



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

1. Mission, Vision, Core Beliefs

Mission and Vision

The West Athens Elementary School learning community-administrators, teachers, parents, community members and students-believe that all students can learn when provided with a safe, cooperative, supportive and nurturing learning environment. West Athens Elementary School is committed to developing a rigorous learning environment where all stakeholders view learning as a lifelong process, students achieve success in both academic and social skills and are well-prepared to meet the challenges of the diverse, global world.

West Athens will foster a love for learning as it provides an innovative, collaborative instructional climate designed to empower students to be competent, productive, caring and responsible members of the West Athens learning community. Teachers will model that learning is a lifelong process as they work collaboratively in professional learning communities researching and implementing standard-based instruction using strategies designed to develop rigorous habits of mind, essential skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. The collaboration reflected in teacher learning will be mirrored with the use of cooperative learning groups in the classroom. Classrooms will reflect rich, motivating and positive learning experiences. Student portfolios will provide weekly evidence and evaluation of student progress. Students will project a sense of pride in their work, their school and their culture, as well as appreciate and respect other cultures or beliefs.

Data analysis will be the basis for and guide the instructional program. in order to refine and enhance teacher practice, teachers will be involved in an on-going data driven process of consistent and systematic collaboration that includes setting goals and instructional objectives, inquiry, evaluation and reflection. Peer coaching will be an invaluable tool in this process.

Core Beliefs

Our students and their needs are the driving force for all decisions and behaviors at West Athens Elementary School. Because every student is valuable and unique, we will establish a nurturing learning environment that accepts and advocates for the whole child. We believe that in order to prepare all students to thrive in elementary, secondary, college and beyond we must engage all students in an educational program that provides:



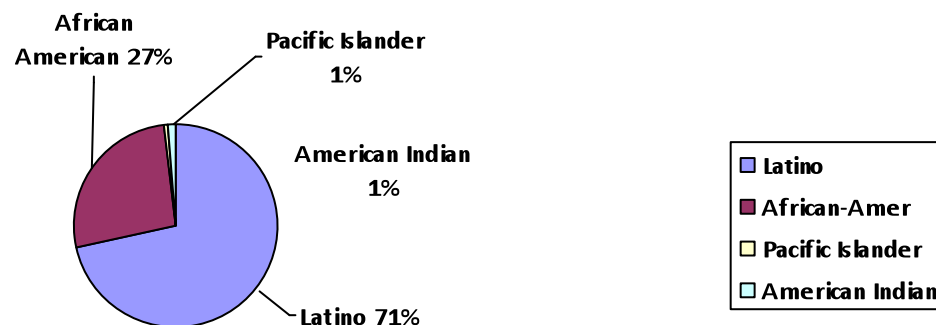
Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

1. A rigorous, differentiated, balanced, standards-based, multi-tiered approach to instruction and intervention to improve student achievement
2. A healthy, positive, nurturing, safe, learning environment where adult behavior serves as an important model for our students' behavior
3. An emphasis on teaching and learning social skills, character development traits and conflict resolution skills necessary to promote peace in the school, neighborhood and global community
4. Opportunities for problem solving, evaluation, and higher level critical thinking skills for all learners through technology and interactive learning
5. An appreciation for cultural diversity and a climate of mutual respect, creative self-expression and a love for life-long learning.
6. Frequent opportunities to monitor student progress and achievement to inform instruction and motivate students and staff through data analysis
7. An emphasis on maximizing the impact of core instruction and standards-alignment for all students through "good first teaching"
8. An emphasis on Multiple Intelligences pedagogy to address our students' varied learning styles and unique strengths.

2. School Data Analysis

Student Body Demographics: 2010 - 2011



CST Data: English Language Arts

Subgroups	2009-10 Students Tested	2010-11 Students Tested	2009-10 % Proficient & Advanced	2010-11 % Proficient & Advanced	1 Year Change
All Students	503	419	21.9%	29.1%	7.2%
African-American	129	98	16.3%	21.4%	5.1%
Latino	368	315	24.2%	30.8%	6.6%



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

English Learner	237	206	12.2%	17.5%	5.3%
SWD	48	13	4.2%	0.0	-4.2%
Socio-Eco Disadv.	503	418	21.9%	29.2%	7.3%

CST Data: Mathematics

Subgroups	2009-10 Students Tested	2010-11 Students Tested	2009-10 % Proficient & Advanced	2010-11 % Proficient & Advanced	1 Year Change
All Students	501	416	23.2%	42.5%	19.3%
African-American	127	96	11.0%	31.3%	20.3%
Latino	368	314	27.2%	45.5%	18.3%
English Learner	237	205	19.4%	36.6%	17.2%
SWD	48	13	2.1%	23.1%	21%

Based on an analysis of achievement from our elementary school, our student body is comprised of 47% English Learners (EL), 100% Economically Disadvantaged (ED), and 9% Students with Disabilities (SWD). The data indicated that 45% of West Athens Elementary students have moderate to severe learning gaps. Based on an analysis of achievement from our elementary school, a significant proportion of students will need additional instructional support and overt scaffolding in order to be successful in the core academic instructional program.

3. Applicant Team Analysis

Our applicant team of teachers, administrators and community members bring a wealth of expertise and talent to lead the transformation of our instructional program. Under the leadership and guidance of our current Principal Leader, we have forged a dynamic partnership with *Park Western Place Elementary School*. Her relentless pursuit of success for all students has led our team to shape our focus into a formula for success.

The recently assigned principal worked in a collaborative leadership role, as an assistant principal and classroom teacher, with the administrative and instructional team at Gulf Avenue Elementary School. Gulf Avenue grew 77 points over a two year period. At Miles Avenue Elementary School, as an assistant principal, and also in a collaboration with administrators and teachers, Miles Avenue showed a growth of 37 points.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

The team also consists of a teacher, doctoral candidate, who shared the latest research and effective strategies for classroom success; teachers who are also community members; instructional coaches, and special education teachers.

The applicant team has taken their duties seriously and are committed to serving the students at West Athens. We are confident we are building an instructional team to execute this plan.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

A. INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Category One: Unwavering Focus on Academic Achievement

B-1 Curriculum and Instruction

a. Instructional Programs

West Athens Elementary School will create an environment that motivates and requires all students to meet defined grade level goals throughout the year in order to accomplish proficient grade level outcomes. We know that all students, regardless of ethnicity, primary language, socioeconomic status, or gender, are capable of attaining proficiency in their learning. We will embrace this goal: the teachers, the parents, the principal, the support staff and most significantly, the students. Since all stakeholders of West Athens Elementary School view learning as a lifelong process, everyone in our school community will serve as a role model. Our purpose is to advance all students; no student slips through the cracks; all students are supported and offered a full spectrum of opportunities to learn.

We will construct a rigorous, systematic curriculum that is based on standards, appropriate assessment, and clear expectations of achievement that are instilled everyday Pre-K-5. A cycle of assessment, differentiation, and re-teaching will ensure our goals of proficiency. Success will be an expectation of all participants; teachers, parents, community and students. Differentiation ensures that the needs of all student populations (EO, ELL, SEL, Special Education and Gifted) will be addressed. Results-based teaching ensures real learning. To achieve our goals, teachers will provide students with strategies necessary to master reading, writing and math standards in a culture that promotes student meta-cognition of their learning process. Students will be taught to be to be full participants in their achievements fueling the desire for more. We believe everyone desires to be and can be successful.

We will set goals for improved student outcomes on standards based tests.

- All curricula will be aligned to the California State Standards and once adopted, to the Common Core Standards; not to a program.
- The curriculum and instructional program will embody clear expectations for improving student outcomes for all students regardless of prior proficiency level or demographics.
- Instruction will be guided and modified in relation to measurable goals set by nationally accepted grade level benchmarks as established by the Common Core Standards.
- We will meet and exceed State and Federal accountability targets.
- *Instruction will be data-driven using information gathered from reading, writing and mathematics assessments, both formative and summative. These assessments will be used to differentiate and modify instruction, monitor student progress, and determine the effectiveness of the instructional program.*



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

We will exemplify a shared school mission aimed at preparing students academically for the future.

- Curriculum and instruction will be designed to provide strong foundational academic and study skills, including mastery of standards on tested on the California Standards Test (CST) and the new national K-12 Core Standards.
- Instruction will foster grade-level reading with engagement and skill. Students will be writing in the three common core areas, narrative, argument and expository. Mathematics will be designed to with a heavy emphasis on number sense, fractions, and decimals. Multiplication, division and basic facts and will be imbedded in problem solving activities and math journals.
- Instruction will be guided by student strengths and weaknesses thereby meeting their learning needs and measuring the effectiveness of the instructional program.

We will deliver tight and coherent implementation of standards-based curricula and instructional practices.

- Instruction will be closely guided by state academic standards and state-adopted curricula, including a focus on English Language Development (ELD) standards.
- Instruction will emphasize and prioritize key standards in each grade and core subject; teachers will regularly collaborate around “breaking down” standards to identify prerequisite skills and ways to address them.
- Through professional development and grade level PLC’s, teachers will regularly collaborate on common benchmarks and formative assessments to design and modify targeted instruction.

We will be held accountable for demonstrating high levels of expertise and competence in terms of: (Through professional development and grade level PLC’s)

- Knowing state standards and mapping curriculum standards to specific instructional practices/strategies.
- Using student assessment data to improve teaching and learning.
- Adapting curriculum and instruction to meet the learning needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and Standard English Learners (SEL)
- Understanding early child development and the ability to make personal connections with students and their families.
- Working collaboratively with peers in a professional, instructionally-focused manner that puts student needs first.

West Athens Elementary School is committed to providing an instructional program for all students, grades K-5, which exemplified a high quality, rigorous academic program. We believe that such an instructional program must be based on providing best practices, instruction that is informed by the research-based pedagogical techniques in order to ensure that all students have access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum. We will deliver consistent, school-wide approaches to teaching and learning designed



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

to build and reinforce student skills in the areas of high-level thinking skills, making predictions, visualizing, problem-solving, reasoning, and persuasion.

West Athens Elementary will work as whole school teams, in grade level spans (K-1, 2-3, 4-5), and grade level teams. This approach will ensure that the school's direction, focus and mission is consistent by subject area meeting whole school objectives; that each student moves through the grade levels seamlessly and accountably; and that grade level planning is designed to hit all standards soundly. Teachers will use two critical data sources: student assessment data and classroom instruction data to inform instructional strategies and curriculum decisions. Teachers will also use student assessment data gathered from CST scores, benchmark assessment, *Dynamic Indicators for Beginning English Learners (DIBELS Next)*, *Words Their Way Spelling Inventory*, *Running Records*, the district's quarterly periodic assessments and student work samples to develop rigorous, meaningful and challenging lessons for our students. Grade levels will use PLC's, lesson study, and classroom observations to implement, monitor and plan effective lessons using proven successful teaching strategies, *Blooms Taxonomy*, student engagement, *Culturally Relevant Response Instruction* teaching methods. Classroom student assessment data will be analyzed and further enhanced by classroom observation data collected by teaching peers and administrators. This would then be used to guide discussion, planning and monitoring of best practice teaching, classroom by classroom.

Research indicates that using data to improve student achievement had been successful at other schools. West Athens Elementary has decided to implement a Data Analysis system to address the needs of our non-proficient students. Using data will allow us to plan more targeted and effective instruction and intervention. The first goal is to use professional development time to teach teachers how to assess and interpret data and use that data analysis to improve student performance. We anticipate that we will use data for instructional purposes, to identify low-performing students, to create specific instructional strategies to meet their needs, and to provide targeted interventions.

Assessment data will drive our planning and teaching. Classroom lessons, purchasing of materials, staff development, and assessment tools use the standards as a guideline. Teachers use materials, plan projects and homework, and assess student performance using criteria based on the standards. Formal and informal assessments will guide individual, small and whole group instruction.

West Athens Elementary will be using research-based strategies of Guided Reading, Differentiated Word instruction and Writing Units of Study and the core curriculum, Treasures, as tools to meet grade level standards. Each part will be taken apart, analyzed and put together in a way that makes sense for individual students. In addition, mathematics will be standards based with an emphasis on number concepts being taught through varied strategies at least three different ways using assessment and differentiation to determine mastery.

- 1. Differentiation.** Differentiated instruction is “responsive” teaching that addresses defined student learning needs in a proactive and comprehensive manner. The West Athens Elementary approach to differentiation will draw on two research-based frameworks that provide multiple pedagogical strategies for differentiating teaching and learning:



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- *Benchmark Data* : We assess students and base their program on their individual needs in math and reading. We collect benchmark data lined up with CST. We set a trajectory for each student to get them to grade-level. Our intervention, individual, small group, whole group, professional development, and spent parent involvement are all aligned to ensure the students reach the benchmark.
 - *Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)* is a pedagogical approach that focuses on providing students with scaffolded and differentiated lessons that enable students to access and master rigorous core content through the application of modified speech and explicit modeling by teachers, frontloading of academic vocabulary, student involvement in multi-sensory experiences that address multiple learning modalities, cooperative learning activities, comprehensible input including use of graphic organizers and other non-linguistic representations to categorize and organize learning, and frequent checking for student understanding.
 - *Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education (CRRE)*. We define CRRE as ensuring students receive ample opportunities for: a) Participating in structured peer-to-peer interactions and facilitated cooperative learning experiences; b) Engaging in instructional conversations that employ the use of academic language/vocabulary in each subject area; c) Using higher-level, critical thinking skills including the manipulation of texts and information on their own to make sense and meaning of classroom learning (e.g., synthesis, self-evaluation, inference, etc.); and d) Practicing written expression by ensuring writing across the curriculum that addresses all genres of writing in all subjects areas.
- 2. Thinking Maps and Graphic Organizers – are one visual scaffold which can be used as a tool to help students organize their thinking in all areas of study.** *Marzano's* research supports the use of visual tools. He states that knowledge is stored in two forms: linguistic and non-linguistic. Research proves that the more we use both systems of representation the better we are able to think and recall knowledge. Each of the eight Thinking Maps and Graphic Organizers is based on a fundamental cognitive skill such as comparing and contrasting, sequencing, classifying, and cause-effect reasoning.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

3. **Brain Based Learning** – Renate Caine and Geoffrey Caine (2005)¹ discuss what brain-based instruction would look like in a school in need of improvement. “Instruction should shift from memorizing information to meaningful learning.” Brain-based learning stresses the importance of *patterning*, that is, the fact that the brain does not easily learn things that are not logical or have no meaning. Because our natural tendency is to integrate information, we resist learning isolated bits of information. Because we believe teachers must help their students see the meaning of new information.

We expect to see teachers and students using stories and specifics of instruction are always tied to larger understandings and purposes, complex themes and metaphors to link information and understanding.

4. **Running Record** - a method of assessing reading that is given monthly. It is a formative assessment, given to individual students which are ongoing and curriculum based. It provides a graphic representation of a student's oral reading, comprehension as evidenced by retelling and correct answering of questions, and ability to infer meaning also evidenced by the ability to answer questions after reading. Running Records help teachers identify areas of instruction for the next step a student needs to grow his or her reading strength. Running records are created on specified leveled texts and can also be given straight from a leveled book. However, passages need to be planned for, marked and tested prior to administering. Questions also need to be considered so they test for ‘right there’ information as well as inference. West Athens Elementary will make these available so teachers do not need to photocopy reading passages before students are assessed.

Running records are meant to be ongoing assessments and will be administered early in the year – and repeated often throughout the year – to monitor reading progress. They will help teachers’ measure students' progress, plan for future instruction, provide a way for students to understand their progress, and communicate progress to parents and the school community. The assessments measure what teachers teach and what students learn. From the understandings afforded by Running Records teachers can help one another, during PLC time and professional development, discover what is working and what is needed in the teaching-learning interactions. These assessments are valuable because they not only give the teacher an opportunity to learn more about the needs and strengths of individual students but also provide time to interact with individual students. They also help a teacher grow his or her personal pedagogical understanding. The assessment information is also supportive when used to help children better understand their own literacy development. In addition, the results of these assessments are invaluable when communicating with parents about individual students. Running Record data collected throughout the year monitors reading

¹ Caine, G. and Caine, R. (2005). Making connections, teaching and the human brain. New York: Cowin Press.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

proficiency allowing teacher, student and parents a real time assessment of the student's proficiency level.

Teachers will use assessment data from running records to identify specific areas students need to develop: comprehension, fluency and vocabulary development. Students will then receive explicit instruction in these areas designed to move the student to the next level and thereby meeting grade level expectations. The teachers will create a menu of all possible assessed areas. Teachers and students will choose a few areas of improvement to work on at a time. Based on information gained from Running Records, Common Core - K-1 and State Standards - 2-5 students will work either with a teacher or independently during Universal Access time on the identified areas of improvement.

Running Records will ensure that all readers whether they are EO, SEL, ELL, Special Education, and/or Gifted and Talented readers will all be reading books that are appropriate for their current independent reading level which will best support their growth as readers and prepare towards reading materials that will be necessary for college and careers.

- 5. Dynamic Indicators for Beginning English Learners Next (DIBELS Next) - Grades K-2** will screen and progress monitor students in phonics, reading fluency and reading comprehension using *DIBELS Next*. *DIBELS Next* benchmark goals will help teachers assign interventions to students who are not meeting benchmark goals. These students will be assigned to Tier 2 and will receive classroom teacher and push-in intensive instruction. Students reaching benchmark goals will continue with core classroom curriculum. *DIBELS Next* will be used school-wide. By using DIBELS school-wide model, our goal is to help the school build the capacity, communication, and commitment to support the adoption and sustained use of research-validated practices while still acknowledging and honoring their students' unique and characteristic differences. The school-wide framework or infrastructure supports comprehensive and coordinated reading goals, assessment and instruction for all students through differentiated and individualized instruction ongoing use of progress monitoring informing instructional adjustments. The school-wide model is designed to take what we know from scientifically based reading research and translate it into effective reading practices. The overall goal of the school-wide model is to build the capacity, communication, and commitment to ensure all children become readers. Building capacity means creating the infrastructure and systems school-wide that can support and sustain effective reading practices for all students. Building communication means developing a common language surrounding reading and establishing channels of communication school-wide, among teachers and administrators, and across classrooms and grades. Building commitment means developing a consensus that reading is a top priority school-wide and dedicating the resources necessary to meet the goal. *DIBELS Next* will be an additional component used to test and monitor each student. Instruction will be differentiated and adjusted based on performance data.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

b. Core Academic Curriculum

Instruction will remain standards-based. For the core academic curriculum, West Athens Elementary will continue to utilize many of the curricular resources provided by LAUSD. We will use the periodic assessments, which provide standards-alignment benchmarks on student progress. All textbooks, Universal Access materials, and other supplemental materials will adhere to guidelines from the State Board adoptions.

West Athens Elementary will promote reading accomplishment and reading success. We will use strategies that work to get our students work or college ready. In addition there will be a relentless focus on development of academic English language proficiency.

In English/Language Arts the core curriculum will be leveled reading with comprehension and fluency in all textual genres, and with equal weighting of fiction and non-fiction texts. Concretely, this necessitates high levels of student interaction with text in small and large group settings (e.g., Read Alouds, Shared Reading, etc.), designed to build both oral and written language. Classroom pedagogy will focus on helping students practice communication and discussion of ideas, with learning extensions aimed at cultivating negotiation, debate, and presentation skills. Throughout, students will receive frequent opportunities for practicing oral and written language, with infused SDAIE/AEMP pedagogy in all classrooms. Once again, our goal in Leveled Reading will be for all students to be beginning readers by the end of Kindergarten, and for all students to be fluent readers upon entrance to 3rd grade. We will utilize the core in the following ways:

- 1. Balanced Literacy** Effective instruction in language, literature and the content areas begin with Readability (leveled reading with comprehension and fluency) is the missing ingredient for effective student learning; all students will read fluently at high levels of comprehension as a foundation for literacy in all content areas. From the earliest grade levels, English/Language Arts will focus on readability.
 - Guided Reading employs small group instruction for students who read the same text. The group is homogeneous: the students read at about the same level, demonstrate similar reading behaviors, and share similar instructional needs. The small groups (ranging from three to eight students) are temporary; they change as teachers assess student growth and needs. In the small group, teachers introduce a text that the teacher has previewed and selected, and the students read it independently. Students usually read silently, though teachers might ask individual students to read orally and then talk with them individually about the book. Teachers also explicitly teach effective strategies for processing a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. Teachers then select teaching points based on the reader's needs and may assign further reading, rereading, oral and/or written responses and extensions. Teachers may also engage the student in a minute or two of word work. "Running Records" will be collected on a monthly basis to initially level readers and then to ensure that students not making adequate progress in attaining grade level benchmarks are provided with targeted instruction. Critical to Guided Reading is the fact that students have daily exposure to text at



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- their independent reading level.
- *Writer's Workshop*: In the West Athens Elementary School Writing Program students will learn what it means to be a writer: how writers think, plan, compose, revise, and share their work. Fundamental to the program will be a “routine” for writing: it is a daily activity, not a series of assignments. The three contexts of our writing will be independent writing, guided writing, and investigational writing. These contexts make it possible to offer students more instruction and guidance in specific aspects of writing, and they also allow students to write across the broad range of topics included in the content curriculum. We believe that effective learners demonstrate their ability to produce competent writing using *Writer's Workshop*. Students will practice writing in a variety of contexts based on the following principles: a) Writing promotes learning and reading; b) Integration of writing and the writing process promotes student participation, a diversity of student voices, and engage students as critical thinkers while promoting their texts as important resources and thinking tools; c) Effective writing instruction integrates subject area disciplines; d) The opportunity to write in every class develops high-quality writers; e) Using writing as part of instruction can be used in every classroom; and f) Only by practicing the thinking and writing conventions of an academic discipline will students begin to communicate effectively within that discipline. West Athens Elementary will be a “school of writers”. Students will be expected to write on a daily basis across the different subject areas of the curriculum using Units of Study. All students will write fluently, coherently, and with correct usage/syntax. The expectations for length and quality of writing will increase developmentally.
2. **Writing Units of Study** - will provide the foundation for our staff development and-writing curriculum. The school has purchased the primary and upper grades Units of Study written by Lucy Calkins and the staff developers for Teachers College. Each collection has books that delineate the writing process, narrative, persuasive and expository writing. These Units of Study provide a comprehensive approach to writing. *The Units of Study* will include planning, coaching and demonstration of lessons within the PLC's. Student work is utilized throughout the process to target student needs, develop unit plans and establish grade level benchmarks.

Genres Taught

Personal Narrative
Realistic Fiction
Fairy Tale/Fantasy
How To/All About
Information Books/Reports
Essays
Poetry

Grade Level

Kindergarten - Fifth Grade
First Grade - Fifth Grade
Kindergarten - Fifth Grade
Kindergarten – Second Grade
Third Grade - Fifth Grade
Fourth Grade – Fifth Grade
Kindergarten – Fifth Grade



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Grade levels meet during staff development time to write the daily lessons for each unit of study. Three to four broad learning goals are established that define the big ideas of the unit and dictate the direction of each week's lessons. Daily lessons are planned with explicit skills and strategies that are implemented in daily writing. Each lesson is designed to build on the previous, ideally culminating with the students understanding the big ideas set for the unit of study as well as the skills and strategies of the unit. Grammar and conventions appropriate for each unit are integrated within the plan. The California Standards, the Core Standards and the Units of Study are used to determine the big ideas and explicit lessons to present to children.

The principal will provide leadership by monitoring classroom lessons and progress of monthly and yearly plans. The principal will also support the writing program by providing all necessary materials, arranging the professional development and articulating with parents and LAUSD. He/she also monitors the California Core Standards to insure that they are being taught and assessed in each unit of study.

Teachers will participate in and show by example the writing process by writing alongside the students: sharing the strategies and the difficulties encountered in writing, finding ways to overcome problems, and having successful writing experiences together.

3. **Vocabulary Instruction** – There are many compelling reasons for providing students with instruction to build vocabulary. Given the importance of vocabulary knowledge to learning, word knowledge disparities among children entering kindergarten have long been a concern of researchers. According to Dr. Isabel Beck, professor of education and senior scientist at the University of Pittsburgh, the average child enters kindergarten with approximately 5,000 words in his/her meaning vocabulary; too many enter school with far fewer words, thus beginning their school career at a disadvantage. Children in economically disadvantaged households were exposed to significantly fewer words, which are related to their own vocabulary use and rate of vocabulary growth during these formative years. Clearly, poverty is a factor in vocabulary development. The research to date does provide some clear insight into vocabulary instruction. McKeown and Beck (1991)² found that “word knowledge is not an all or nothing proposition. Words may be known at different levels.” This suggests that teachers should not try to find one “surefire” way to teach vocabulary, but should instead utilize many methods of direct instruction. As noted by Beck, the amount and type of instruction a student is given directly correlates to his level of word knowledge. Direct vocabulary instruction will occur when West Athens Elementary teachers systematically demonstrate how to determine the meanings of words by utilizing contextual and conceptual clues, teaching specific instructional strategies for discovering meaning.

² Beck, I., & McKeown, M. (1991). Conditions of vocabulary acquisition. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 789-814). New York: Longman.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

None is more important than the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to reading comprehension. Indeed, one of the most enduring findings in reading research is the extent to which students' vocabulary knowledge relates to their reading comprehension. Kate Kinsella concluded that effective vocabulary instruction requires careful planning. "Preparation is one of the major differences between offering vocabulary activities to students and delivering vocabulary instruction to them. Many teachers ask students to acquire critical word meanings through independent dictionary work or by completing skill sheet and crossword puzzles – activities that have limited instructional value and require little preparation (Kinsella, 2005).³" Given that students' success in school and beyond depends in great measure upon their ability to read with comprehension, there is urgency to providing instruction that equips students with the skills and strategies necessary for lifelong vocabulary development. Students for whom English is not a first language – particularly native Spanish speakers – makes up an increasing proportion of our school-age population. Many of these students have difficulty comprehending what they read. A major cause of this difficulty is their lack of understanding of abstract English words, especially those words (e.g., freedom, motive, change) that they see in content area textbooks.

Kinsella explains no one single instructional method is sufficient for optimal vocabulary learning; therefore, effective instruction must use a variety of methods to help students acquire new words and increase the depth of their word knowledge over time. She has concluded that teachers need to include six components for successful vocabulary instruction⁴:

1. **An advanced organizer.** An advanced organizer gives students a sense of what's coming and what's important for them to retain.
2. **A consistent instructional process.** Some teachers use a different strategy for each vocabulary word. This chameleon pedagogy makes it difficult for students to know what's going on and to take notes for study and review.
3. **A well-organized presentation.** The most important thing English Language Learners need is clear, intentional, and recognizable language instruction.
4. **More time dedicated to important academic words.** High-use academic words should be given the same level of attention as words that are simply eye-catching or unusual.
5. **Visual representations of the words being taught.** If critical information about a word is entrusted primarily to auditory processing, it often results in linguistic approximations.

³ Kinsella, Kate, Ed.D. "Aiming High, A Countrywide Commitment to Close The Achievement Gap for English Learners." Sonoma County Office of Education Publication, October 2005.

⁴ Kinsella, Kate, Ed.D. "Aiming High. A Countrywide Commitment to Close The Achievement Gap for English Learners." Sonoma County Office of Education Publication, October 2005.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

6. **Their own written record.** If students have to expend all their intellectual capital just to keep up with a teacher who is teaching on the fly, they will not be able to take the notes they need for review and mastery.

According to Dr. Isabel Beck, effective vocabulary instruction should be a high priority for our educational system. Students who are successful in acquiring vocabulary are generally, better readers. Beck has conducted extensive research of decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension and has published over 100 articles on her research. She found that words are learned best when learned in context with thought-provoking and interactive follow-up in the classroom. When all of the work of Beck's group and others is considered a good case can be made that when students are taught vocabulary in a thorough fashion, their comprehension of what they read improves.

Based on Beck's research, we will use the following instructional strategies to teach vocabulary:

1. Direct instruction of vocabulary items required for a specific text.
2. Repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items.
3. Students will be given vocabulary words, idiom or vocabulary phrases that will likely appear in many contexts.
4. Vocabulary tasks will be restructured as necessary. Ensuring that students fully understand what is asked of them in the context of reading, rather than focusing only on the words to be learned.
5. Vocabulary learning will entail active engagement in learning tasks.
6. Vocabulary will be acquired through incidental learning. Much of a student's vocabulary will be learned in the course of doing things other than explicit vocabulary learning. Repetition, richness of context, and motivation will also add to students' ability to learn incidental vocabulary within the context of their lives.
7. A variety of methods will be used effectively with emphasis on multimedia aspects of learning, richness of context in which words are to be learned, and the number of times a learner is exposed to a word.

Mathematics

"All students can and will advance their learning in an engaging and challenging environment" is our mission. To accomplish our goal, we will develop an integrated, developmental approach to mathematics instruction aligned with the California State Standards. Teachers will collaboratively select specific hands-on activities that support the standards and arrive at appropriate benchmarks of achievement for their grade level in each mathematical strand: number sense, algebra and functions, measurement and geometry, statistics, data analysis, and probability. Beginning in kindergarten, number sense will be critical to long-term success. Manipulative-based activities, math journals, mental mathematics and EnVision textbooks will be used to create a strong conceptual base upon which to build higher mathematics understanding in subsequent years. Grades K to 5 will focus on application of math skills and concepts, problem solving, and making useful connections in science and other curriculum areas.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Teachers will work collaboratively at each grade level and across grade levels to create an integrated and consistent math program. Instruction will utilize hands-on learning experiences and math journals to address different learning modalities, and create a balance between independent and collaborative student work as well as teacher- directed and student-centered work. We will a variety of instructional tools that are designed to capture the interest of students; video and related media technology; textbooks and other reading materials; hands-on materials and activities, especially for science and mathematics; experiential learning simulation activities; and projects designed to use the skills and concepts taught. All students will learn how to use the following mathematical practices taken from the Common Core Standards.

Mathematical Practices:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically. Know which tools to use and use them appropriately.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

West Athens Elementary will connect the standards for mathematical practice to standards for mathematical content. By year two the school will work exclusively with the Common Core Standards for all students. The first year (i.e., 2012 – 2013) K-1 will learn common core content standards and 2-5 will learn state content standards. West Athens Elementary teachers will strengthen and augment the LAUSD district adopted math series, *Envision*, with materials and teaching strategies taken from Marilyn Burns, Marcy Cook, Kim Sutton, and John de Walle. These math consultants have developed proven teaching strategies to work with all children. Common Core and State Standards do not define the materials necessary to work with all students. Teachers will select materials to meet the needs of all of their students, including students well below and well above grade level standards, SEL, ELL, special needs students and/or gifted. To assist parents in working with students west Athens Elementary will provide a Family Math Night and family math workshops.

Quarterly district benchmark assessments will provide percentages of mastery for each tested standard for each student. Tests from the state-adopted *EnVision* program will be administered to assess whether specific standards within the mathematical strands are met. Computer software and interactive internet activities from the *EnVision* program will provide students with appropriate leveled practice.

Science

Within the subject areas of science West Athens Elementary will teach academic vocabulary that supports and is used in writing in each subject matter. As our students progress through school and attempt to comprehend more challenging text, academic vocabulary will become increasingly important will be



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

taught to understand and communicate in the academic disciplines, including such things as specialized vocabulary, conventional text structures within a field (e.g., essays, lab reports) and other language-related activities typical of classrooms, (e.g., expressing disagreement, discussing an issue, asking for clarification).

FOSS Science will be used to provide interactive science experiences for students at West Athens Elementary. We believe that scientific knowledge advances when scientists observe objects and events, think about how they relate to what is known, test their ideas in logical ways, and generate explanations that integrate the new information into the established order. A balanced science program will provide developmentally appropriate lessons in physical science, life science, earth science, and experimentation and investigation at all grade levels. Students will receive a full spectrum of scientific background and understanding of essential concepts in areas such as Matter, Human Body, Survival and Adaptation, Weather, Physics, Sound, Earth, Life Cycle, Water Cycle, Energy, Eco Systems, Geology, Electricity and Magnetism and others. At every grade level, hands-on experimentation and investigations occur in which students record observations, test variables, and engage in the scientific process. Computer research and educational interactive programs will reinforce scientific concepts.

The FOSS program promotes the use of interdisciplinary instruction by identifying math standards/connections that can be addressed during investigations. The FOSS program includes a language arts component that encourages the use of trade books to reinforce concepts developed during hands-on investigations. FOSS encourages the use of the Science Notebook section and the Reading and Writing in Science section to increase students' scientific literacy. FOSS contains ideas for supporting and differentiating instruction for English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and Gifted and Talented students. The program provides teachers with various access strategies for increasing vocabulary and reading comprehension. It also includes (FOSSweb), a technology component for teachers and students. Teachers utilize the online resource by receiving specific professional development for each lesson through an online video. Students can receive enrichment on FOSSweb by participating in interactive games that reinforce science concepts learned.

The FOSS program affords students a numerous opportunities to develop science content knowledge and process skills through hands-on investigations. Students work cooperatively to explore familiar and/or unfamiliar ideas through an inquiry-based process. This inquiry process is initiated by a question, problem, or scenario. Students collect evidence, interpret the evidence, and formulate an explanation to the question, problem, or scenario based on the evidence collected. The information is recorded in a science notebook for students to communicate their findings with the class/school community. They will also demonstrate their learning through multi-media presentations that will culminate with a science fair. These opportunities for students to share their findings with the school community motivates them to defend or explain their thinking and showcase their understanding and application of the scientific process and concepts they have learned, which is an important 21st Century skill assisting students in being College Prepared and Career Ready.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Social Studies

As students in the learning community engage in social studies they will acquire key, core-knowledge in history, geography, civics, and economics. They will also develop and employ critical thinking skills. Scott Foresman History/Social Science is a standards driven and utilizes focused instruction with interactive text, teacher developed activities and rich technology capabilities. This program provides thorough coverage of the standards. The content is taught through three instructional paths: the core text path providing in-depth content, a multi-media digital path and activity path. All three instructional paths provide universal access, English Learner support, and intervention. Each path will allow teachers to accommodate student learning styles as well as their own teaching preferences. The flexibility of the instructional paths allows them to be used as integrated whole or as individual teaching tools to meet students' specific needs. Teachers will collaborate in grade level teams to access instructional practices, plan using student achievement data, and revise and design intervention for student success. Teachers will utilize this program to ensure students become active, involved and informed citizens in the 21st century, through the integration of the arts, simulations, and collaborative and project- and student-based inquiries, and learning.

West Athens Elementary will integrate history, geography, economics, government and civics. Our K-2 grades will study local community and comparative cultures, upper grades (3-5) will study California and the United States. Students will compare and contrast events in the past with current times; geographical regions and resources; cultural and environmental diversity; exploration, immigration, settlement of people; structure of government; and sources of past conflict. Textual material including primary source material, historical fiction, simulation activities, dramatic production, internet research and interactive programs, such as multi-media presentation and map investigations will be utilized.

Students will use the language and tools of historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. They will also learn to identify common and complex themes, and make connections between their own lives, those of their ancestors and the implications for the future and a global society. Young people who are knowledgeable, skillful, and committed to democracy are necessary to sustaining and improving our democratic way of life and participating as members of a global community.– National Council for Social Studies

In addition to the adopted Social Studies program, teachers will visit and work with local museums and cultural centers to provide rich experiences for all students. Teachers will also utilize online resources as well as other technologies to give students experiences with a variety of virtual collections, primary and secondary sources. School journeys will be provided to provide students with hands on experiences of the cultural and historical sites in their community.

c. Management of Multiple School N/A

d. WASC Accreditation: N/A



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

e. Addressing the Needs of All Students

As educators we have learned there is a need to build instruction from a very basic framework level. We call this scaffolding instruction. We know we must provide individualized instruction that will benefit each learner in our classes. We call this differentiation. We know we need to combine the use of scaffolds and differentiation for our students. We also know we must have many ways we present and then present again the content we intend our students to learn. The processes they experience must be designed to meet them where they are and to affect them. The products they produce must be learning rich and centered on our specific learners. This necessarily means our teaching must be responsive to the students in our classes. As such it must be fluid, adjusting to learners needs. Not all students are alike. Based on this knowledge, differentiated instruction applies an approach to teaching and learning that gives students multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas. Differentiated instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001). The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. We have recently identified differentiated instruction as a method of helping more students in diverse classroom settings experience success.

West Athens Elementary is committed to providing consistent access for all students to standards-based curricula that embody high expectations for academic achievement, as well as differentiated instruction that takes into account different learning styles, socio-cultural influences and possible learning disabilities so that students receive individualized, personalized pedagogy.

We are committed to providing embedded, in-class differentiation. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning and interests; and to react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process for teaching students of differing abilities in the same class; maximizing each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is and assisting in the learning process.

We recognize that engagement is a vital component of effective classroom management, organization, and instruction. Therefore, our teachers are encouraged to offer choices of tools, adjust the level of difficulty of the material, and provide varying levels of scaffolding to gain and maintain learner attention during lessons. By providing varying levels of scaffolding when differentiating instruction, students have access to varied learning contexts.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education (CRRE) will also provide an educational framework for ensuring that differentiation is implemented throughout the school. The central elements⁵ of CRRE that will inform the instructional program at West Athens Elementary will include:

⁵ For this framework, we have borrowed heavily from the typology from The Knowledge Loom (www.knowledgeloom.org). For the research and theoretical foundation of these approaches see for example, For the research and theoretical foundation of these approaches see for example, Gloria Ladson Billings (1994) in *The*



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- *Communication of High Expectations.* Rejecting deficit-based thinking in favor of an authentic belief that students from culturally diverse and low-income backgrounds are capable learners. High expectations will be consistently communicated based upon genuine respect and belief in student capability.
- *Cultural Sensitivity.* Gaining knowledge of the cultures and languages represented in their classrooms and translating this into instructional practice. Teachers will harness diversity for intellectual exploration by “bridging” learning experiences so that students “choose” academic excellence.
- *Reshaping the Curriculum.* Providing students with experiences that showcase academic success by legitimizing students’ real-life experiences as part of the official curriculum.
- *Active Teaching Methods.* Believing that the co-construction of knowledge through inquiry is the foundation of the teacher-student relationship. Instruction will engage students in active roles in crafting curriculum and developing learning activities.
- *Small Group Instruction.* Providing students with more collective, collaborative learning experiences, as well as options for demonstrating mastery of skills and standards in learning groups.
- *Teacher as Facilitator of Dialogue.* Developing students’ critical thinking skills through reflective discussions and learning experiences that challenge the status quo (i.e., to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities).
- *Student Controlled Classroom Discourse.* Providing students with the opportunity to control some portion of lessons, so that teachers gain insights into the way that speech and negotiation are used in the home and community.

We believe that it is essential to provide quality student support services and early academic interventions to bolster student preparation and performance. Towards this end, West Athens Elementary will implement a comprehensive Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) to meet the needs of all students. As described by LAUSD in Bulletin 4827.1, RtI² is based on supporting students with systematic intervention and extended learning opportunities. In particular, this means designing a tiered “pyramid of intervention” that clearly defines the entry and exit criteria for academic intervention and referral to other “intervention” services.⁶ RtI² is an integrated approach using pedagogy, lesson design, and progress monitoring data to ensure the best instructional decisions for students, to ensure that every student will receive quality, standards-based instruction in all content areas to enable all students to graduate College Prepared or Career Ready.

We will articulate with the neighborhood preschool(s), and nearby middle school(s), Clay Middle School

Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishers and “But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” (1995) in *Theory Into Practice* (34:3), pp. 159-165. Another good reference is Tyrone C. Howard, “Culturally relevant pedagogy: ingredients for critical teacher reflection,” in *Theory Into Practice* (Summer 2003)

⁶ For a description of the “Pyramid of Interventions” please see DuFour, R., Eaker, R., Karhanek, G. and DuFour, R. (2004). *Whatever it Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond when Kids Don’t Learn.*



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

in order to provide an integrated program and ensure smooth transitions. Our school will host a meeting between feeder middle school counselors and our parents and students to keep them informed about matriculation their options. Within the school and during professional development cross-grade level articulation will provide teachers the opportunity to discuss the needs of all students and will serve to engender a sense of responsibility for all students. The preschool and kindergarten teachers will regularly discuss student progress, particularly in the development of reading readiness. Communication with the preschool(s) will help us identify special needs for early intervention. We will work with the identified preschool(s) to initiate coherent transitions between our programs.

e. Vertical Articulation

West Athens Elementary School will partner with *Park Western Place Elementary School*. The teachers at *Park Western* have led numerous curriculum workshops and forums for district teachers. Success has made Park Western a host to principals, teachers, and visitors from other schools to observe classrooms and school programs in action. Our instructional plan will integrate some instructional practices used for their reading programs and assessment processes. Several teachers at *Park Western* have worked with new teacher in the Beginning Teacher and Support and Assessment (BTSA) program.

f. Early Care and Education

Research Studies have indicated a return on preschool investment in savings for schools and society at a conservative estimate of two dollars to as much as thirteen dollars for every dollar spent.⁷ Our first priority will be to continue our work with the LAUSD Early Education Division to maintain an excellent SRLDP program at the La Salle school site. The SRLDP and kindergarten teachers will meet regularly to discuss student progress, particularly in the development of reading readiness. We will continue to provide two sessions, morning and afternoon, enabling us to service up to 36 three and four year old students. Communication with the SRLDP teachers will help us identify special needs for early intervention.

g. Service Plan for Special Education (attached)

⁷ Calman, Leslie J. and Tarr-Whelan, Linda (2005). *Early Education for All: A Wise Investment*. Recommendations arising from, "The Economic Impacts of Child Care and Early Education: Financing Solutions for the Future" a conference sponsored by Legal Momentum's Family Initiative and the MIT Workplace Center. See <http://web.mit.edu/workplacecenter/docs/Full%20Report.pdf>



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

B-2 Professional Development

a. Professional Culture

In accordance with Local Initiative School Authority Waiver #7, West Athens staff will combine the professional development and faculty meeting in order to extend professional learning community (PLC) meeting opportunities, allowing the last 15 minutes of a two hour block for announcements, including UTLA announcements.

Rationale: This will allow additional time for PLC teams to plan; collaborate; create common formative assessments; look at student work; analyze data; set goals; and determine next steps.

West Athens Elementary is committed to developing a collaborative school wide environment that will center on high-quality teaching with high expectations for student learning. During the past decade, education reforms have raised the educational bar so that all children in the United States--including newcomers--must finish school to participate in the economic and social world of the 21st century. Students must be highly competent in reading and writing to pass the various assessments that constitute gateways for completing school, getting into college and finding jobs. In order for high-quality learning to occur, teachers need a wealth of content and pedagogical knowledge to ensure that they are providing appropriate instruction to all students.

Our professional culture will be based on high expectations for student achievement, clear, measurable goals for student success, aligned to clear academic standards continually modeled and supported by school leadership. This professional learning culture will be one in which we, as educators, are committed to our own growth and development as professionals. It will come out of our deep professional desire to continue to develop our knowledge and practice and to maximize opportunities for learning. This means that, as educators, we see ourselves, and are seen by others, as lifelong learners of the cultures we teach and of teaching itself. As educators we will continue to stay abreast of current research pertinent to our profession. Moreover, our professional drive is to continue to deepen and broaden our knowledge of our chosen field through ongoing learning throughout our careers and beyond.

West Athens Elementary believes a professional learning culture is one which engages with learning in many different contexts. It is not simply the students' learning or an individual teacher's learning, but rather a commitment to learning as a valued activity in its own right. Creating a culture of learning for students is an important part of this work, as is having a supportive environment in which to develop as a professional, however nothing can create a professional learning culture if this is not found in the practice of teachers themselves and their disposition to developing their professional learning.

West Athens Elementary professional development will require active engagement with ideas and issues and critical reflection of knowledge and practice. By engaging in this way, our teachers will take an active responsibility to understand, develop and experiment with aspects of their professional work. Teachers are in this sense observers and analyzers of what is occurring in their schools, classrooms and



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

communities and not just planners or deliverers of the curriculum. Our professional learning culture will be something that is created to support the learning of others. Teachers ultimately will create a culture of professional learning through their own actions.

Observation and analysis will add a critical dimension to our teaching practice, which seeks to continually experiment with and develop what happens in the process of teaching and learning in order to expand the opportunities for both teacher and learners. This in turn involves the development of an 'investigative stance'. In discussing the idea of an investigative stance Crichton notes; "Teaching necessarily involves being alert to what is going on in the classroom, noticing developments and changes, attending to emergent needs, comparing achievements at one point in time with what has happened before and what might happen after, reflecting on teaching practice and assessment, evaluating activities and plans, developing and drawing on curriculums, and the host of other activities that contribute to effective teaching practice. Of course these activities do not happen in isolation; they inform each other through the lesson, the day, the week, and over the longer term, acknowledging the perspectives and changing needs of students, teachers and members of the broader school community." (Crichton, 2007)⁸

Liddicost and Jensen (1998)⁹ explain an investigative stance as a way of doing what teachers regularly do in a more systematic way. At West Athens Elementary investigative stance will involve an orientation to noticing, documenting, and analyzing the actions and interactions of teachers and learners and; an ongoing interest in using information about the classroom to develop teaching and learning practice. This means more than keeping up-to-date with curriculum initiatives and planning units of work. La Salle Elementary teachers will devote time to thinking about and developing their curriculum and many of the professional learning activities will focused on developing better understandings of curriculum. These interests and investments in bettering our practice will place focus on the intended curriculum (what is going to be taught). Marzano (2003)¹⁰ states that less attention is often paid to important aspects of teaching methodology such as the implemented curriculum (what teachers actually teach) and to the attained curriculum (what students learn). We intend to give more attention to the processes of teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation or to questioning one's understanding of the basic constructs of the discipline, culture, learning and the intercultural.

A professional learning community is a vital means toward growing genuine and collegial support for personal learning. By this we mean our professional learning should encompass inquiry, quiet conversations wherein real learning and growth can take place as well as larger community discussions, time given to reflection of practices as well as personal learning and eventually leadership.

⁸ Crichton, S. (2007). Embedded or linked learning objects: Implications for content development, course design, and classroom use. *Canadian Journal Technology and Learning (CJTL)*, (33, 2).

⁹ *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 56, No.3, Pgs. 41-45, November, ASCD. Alexandria, VA.

¹⁰ Marzano, R. (2003). *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

As West Athens Elementary moves forward in developing a professional culture, teachers will engage with colleagues in the ongoing exploration of four crucial questions that drive the work of those within our professional learning community:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
4. What do we do for students who are proficient?

West Athens will work to achieve a culture of collaboration. In shaping our professional culture, West Athens elementary, embraces the three core tenets of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's):

1. PLCs are student-centered: Staff focuses on what students have learned, not merely what has been taught. This emphasis on student learning means that we ask ourselves what students need to learn, how we can know students have indeed learned, multiple strategies and tools we can use when students struggle with learning, and what we will teach next once students have demonstrated appropriate learning.
2. PLCs are deliberately collaborative: Staff has regular, job-embedded time to plan common lessons, develop common assessments, and discuss the students they share. Collaboration is based on collective inquiry, active research, and experimentation. In other words, teachers do not work in isolation but recognize that a team committed to collective solutions to common problems provides a far more productive way to improve student achievement.
3. PLCs are professionally accountable for outcomes and reflective: Staff “own” student success or failure. We commit to looking in the mirror and addressing the factors that are within our control rather than pointing the finger of blame elsewhere or expounding on factors outside of our control that impact student learning. We also commit to using data to evaluate defined outcomes not merely intentions, and to ensure that data (broadly conceived) guides and modifies school-wide, team, and individual classroom decisions.

b. Professional Development:

Classroom practice and school leadership at West Athens Elementary will be improved through tailored, intensive professional development that includes follow-up, support, practice, feedback, and evaluation.

West Athens Elementary will invest in professional development that will improve student learning by supporting professional development that is:

- Grounded in teachers' questions and inquiry.
- Linked to and derived from teachers' work with their students.
- Connected to the study of subject matter and teaching methods.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- Sustained and intensive coaching, modeling and problem solving in collaboration with coaches and teachers and teacher teams.

Analyzing data at West Athens Elementary will be an integral part of our professional development. West Athens Elementary will train staff to analyze and disaggregate student data. Data analysis and disaggregation are essential for identifying and solving issues of curriculum, assessment, and instructional alignment (U.S. Department of Education, 1998; WestEd, 2000).¹¹ This developed system continuously collects and analyze student and school data to frequently monitor our achievement performance and the capacity to manage one's own self-improvement. The system will also allow flexibility so a transparent accountable framework is a means for spreading effective practice across the system and for becoming more responsive to immediate and future school needs.

The first goal is to train staff how to assess and interpret data and use that data analysis to improve student performance. In addition to our professional development being systematic and school wide, our professional learning community's expectation is to respond to students quickly who are experiencing difficulty by providing them with help as soon as they experience difficulty, and to require students (rather than only inviting students) to devote extra time and receive additional assistance until they have acquired necessary skills or concepts.

We will include Alan Blankstein's¹² idea of the data notebook (2004), an ongoing collection of data a teacher gathers to help inform his or her instruction and interventions during the course of a year. Participants set up data notebooks and shared them with one another. The teachers will be required to note three dimensions of any data they recorded: the frequency with which they collected these data; the type of teacher thinking this entry showed (descriptive, analytical, or reflective); and the kind of information it represented (such as evidence of student learning; demographics; teachers', students' and others' perceptions; or instructional processes). Prodding teachers to collect meaningful data on their own ensures that they will begin to ask themselves probing questions. This practice is based on the belief that teachers have the ability to formulate valid questions about their own practice and pursue objective answers to these questions.

We will learn how to disaggregate and interpret CST scores, DIBELS Next, SRI, Running Records and the district's quarterly benchmark assessments, to plan and drive instructional practices. The staff will look at individual achievement and class by class trends. This is significant because teachers can reflect on their students' test scores and trends. They can, together with colleagues, administrators and pertinent staff members, create hypotheses as to why specific categories were lower than aimed for or expected. Teachers can then collectively determine possible solutions to be discussed, researched, planned for and implemented in tandem with their colleagues who have experienced success with similar students in areas of testing difficulties.

¹¹ *The National Educational Technology Plan*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education (1998). San Francisco, CA: West Ed (2000).

¹² Blankstein, A. M. (2004). *Failure is not an option*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

The leadership at West Athens Elementary will engage the staff in professional discourse in PLC's, drawing on external ideas and research to inform their thinking and actions, and encourage them to reflect on what they are trying to achieve with students and how they are doing it. This expectation is supported by the creation of both formal structures to develop the leadership capabilities of teachers and informally by virtue of teachers being a part of a learning community that values, and believe in, continuous improvement. It involves teachers working in a spirit of openness and critical reflection, sharing their experiences, ideas and expertise with each other and engaging in an ongoing process of inquiry that promotes deep learning. The work of West Athens Elementary is guided by a clear and systematic model of problem-solving and learning, one that encompasses learning – application – refinement - application cycle.

The most fruitful discussions result from using examples of student work that are varied in nature and quality, for example, written work from several students in relation to the same assignment that includes students' explanations of their thinking. West Athens Elementary will implement strategies in their classrooms and share student work to determine the level of success and make appropriate adjustments. The discussions teachers have will highlight the way in which they can enhance their teaching based on what they have learned about student understanding of important concepts.

Teachers will meet regularly in grade level groups and grade level spans (K-1, 2-3 and 4-5) to discuss instructional practices and strategies, review student work, design appropriate learning activities, and share resources and materials. Release time will be used for teachers to observe their colleagues and work together collaboratively. In addition teachers will attend a variety of workshops, in-services and conferences to keep current and deepen their level of professional training. Professional development is essential to a rigorous academic program and our staff is dedicated to improving their craft. We know the best teachers are those that continue to learn.¹³

Within PLCs, the focus on "Lesson Study Teams" will be to engage teachers directly in deconstruction and prioritization of the standards. Continuity and follow-through on agreed upon curricular foci and instructional strategies will reduce the gap between common planning and actual "transfer" of common implementation to the classroom. The members of the teams will share the experiences of applying the learning of new knowledge and skills in their individual classrooms. If the methods teachers try don't work, they talk about how they each applied the ideas/methods, compare experiences and determine how to best adjust their teaching to fit their learners' needs. This may indeed require more PD, but it may also be as simple as trying it the way a colleague did in order to obtain better learning results. This cycle of continuous improvement ensures that teachers are constantly working to become more effective in addressing students' learning challenges. As members of a team hone their skills, others may begin to adopt these new best practices, and success can spread throughout the school and even from school to school.

In addition, part of the professional development at West Athens Elementary will hinge on observing a

¹³ Adapted from Park Western Place Elementary, *California School Recognition Program* (2010). California Department of Education.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

peer's teaching. All teachers will be expected to participate as both observer and observed, using protocols and defined tools that measure the use of agreed upon instructional strategies. In this way, peer feedback will constitute a source of data considered as part of PLC meetings. West Athens Elementary will tie PLC collaboration to intervention to ensure that student data is consistently analyzed to monitor for growth and to assess the effectiveness of the instructional program. In particular, we aim to make analysis of formative measures (particularly analyzing student work) central to the data that drives our instructional practices, tied to intervention and re-teaching or review. Embedded in the PLC work is Response to Intervention.

i. Management of Multiple Schools

The Local District is providing on-going professional development for Administrators and Teachers regarding the Common Core Standards, Standards-Aligned Instruction, universal screening, differentiated instruction, and progress monitoring to ensure that instruction is meeting student needs. Topics include conceptual lessons in math, and early literacy strategies including Lexile driven leveled reading, and text complexity. All aspects of the performance meter are monitored, and support is provided district-wide and at specific sites, as indicated through data analysis. Because the Performance Meter does not include explicit academic accountabilities for Kindergarten through Second Grade, the decision was made to create Local District goals for Kindergarten and First Grade to ensure that instruction is rigorous enough to provide students with the required academic foundation and background for proficiency by Second Grade. The Kindergarten and First Grade goals include effective use of Benchmark and Progress Monitoring assessments to design differentiated instruction, and a focus on the Common Core State Standards to increase the rigor of instruction and ensure that students are prepared for the new standards and assessments. Under the leadership of the Local Superintendent and Directors, Local District Instructional Support Personnel including ELD and Title 1 Coordinators and their teams, Content and RtI² Teams, and expert teachers from school sites are utilized to provide professional development to support schools in meeting performance meter goals, and Local District identified goals.

During the monthly Principal and Assistant Principal meetings, content and leadership professional development is provided to ensure continuous growth in instructional leadership capacity. The meetings focus on analyzing formative and summative assessment data, coaching for appropriateness to the content standards, and analyzing the rigor and relevance of student work. Administrators have the opportunity to share experiences and identify best practices for developing a strong instructional program at each school.

To ensure sufficient support and follow-up for implementation of professional development at the school sites, and at the classroom level, Elementary Directors are present for support at their designated schools on a daily basis to observe classroom instruction with the Principal, Assistant Principals, Instructional Specialists, Instructional Coaches, or other instructional support staff. The Director has frequent conversations with the team to discuss academic rigor, differentiated support for teachers, and quality of the overall instructional program. The Local Superintendent



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

joins the Directors to visit classrooms on a consistent basis. The purpose of the visits is to facilitate continuous growth in the capacity of Principals and administrators to

- observe and analyze standards-based instruction on a daily basis
- meet with teachers to reflect on their practice and improve content/ pedagogical knowledge
- evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of professional development
- collaboratively design a plan of action to improve academic achievement for all students.

Local District Instructional Support Personnel provide additional technical support through school visits, lesson studies, and professional development provided at Local District meetings and at school sites.

c. Teacher Orientation:

Ongoing professional development and grade level meetings will ensure that staff will have a shared definition of the heart of our instructional program, high-quality teaching with high expectations for student learning. Where appropriate, staff orientation will include differentiated support. In this way we aim to ensure that all staff knows how quality instruction which actively engages students is the best and most authentic preparation for the high-stakes assessment that comprises school accountability.

d. Professional Development Evaluation

West Athens Elementary believes that in order to evaluate professional development practices the evaluation process should not focus exclusively on measuring transmission skills, however ongoing evaluation of practice must value honest reflection of practice, training should emphasize the ‘appropriateness’ of teaching decisions, making sure administrators have been effective in establishing and supporting a culture of learning and inquiry and all staff will have opportunities to rethink practice and learn new skills.¹⁴

The administrators of West Athens Elementary will hold staff accountable for active participation in PLC work (i.e., the teacher role in collaboration and follow through with agreed upon actions) with evidence of student achievement from multiple assessments. Teachers will gather data to see if students are more successful on classroom assessments, such as test, quizzes, written assignments, projects and other forms of classroom work. Teachers will be taught how to judge if the results of the professional development teaching method, approach or attempt are making or not making the needed difference in everyday classroom instruction. Our Learning Community will ask questions and gather valid information to document the effects of our instructional program that is growing and responding to the needs and results we are seeing in our students.

¹⁴ Darling-Hammond, L. and McLaughlin, M. W. (1995). Policies that support professional development in an era of reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76 No. 8 pp 597–604.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

West Athens Elementary believes the most crucial process of evaluating professional development will be “assuring the improvement of student achievement.” Teachers will receive an evaluation form to complete and evaluate the effectiveness of any professional development provided them.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

B-3 Assessments and School-wide Data

a. Student Assessment Plan

The foundation of West Athens Elementary assessment philosophy is the need to move from assessment OF learning to assessment FOR learning.¹⁵ We believe that the overriding purposes of assessment are to gather evidence to inform instructional decisions. In designing such an assessment system, we are guided by Popham's definition of formative assessment as "a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures."¹⁶

Assessment of learning tells us where to start, how effective we have been and starts the conversation of where to go. The assessment of learning is the starting point for instructional decisions. What and how we deliver instruction to each child is critical to long term success and that is determined by the assessment of learning. Therefore, the chief elements of our assessment philosophy can be summarized as assessment that addresses each child ; a) deliberately planned and continually revised; b) evidence- and outcome-based; c) actionable- capable of immediate use by teachers in the classroom; and d) shared with students and parents so they understand the specific grade level goals to be reached and what needs to be done to achieve the goal.

West Athens Elementary assessment philosophies will be student-centered, providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge/skills. Teaching that embraces assessment and is seen throughout the teaching day, week, month, year is the cornerstone of our philosophy. Assessments are designed to show students' growth in measurable skills thus allowing teachers to determine their effectiveness, identify next steps and create near and longer term goals.

To gain a robust understanding of students' abilities and learning needs, we will collect data from a variety of sources. The annual state assessment guides our grade level benchmarks but other sources are essential to reach the necessary goal by year end. The primary basis of our reading assessments will be Running Records, which is based on text complexity including fluency and comprehension measures, as well as SRI. These monthly assessments will be aligned with CST results to create grade level benchmarks. Other sources include, school assessments, curriculum-based assessments, chapter tests, and classroom projects all of which should show measurable growth in specific skills as the year progresses. Multiple sources may be used but the primary source is running records and periodic assessments all aligned to the CST.

In the table below, we have summarized the battery of multiple, common assessments that will be used to measure student progress in English/Language Arts (reading, word study and writing) and Mathematics. Most of these are formative assessments aimed at providing teachers and other staff with information

¹⁵ Stiggins, R. (2005). "Assessment FOR Learning: Building a Culture of Confident Learners," in *On Common Ground: the Power of Professional Learning Communities*, Eds. Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Rebecca DuFour. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

¹⁶ Popham, J. W. (2008) *Transformative Assessment*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

“along the way” that can be used to improve student achievement and guide collaborative (PLC) planning and discussions tied to targeted academic intervention. This is the essential work of teaching. There should be few surprises in summative results because we know where we are throughout our instructional year. We can modify, redirect and supplement in accordance with student needs. The end result is fluid, responsive instruction.

School-wide Student Common Assessments in ELA and Mathematics

Content Area	Name of Assessment	Grade level	Timing/Frequency	Rationale and Purpose of Assessment
ELA Reading	DIBELS	K-5	3x/year as benchmark with monthly progress monitoring	Benchmark assessment to screen for underperforming students. Progress monitoring for struggling students
	Running Record	K-1	Bi-monthly	Progress monitoring of readability (fluency and reading comprehension). Measures the level of a student's text complexity and whether students can read with comprehension.
	Treasures Reading series	K-5	Weekly	Monitor weekly reading comprehension and fluency of students.
	Words Their Way	K-1	Monthly	Benchmark in addition to DIBELS. Measures sound symbol development. Screen students for advanced placement and early intervention.
	Core K-12	2-5	Ongoing determined by early assessments.	Assessing Standards on grade level.
	District Periodic Assessment	K-5	3x/year	Formative benchmark assessment
	CST Benchmark	2-5	Annual	Summative assessment



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

ELA– Writing	PLC developed Common Assessments	K-5	On Demand pre/post for narrative, expository and argument units of study.	This helps to determine next steps to be taken to assure students are writing on or above grade level giving the teacher and student information on where to intervene and differentiate.
Mathematics	Math Journals	1-5	Weekly	Progress monitoring
	Algebra Essential Skills	2-5	Weekly	Progress monitoring and intervention
	PLC Common Assessments	K-5	On Demand	Backbone of PLC collaboration
	Core K-12	2-5	On Demand	Tailored item analysis
	District Periodic Assessment	K-5	3x/year	Formative benchmark assessment

To gain deeper insight into students’ needs and to measure changes in students’ skills during the academic year, our teachers will collect and analyze data from multiple formative assessments that are aligned to the State and new Common Core standards, sources that are administered consistently across our school at regular intervals throughout the year (as indicated in the chart above). It is the responsibility of all teachers, to utilize the formative assessments to determine next steps during the learning process as the instruction approaches the summative assessment of student learning.

West Athens Elementary will provide additional time for teachers to understand and study common assessments, develop common grading policies based on assessment; and the inclusion of assessment writing skills across the curriculum. For example, our plan to develop students writing skills across the curriculum will be supported through the development of standards-based rubrics in writing that we develop and score collaboratively based on the content standards and common core standards. Similarly, the “Cycle of Inquiry” at the heart of our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) model for teacher collaboration and professional development (see Professional Development section) will analyze student work; developing expectations within each standard with the intent of holding students accountable for skills learned as they move through the curriculum as well as effective strategies to meet these goals.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Assessment Development

While West Athens will continue to utilize the newly aligned Periodic Assessments from the District, we will refine and strengthen existing use of teacher-developed formative assessments within each grade level PLC to provide more assessment around the standards. West Athens Elementary also intends to take advantage of new features of the district's Periodic Assessments, which allow test creation to targeted standards/strands, as well as more strategic use of item analysis. For example, the new Core K-12 system provides opportunities to augment the formative test items by content area or make customized selections.

West Athens Elementary teachers will use running records and Core Reading assessments to assess reading comprehension monthly. Based on where students are in the continuum of comprehension, teachers will triage their students, addressing each student's needs and direct instruction accordingly, be it whole group, small group, or one-on-one. Instruction is reworked and refined student by student until needs of all students are addressed and Running Records benchmarks are met.

Teacher developed assessments of specific skills will guide effectiveness of weekly instruction as well as next steps: what, how and to whom the lesson are taught. The teacher-made assessments will be created by the grade-level PLC.. The teachers will then use results of these formative assessments to re-teach specific skills required as evidenced by the students' results.

West Athens Elementary will ensure ongoing use of data and assessments to guide and modify classroom and school decisions, ensuring a cycle of continuous improvement. Our school will develop English language arts (reading), and mathematics common formative assessments in each grade-level PLC. Another area of autonomy that we plan to exercise is the development of performance-based assessments, particularly in writing. Teachers will focus their attention on how students' demonstrate and compose their knowledge in writing. With time, we aim to develop holistic and analytic rubrics across the curriculum to objectively set criteria for performance-based writing assessments that will align with common core expectations.

b. Graduation Requirements NA

c. Data Collection and Monitoring

At West Athens assessing is an on-going process; informal and formal assessment work together to create a comprehensive profile of each student. Teachers must know on a day-to-day basis where their students are in relation to the content standards to have the necessary information to instruct effectively. This is a way for teachers to identify which students can demonstrate proficiency on state content standards and to continuously assess and monitor students as part of their classroom instruction. Therefore, it will be critical for teachers to exercise keen observation, analysis, and documentation skills. Our teachers will document various forms of informal (teacher observations, running records) and formal data that will support planning, instruction and learning. Data collection will not be enough; we will also analyze the data and use it for effective planning and differentiated instruction to meet students' needs, instructors' thinking about whole group instruction, small-group instruction, and one-to-one conferencing, using teacher gathered data to plan instruction and re-teach. As growth occurs, the format of teaching evolves



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

(whole group, small group and one-on-one) addressing individual student needs. Fluidity and flexibility is the key to our success in meeting all student needs.

The systems of assessment that we have committed to developing will provide the basis for data informing teacher classroom practices, as well as providing descriptive feedback to motivate student learning. Moreover, a significant proportion of time set-aside for weekly teacher collaboration by grade-level PLC's will focus on developing appropriate targeted interventions in and out of the classroom so that struggling students receive the assistance necessary to be successful and perform at grade-level. As academic challenges are identified, curricular adjustments and professional development will occur.

Moreover, school-wide professional development on data analysis of standards and skills will emphasize genuinely using data for effective differentiation and scaffolding. In this way, West Athens Elementary is committed to building a responsive and anticipatory school culture, driven by holistic assessment (diagnostic, benchmark, summative, etc.) disaggregated by standards/skills and student subgroups. West Athens Elementary will be authentically data-driven in their use of data to:

- Create a school culture that embraces the effective use of data to as a means to improve student performance by systematically organizing and presenting data in way that identifies gaps and trends in student performance and requires purposeful and intentional decisions regarding curriculum and instruction, intervention, and professional development
- Set measurable goals for each grade-level, subject area, subgroups, and individual student
- Inform individual students and parents of learning gaps and measurable progress
- Identify effective instructional practices, as well as correct gaps in instructional delivery

Three key premises will guide data collection and monitoring at West Athens Elementary:

1. There must be provision of a user-friendly set of formative, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments that reflect the standards and curriculum.
2. Data systems must be both meaningful and actionable in order to track student achievement and to inform key decisions. Staff must have immediate access to the data that are most needed and useful and receive training about data use and data systems as needed.
3. School leaders, teachers, students, and parents must discuss assessment results openly and honestly in large-group, small-group, and individual meetings.

West Athens Elementary will identify the student achievement data needed to determine if students are making progress toward the attainment of their priority goals.

Assessment and data will serve as the foundation for making instructional decisions at the school, grade-level, classroom, and individual levels. To facilitate this, each PLC will be responsible for meeting monthly to analyze data from multiple data sources that include District Benchmark, State Assessments, DIBELS, Running Records, and other common formative assessments, to identify strengths of learning and obstacles to student learning and determine instructional research-based instructional strategies that



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

will best address their students and learning objectives. The PLC will be responsible for reconvening teachers to analyze the effectiveness of the instructional strategies selected and implemented. Each grade-level PLC will meet weekly to analyze results of the curriculum assessments and their collaborative lessons/assessments. They will discuss what to do for intervention and what changes need to take place for those not performing to expectations. They will modify their curriculum as needed and adjust their delivery of instruction based on what the data shows regarding which strategies are working in assisting students to master the standards. In addition, professional development will be differentiated based on the results of the data collected, by monitoring each grade-level PLC lessons and assessments, to insure professional development is effectively meeting teachers' instructional needs.

In addition, all teachers will also be trained and expected to use My Data. We intend this data platform to enable individual teachers to get to know each student's data profile and, so personalize the delivery of instruction. This data will be the key to tracking the progress of students referred for academic interventions in our system of tiered intervention.

In sum, data will be the starting point for reflecting on what students have learned, the true measure of what has been taught. All Stakeholders will be accountable for and take responsibility for improved student outcomes. Moreover, teachers will be expected to analyze data on their students before coming together for structured collaboration so their combined time is focused on devising collective, strategic responses to student learning needs based on data.

i. Management of Multiple Schools

LAUSD Performance Meter Goals are monitored, with the most recent data provided to all administrators, at monthly Principals' Meetings. During RtI² meetings, Title I and ELD meetings, the progress toward the goals for Kindergarten and Grade 1 is also analyzed using the schools' DIBELS data as well as observational data, Periodic Assessment data, and additional school-made progress monitoring data.

The monthly principals' meetings are also used to review and analyze CST, API and AYP data to determine action steps for meeting the Performance Meter and NCLB targets. Information from Benchmark and Progress Monitoring assessments, as well as Core K-12, and Periodic Assessments in Literacy and Mathematics are also used to drive the formulation of action plans. At every meeting, each school receives updated data for all schools for Attendance, Suspension, and Reclassification. All schools have received, or are currently in the process of receiving, Professional Development in the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²) Problem Solving Model. At RtI² Professional Development, as well as through on-going technical assistance provided by the Local District RtI² Team, schools are assisted with application of the problem solving process to address targeted school goals identified through data analysis.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Category Two: School Culture, Climate, and Infrastructure

B-4 School Culture and Climate

a. Description of School Culture

The school administration will develop an atmosphere of trust and respect through shared decision-making with staff and families. The administrator will model and establish a positive school culture that promotes learning and engagement of all students. Time, resources, and personnel will be provided to develop and foster the teaching /professional skills of the teachers and instructional aides. Teachers will be encouraged to work in professional learning communities, initially at each grade level, to review and analyze data, to design and evaluate lessons and read about and upon reflect on best practices.

There will be a strong emphasis on professional development so that West Athens teachers can be active contributors to their professional educational community. Teachers will develop and implement a school-wide behavior policy, receive training on such behavior modification strategies, such as Tribes, Second Step, the Three Bees, and intervention programs available for students with profound emotional needs. All staff will enforce acceptable behavior standards and provide appropriate incentives and awards for students in the classroom as well as school-wide. Frequent communication with parents will be key to the success of the behavior policy at West Athens.

Students will be empowered to take responsibility for their own actions and be an integral part of maintaining a safe and inviting learning environment. Respect for self and others will be a priority. This will be accomplished through the use of the Tribes program and the “Three Bee Plan”: Be safe, be respectful, be responsible. Students will participate in a Safe and Civil Committee along with teacher sponsors. They will serve as play leaders, safeties on the yard, in the hallways, and in the restrooms. Monthly award and recognition assemblies will provide incentives for academics, attendance and positive behavior; “caught being good” vouchers, student of the month, and blue card awards for those who followed the Three Bees, to be given to one student per classroom each week, are a few of the actions designed to foster a safe learning environment at West Athens Elementary School. At behavior assemblies, students will role play situations and appropriate problem solving strategies. A Student Store will be available for students to purchase school items with the blue cards and “caught being good” vouchers. Assemblies will be held to celebrate academic success in reading, math and for English Language Learners who redesignate. Students will be encouraged to come to school every day, to arrive on time, to wear school uniforms, and to perform their best in their classrooms.

Students will be nurtured and supported through intervention strategies and a rigorous curriculum designed for students to perform to their highest potential. Operation Hope, a literacy pilot program will provide incentives for student to develop effective reading skills. An after school homework program will assist students successfully complete their homework. RTI will be used within classes at each grade level. Through on-going classroom assignments in reading, writing, problem-solving, critical thinking and speaking and appropriate homework, every student will be held accountable and encouraged to do his/her best. All students will be offered sufficient learning opportunities to master key competencies and skills.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Our program will promote the development of and encourage the use of academic language. Proficiency in grade level standards and CST results will be the central focus of the academic program at West Athens. The EL redesignation rate will increase as a result of the use of leveled readers and intervention.

Consequences will be established for those who choose to violate the school behavior policy. A committee of staff, parents and students will meet and design a tiered consequence so that suspension would be the last action observed when a student violates the policy. There will be zero tolerance for fighting, destruction of school property and defiance. Parent conferences with teacher and student, loss of privileges, and administrator/parent conference are among the consequences designed to stop negative behavior and encourage positive interaction with others.

i. Management of Multiple Schools

Local District Professional Development structures provide new learning as well as the sharing of best practices among teachers, principals, and leadership teams to support the professional growth of all school team members. In addition to content and pedagogy, the shared learning contributes to the building of school climate and culture focused on student achievement.

During Principals' meetings and additional professional developments, Principals and School Teams are strategically grouped. Schools with similar demographics but disparate API scores work together to share challenges and best practices, allowing the less successful schools to learn about strategies that are working with similar student populations.

Teachers are also provided with the opportunity to network and learn about best practices at similar schools. Teachers who have demonstrated success with academic growth are utilized to facilitate professional developments for conceptual lessons in mathematics, early literacy skills (Words Their Way, Guided Reading, Text Complexity), Differentiated Instruction, and Intervention strategies. Multiple schools collaborate to participate in these professional developments.

Additional Culture and Climate Indicators, including student and teacher attendance, and student suspension rates and disproportionality, are reviewed at monthly principal meetings. Central and Local District personnel often attend to address topics such as RtI² support for academics, attitude, and attendance. The unwavering focus on student achievement is modeled and supported as a Local District Culture to be replicated at each school site.

b. Student Support and Success:

Parents are an integral part of a child's learning and, as such, will be embraced and welcomed as participants in their child's educational program at West Athens. Parents will receive the school discipline policy at the beginning of the school year and will be asked to review it at home. Flyers will be sent home three times a year showing parents how to use the Three Bees at home. Through parent meetings, parent education classes, a parent center, ELAC, CEAC and SSC meetings, and parent newsletters, West Athens Elementary School parents will be encouraged to be actively involved in school and support learning not only at school but also in the home. Through the parent center and parent workshops, effective family,



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

school, and community partnerships will be formed that will support student achievement at West Athens Elementary School. Communication through school the school marquee, newsletters, flyers, connect education and the school web site will be open, clear, and transparent. Parent conferences, back-to-school night, open house, family literacy nights, and family math nights are a few of the avenues of communication and parent training available to West Athens parents. Parents will be invited to attend student study teams and help design effective instructional and behavioral modifications for a child who may be performing below basic or exhibits behavioral problems. A parent satisfaction survey will be disseminated quarterly as a means of assessing the effectiveness of the educational program at West Athens Elementary School.

It is important that all students have access to materials that are differentiated. Classrooms will be structured so that the individual needs of students are addressed such as leveled readers, center activities, and small group instruction. These types of resources We will strengthen academic progress and support our overall mission to promote excellence by working collaboratively to provide programs that promote student, parent, and community participation including: back to school night, open house, literacy and math family night, parent workshops, differentiated intervention, and book fairs. **The high expectations for the success of all students will be reinforced by:**

- Providing differentiation of instruction especially during workshop
- Progress monitoring to meet individual needs
- Planned and targeted professional development
- Weekly grade level planning
- Monthly parent meetings
- Monthly newsletter
- Periodic review of behavioral and academic data to allow for on-going modifications.

Students will be provided with the opportunity to wear school uniforms. The West Athens community has a high rate of gang activity and violence. We believe that school uniforms will lessen gang activity and make it safer for students to walk to school.

West Athens Elementary School is currently in year 3 of our operational grant with Healthy Start. Healthy Start contributes directly to the students by providing linkage for such services as, mental health assessments and counseling, after school programs, and youth development.

c. Social and Emotional Needs:

The emotional needs of students will be addressed on an on-going basis using Student Study Teams, Didi Hirsch/Starview (a program that deals with students displaying severe emotional behavior), Healthy Start, the school counselor, nurse and school psychologist. A crisis intervention team will be developed and immediately available when needed. Teachers will receive training on the COST referral form and how to use it effectively.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

d. College and Career Readiness:

Activities will expose students to the world of college and the importance of doing well in school. An annual career day will provide speakers from various professions and careers and reveal the wealth of opportunities awaiting students after high school and college or vocational education. School journeys to nearby college campuses will be arranged. Classroom teachers will display college paraphernalia in the classroom. Staff members who are in an advanced degree program will share with students that learning is a lifelong process. A monthly college day will feature a specific college on a central bulletin board. Teachers will bring their diplomas and show them to their students. Parents will be invited to participate in all of the above listed activities.

e. School Calendar

In accordance with Local Initiative School Authority #5 Local Instructional Schedules and Strategies, West Athens Elementary School will extend their school day an additional five (5) minutes in order to bank time, and add an additional hour per week of grade level planning. The school will follow the Los Angeles Unified School District established school year calendar. School will begin and 8:00 A.M. and end at 2:25 P.M.

Proposal: Extend required on site school hours for teachers. In addition to general staff development, we will use an additional one hour per week.

1. An additional 5 minutes per day will be banked in order to have every Tuesday, as Bank Time Tuesday. This will create a consistent schedule for parents, students, and staff through the entire school year. (Local Initiative School Authority #5)
2. Teachers will commit to an additional hour on site, every Thursday, in order to plan and meet with their grade level teams. This commitment will take place through the entire school year. (Local Initiative School Authority #5)

To be implemented: 2012--2013 school year

Rationale: Our goal is to create a professional learning community that works collaboratively to maximize student achievement. An effective professional learning community requires additional time to analyze the four essential questions. To have an effective learning community, we require the additional hours of collaboration to: plan, assess, analyze data and monitor student achievement.

The extended day for teachers aligns with our goal of maximizing student achievement. An increased amount time for collaboration will facilitate improved instructional practice, more effective use of data, greater continuity within grade-levels, team building and increased professional capacity. The benefits of a professional learning community led to greater student achievement because of the staff's increased professional capacity.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

f. Policies

The behavior policy will promote positivity as opposed to being punitive. Students will be given opportunities to learn from their mistakes. Our mission will be to guide students in understanding why they make certain choices and provide examples of different choices they could make in the future. We want students to understand that reflection of oneself is a powerful tool that can foster the best learning experiences. Programs such as Second Step will be used to guide students in making wise choices.

All students are expected to know, understand, and follow the school rules which are to be safe, respectful, and responsible. In a consistent effort to support positive behavior, students will be given school-wide and suggested classroom opportunities to earn rewards as indicated in the charts below.

School-wide Rewards Program

Suggested Classroom Rewards Program

Playground	Students who display excellent behavior and follow school rules will receive eagle bucks. These bucks can be entered into the weekly prize raffle.	Class	When the entire class displays positive behavior they will receive marble points. When the marble jar is full, the class will receive a marble treat.
Cafeteria	Students who follow the lunch area rules will receive table points. Table points can be used to gain more play time.	Groups	When a group is engaged and trying their best, they will receive a point. The group with the most points at the end of the week gets stickers.
Classroom	The classroom that has the least amount of referrals for the week will receive a shining star. Students who are caught being good will also get shining stars. When a class earns 25 shining stars they are announced in the morning assembly and given a popcorn party.	Individual	Each student will be given a popsicle stick point for every day that they displayed excellent behavior and tried his/her best. The students that have at least four sticks at the end of the week will be allowed to get a prize from the treasure chest.

It is important for students to know that inappropriate behaviors have consequences. All students should feel confident that someone will take the time to listen to what they have to say and provide solutions to help them resolve the problem. Our goal is to ensure that consequences are fair and reflect the action.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Furthermore, students must understand why their actions were not a wise choice. Students will be required to complete a brief survey that helps them understand their actions. This reflection period allows the student to express his/her feelings and offer any possible explanations for the action. After the student has had time to complete the form and think about his/her actions, there will be a brief meeting with an administrator or counselor.

Teachers will be trained in appropriate ways to handle different behaviors. The goal is to minimize classroom interruptions while making sure that students are only sent to the office when specific steps have been followed.

West Athens Elementary School retention and graduation policy reflect high academic expectations. Starting in grade 1, students who fail to attain the minimum requirements for promotion may be retained. We will ensure that several scaffolds have been put in place before retention is offered so that at risk students will have been given sufficient opportunity to improve academically. These scaffolds include:

- Early and ongoing documented communication with parents of at risk students.
- West Athens based or outside intervention opportunities
- Collaboration between parents and West Athens (SST) Student Study Team
- Tier 3 instruction with homeroom teacher and/or another teacher within the grade level



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

B-5 Parent and Community Engagement

a. Background

West Athens Elementary is located in a densely populated unincorporated area in South Los Angeles with extreme poverty and violence. Thirty-five percent of the families in the community live below poverty level. Sixty-six percent of the housing units are renter-occupied (compared to 33% in the U.S.). The median family income is 52% lower than the national average. Violent crime is a part of the students' daily lives. The West Athens neighborhoods experience a 250% higher rate of homicide than Los Angeles County. Our student population is ethnically diverse with 26.8% African American, and 71.6% Hispanic or Latino. Fifty-two percent of students are English Learners, and 91% are eligible for Free & Reduced Price Meals. A large number of West Athens students reside in out-of-home placements.

West Athens Elementary School combined with the West Athens Community Collaborative is a team of multi-disciplinary professionals; whose mission is to enhance the accessibility of community health and social services for the students, their families and local community members.

The West Athens Community Collaborative, through an extensive needs assessment and planning efforts for the Healthy Start Grant, determined that this initiative's goal is to create a school-community collaboration that will enhance and coordinate resources in order to bolster critical learning support services, to accentuate student and academic achievement, and remove the barriers to education. Our efforts will lead to the following outcomes:

- 1) Improved health status of children and their families;
- 2) Improved behavior of children;
- 3) Enhanced students' feeling of safety in and around school; and
- 4) Improved academic achievement/youth development

b. Strategies

Research has shown that families are important educators of their children. Family and community involvement in education makes a difference in a student's achievement at school and in life. West Athens plans to sponsor community and family involvement activities to improve student learning and to support effective school performance through family, school, and community partnerships.

The following are activities of our family and community engagement:

- CEAC Advisory Committee
- ELAC Advisory Committee
- Parent Workshops
- Back to School Night
- Open House
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Career Day



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- Winter/Spring Program
- Harvest Festival
- Grade Level Parent Representatives
- Family Literacy Night
- Math Family Night
- Mobile Health Clinics
- School Newsletters
- School Flyers
- Connect Ed
- Student Letters

West Athens has three committees for share in the decisions. English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) focuses on strategies to help English Learners pass the reclassification process. The Compensatory Education Advisory Committee (CEAC) designs ways for students from low socio-economic backgrounds to advance academically. The School Site Council (SSC) makes decisions on school schedules and budgets and runs the nominations of the Chapter Chair.

An operational grant from the California Department of Education, under Senate Bill 620 was obtained by West Athens Elementary and is currently being implemented by the school staff and collaborative partners. The Healthy Start Program serves as a model program that provides resources to school districts and communities so they can develop comprehensive support services to children and families at or near school sites. This provides an ideal setting where families can learn and grow alongside their children. The programs promote academic support for students in the school and community. Healthy Start creates a resource and referral network between families and service-providing agencies. Healthy Start works as the hub of the network system, connecting families with services. The Healthy Start Family Resource Center (FRC) is the place where parents, students, teachers, and community members identify the services needed.

In addition to the implementation of the Healthy Start Program on campus, West Athens Elementary has adopted the Principles of Family Support Practice and incorporated them into the daily operations of the school. The principles are as follows:

- 1) Staff and families work together in relationships based on equality and respect.
- 2) Staff enhances families' capacity to support the growth and development of all family members – adults, youth, and children.
- 3) Families are resources to their own members, to other families, to programs, and to communities.
- 4) Programs affirm and strengthen families' cultural, racial, and linguistic identities and enhance their ability to function in a multicultural society.
- 5) Programs are embedded in their communities and contribute to the community-building process.
- 6) Programs advocate with families for services and systems that are fair, responsive, and accountable to the families served.
- 7) Practitioners work with families to mobilize formal and informal resources to support family development.
- 8) Programs are flexible and continually responsive to emerging family and community issues.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- 9) Principles of family support are modeled in all program activities, including planning, governance, and administration.

The placement of the Family Resource Center on campus is the key to ensuring that all students' families' community members receive continual information about the services, activities available, and immediate access to all in an environment that is familiar and comfortable.

The current service delivery system provides for identification of students and families that require case management services. Effective service plans are created with active family participation, with each family having decision-making power at every point.

The case management team will help the student or family member evaluate the existing situation and formulate a concept of where they want to be within a given time frame. Based on this analysis, a set of time-limited goals and an individualized action plan will be developed together. The case manager will make referrals to appropriate agencies of school support systems, coordinate efforts of multiple service providers, and monitor a student's use of services and progress toward goals.

This strategy has several important advantages beyond the financial. It: 1) increases the involvement of parents as providers as well as consumers of services; 2) ensures that services are culturally and linguistically appropriate; and 3) provides opportunities to develop skills and leadership abilities that contribute to improve the well-being for families and the community. Families with choices become active in making good decisions that in turn create harmony in the community and reduce the violence.

The staff in the FRC compiles copies of all referrals, follow-up records, and uses a database to monitor individual cases and activities. This capability is crucial to ensure there is no duplication of services as well as maintaining client confidentiality.

The case management system, with its tight coordination of services and regular tracking of outcomes, responds directly to the prioritized results targeted by the West Athens Collaborative. The causes, consequences and relationships of the identified needs confirm that students with the greatest academic difficulties are struggling with a complex set of personal and family problems. This case management system targets these students and families and addresses their needs through a holistic service delivery system that is coordinated and sustained.

West Athens' principal discussed student's and parent's needs at School Site Council, Bilingual Council, and Title I Council. The wellness coordinator participated in the broader Safe Schools Healthy Students collaborative which includes Centinela Youth Services, Catholic Big Brothers Big Sisters, Department of Mental Health, LAUSD foster care liaison, as well as parents and teachers. The school counselor held informal discussion groups with parents volunteering in the parenting center throughout the year.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

c. Key Community Partnerships

The Healthy Start coordinator will convene a monthly collaborative meeting that includes an executive board. The executive board consists of members of the collaborative who will be charged with seeking additional funding from state, federal, and local district funding in addition to local corporations, and private foundations. Catholic Big Brothers Big Sisters for example, is a member of a mentoring collaborative in Pasadena who are seeking grants together to fund mentoring services in that area. They have agreed to do the same for the West Athens collaborative.

The planning process created partnerships that will endure regardless of grant funding. Collaborative partners have made commitments to a process that will achieve long-term stability through strategies and processes that extend beyond the four years of Healthy Start operational funding. Sustainability will be ensured through a consistent focus on developing and maintaining strong, mutually beneficial relationships and on redesigning the systems that support the school-community. The evaluation/sustainability task force will work together with Helen Keller Park and other partners to expand corporate sponsorships of joint programs. The Collaborative will continue an ongoing process of needs assessment, identifying strengths, resource reconfiguration and realignment, and ongoing data collection and analysis. This process will enable organizers to match service needs with additional funding opportunities that become available through public and private sources.

The West Athens Healthy Start Community and Family Resource Center (FRC) is designed to serve children, their families, and the community. The FRC provides comprehensive community services that are carefully integrated into existing school services and activities to meet the desired results identified by students, parents, school staff, and community members. The goals of Healthy Start include: Ensuring that each child receives the physical, emotional, and intellectual support that he or she needs – in school, at home, and in the community – to learn well.

Building the capacity of students and parents to be participants, leaders, and decision-makers in their communities is the mission of West Athens Elementary School.. Helping schools and other child and family-serving agencies to recognize, streamline, and integrate their programs to provide more effective support to children and their families. Concerned people who believe accessibility to community and social services for students and families is imperative for student academics, social achievement, and family harmony.

These services and activities include the following and are subject to change based on school and community need:

- Academic/education (tutoring, mentoring, dropout prevention, adult education and staff training)
- Youth Development Services (tutoring, employment, community services, recreation, and sports)
- Family Support (child protection, parenting education, English as a second language (ESL), citizenship classes, child care, case management, child abuse prevention, and family advocacy)
- Basic Needs (supplemental food on an as needed basis, three food give-aways annually, nutrition education services, clothing shelter/housing, transportation, and legal assistance)



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

- Medical/Health Care (vision, hearing, dental, CHDP, acute care, preventative health care, and healthy insurance)
- Mental Health Care and Counseling (individual and family counseling, group therapy, support groups, and substance abuse prevention)
- Employment (career counseling, job placement, economic security, job preparation and development)



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Category Three: Leadership that Supports High Achievement for Students and Staff

B-6 School Governance and Oversight

a. School Type

In accordance with our mission and vision, the school governance will be founded on a model of distributive leadership. All stakeholders (students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents and community) will share in the responsibility of promoting communication, planning evaluation, and accountability. This model draws on the experience of all stakeholders and establishes and monitors high goals for student learning and achievement. West Athens' school philosophy is student centered and student needs are the driving force for all decisions and actions. The following committees will contribute to shared decision making policies.

b. School Level Committees

School Site Council (SSC)

The SSC is the decision-making council for programs funded through categorical monies. These programs are to improve student achievement. The SSC will develop and approve the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) in consultation with all stakeholders. The council is comprised of the principal, classroom teachers, other school personnel, parents, and community members. The team will meet at least six times a year to make revisions to the Single Plan for Student Achievement, and analyze student achievement data to make adjustments in the spending of categorical money. The team will conduct an annual needs assessment.

English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)

The function of the ELAC is to advise and make recommendations in writing to the principal and SSC on the development of an effective educational program and plan which raises student achievement of English Language Learners (ELL). The ELAC will be comprised of parents and legal guardians of ELL, certificated and classified staff, community members, and school support groups. The committee will meet at least six times a year to analyze student achievement data and make recommendations to the SSC. Legally, the committee must advise and make recommendations to assist in the development of: 1.) The SPSA as it relates to ELL, 2.) the needs assessment of the school, 3.) the language census of the school and 4.) efforts to notify parents of the importance of regular school attendance.

Compensatory Education Advisory Committee (CEAC)

The function of the CEAC is to advise and make recommendations in writing to the SSC on the development of an effective educational program and plan which raises student achievement of the economically disadvantaged students. The CEAC will be comprised of parents and legal guardians of identified Title 1 students, certificated and classified staff, community members, and school support groups. The committee will meet at least six times a year to analyze student achievement data and make recommendations to the SSC.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Grade-Level Chairpersons

Meetings with grade level chairpersons will directly influence topics which are discussed as well as decisions that are made by SSC. Grade level chairperson will also facilitate discussions about data analysis and planning meeting on a weekly basis to ensure high quality teaching and improved student performance. Administrator, grade-level chairpersons, teachers and instructional staff will conduct regular, focused classroom observations to provide constructive feedback to teacher. Teachers will participate in peer coaching, lesson study and sharing of best practices among colleagues.

Curriculum and Instruction/Professional Development Committee

Responsible for supporting and assessing the PSC plan as it relates to curriculum, instruction, and professional development.

Positive Behavior Support/Safe and Civil School

The function of the committee of representative stakeholders will be responsible for implementing program to sustain a positive and safe school culture.

School-wide Safety Committee

The function of the committee of representative stakeholders responsible for implementing the school's Safety Plan.

Grant Writing Committee

The function of the grant writing meeting will be to identify funding sources and write grants to support improving student achievement, attendance, and behavior.

Social Committee

The function of the social committee will be to create a sense of community and uplift morale among all employees.

c. Governing Council: NA



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

B-7 School Leadership

a. Principal Selection

The principal of West Athens Elementary School will be a dynamic school leader, actively leading the effective implementation of their PSC plan while respectfully honoring all stakeholders in a collaborative and supportive school culture. The distributed leadership model will mobilize the expertise and talent of the staff and community to deliver the richest educational experience to all leader who is receptive to all viewpoints, able to assess each situation and act in a consistent manner in keeping with the mission and vision of the school. This leader will be knowledgeable of the curriculum, effective teaching pedagogy strategies, assessment, and operations, and will work to support the highest quality teaching and learning in every classroom. School leadership will ensure that West Athens will be a safe, nurturing, and collaborative educational environment with high expectations that fosters independent student learning, values effort, and champions social justice.

The following skills and attributes will be considered in selecting a principal at West Athens:

- Shared beliefs (consistent with school vision)
- Flexible
- Collaborative
- Effective oral and written communication skills as advocate/spokesperson for the school
- Knowledgeable about the curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Focused
- Disciplined
- Intellectually skilled
- Highly visible
- Affirmative, up-beat
- Inspiring
- Creative in problem-solving
- Connected to community and business

A deep understanding of the connection between the local and global communities is paramount for this principal. The individual should demonstrate a track record of past performance in the area of student growth, academic achievement in math and English language arts, and the ability to establish and achieve goals. This person should also possess a commitment to the ideals of social justice that the school's namesake exemplified. A clear understanding of the myriad challenges a student in this community faces in successfully completing an education path to college and beyond is also necessary.

The job description for the principal will center on the **LAUSD School Leadership Framework** and its six standards: 1) A shared vision based on student needs, current education research and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels; 2) Supervision of instruction involving ongoing, coherent guidance for implementation and continuous improvement of teaching and learning; 3) Investing in teacher quality involving an ongoing commitment by school leaders to work collaboratively toward the development of highly effective teachers; 4) Culture of learning and positive behavior reflecting high expectations



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

modeled by the school leadership and embraced by the entire school community; 5) Family and community engagement involving collaborating with family and community partners to promote the success of all students; and 6) Systems and operations ensuring that there are structures and processes in place to assess the school's needs and align resources allocation to drive school improvement. In addition to these characteristics, the principal must have a solid commitment and understanding of the State and Common Core State Standards.

A letter of intent, letters of recommendation, resume, evidence of prior accomplishments, and a check of references will be key components in principal selection. A separate element in the evaluative toolkit will be an annual reflective piece for the school principal centered on the six standards of the LAUSD School Leadership Framework. Elements will include school-wide standardized test scores, participation in community-based activities, connection with community partners, effective collaboration with teachers and parents, and creation of a positive and nurturing school culture.

b. Leadership Team

West Athens Elementary School will use its leadership team for making decisions impacting curriculum, instruction and assessment. This leadership team will be comprised of the principal, assistant principal, out classroom support staff and grade level chairs. The team will meet on a bi-monthly basis to review both formative and summative indicators of achievement, and then plan and coordinate the dissemination of data to PLC's organized by academic team support and monitor school improvement.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

B-8. Staff Recruitment and Evaluation

a. Staffing Model

In accordance with Local Initiative School Authority Waiver#10, West Athens Elementary School teachers will select their grade level in the spring of 2012 and commit to their grade level for the duration of this plan, three years.

Rationale: Teachers will gain a deeper understanding of the core curriculum, build deeper relationships, and become more knowledgeable of curriculum standards. This will also allow the opportunity for grade level teams to develop into professional learning communities (PLC) and exhibit the behaviors of a true PLC, which is the belief that all students can and will learn.

The school will be staffed initially with the numbers of staff normally allocated to elementary schools in LAUSD. Meeting the needs of the whole child, especially the social emotional needs, is essential for the academic success of our students. Class size reduction teachers may be added, to the extent that funding allows. Additionally, intervention coordinators will be utilized for targeted intervention. It is our intent to establish the School Site Council to take advantage of the categorical funding.

Academic (Certificated)	Non-Academic (Classified)
Principal	School Administrative Assistant (1)
AP-EIS (Part-Time)	Office Technicians (2)
K-3 rd teachers	Healthy Start /Student Support Coordinator (1)
4th-5th teachers	Wellness Facilitator (1)
Pre-K Teachers (15 to 1)	Counselor Aide (1)
Bilingual Coordinator	Building & Grounds Workers (2)
Title 1 Coordinator	Plant Manager (1)
Title 3 Access to Core Coach	Cafeteria Manager (1)
Intervention (2)	Cafeteria Workers (2)
Intervention Coordinator (2)	Campus Supervision (4)
Counselor	Special Education Assistants (5)
School Psychologist	Paraprofessionals (4)
Nurse	Parent/Community Representative (1)
PSA (Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor) Part-time	Library Aide (1)
Resource Specialist Teacher	Psychiatric Social Worker (1)
Orchestra Teacher (1)	Share & Care Counselor (1)

b. Recruitment and Selection of Teachers

The West Athens Elementary School will provide all students with a high-quality, rigorous academic education, featuring best first instruction coupled with high expectations. In addition, teachers at this



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

school will ensure that diverse student learning needs, particularly those of English learners, are met with differentiated and research-based pedagogy. The mission and vision of the school centers on collaboration, and the valuing of effort, all qualities a West Athens teacher must embrace. Since the most important factor in the success of a school is the quality of its teachers. The goal is to ensure that the best become part of the West Athens faculty.

Teacher candidates must exhibit a strong commitment to the school, the community, and the PSC plan. The job description is based on the ***LAUSD Framework for Teaching***: Standard 1) Planning and Preparation; Standard 2) Classroom Environment; Standard 3) Instruction; Standard 4) Additional Professional Responsibilities; and Standard 5) Professional Growth. In addition to the specifics of each of these standards, candidates should be willing to serve on school-wide committees to support our leadership model in order to share the responsibility for the school's success.

The process of selecting teachers for West Athens Elementary School will be similar to that of principal selection, with the committee reaching out to the LAUSD, county, and university communities to attract qualified candidates. The Personnel/Staff Selection Committee will require a letter of intent, letters of recommendation, a resume, and evidence of the following: knowledge of content, pedagogy, and lesson-planning; management of routines, procedures, and student behavior; student progress-monitoring and intervention; communicating with families; and collaboration with colleagues.

Candidates must demonstrate the ability to plan and deliver a standards based lesson by conducting a demonstration lesson with students or the selection committee, submitting a video, or explaining the steps he/she would take to plan and deliver a lesson.

An committee-created evaluative toolkit, containing job announcement flyers, job descriptions, interview questions, and rubrics for application packets and interviews, will aid in the fair and unbiased screening of candidates. West Athens will use its staffing autonomy to find and retain the best possible teachers and staff to ensure the successful implementation of the PSC plan.

c. Performance Reviews

West Athens is committed to implementing the UTLA-LAUSD contracted method of staff evaluation. In addition to the requirements set down by the district, West Athens will further support improved instruction by implementing Lesson Study, a method by which teachers, working in small groups, plan, and observe each other teaching and participating in feedback sessions aimed at supporting student achievement. This collaborative, collegial approach to classroom observation will support an open and honest reflective process. The staff will participate annually on a school reflection aimed at assessing the progress the school has made and setting goals for the coming school year. This yearly assessment process will also feature stakeholder surveys and structured conversations that will focus on school improvement in the areas of instruction, communication, operations, and school culture.

B-9: Sharing a Campus NA



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

C-1 Internal Management

a. Waivers

Local Initiative School Authority Waivers have been specified and noted in this proposal.

C-2 Budget Development

We plan to establish an academic environment that will educate, challenge, and inspire students to achieve at high levels of academic proficiency and excellence in relation to state and national standards. The school will use the appropriate data to assess the effectiveness of expenditures and guide future decisions in a cycle of continuous improvement in student achievement. West Athens Elementary School will receive funding via Los Angeles Unified School District's transparent budgeting process. Additionally, West Athens will receive categorical funding from Title 1, Bilingual and Special Education. The School Site Council (SSC) is ultimately responsible for creating and approving the annual school budgets for categorical and grant funded programs with recommendations from the CEAC and ELAC parent advisory councils.

The active grant writing team consists of the principal/designee and representatives of the School Leadership Council. We will seek out and apply for grants in a wide variety of venues including teacher grants. Some benefits of the transparent budgeting per pupil funding for West Athens Elementary School will be the following:

- A transparent budget that clearly shows the funds the school receives and the school site spending decisions that are made by stakeholders.
- A flexible budget that allows the school to make decisions about budgets which traditionally are made centrally.

Priorities for Funding

Year 1

The primary goal will be to add and update the technology at the school site, this includes document readers; computers for classrooms; as well as on going professional development to bridge technology with student achievement. As stated in our vision and mission through the use of assessment, i.e., DIBELS.

Year 2

We will continue to purchase technology for the school site. Professional development opportunities that involve a major commitment of funds include: Balanced Literacy (Units of Study Writing Training and Leveled Reading), Professional books to deepen teacher pedagogy during professional development meetings, i.e., DuFour (PLCs) and Marzano (effective strategies), Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) training for sharpening SDAIE skills.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

Year 3

In year 3 the commitment will be to continue upgrading the school's technology; ongoing professional development in the use of technology; professional readings and / or conferences to deepen teacher pedagogy; and staffing in order to meet the needs of the whole child.



Local District 8

West Athens Elementary School

D-1 Operational Management

a. Portfolio Evaluation

The Performance Meter Goals, effective progress monitoring, differentiating instruction, and alignment of Kindergarten instruction with the Common Core Standards have been identified through the data as key focus areas in Local District 8. These areas are addressed district-wide through on-going professional development of administrators and teachers. Implementation and results are assessed through analysis of the progress monitoring data at the regularly scheduled meetings, as well as the daily observations at school sites.