALCOHOL FREE/SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT
SMCA is a drug, alcohol and tobacco free workplace.

VISION, HEARING, AND SCOLIOSIS SCREENING
SMCA will provide vision, hearing, and scoliosis screening to students to the extent as would be required if the pupils attended a non-charter public school. The Charter School adheres to Education Code Section 49450, et seq., as applicable to the grade levels served by the school. For sections 2, 3 and 4, please see Element 16, Facilities.
INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

No coverage shall be provided to the Charter School by the District under any of the District’s self-insured programs or commercial insurance policies. The Charter School shall secure and maintain, at a minimum, insurance as set forth below with insurance companies acceptable to the District [A.M. Best A-, VII or better], or approved risk management pool operated by a joint powers authority pursuant to Government Code section 6528 to defend the Charter School against claims which may arise from its operations. Each Charter School location shall meet the below insurance requirements individually.

It shall be the Charter School’s responsibility, not the District’s, to monitor its vendors, contractors, partners or sponsors for compliance with the insurance requirements.

The following insurance policies are required:

1. Commercial General Liability, including Fire Legal Liability, coverage of $5,000,000 per occurrence and in the Aggregate. The policy shall be endorsed to name the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles as named additional insured and shall provide specifically that any insurance carried by the District which may be applicable to any claims or loss shall be deemed excess and the Charter School’s insurance shall be primary despite any conflicting provisions in the Charter School’s policy. Coverage shall be maintained with no Self-Insured Retention above $15,000 without the prior written approval of the Office of Risk Management for the LAUSD.

2. Workers' Compensation Insurance in accordance with provisions of the California Labor Code adequate to protect the Charter School from claims that may arise from its operations pursuant to the Workers' Compensation Act (Statutory Coverage). The Workers’ Compensation Insurance coverage must also include Employers Liability coverage with limits of $1,000,000/$1,000,000/$1,000,000.

3. Commercial Auto Liability, including Owned, Leased, Hired, and Non-owned, coverage with limits of $1,000,000 Combined Single Limit per Occurrence if the Charter School does not operate a student bus service. If the Charter School provides student bus services, the required coverage limit is $5,000,000 Combined Single Limit per Occurrence.

4. Fidelity Bond coverage shall be maintained by the Charter School to cover all Charter School employees who handle, process or otherwise have responsibility for Charter School funds, supplies, equipment or other assets. Minimum amount of coverage shall be $50,000 per occurrence, with no self-insured retention.
5. Professional Educators Errors and Omissions liability coverage with minimum limits of $3,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000 general aggregate.

6. Sexual Molestation and Abuse coverage with minimum limits of $3,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000 general aggregate. Coverage may be held as a separate policy or included by endorsement in the Commercial General Liability or the Errors and Omissions Policy.

7. Employment Practices Legal Liability coverage with limits of $3,000,000 per occurrence and $3,000,000 general aggregate.

8. Excess/umbrella insurance with limits of not less than $10,000,000 is required of all high schools and any other school that participates in competitive interscholastic or intramural sports programs.

*Coverages and limits of insurance may be accomplished through individual primary policies or through a combination of primary and excess policies. The policy shall be endorsed to name the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles as named additional insureds and shall provide specifically that any insurance carried by the District which may be applicable to any claims or loss shall be deemed excess and the Charter School’s insurance shall be primary despite any conflicting provisions in the Charter School’s policy.

**EVIDENCE OF INSURANCE**

The Charter School shall furnish to the District’s Office of Risk Management and Insurance Services located at 333 S. Beaudry Ave, 28th Floor, Los Angeles CA 90017 within 30 days of all new policies inceptions, renewals or changes, certificates or such insurance signed by authorized representatives of the insurance carrier. Certificates shall be endorsed as follows:

“The insurance afforded by this policy shall not be suspended, cancelled, reduced in coverage or limits or non-renewed except after thirty (30) days prior written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, has been given to the District.”

Facsimile or reproduced signatures may be acceptable upon review by the Office of Risk Management and Insurance Services. However, the District reserves the right to require certified copies of any required insurance policies.

Should the Charter School deem it prudent and/or desirable to have insurance coverage for damage or theft to school, employee or student property, for student accident, or any other type of
insurance coverage not listed above, such insurance shall not be provided by the District and its purchase shall be the responsibility of the Charter School.

**HOLD HARMLESS/INDEMNIFICATION PROVISION**

To the fullest extent permitted by law, the Charter School does hereby agree, at its own expense, to indemnify, defend and hold harmless the LAUSD and the Board of Education and their members, officers, directors, agents, representatives, employees and volunteers from and against any and all claims, damages, losses and expenses including but not limited to attorney’s fees, brought by any person or entity whatsoever, arising out of, or relating to this Charter agreement. The Charter School further agrees to the fullest extent permitted by law, at its own expense, to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the LAUSD and the Board of Education and their members, officers, directors, agents, representatives, employees and volunteers from and against any and all claims, damages, losses and expenses including but not limited to attorney’s fees, brought by any person or entity whatsoever for claims, damages, losses and expenses arising from or relating to acts or omission of acts committed by the Charter School, and their officers, directors, employees or volunteers. Moreover, the Charter School agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the District for any contractual liability resulting from third party contracts with its vendors, contractors, partners or sponsors.

**HEALTH, SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PLAN**

The Stella Middle Charter Academy will have a Health, Safety and Emergency Plan in place prior to beginning the operation of the Charter School. The Stella Middle Charter Academy will ensure that staff has been trained in health, safety, and emergency procedures and will maintain a calendar and conduct emergency response drills for students and staff.

**FERPA**

Stella Middle Charter Academy, its employees and officers, will comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) at all times.

**CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS AND FINGERPRINTING**

Charter School shall require all employees of the Charter School, and all volunteers who will be performing services that are not under the direct supervision of a Charter School employee, and any onsite vendors having unsupervised contact with students to submit to criminal background checks and fingerprinting. The Charter School will maintain on file and available for inspection evidence that the Charter School has performed criminal background checks for all employees and
documentation that vendors have conducted required criminal background checks for their employees prior to any unsupervised contact with students. The Charter School shall also ensure that it receives subsequent arrest notifications from the Department of Justice to ensure the ongoing safety of its students.
ELEMENT 7

RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE

“The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district to which the charter petition is submitted.” Ed. Code 47605 (b)(5)(G)

OUTREACH EFFORTS

SMCA implements a coordinated advertising and recruiting strategy that ensures all parents and families are notified about the educational opportunities we offer. These efforts are carried out from December–August. SMCA is committed to serving all ethnic groups and thus, uses various advertising techniques to recruit students from all backgrounds.

Each year Bright Star Schools conducts an analysis of enrollment trends in order to optimize our efforts to recruit and retain students. A committee, comprised of various stakeholders from the instructional, administrative and operational sides of the school, meets regularly to complete a complex problem solving model. Using both quantitative and qualitative feedback from the previous year, the model allows the team to work together to clearly identify enrollment trends and their root causes, determine potential solutions, and generate strategies to successfully implement and track solutions in the upcoming year. One of the most valuable sources of data for this exercise comes from exit interviews, through which feedback is gathered by SMCA administrators from the students and parents who choose not to enroll or re-enroll at SMCA.

Externally, SMCA addresses retention and attrition through the development of school-based family engagement systems and strong partnerships that support teaching, learning, and student achievement. Director of Student Services oversees coordinated efforts to strengthen two-way communication between parents and the school. This includes projects that give parents immediate access to critical information, help them better navigate the school and communicate possible concerns. The bi-annual parent surveys are an important component for they provide feedback that guides our parent engagement efforts. Because we understand parents play a fundamental role in their child’s education, we do our best to support parents in their role as parent educators by providing them with resources to develop their skills and monitor their children’s learning at home. Resources include parent workshops and meetings, skills development opportunities and online tools. This collaboration not only helps parent relations, but also increases student achievement and hopefully retention.
RECRUITMENT PLAN

Some of the methods include, but are not limited to the following:

- Distribution of informational materials to community organizations that serve various racial and ethnic populations, such as libraries, recreation centers, local businesses, middle schools and faith based organizations.
- Presentations at various multi-ethnic events, including community fairs and festivals.
- Announcements in local media, such as “The Neighborhood News” serving the communities of Mid City, West Adams, Arlington Heights, and others.
- Outreach meetings in several educational areas of the District to reach prospective students and parents.
- Providing opportunities for parents to speak to our representatives outside popular shopping venues.
- Development of promotional materials in various languages, thus far Korean and Spanish, to inform non-English speaking populations about our school.

Our efforts are centered on providing equal opportunities to all residents of the district, regardless of racial and ethnic background. Our student body is comprised of Latino/a, African American and Korean students.

GEOGRAPHIC TARGETS

Our efforts target Mid City, West Adams, Arlington Heights, Baldwin Hills, etc., and based on our current location near the Los Angeles airport: Marina del Ray, Playa del Ray, Mar Vista, Westchester, Lennox and Inglewood.

OUTREACH LANGUAGES

The primary languages for outreach are in English and Spanish. If Korean translation is needed, SMCA has Korean-speaking staff members to accommodate the language barrier. SMCA provides translation services for in-person interaction requiring translation to the extent we have those language services available.

ACHIEVING RACIAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE

SMCA keeps on file documentation of the efforts made to achieve racial and ethnic balance and the results achieved, as well as an accurate accounting of the ethnic and racial balance of students enrolled in the school. SMCA seeks to serve the families of Los Angeles, with a particular emphasis on reaching out to and recruiting in the underserved community South of the Interstate 10 freeway.
near LaBrea and Adams. The local public school population has a high Hispanic demographic, as well as a high socio-economically disadvantaged population. SMCA's demographics also reflect such statistics.

As stated in our vision, SMCA seeks to narrow the achievement gap by offering all students, regardless of background, an excellent public education. As such, SMCA is committed to maintaining a racial and ethnic balance of its students that is reflective of the general population residing within the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) territorial jurisdiction. In order to accomplish this, SMCA conducts the following recruitment efforts, outreach programs and activities:

- Maintain student demographic data to ensure accurate accounting of racial and ethnic balance of students enrolled in the school.
- Develop and distribute flyers or brochures, applications and other recruitment materials that reflect the diversity of the community in English and Spanish (the languages of the families in the surrounding neighborhood).
- Use various distribution channels to enable public relations efforts to reach a wide audience, including community presentations, flyers, the school website and/or sending out press releases to the local media.
- Visit local elementary schools that serve as feeders to SMCA, consistent with District policies regarding visitation.

**COURT-ORDERED INTEGRATION**

The Charter School shall comply with all requirements of the Crawford v. Board of Education, City of Los Angeles court order and the LAUSD Integration Policy adopted and maintained pursuant to the Crawford court order, by the Office of Student Integration Services (collectively the “Court-ordered Integration Program”). The Court-ordered Integration Program applies to all schools within or chartered through LAUSD. The School will provide a written plan in the charter petition and upon further request by the District outlining how it would achieve and maintain the LAUSD’s ethnic goal of 70:30 or 60:40 ratio. (*Ratio represents the percentage of Predominantly Hispanic Black Asian Other (PHBAO) compared to Other White (OW)*). The written plan should list specific dates, locations and recruitment activities to achieve the District’s Racial and Ethnic Balance goal.
Activities SMCA has engaged in to achieve this balance include but are not limited to:

1. Star Eco Station Earth Day: Informational and Recruiting Table, April Annually
2. Pan African Film Festival: Set up a table and reached out to student, February Annually.
3. Neighborhood council meetings for West Adams, UNNC, and Koreatown regions
4. Present at the following schools: New LA Charter, Century Community Charter, Charles H. Kim Elementary School, Third Street Elementary School, Cahuenga Elementary School, Wilshire Park Elementary School, and Harvard Elementary School, Virginia Road Elementary School, and Queen Anne Elementary School
5. Dropped off and distributed flyers at local businesses, libraries, parks, community events, and youth centers
6. Established relationships with local community centers and organizations such as HOLA, Bresee Foundation, Koreatown Youth and Community Center.

The District receives neither average daily attendance allocations nor Court-ordered Integration Program cost reimbursements for charter school students. Instead, the District now receives the Targeted Instruction Improvement Grant (TIIG) for its Court-ordered Integration Program. The District retains sole discretion over the allocation of TIIG funding, where available, and cannot guarantee the availability of this funding.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND-PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE (NCLB-PSC) TRAVELING STUDENTS

The District and Stella Middle Charter Academy are committed to providing all students with quality educational alternatives in compliance with all federal and state laws, including students who are enrolled in schools of the District identified by the California Department of Education as in need of Program Improvement. No Child Left Behind-Public School Choice (“NCLB-PSC”) placement with charter schools is an alternative strongly encouraged by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (“NCLB”).

SMCA agrees to discuss with the District the possibility of accepting for enrollment District students participating in the District’s NCLB-PSC program. The parties agree to memorialize separately any agreed-to number of NCLB-PSC placements of District students at the school.

As required under NCLB, all NCLB-PSC students attending SMCA shall have the right to continue attending SMCA until the highest grade level of the charter. However, the obligation of the District to provide transportation for a NCLB-PSC student to SMCA shall end in the event the NCLB-PSC student’s resident District school exits Program Improvement status.
SMCA will ensure that all of its NCLB-PSC students are treated in the same manner as other students attending the Charter School. NCLB-PSC students are and will be eligible for all applicable instructional and extra-curricular activities at the school. SMCA will make reasonable efforts to invite and encourage the participation of the parents of NCLB-PSC students in the activities and meetings at the Charter School.

Determination of student eligibility for this NCLB-PSC option, including the grade level of eligibility, will be made solely by the District, based on the District's NCLB-PSC process, guidelines, policies and the requirements of NCLB. In the event demand for places at SMCA under the NCLB-PSC program increases in subsequent years, SMCA agrees to discuss with the District the possibility of increasing the number of NCLB-PSC places available at the school.

**FEDERAL COMPLIANCE**

As a recipient of federal funds, including federal Title I, Part A funds, SMCA has agreed to meet all of the programmatic, fiscal and other regulatory requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and other applicable federal grant programs. Stella Middle Charter Academy understands that it is a local educational agency [LEA] for purposes of federal compliance and reporting purposes. SMCA agrees that it will keep and make available to the District any documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of NCLB and other applicable federal programs, including, but not limited to, documentation related to funding, required parental notifications, appropriate credentialing of teaching and paraprofessional staff, the implementation of Public School Choice and Supplemental Educational Services, where applicable, or any other mandated federal program requirement. The mandated requirements of NCLB, Title I, Part A include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Notify parents at the beginning of each school year of their “right to know” the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teacher including a timely notice to each individual parent that the parent’s child has been assigned, or taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified

- Develop jointly with, and distribute to, parents of participating children, a school-parent compact

- Hold an annual Title I meeting for parents of participating Title I students

- Develop jointly with, agree on with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parent involvement policy
Submit biannual Consolidated Application to California Department of Education (CDE) requesting federal funds

Complete and submit Local Education Agency (LEA) Plan to CDE

Complete reform planning process with stakeholders and submit to CDE all appropriate documents for Title I schoolwide status, if applicable; otherwise, identify and maintain roster of eligible students for the Title I Targeted Assistance School Program

Maintain inventory of equipment purchased with categorical funds, where applicable; and

Maintain appropriate time-reporting documentation, including semi-annual certification and personnel activity report, for staff funded with categorical resources, where applicable.

SMCA also understands that as part of its oversight of the Charter School, the District may conduct program review of federal and state compliance issues.
ALL PUPILS

ASSURANCE

As a public school, SMCA admits all grade-level eligible pupils who wish to attend up to capacity, in accordance with California Education Code § 47605 (d)(2)(A).

Stella Middle Charter Academy shall:

- Be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.
- Not charge tuition.
- Not discriminate against any student on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code.
- Admit all pupils who wish to attend the school. EC 47605(d)(2)(A)
- Determine admission by a public random drawing, if the number of pupils who wish to attend the school exceeds the school capacity, and preference shall be extended to pupils who currently attend the Charter School and pupils who reside in the District. EC 47605(d)(2)(B)
- Not enroll pupils over nineteen (19) years of age unless continuously enrolled in public school and making satisfactory progress toward high school diploma requirements.
- Not require any child to attend the Charter School nor any employee to work at the charter school.
- In accordance with Education Code Section 47605(d)(3)], if a pupil is expelled or leaves the charter school without graduation or completing the school year for any reason, the charter school shall notify the superintendent of the school district of the pupil’s last known address within 30 days, and shall, upon request, provide that school district with a copy of the cumulative record of the pupil, including a transcript of grades or report card, and health information.
Stella Middle Charter Academy shall adhere to all provisions of No Child Left Behind regarding:

- Receiving students from Program Improvement schools as part of Public School Choice.
- Providing the Principal's attestation of highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Meeting the needs of "at-risk" students if the school is designated a targeted assistance school.

If the number of pupils who wish to attend the Charter School exceeds the school's capacity, attendance, except for existing pupils of the Charter School, shall be determined by a public lottery. Preference is extended to pupils as described in the section entitled Admission Preferences below except as provided for in California Education Code § 47614.5. Charter schools are schools of choice and admissions policies reflect this compliance with state and federal requirements. In accordance with Education Code Section 47605 (d)(2)(A), SMCA admits all students who wish to attend, up to the school’s enrollment capacity.

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

The Charter School will adhere to the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths. The Charter School will include specific information in their outreach materials, websites, at community meetings, open forums, and regional center meetings notifying parents that the school is open to enroll and provide services for all students which shall include a District standard contact number to access additional information regarding enrollment. A student's IEP will never be required prior to participation in any attendance lottery or as a condition for enrollment.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

SMCA abides by California Education Code § 47605 (d)(1) and does not charge tuition. SMCA shall not discriminate against any student on the basis of disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the Penal Code.

**EFFORTS TO RECRUIT CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS**

By charter school law, SMCA has open admission for any student who seeks to enroll in our academic program. Our recruitment efforts reflect our objective nature as a charter school and in no way favor or bias any demographic. When students with IEPs enroll, it is the school’s policy to
collect any and all information pertaining to the student's IEP. SMCA is committed to serving academically low-achieving and economically disadvantaged students to offer them a seamless path to success in high school and college. SMCA is located where on average 80-95% of the students in our target population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch according to federal guidelines. We are dedicated to making sure that all community members are equally aware of the alternative we are providing to middle school students of Mid-City/West Adams neighborhoods.

Our school recruiting team conducts student outreach activities from December through August annually.

Some of the methods include, but are not limited to the following:

- Distribution of informational materials to community organizations that serve various racial and ethnic populations, such as libraries, recreation centers, local businesses, middle schools and faith based organizations.
- Presentations at various multi-ethnic events, including community fairs and festivals.
- Announcements in local media, such as “The Neighborhood News" serving the communities of Mid City, West Adams, Arlington Heights, and others.
- Outreach meetings in several educational areas of the District to reach prospective students and parents.
- Providing opportunities for parents to speak to our representatives outside popular shopping venues.
- Development of promotional materials in various languages, thus far Korean and Spanish, to inform non-English speaking populations about our school.

In order to ensure we attract low-achieving, economically disadvantaged and special education students, we conduct our outreach in communities with similar demographics, such as Mid City, West Adams, Arlington Heights, Baldwin Hills SMCA’s marketing and recruiting materials highlight that our program is available to all students with a variety of needs and backgrounds. Our recruiting teams are trained to ensure all families are notified that our program currently serves a large population of economically disadvantaged students and that we accept students regardless of past academic performance.

When students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) enroll, it is the school's policy to collect any and all information pertaining to the student’s IEP, in that SMCA can provide all necessary and timely services.
**RANDOM DRAWING**

Our admissions process begins with the submission of an application at any time during the year. Students who submit an application prior to the end of the open enrollment period will not be considered enrolled until it has been determined whether or not a lottery is necessary. Once a student is offered a space in the school, families must complete an enrollment packet. In the late spring and summer months, families attend a “Welcome Meeting” where the school culture and academic policies are reviewed prior to the first day of school.

**Summary of SMCA’s Application Process**

1. Open Enrollment Period (September through January).
   a. Recruitment/Informational Meetings.
   b. Completion of application packet also available online.

2. Random Public Drawing (sometime in January if necessary).
   a. Lottery (if necessary).
   b. Notification of families.

3. Paperwork (within two weeks of lottery).
   a. Acceptance letter signed and mailed to school by parent/guardian.
   b. Completion of all necessary paperwork, including but not limited to:
      1. Proof of age.
      2. Immunization records.
      3. Home language survey.
      4. Emergency medical information.
      5. Welcome Meeting (May-August).
         a. Parent & Student attendance at Welcome Meeting.
         b. Parent and student signature of school Commitment to Excellence.

**COMMUNICATING REGARDING ENROLLMENT**

All students interested in attending SMCA are required to complete an intent to enroll application form and submit this application directly to the school before the annual deadline. Intent to Enroll Applications are available online and at the school site during a publicly advertised open enrollment period each year, generally beginning the first business day after early January and
continuing through late March. Submitted applications are date-and-time stamped and student names added to an application roster to track receipt.

Following the open enrollment period, applications are counted to determine if any grade level has received a number of applications which exceed available seats. In this event, the school holds a public random lottery to determine enrollment for the impacted grade level. The public is notified of the random drawing and the rules to be followed during the lottery process through written notices posted on all Bright Star Schools campuses, via our website which outlines admissions policies in the Admissions section and highlights the lottery process and timeline on the School Calendars and through telephone and email notification to all applicants at the time of their application submission.

FAIR EXECUTION

The lottery is led by our Outreach Coordinator. Given the native languages of the anticipated target community, all proceedings are conducted in English and Spanish. The names of each prospective student are put on cards that are of equal size and shape. The cards indicate if the applying student has any siblings that are applying for admission the same year. The name on each card is read as it is placed into a container or lottery device that randomly mixes the cards. The person leading the lottery draws the cards one at a time and reads the name on the card. As each card is pulled it is posted visibly on a display in the order it was chosen. Names are given a numerical ranking based on the order they were chosen. The drawing continues until all cards have been drawn and all names have been assigned a numerical ranking. These rankings are recorded in an electronic database that is double checked by the lottery official.

Separate lotteries are conducted for each grade in which there are fewer vacancies than pupils interested in attending. All lotteries take place on the same day in a single location. Lotteries are conducted in ascending order beginning with the lowest applicable grade level. Due to preference given to students as listed below in Admissions Preferences, if a card is drawn that indicates said student, the student will be assigned the next available numerical ranking for the appropriate grade level.

The lottery is open to the public and families are encouraged to attend, however, families are not required to be present at the time of the drawing to be eligible for admission. Results are published in English and Spanish and are posted online and in hard copy in public locations. Results are also mailed to all applicants and follow up phone calls are made by the Outreach Coordinator.
Admission to the school is offered to pupils according to their numerical ranking until capacity is reached. All remaining names are placed on a waiting list in order according to their numerical rank. Families who are offered admission have two weeks to confirm in writing their intent to enroll by returning the Enrollment Packet to the Outreach Coordinator. Any families who decline admission or who fail to confirm lose their position to the next name on the waiting list.

The waiting list is kept on file at the school and is valid for the duration of the school year. The waiting list for SMCA rolls over year to year; parents who do not want their child to remain on the wait list provide, in writing, their request for removal. If no request is received, the student’s name remains on the waiting list. If a student withdraws or is expelled from the school, that seat is offered to the next person on the waiting list.

The lottery process is conducted through our Outreach Coordinator. Applications received after the end of the second week of January are not placed in the lottery, but is marked with the date and time of receipt and is added to the waiting list on a first come, first served basis. Families are notified of acceptance within 3 business days of the lottery and must accept enrollment for their students at SMCA within two weeks of the lottery’s results by returning the Enrollment Packet to the Outreach Coordinator.

**TIMELINES**

We accept applications for enrollment up until the end of the second week in January in any given school year. In the event that we receive more applications than seats open for a particular grade, we conduct a public lottery to determine admission. In case we do have more available space, SMCA continues to accept all applications. If there is a lottery, it occurs sometime in January in a public space large enough to accommodate all interested families, most likely at the school.

**LOTTERY LOCATION**

The lottery takes place at our flagship location in the West Adams area. The Outreach Coordinator will conduct the drawing on the SMCA campus at 2636 Mansfield Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90016. The lottery process is open to the public.

**TIME OF LOTTERY**

The lottery date for the 2013-14 school year is scheduled for the third week in January, based upon the need for a lottery. If there is no need for a lottery because SMCA is under-enrolled, no lottery will take place. If there needs to be a lottery, it is publically announced and all steps mentioned
above will also follow. The lottery will be held sometime between the hours of 6pm and 8pm on a weeknight.

ADMISSION PREFERENCES

If the school receives a number of applications that exceeds the number of available spaces, a public random lottery is hosted, with preference for available spaces given to students in the following order:

1. In District Students
2. Sibling(s) of current Bright Star students attending any Bright Star School.
3. Children or wards of Bright Star Schools’ employees, limited to 10% of the charter school’s total enrollment.
4. Other California residents.

This information is requested on the Intent to Enroll form, and student applicants are placed in separate lottery pools based on preference.

PROCEDURES FOR WAIT LIST

After the lottery, student applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis as additional seats become available. A waiting list is implemented when the number of applications exceeds the enrollment capacity. Waiting list priority is given to in district students, siblings of students, children or wards of Bright Star employees, and then to other California residents.

WAITING LIST

The waiting list is established from the applications that do not receive admission and is used to fill enrollment vacancies that occur during the year. If a position opens during the school year, the Office of Advancement staff contacts the family at the top of the wait list by telephone and/or emails to offer their student admission to the school. The student and family has two business days to either come in person or contact the School Office by phone or email to secure admission. Should the family decline the seat or fail to respond within two business days, the next family on the list is contacted until the open position is filled. Students who submit applications after the deadline are added to the end of the waiting list in the order received.
RECORD KEEPING

Copies of all application packets, lottery results and waiting lists are readily available for inspection at the school office. The school has developed a Lottery Policy document that has been approved by Bright Star Schools’ Charter Management Organization (CMO) and the Board of Directors. It is available to the public at any time by contacting the Office of Advancement.

Acceptance letters are distributed to families whose students earn space through the lottery. All families, including those whose children are admitted through the lottery but are not present at the time of the drawing, are notified by mail. All admitted students must return acceptance letters within two weeks of the lottery to secure their seat.

ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING

SMCA utilizes an appropriate student information system for attendance tracking and reporting purposes and utilizes attendance accounting procedures that satisfy requirements for LAUSD, LACOE and CDE. Required reports are completed regarding daily attendance and submitted to the requesting agencies. This includes reporting enrollment and attendance figures to LAUSD as required by the District.

SMCA provides to LAUSD the following information for each academic year:

- Norm Day Classification.
- List of all highly qualified Certificated Personnel in core subjects as defined in No Child Left Behind and State policy and regulations.
- Total School Enrollment.
- Number of Students by Grade Level.
- Unfilled Classroom Teacher Positions.
- Number of Students by Ethnicity & Grade Level.
- Number of Students Living Outside LAUSD Attendance Area.
ELEMENT 9

FINANCIAL AUDITS

“The manner in which an annual, independent financial audit shall be conducted, which shall employ generally accepted accounting principles, and the manner in which audit exceptions and deficiencies shall be resolved to the satisfaction of the chartering authority.” Ed. Code Section 47605(b)(5)(I)

INDEPENDENT CHARTER STATUS

SMCA is a fiscally independent, directly funded charter school.

ASSURANCE

Each fiscal year an independent auditor conducts an audit of the financial affairs of SMCA to verify the accuracy of the school’s financial statements, attendance and enrollment accounting practices, and to review the school’s internal controls. SMCA retains auditors to conduct independent financial audits, which employs generally accepted accounting principles and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Controller General of the United States.

To the extent required under the applicable federal laws for audits of the major federal programs, the audit scope expands to include items and processes specified in any applicable U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars.

The financial audits are conducted by a qualified Certified Public Accountant familiar with school finances and operations. The audits assure that the school’s money is being handled with responsibility and that financial statements conform to the Government Accounting Standards. Audit exceptions and deficiencies are resolved in conference with the auditor to the satisfactions of the auditing agency prior to the completion of the auditor’s final report, and in no circumstance later than the end of the next fiscal year. Audit exceptions and deficiencies are resolved to the satisfaction of LAUSD. The first financial audit is completed within four months of the end of the fiscal year. SMCA provides LAUSD with final audit results within 60 days of completion or December 15th, whichever is earlier.

In addition, financial statements audited by a Certified Public Accountant are submitted to the District within four months following the close of the fiscal year.
RESOLVING EXCEPTIONS AND DEFICIENCIES

Bright Star Schools Board Finance Committee reviews any audit exceptions or deficiencies and report recommendations to the full Board as to how these have been, or will be, resolved. Bright Star Schools Board acts upon these recommendations, and reports its action to Los Angeles Unified School District to the satisfaction of the District. Audit exceptions and deficiencies are resolved in conference with the auditor to the satisfactions of the auditing agency prior to the completion of the auditor's final report, and in no circumstance later than the end of the next fiscal year.

ANNUAL AUDIT

Adequate cash flow for SMCA is ensured by maintaining a funds balance (reserve) of its expenditures as required by section 15450, Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. The Executive Director and Controller regularly prepare financial reports, including balance sheets and cash flow statements that the Board of Directors reviews during their board meetings. The Executive Director and Controller file and maintain financial documents and supporting documentation such as receipts, invoices and credit card statements in a uniform and orderly fashion for easy accessibility by the auditor(s).

The above-mentioned plans and systems are used to provide information for an annual, independent financial audit. On an annual basis, the Controller is responsible for contracting services with an independent Certified Public Accountant who has been certified by the State of California Controller's Office on its list of education auditors with education finance experience to audit the school's financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and in accordance with the provisions within the California Code of Regulations governing audits of charter schools as published in the State Controller's Guide.

Any audit exceptions or deficiencies are resolved prior to the end of the subsequent fiscal year in consultation with the auditing agency and members of the school’s administration and/or Board Members, and is resolved to the satisfaction of the Los Angeles Unified School District. The Board of Directors furnishes the final audit results to the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, the California Department of Education and the State Controller's Office no later than December 15th.

The following reports will be submitted to LAUSD, in the required format and within timelines to be specified by LAUSD each year:

  a. Provisional Budget – Spring prior to operating fiscal year
b. Final Budget – July of the budget fiscal year  
c. First Interim Projections – November of operating fiscal year  
d. Second Interim Projections – February of operating fiscal year  
e. Unaudited Actuals – July following the end of the fiscal year  
f. Audited Actuals – December 15 following the end of the fiscal year  
g. Classification Report – monthly according to school’s Calendar  
h. Statistical Report – monthly according to school’s Calendar of Reports

   In addition:
   o P1, first week of January
   o P2, first week of April

i. Instructional Calendar – annually five weeks prior to first day of instruction  
j. Other reports as requested by the District

SMCA and the Los Angeles Unified School District jointly develop any other evaluation criteria that the District requests in connection with these annual reports. In addition, Los Angeles Unified School District and SMCA jointly coordinates an annual site visitation procedure to enable the District to independently confirm the Charter School’s performance and compliance with the terms of its charter.

**DISTRICT OVERSIGHT COSTS**

The District may charge for the actual costs of supervisorial oversight of the Charter School not to exceed 1% of the Charter School’s revenue, or the District may charge for the actual costs of supervisorial oversight of the Charter School not to exceed 3% if the Charter School is able to obtain substantially rent free facilities from the District. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the District may charge the maximum supervisorial oversight fee allowed under the law as it may change from time to time. The supervisorial oversight fee provided herein is separate and distinct from the charges arising under the charter school/facilities use agreements.

**BALANCE RESERVES**

Additionally, it is recommended that the Charter School maintain a funds balance (reserve) of its expenditures as outlined in section 15450, Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.
SPECIAL EDUCATION REVENUE ADJUSTMENT/PAYMENT FOR SERVICES

In the event that the Charter School owes funds to the District for the provision of agreed upon or fee for service or special education services or as a result of the State's adjustment to allocation of special education revenues from the Charter School, the Charter School authorizes the District to deduct any and all of the in lieu property taxes that the Charter School otherwise would be eligible to receive under section 47635 of the Education Code to cover such owed amounts. The Charter School further understands and agrees that the District shall make appropriate deductions from the in lieu property tax amounts otherwise owed to the Charter School. Should this revenue stream be insufficient in any fiscal year to cover any such costs, the Charter School agrees that it will reimburse the District for the additional costs within forty-five (45) business days of being notified of the amounts owed.

AUDIT AND INSPECTION OF RECORDS

Charter School agrees to observe and abide by the following terms and conditions as a requirement for receiving and maintaining their charter authorization:

- Charter School is subject to District oversight.
- The District's statutory oversight responsibility continues throughout the life of the Charter and requires that it, among other things, monitors the fiscal condition of the Charter School.
- The District is authorized to revoke this Charter for, among other reasons, the failure of the Charter School to meet generally accepted accounting principles or if it engages in fiscal mismanagement.

Accordingly, the District hereby reserves the right, pursuant to its oversight responsibility, to audit Charter School books, records, data, processes and procedures through the District Office of the Inspector General or other means.

The audit may include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Compliance with terms and conditions prescribed in the Charter agreement,
- Internal controls, both financial and operational in nature,
- The accuracy, recording and/or reporting of school financial information,
- The Charter School's debt structure,
- Governance policies, procedures and history,
- The recording and reporting of attendance data,
- The Charter School's enrollment process,
- Compliance with safety plans and procedures, and
- Compliance with applicable grant requirements.

The Charter School shall cooperate fully with such audits and shall make available any and all records necessary for the performance of the audit upon 30 days notice to Charter School. When 30 days notice may defeat the purpose of the audit, the District may conduct the audit upon 24 hours notice.

Stella Middle Charter Academy will develop and maintain internal fiscal control policies governing all financial activities.
SMCA informs parents and students of all discipline policies and procedures, including grounds for suspension, expulsion, and due process, through the annual Parent and Student Handbook. The Principal teacher shall automatically recommend expulsion for the following Mandatory Expellable Offenses:

**MANDATORY EXPELLABLE OFFENSES—NON-DISCRETIONARY**

1. Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm or explosive.
2. Brandishing a knife at another person.
3. Unlawfully selling a controlled substance as defined by Education Code
4. Committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault.

A student may be expelled for prohibited misconduct, if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring anytime including but not limited to any of the following:

a) While on school grounds.

b) While going to or coming from school.

c) During the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus.

d) During, going to or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

**MAY EXPEL—DISCRETIONARY OFFENSES**

Students may be expelled or suspended for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:

1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force of violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.

2. Possessed, sold or otherwise furnished any knife or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee with the Principal Teacher or designee's concurrence.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of any controlled substance, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.

4. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance as defined in Health and Safety Code 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.

5. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.

6. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.

7. Engaged in any form of dishonesty (lying, cheating, or stealing).

8. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.

9. Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.

10. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.

11. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Health and Safety Code 11014.5.

12. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

13. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

14. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e.: a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.

15. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.

16. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold any prescription drug.

17. Engaged in or attempted to engage in hazing of another.

18. Aiding or abetting as defined in Section 31 of the Penal Code, the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
19. Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property.

20. Committed sexual harassment.

21. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence.

22. Committed any repeated willful violation of the suspendable offenses as specified in the student handbook.

23. Bullying defined as intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment. Engaged in an act of bullying, including, but not limited to, bullying committed by means of an electronic act, as defined in subdivisions (f) and (g) of Section 32261 of the California Education Code, directed specifically toward a pupil or school personnel.

24. Any other serious violation of school policy regarding student conduct or behavioral expectation as set forth in the student handbook.

IN SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROCEDURES

SMCA does not use at-home suspensions unless a student poses a clear and present danger to students, faculty or staff. Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures:

1. Conference
   a. Suspension is preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted with the Dean of Student Affairs with the student and his or her parent(s) and, whenever practical, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student is notified of the student's right to return to school for the purposes of a conference.
   b. At the conference, the pupil is informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him/her and is given the opportunity to present his/her version and evidence in his/her defense.

2. Notice to Parents/Guardians

At the time of suspension, the Dean of Student Affairs or designee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian is notified by phone and then in writing of the suspension and the date of return following the suspension. This notice states the specific offense
committed by the student. In addition, the notice states the date and time when the student may return to school. If the Dean of Student Affairs or designee wishes to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.

**3. Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Placement/Expulsion**

Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion, shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days and shall not exceed twenty (20) school days per year. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Principal Teacher or designee, the pupil and the pupil’s guardian or representative is invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination is made by the Principal Teacher or designee upon either of the following determinations:

a. The pupil’s presence is disruptive to the education process; or

b. The pupil poses a threat or danger to others.

Upon either determination, the pupil’s suspension is extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing. Students will be provided with a packet of assignments to complete during suspension and will be expected to make up all missed assignments, projects, and assessments within three school days of returning to school.

**EXPULSION PROCEDURES**

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to an evidentiary due process hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed upon parent request and for good cause—e.g. parent needs additional time to prepare—the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Principal Teacher recommends the pupil for expulsion. A hearing will only be held when by the student’s parent or guardian in writing or by telephone to the Principal Teacher or Dean of Student Services. The Principal Teacher makes a recommendation to disciplinary administrative panel for a final decision whether to expel. The panel is comprised of three members of the Bright Star Board of Directors; the Principal Teacher is not part of this panel. The hearing is held in a private and confidential setting. Should the parent or guardian appeal the decision to expel, the Bright Star Board of Directors, minus the three members of the original panel, shall hear the appeal.

Written notice of the hearing is forwarded to the student and the student’s parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it is deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall state or describe:
1. The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
2. A statement of specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
3. A copy of SMCA’s disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
4. Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
5. The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
6. The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
7. The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
8. The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

**RECORD OF HEARING**

A record of the hearing is made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate record or minutes of the proceedings can be made.

**PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE**

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. Findings of fact shall be based on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel is based solely on hearsay and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the panel determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm.

The decision of the panel is in the form of written findings of fact based on substantial evidence and an expulsion order if applicable. The panel makes a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the panel is made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The panel’s decision may be appealed within 10 days to the SMCA Governing Board which will meet to hear the appeal within 30 days of the parent requesting an appeal. In order to appeal the panel’s decision to expel, the parent must initiate the process by contacting the Principal.
Teacher or Dean of Students Services in writing or by telephone. Appeal hearings are conducted according the same procedures as the initial hearing.

If the panel decides not to expel, the pupil is immediately returned to his/her educational program on a probation agreement to be presented by the Principal Teacher or designee and approved by the panel.

**SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION HEARINGS INVOLVING BULLYING AND/OR SEXUAL ASSAULT OR BATTERY OFFENSES**

SMCA may, upon finding a good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which is examined only by the panel members. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, is available to the pupil.

1. The complaining witness in any bullying and/or sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to:
   a. Receive five days notice of his/her scheduled testimony;
   b. Have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel; and
   c. Elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.

2. SMCA must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness’ use prior to and during breaks in testimony.

3. At the discretion of the person or panel conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.

4. The panel conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.

5. The panel conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
6. Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. The person presiding over the hearing may remove a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The person conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.

7. If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, SMCA must present evidence that the witness’ presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to SMCA. The panel presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official from the panel shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.

8. The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.

9. Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness’ prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstances can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

WRITTEN NOTICE TO EXPEL

The Principal Teacher or designee, following the Bright Star Schools disciplinary panel’s decision to expel, sends written notice of the decision to expel, including the Bright Star Schools Governing Board’s adopted findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian within three business days. This notice also includes the following:

1. Notice of the panel’s findings and expulsion order.
2. Notice of the student’s or parent/guardian’s obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student’s status with SMCA.

3. Notice of student’s reinstatement eligibility review date, a copy of the student’s rehabilitation plan, and notice of appeal rights and procedures.

The Principal Teacher or designee sends a copy of the written notice of the decision to expel to the student’s district of residence. This notice includes the following:

1. The student’s name.

2. The specific expellable offense committed by the student.

**Disciplinary Records**

SMCA maintains records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the Charter School. Such records are made available to the District upon request.

**EXPELLED PUPILS/ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**

The Charter School is responsible for facilitating post expulsion placements and enrollment by contacting LAUSD Expulsion Unit or LACOE, providing parents with contact information for the Expulsion Unit or LACOE and clearly explaining next steps to parents, and/or connecting the family with another charter school that can and will serve the student.

**DISTRICT REQUIRED LANGUAGE**

Charter School shall provide due process for all students, including adequate notice to parents/guardians and students regarding the grounds for suspension and expulsion and their due process rights regarding suspension and expulsion, including rights to appeal to the board.

Charter School shall ensure that its policies and procedures regarding suspension and expulsion will be periodically reviewed, and modified as necessary, including, for example, any modification of the lists of offenses for which students are subject to suspension or expulsion.

Charter School shall ensure the appropriate interim placement of students during and pending the completion of the Charter School's student expulsion process. Charter School will implement operational and procedural guidelines ensuring federal and state laws and regulations regarding the discipline of students with disabilities are met. Charter School will also ensure staff is knowledgeable about and complies with the District’s Discipline Foundation Policy. If the student
receives or is eligible for special education, the Charter School shall identify and provide special education programs and services at the appropriate interim educational placement, pending the completion of the expulsion process, to be coordinated with the LAUSD Support Unit, Division of Special Education.

Charter School shall document and utilize alternatives to suspension and expulsion with students who are truant, tardy, or otherwise absent from compulsory school activities.

If a student is expelled from the Charter School, the Charter School shall forward student records upon request of the receiving school district in a timely fashion. Charter School shall also submit an expulsion packet to the Innovation and Charter Schools Division immediately or as soon as practically possible, containing:

a. pupil's last known address,
b. a copy of the cumulative record,
c. transcript of grades or report card,
d. health information,
e. documentation of the expulsion proceeding including specific facts supporting the expulsion and documentation that the Charter School's policies and procedures were followed,
f. student's current educational placement,
g. copy of parental notice expulsion,
h. copy of documentation of expulsion provided to parent stating reason for expulsion, term of expulsion, rehabilitation plan, reinstatement notice with eligibility date and instructions for providing proof of student's compliance for reinstatement, appeal process and options for enrollment, and

i. if the Student is eligible for Special Education, the Charter School must provide documentation related to expulsion pursuant to IDEA including conducting a manifestation determination IEP prior to expulsion. If the student is eligible for Section 504 Accommodations, the Charter School must provide evidence that it convened a Link Determination meeting to address two questions: A) Was the misconduct caused by, or directly and substantially related to the students disability: B) Was the misconduct a direct result of the Charter's failure to implement 504 Plan?
STUDENT HANDBOOK

SMCA has implemented a comprehensive behavior policy, which is outlined in more detail in the Student Handbook (SHB). All students and parents receive and acknowledge the stipulations written in the SHB upon enrollment. The policy clearly describes the school's expectations regarding attendance, mutual respect, violence, safety and work habits. The policy is not discriminatory, arbitrary or capricious and follows the general principles of due process.

The behavior policies are subject to review and revision by SMCA’s Governing Board. When a policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend a pupil from regular classroom instruction and/or expel a pupil from the charter school.

Each student and his or her parent or guardian are required to verify that they have reviewed and understand the policies prior to enrollment. By signing the school’s handbook acknowledgement forms (Commitment to Excellence Form), the students and parents acknowledge their understanding of and the responsibility to the standards set forth in the connection policy. The policy defines student responsibilities, unacceptable behavior and the ways that the school attempts to connect students and their parents to the school's culture and expectations.

Our suspension and expulsion policy is only needed when all of the connection attempts outlined in the SHB have been exhausted or when an immediately expellable offense (drugs, violence, or weapons – as defined in the SHB) has put our school community in danger.

OUTCOME DATA

Charter School shall maintain all data involving placement, tracking, and monitoring of student suspensions, expulsions, and reinstatements, and make such outcome data readily available to the District upon request.

Rehabilitation Plans

Pupils who are expelled from the Charter School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Charter School’s governing board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. Terms of expulsion should be reasonable and fair with the weight of the expelling offense taken into consideration when determining the length of expulsion. Therefore, the rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one (1) year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the Charter School for readmission.
**Readmission**

The Charter School's governing board shall adopt rules establishing a procedure for the filing and processing of requests for readmission and the process for the required review of all expelled pupils for readmission. Upon completion of the readmission process, the Charter School's governing board shall readmit the pupil, unless the Charter School's governing board makes a finding that the pupil has not met the conditions of the rehabilitation plan or continues to pose a danger to campus safety. A description of the procedure shall be made available to the pupil and the pupil's parent or guardian at the time the expulsion order is entered and the decision of the governing board, including any related findings, must be provided to the pupil and the pupil's parent/guardian within a reasonable time.

**Reinstatement**

The Charter School's governing board shall adopt rules establishing a procedure for processing reinstatements, including the review of documents regarding the rehabilitation plan. The Charter School is responsible for reinstating the student upon the conclusion of the expulsion period in a timely manner.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

In the case of a student who has an Individualized Education Program (“IEP”), or a student who has a 504 Plan, the Charter School will ensure that it follows the correct disciplinary procedures to comply with the mandates of state and federal laws, including IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973. As set forth in the MOU regarding special education between the District and the Charter School an IEP team, including a District representative, will meet to conduct a manifestation determination and to discuss alternative placement utilizing the District's Policies and Procedures Manual. Prior to recommending expulsion for a student with a 504 Plan, the Charter School’s administrator will convene a Link Determination meeting to ask the following two questions:

A. Was the misconduct caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student’s disability?
B. Was the misconduct a direct result of the Charter School’s failure to implement 504?

**GUN FREE SCHOOLS ACT**

The Charter School shall comply with the federal Gun Free Schools Act.
ELEMENT 11

RETIREMENT PROGRAMS

“The manner by which staff members of the charter schools will be covered by the State Teachers’ Retirement System, the Public Employees’ Retirement System, or the federal social security.” Ed. Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(K)

ASSURANCES

SMCA makes any contribution that is legally required of the employer, including STRS, 403b, Social Security and unemployment insurance. Bright Star Schools sets salary scales and benefits, working conditions, calendars, holidays, vacations, work days and the work year. When appropriate, the Board may obtain feedback from the school community (i.e. administrators, teachers, parents) on these items.

Bright Star Schools’ controller is responsible for working with any applicable vendors (i.e., payroll companies, etc.), to ensure that the following retirement program data, paperwork and payments are completed and submitted accordingly and that contributions are made on behalf of all eligible staff members.

STATE TEACHERS’ RETIREMENT SYSTEM (STRS)

SMCA’s certificated teachers and eligible administrators are a part of the State Teachers’ Retirement System, (STRS). Employees accumulate service credit years in the same manner as all other members of STRS. Any full-time certificated employees who are eligible may elect to participate in the State Teachers’ Retirement System (STRS). Participating employees contribute the required percentage (currently 8% of salary), and BBSCA contributes the employer’s portion (currently 8.25%) required by STRS. Retirement data is reported and payments are made via the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in accordance with procedures established by STRS.

CLASSIFIED PERSONNEL

For non-certificated, full-time employees, the school contributes to Social Security and a 403(b) account. We reserve the right to change the retirement program for classified personnel if the
school administration becomes aware of a more efficient retirement program for which they qualify.

**REPORTING**

Retirement reporting is contracted out to a qualified service provider, however, the Controller is responsible for ensuring that such retirement coverage is arranged. SMCA forwards any required payroll deductions and related data to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) as required by Education Code 47611.3 and 41365.
ELEMENT 12

ATTENDANCE ALTERNATIVES

“The public school attendance alternatives for pupils residing within the school district who choose not to attend charter schools.” Ed. Code Section 47605 (b)(5)(L)

Pupils who chose not to attend SMCA may choose to attend other public schools in their district of residence or pursue an interdistrict-transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of the District.

Bright Star Schools’ main address is: 2636 S. Mansfield Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90016.

LAUSD middle schools in the West Adams neighborhood include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audubon Middle School (Magnet)</td>
<td>4120 11th Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90008</td>
<td>(323) 299-2882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berendo Middle School (YR)</td>
<td>1157 S Berendo St, Los Angeles, CA 90006</td>
<td>(213) 382-1343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Adams Middle</td>
<td>151 W 30th St, Los Angeles, CA 90007</td>
<td>(213) 744-1502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnnie Cochran, Jr., Middle</td>
<td>4066 W 17th St, Los Angeles, CA 90019</td>
<td>(323) 733-2157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public middle schools of choice in the West Adams neighborhood include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Designs Charter School</td>
<td>2303 S Figueroa Way, Los Angeles, CA 90007</td>
<td>(213) 765-9084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Merkin Middle Academy</td>
<td>2023 Union Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90007</td>
<td>(213) 748-0141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In case of a desire to transfer, enrollment at SMCA does not guarantee a student admission at any non-charter district school, except to the extent that such a right is extended by the District.
ELEMEENT 13

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

“A description of the rights of any employee of the school district upon leaving the employment of the school district to work in a charter school, and of any rights of return to the school district after employment at a charter school.” Ed. Code 47605 (b)(5)(M)

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Leave and return rights for union-represented employees who accept employment with the charter school will be administered in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements between the employee’s union and the District and also in accordance with any applicable judicial rulings.
ELEMENT 14

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

“The procedures to be followed by the charter school and the entity granting the charter to resolve disputes relating to provisions of the charter.” Ed. Code § 47605 (b)(5)(N)

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The staff and governing board members of Bright Star Schools agree to resolve any claim, controversy or dispute arising out of or relating to the Charter agreement between the District and Bright Star Schools, except any revocation proceeding under Education Code section 47607(c), (“Dispute”) pursuant to the terms of this Element 14.

Any Dispute between the District and Bright Star Schools shall be resolved in accordance with the procedures set forth below:

1) Any Dispute shall be made in writing (“Written Notification”). The Written Notification must identify the nature of the Dispute and any supporting facts. The Written Notification shall be tendered to the other party by personal delivery, by facsimile, or by certified mail. The Written Notification shall be deemed received (a) if personally delivered, upon date of delivery to the address of the person to receive such notice if delivered by 5:00 PM or otherwise on the business day following personal delivery; (b) if by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail. All Written Notifications shall be addressed as follows:

To Charter School: Stella Middle Charter Academy
                  c/o School Principal 2636 S. Mansfield Ave.
                  Los Angeles, CA 90016

To Director of Charter Schools: Charter Schools Division
                               Los Angeles Unified School District
                               333 South Beaudry Avenue, 20th Floor
                               Los Angeles, California 90017
2) A written response ("Written Response") shall be tendered to the other party within twenty (20) business days from the date of receipt of the Written Notification. The parties agree to schedule a conference to discuss the Dispute identified in the Written Notice ("Issue Conference"). The Issue Conference shall take place within fifteen (15) business days from the date the Written Response is received by the other party. The Written Response may be tendered by personal delivery, by facsimile, or by certified mail. The Written Response shall be deemed received (a) if personally delivered, upon date of delivery to the address of the person to receive such notice if delivered by 5:00p.m., or otherwise on the business day following personal delivery; (b) if by facsimile, upon electronic confirmation of receipt; or (c) if by mail, two (2) business days after deposit in the U.S. Mail.

4) 3) If the Dispute cannot be resolved by mutual agreement at the Issue Conference, either party may then request that the Dispute be resolved by mediation. Each party shall bear its own attorney's fees, costs and expenses associated with the mediation. The mediator's fees and the administrative fees of the mediation shall be shared equally among the parties. Mediation proceedings shall commence within 120 days from the date of either party's request for mediation following the Issue Conference. The parties shall mutually agree upon the selection of a mediator to resolve the Dispute. The mediator may be selected from the approved list of mediators prepared by the American Arbitration Association. Unless the parties mutually agree otherwise, mediation proceedings shall be administered in accordance with the commercial mediation procedures of the American Arbitration Association. If the mediation is not successful, then the parties agree to resolve the Dispute by binding arbitration conducted by a single arbitrator. Unless the parties mutually agree otherwise, arbitration proceedings shall be administered in accordance with the commercial arbitration rules of the American Arbitration Association. The arbitrator must be an active member of the State Bar of California or a retired judge of the state or federal judiciary of California. Each party shall bear its own attorney's fees, costs and expenses associated with the arbitration. The arbitrator's fees and the administrative fees of the arbitration shall be shared equally among the parties. However, any party who fails or refuses to submit to arbitration as set forth herein shall bear all attorney's fees, costs and expenses incurred by such other party in compelling arbitration of any controversy or claim.
ELEMENT 15
EMPLOYER STATUS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

“A declaration whether or not the charter school shall be deemed the exclusive public school employer of the charter school for the purposes of the Educational Employment Relations Act.” [Chapter 10.7 (commencing with Section 3540) of division 4 of Title 1 of the Government Code]. Ed. Code 47605 (b)(5)(O).

Bright Star Schools, as the Charter Management Organization for Stella Middle Charter Academy, is deemed the exclusive public school employer of the employees of the Charter School for the purposes of the Educational Employee Relations Act (EERA). As such, Bright Star Schools complies with all provisions of the Educational Employment Relations Act and acts independently from LAUSD for bargaining purposes. In accordance with the EERA, employees may join and be represented by an organization of their choice for collective bargaining purposes. However, unless the employees elect to be represented by an organization for bargaining purposes, all employees are individually contracted.
ELEMENT 16

CLOSING PROCEDURES

“A description of the procedures to be used if the charter school closes. The procedures shall ensure a final audit of the school to determine the disposition of all assets and liabilities of the charter school. Including plans for disposing of any net assets and for the maintenance and transfer of pupil records.” Ed. Code Section 47605(b)(5)(P)

In the event of school closure, the assets and liabilities of the school will be disposed of by the Bright Star Schools Board of Directors to another charter school, non-profit corporation or educational entity in accordance with the asset disposition provisions of the school's bylaws and in compliance with the Disposition of Liabilities and Assets procedures in the charter. The Board of Directors will attend to enumerating and disposing of the assets and liabilities as directed by the bylaws, and the Board treasurer shall ensure that a final audit of the school's assets and liabilities is performed. Material assets covered under the lease agreement with the chartering agency revert to custody of the agency. Only unrestricted funds will be used to pay creditors in respect to regulations stating that categorical funds including AB 602 funds from LAUSD must be returned to the source of the funds.

REVOCATION

The District may revoke the charter if SMCA commits a breach of any provision set forth in a policy related to Charter Schools adopted by the District Board of Education and/or any provisions set forth in the Charter School Act of 1992. The District may revoke the charter of the SMCA if the District finds, through a showing of substantial evidence, that the charter school did any of the following:

★ SMCA committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in the charter.
★ SMCA failed to meet or pursue any of the pupil outcomes identified in the charter.
★ SMCA failed to meet generally accepted accounting principles, or engaged in fiscal mismanagement.
★ SMCA violated any provision of law.
Prior to revocation, and in accordance with Cal. Educ. Code section 47607(d) and State regulations, the LAUSD Board of Education will notify the SMCA in writing of the specific violation, and give the SMCA a reasonable opportunity to cure the violation, unless the LAUSD Board of Education determines, in writing, that the violation constitutes a severe and imminent threat to the health or safety of the pupils. Revocation proceedings are not subject to the dispute resolution clause set forth in this charter.

**CHARTER RENEWAL**

SMCA must submit its renewal petition to the District’s Charter Schools Division no earlier than September of the year before the charter expires.

**CLOSURE ACTION**

The decision to close Stella Middle Charter Academy either by the Stella Middle Charter Academy governing Board or by the LAUSD Board of Education, will be documented in a Closure Action. The Closure Action shall be deemed to have been automatically made when any of the following occur: the charter is revoked or non-renewed by the LAUSD Board of Education; the Charter School board votes to close the Charter School; or the Charter lapses.

**CLOSURE PROCEDURES**

The procedures for charter school closure are guided by California Education Code sections 47604.32, 47605, 47605.6, and 47607 as well as California Code of Regulations, Title 5 (5 CCR), sections 11962 and 11962.1. A closed charter school must designate a responsible entity to conduct closure activities and identify how these activities will be funded. The procedures outlined below are based on “Charter School Closure Requirements and Recommendations (Revised 08/2009)” as posted on the California Department of Education website. References to “Charter School” applies to the charter school’s nonprofit corporation and/or governing board.

**DOCUMENTATION OF CLOSURE ACTION**

The revocation or non-renewal of a charter school must be documented by an official action of the authorizing entity. Notice of a charter school’s closure for any reason must be provided by the authorizing entity to the California Department of Education (CDE). In addition, the charter school must send notice of its closure to:
1. Parents or guardians of students. Written notification to parents/guardians/caregivers of the enrolled students of the Stella Middle Charter Academy will be issued by Stella Middle Charter Academy within 72 hours after the determination of a Closure Action and the effective date of closure. A copy of the written notifications to parents is also to be sent to LAUSD within the same time frames.

2. The authorizing entity

3. The county office of education. Written notification to the Los Angeles County Office of Education of the Closure Action shall be made by the Stella Middle Charter Academy by registered mail within 72 hours of the decision to Closure Action. Charter School shall provide a copy of this correspondence to the ICSD.

4. The special education local plan area in which the school participates. Written notification to the Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) in which the Charter School participates of the Closure Action shall be made by the Stella Middle Charter Academy by registered mail within 72 hours of the decision to Closure Action. Charter School shall provide a copy of this correspondence to the ICSD.

5. The retirement systems in which the school’s employees participate. The Charter School will within fourteen (14) calendar days of closure action contact the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS), Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), and the Los Angeles County office of Education and follow their procedures for dissolving contracts and reporting. Charter School shall provide a copy of this correspondence to the ICSD.

6. The CDE. Written notification to the California Department of Education of the Closure Action shall be made by the Stella Middle Charter Academy by registered mail within 72 hours of the decision to Closure Action. Charter School shall provide a copy of this correspondence to the ICSD.

Notice must be received by the CDE within ten calendar days of any official action taken by the chartering authority. Notification of all the parties above must include at least the following:

1. The effective date of the closure
2. The name(s) of and contact information for the person(s) handling inquiries regarding the closure
3. The students' school districts of residence
4. How parents or guardians may obtain copies of student records, including specific information on completed courses and credits that meet graduation requirements

In addition to the four required items above, notification to the CDE must also include:

1. A description of the circumstances of the closure
2. The location of student and personnel records

In addition to the four required items above, notification to parents, guardians, and students should also include:

1. Information on how to transfer the student to an appropriate school
2. A certified packet of student information that includes closure notice, a copy of their child’s cumulative record which will include grade reports, discipline records, immunization records, completed coursework, credits that meet graduation requirements, a transcript, and State testing results.
3. Information on student completion of college entrance requirements for all high school students affected by the closure

The charter school shall announce the closure to any school districts that may be responsible for providing education services to the former students of the charter school within 72 hours of the decision to Closure Action. This notice will include a list of returning students and their home schools. Charter school closures should occur at the end of an academic year if it is feasible to maintain a legally compliant program until then. If a conversion charter school is reverting to non-charter status, notification of this change should be made to all parties listed in this section.

SCHOOL AND STUDENT RECORDS RETENTION AND TRANSFER

SMCA shall observe the following in the transfer and maintenance of school and student records:

1. The Charter School will provide the District with original cumulative files and behavior records pursuant to District policy and applicable handbook(s) regarding cumulative records for secondary and elementary schools for all students both active and inactive at the Charter School. Transfer of the complete and organized original student records to the District will occur within seven calendar days of the effective date of closure.

2. The process for transferring student records to the receiving schools shall be in accordance with LAUSD procedures for students moving from one school to another.

3. The Charter School will prepare an electronic master list of all students to the Charter Schools Division. This list will include the student’s identification number, Statewide Student Identifier (SSID), birth date, grade, full name, address, home school, enrollment date, exit code, exit date, parent/guardian name(s), and phone number(s). If the Charter School closure occurs before the end of the school year, the list should also indicate the
name of the school that each student is transferring to, if known. This electronic master list
will be delivered in the form of a CD.

4. The original cumulative files should be organized for delivery to the District in two
categories: active students and inactive students. The CSD will coordinate with the Charter
School for the delivery and/or pickup of the student records.

5. The Charter School must update all student records in the California Longitudinal Pupil
Achievement Data System (CALPADS) prior to closing.

6. The Charter School will provide to the CSD a copy of student attendance records, teacher
gradebooks, school payroll records, and Title I records (if applicable). Submission of
personnel records must include any employee records the charter school has. These
include, but are not limited to, records related to performance and grievance.

7. All records are to be boxed and labeled by classification of documents and the required
duration of storage.

FINANCIAL CLOSE-OUT

After receiving notification of closure, the CDE will notify the charter school and the authorizing
entity if it is aware of any liabilities the charter school owes the state. These may include
overpayment of apportionments, unpaid revolving fund loans or grants, or other liabilities. The CDE
may ask the county office of education to conduct an audit of the charter school if it has reason to
believe that the school received state funding for which it was not eligible.

SMCA shall ensure completion of an independent final audit within six months after the closure of
the school that includes:

1. An accounting of all financial assets. These may include cash and accounts receivable and an
inventory of property, equipment, and other items of material value.

2. An accounting of all liabilities. These may include accounts payable or reduction in
apportionments due to loans, unpaid staff compensation, audit findings, or other
investigations.

3. An assessment of the disposition of any restricted funds received by or due to the charter
school.

This audit may serve as the school’s annual audit.

The financial closeout audit of the Charter School will be paid for by the Stella Middle Charter
Academy. This audit will be conducted by a neutral, independent licensed CPA who will employ
generally accepted accounting principles. Any liability or debt incurred by Stella Middle Charter
Academy will be the responsibility of the Stella Middle Charter Academy and not LAUSD. Stella Middle Charter Academy understands and acknowledges that Stella Middle Charter Academy will cover the outstanding debts or liabilities of Stella Middle Charter Academy. Any unused monies at the time of the audit will be returned to the appropriate funding source. Stella Middle Charter Academy understands and acknowledges that only unrestricted funds will be used to pay creditors. Any unused AB 602 funds will be returned to the District SELPA or the SELPA in which the Stella Middle Charter Academy participates, and other categorical funds will be returned to the source of funds.

Stella Middle Charter Academy shall ensure the completion and filing of any annual reports required. This includes:

1. Preliminary budgets
2. Interim financial reports
3. Second interim financial reports
4. Final unaudited reports

These reports must be submitted to the CDE and the authorizing entity in the form required. If the charter school chooses to submit this information before the forms and software are available for the fiscal year, alternative forms can be used if they are approved in advance by the CDE. These reports should be submitted as soon as possible after the closure action, but no later than the required deadline for reporting for the fiscal year.

For apportionment of categorical programs, the CDE will count the prior year average daily attendance (ADA) or enrollment data of the closed charter school with the data of the authorizing entity. This practice will occur in the first year after the closure and will continue until CDE data collection processes reflect ADA or enrollment adjustments for all affected LEAs due to the charter closure.

**DISPOSITION OF LIABILITIES AND ASSETS**

The closeout audit must determine the disposition of all liabilities of the charter school. Charter school closure procedures must also ensure disposal of any net assets remaining after all liabilities of the charter school have been paid or otherwise addressed. Such disposal includes, but is not limited to:

1. The return of any donated materials and property according to any conditions set when the donations were accepted.
2. The return of any grant and restricted categorical funds to their source according to the terms of the grant or state and federal law.
3. The submission of final expenditure reports for any entitlement grants and the filing of Final Expenditure Reports and Final Performance Reports, as appropriate.

Net assets of the charter school may be transferred to the authorizing entity. If the Charter School is operated by a nonprofit corporation, and if the corporation does not have any other functions than operation of the Charter School, the corporation will be dissolved according to its bylaws.
   a. The corporation’s bylaws will address how assets are to be distributed at the closure of the corporation.
   b. A copy of the corporation's bylaws containing the information on how assets are to be distributed at the closure of the corporation, are to be provided to LAUSD prior to approval of this Charter.

For six (6) calendar months from the Closure Action or until budget allows, whichever comes first, sufficient staff as deemed appropriate by the Stella Middle Charter Academy Board, will maintain employment to take care of all necessary tasks and procedures required for a smooth closing of the school and student transfers.

The Stella Middle Charter Academy Board shall adopt a plan for wind-up of the school and, if necessary, the corporation, in accordance with the requirements of the Corporations Code.

The Charter School shall provide LAUSD within fourteen (14) calendar days of closure action prior written notice of any outstanding payments to staff and the method by which the school will make the payments.

Prior to final closure, the Charter School shall do all of the following on behalf of the school's employees, and anything else required by applicable law:
   a. File all final federal, state, and local employer payroll tax returns and issue final W-2s and Form 1099s by the statutory deadlines.
   b. File the Federal Notice of Discontinuance with the Department of Treasury (Treasury Form 63).
   c. Make final federal tax payments (employee taxes, etc.)
   d. File the final withholding tax return (Treasury Form 165).
   e. File the final return with the IRS (Form 990 and Schedule).

This Element 16 shall survive the revocation, expiration, termination, cancellation of this charter or any other act or event that would end SMCA’S right to operate as a Charter School or cause Stella Middle Charter Academy to cease operation. Stella Middle Charter Academy and District agree that,
due to the nature of the property and activities that are the subject of this petition, the District and public shall suffer irreparable harm should Charter School breach any obligation under this Element 16. The District, therefore, shall have the right to seek equitable relief to enforce any right arising under this Element 16 or any provision of this Element 16 or to prevent or cure any breach of any obligation undertaken, without in any way prejudicing any other legal remedy available to the District. Such legal relief shall include, without limitation, the seeking of a temporary or permanent injunction, restraining order, or order for specific performance, and may be sought in any appropriate court.

FACILITY

District-Owned Facilities: If Charter School is using LAUSD facilities as of the date of the submittal of this charter petition or takes occupancy of LAUSD facilities prior to the approval of this charter petition, Charter School shall execute an agreement provided by LAUSD for the use of the LAUSD facilities as a condition of the approval of the charter petition. If at any time after the approval of this charter petition Charter School will occupy and use any LAUSD facilities, Charter School shall execute an agreement provided by LAUSD for the use of LAUSD facilities prior to occupancy and commencing use.

Charter School agrees that occupancy and use of LAUSD facilities shall be in compliance with applicable laws and LAUSD policies for the operation and maintenance of LAUSD facilities and furnishings and equipment. All LAUSD facilities (i.e., schools) will remain subject to those laws applicable to public schools which LAUSD observes.

In the event of an emergency, all LAUSD facilities (i.e., schools) are available for use by the American Red Cross and public agencies as emergency locations which may disrupt or prevent Charter School from conducting its educational programs. If Charter School will share the use of LAUSD facilities with other LAUSD user groups, Charter School agrees it will participate in and observe all LAUSD safety policies (e.g., emergency chain of information, participate in safety drills). The use agreements provided by LAUSD for LAUSD facilities shall contain terms and conditions addressing issues such as, but not limited to, the following:

- **Use.** Charter School will be restricted to using the LAUSD facilities for the operation of a public school providing educational instruction to public school students consistent with the terms of the charter petition and incidental related uses. LAUSD shall have the right to inspect LAUSD facilities upon reasonable notice to Charter School.

- **Furnishings and Equipment.** LAUSD shall retain ownership of any furnishings and equipment, including technology, ("F&E") that it provides to Charter School for use. Charter
School, at its sole cost and expense, shall provide maintenance and other services for the good and safe operation of the F&E.

- **Leasing; Licensing.** Use of the LAUSD facilities by any person or entity other than Charter School shall be administered by LAUSD. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement in the use agreement.

- **Minimum Payments or Charges to be Paid to LAUSD Arising From the Facilities.**
  (i) Pro Rata Share. LAUSD shall collect and Charter School shall pay a Pro Rata Share for facilities costs as provided in the Charter School Act of 1992 and its regulations. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement regarding facilities costs in the use agreement; and
  (ii) Taxes; Assessments. Generally, Charter School shall pay any assessment or fee imposed upon or levied on the LAUSD facilities that it is occupying or Charter School’s legal or equitable interest created by the use agreement.

- **Maintenance & Operations Services.** In the event LAUSD agrees to allow Charter School to perform any of the operation and maintenance services, LAUSD shall have the right to inspect the LAUSD facilities and the costs incurred in such inspection shall be paid by Charter School.
  (i) Co-Location. If Charter School is co-locating or sharing the LAUSD facilities with another user, LAUSD shall provide the operations and maintenance services for the LAUSD facilities and Charter School shall pay the Pro Rata Share. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement regarding performance of the operations and maintenance services and payment for such in the use agreement.
  (ii) Sole Occupant. If Charter School is a sole occupant of LAUSD facilities, LAUSD shall allow the Charter School, at its sole cost and expense, to provide some operations and maintenance services for the LAUSD facilities in accordance with applicable laws and LAUSD’s policies on operations and maintenance services for facilities and F&E. NOTWITHSTANDING THE FOREGOING, LAUSD shall provide all services for regulatory inspections, which as the owner of the real property is required to submit, and deferred maintenance and Charter School shall pay LAUSD for the cost and expense of providing
those services. The parties may agree to an alternative arrangement regarding performance of the operations and maintenance services and payment for such services in the use agreement.

- **Real Property Insurance.** Prior to occupancy, Charter School shall satisfy those requirements to participate in LAUSD’s property insurance or, if Charter School is the sole occupant of LAUSD facilities, obtain and maintain separate property insurance for the LAUSD facilities. Charter School shall not have the option of obtaining and maintaining separate property insurance for the LAUSD facility IF Charter School is co-locating or sharing the LAUSD facility with another user.

**Facility status:**

The charter petitioner must demonstrate control of a facility such as a commitment from the landlord, to ensure that the property is actually available to the charter developer, and that the facility is usable with or without conditions (such as a conditional code permit.) The charter school facility shall comply with all applicable building codes, standards and regulations adopted by the city and/or county agencies responsible for building and safety standards for the city in which the charter school is to be located, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Applicable codes and ADA requirements shall also apply to the construction, reconstruction, alteration of addition to the proposed charter school facility. The Charter School shall implement any corrective actions, orders to comply, or notices issued by the authorized building and safety agency. The Charter School cannot exempt itself from applicable building and zoning codes, ordinances, and ADA requirements. Charter schools are required to adhere to the program accessibility requirements of Federal law (Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504).

**Occupancy of the Site:**

The charter petitioner or developer shall provide the District with a final Certificate of issued by the applicable permitting agency, allowing the petitioner to use and occupy the site. The Charter School may not open without providing a copy of the Certificate of Occupancy for the designated use of the facility. If the Charter School moves or expands to another facility during the term of this charter, the Charter School shall provide a Certificate of District for each facility before the school is scheduled to open or operate in the facility or facilities. Notwithstanding any language to the contrary in this charter, the interpretation, application, and enforcement of this provision are not subject to the Dispute Resolution Process outlined in Element 14.
Health & Safety:

The school will comply with the Healthy Schools Act, California Education Code Section 17608, which details pest management requirements for schools. Developers may find additional information at: www.laschools.org/employee/mo/ipm

Asbestos Management:

The charter school will comply with the asbestos requirement as cited in the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), 40CFR part 763. AHERA requires that any building leased or acquired that is to be used as a school or administrative building shall maintain an asbestos management plan.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

SMCA shall follow current LAUSD's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy that was approved by the Los Angeles Board of Education in March 1999. It is the goal of the school to provide for the safest and lowest-risk approach to manage pest problems, while protecting people, the environment and property. The IPM Policy detailed below focuses on long-term prevention and gives non-chemical methods first consideration when selecting appropriate pest management techniques. Emphasis under the program is placed on the use of mechanical (e.g., glue traps) and exclusionary (e.g., installation of door sweeps and screens, caulking holes and crevices) pest management techniques prior to using pesticides or herbicides where possible. Pesticide/herbicide products used must be first approved by the IPM team following a careful review of contents, precautions and low-risk methods of use. The school notifies parents, employees and students of all pesticides applications using the following guidelines:

- Parents or guardians will receive notification of pesticide use. The notification will include specific information, including product names and active ingredients, target pest, date of pesticide use, signal work indicating the toxicity category of the pesticide, a contact name and number for more information and the availability of further information in the Main Office.

- Parents or guardians should notify the HROM overseeing facilities on the Request for Notification Form if they believe their child's health and/or behavior could be influenced by
exposure to pesticide products, and as a result, if they desire to be notified of all pesticide applications.

- Signs shall be conspicuously posted around any area at least 72 hours before and for five (5) half-lives of the product after the use or application of pesticides not on the IPM Team-approved list in a non-emergency situation. In the event of an emergency as determined above, posting will go up at the time of the application.

FACILITY

SMCA is housed at St. Agatha’s church. The available space at this location is sufficient to accommodate half of the school’s full enrollment (5/6 grade levels). The other half of the school (7/8 grade levels) is housed at 98th St. Elementary School site built by LAUSD. The school operates at this site under a long-term sole occupancy agreement which is coterminous with the school’s charter. SMCA complies with all provisions with the sole occupant agreement, including those related to maintenance of the premises and insurance.

ASSURANCE

SMCA has developed a school safety plan and it is kept on file for review. SMCA implements a comprehensive set of health, safety and risk management policies; created in consultation with our insurance providers and public safety agencies, and in compliance with local, state and federal laws. At a minimum they address the following areas:

- Staff submission to a criminal background check and provision of a criminal record summary as required in Education Code § 44237;
- Use and upkeep of safe school facilities;
- Furnishing and maintenance of facilities in a secure and clean manner;
- Safe use and storage of custodial products and other hazardous materials;
- Safe food preparation and storage according to federal guidelines;
- Bus and car transportation of students only with insured, licensed drivers;
- Safe storage of all custodial and maintenance materials;
- Safe storage of any hazardous materials required to be kept on campus;
- Child abuse reporting procedures;
• Staff submission to a medical exam and results of a current Mantoux Tuberculosis (TB) test;
• Student provision of immunization records, to the extent required of pupils enrolled in non-charter public schools;
• Procedures for authorization, correct administration, and locked storage of students’ prescription medication;
• Procedures in the event of natural disasters such as fires and earthquakes;
• Procedures in the event of bomb threats or disasters caused by humans;
• Regular execution of fire and earthquake drills
• Completion of a thorough evacuation plan, including procedures for parents
• Appropriate training of instructional and administrative staff in emergency response;
• Provision to staff of an emergency kit that includes critical emergency phone numbers, the school’s emergency plans and procedures, emergency response guide, and an emergency medical kit;
• Prevention of contact with blood-borne pathogens;
• The school as a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free workplace;
• Instruction in health education at the seventh grade level; and
• Among the many health and safety laws that need to be followed is the Healthy Schools Act – California Education Code Section 17608, which details pest management requirements for schools.

All school staff and faculty are trained annually on the safety procedures outlined in the plan. These procedures include: fire, earthquake/natural disaster, bomb/terrorist threat, etc. Please reference SMCA’s School Safety Plan located on site.
CONCLUSION

The California Charter Schools Act of 1992 was created to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils and community members to establish and maintain schools that operate independently from the existing school district structure, as a method to accomplish all of the following:

- Improve pupil learning.
- Increase learning opportunities for all pupils, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for pupils who are identified as academically low achieving.
- Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.
- Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system.
- Hold the schools established under this part accountable for meeting measurable pupil outcomes, and provide the schools with a method to change from rule-based to performance-based accountability systems.
- Provide vigorous competition within the public school system to stimulate continual improvements in all public schools.

By authorizing this charter, the Los Angeles Unified School District will be fulfilling the intent of the Charter Schools Act of 1992 and following the directive of law that encourages the creation of charter schools.

The founding team of Bright Star Schools is honored by the opportunity to apply for charter renewal that will continue to serve families in Los Angeles and is eager to work with the District to provide the best possible educational opportunities for all students.