

## LETTER OF INTENT (UPDATED)

The Letter of Intent will provide formal notice to LAUSD regarding an applicant's intention to submit a proposal to operate a school on one of the new campuses or one of the Focus Schools mentioned above beginning in September 2011. The information presented therein is non-binding; specific details provided below may be finalized in the proposal submission.

Applicants must submit this Letter of Intent no later than **6:00pm on Wednesday, June 30, 2010**. If you have any questions about any of the requirements listed in the Letter of Intent, please contact LAUSD at 213.241.5104. Letters of Intent must be submitted to [psc@lausd.net](mailto:psc@lausd.net).

APPLICANT TEAM INFORMATION			
<b>Name of Applicant Team</b> <i>(If you are an organization, please include the legal name of the organization. If you are an internal applicant team, please list the name of the primary contact person.)</i> Local District 7 - John Muir Middle School and Miranda Ra'oof , Principal			
<b>Address:</b>		<b>Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Website</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>		<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>School site for which your team is submitting a Letter of Intent</b>		John Muir Middle School	
<b>School type for which your team is applying</b>		Traditional School	
<b>List the name and contact information of your design team members below:</b>			
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Email address:</b>	<b>School/Affiliation</b>
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2. Jacqueline Carlyle			John Muir MS
3. Miranda Conston-Ra'oof			John Muir MS
4. Phuongthao Dinh			John Muir MS
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**PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE 2.0**

**APPLICATION**

**FOR**

**JOHN MUIR MIDDLE SCHOOL**



**SUBMITTED BY:**

**LOCAL DISTRICT 7 - JOHN MUIR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND**

**MIRANDA RA'OOF, PRINCIPAL**

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## SECTION ONE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

John Muir Middle School's Public School Choice 2.0 Design Team – consisting of a representative mix of administrators and teachers – worked closely with the teachers, staff, and administrators to develop and refine the school's vision, mission, core beliefs and values in 2010. The new elements – as well as the intellectual habits of mind, essential skills, knowledge and attributes students will possess upon matriculation – are defined below.

#### **Vision**

John Muir Middle School will develop students who are caring, thoughtful, productive, and creative citizens who are excited about learning and well prepared for high school and success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### **Mission**

John Muir Middle School is committed to providing and sustaining a nurturing environment that promotes academic achievement, diversity, respect, self-esteem and the skills and knowledge for students to become life-long learners and successful adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### **Core Beliefs**

The core belief of the John Muir school community is that all children can and will learn. What students learn and the extent to which they learn depends on the beliefs, expertise and practices of all the members of the school community, including the administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and students. We believe that:

- Every member of the school community is responsible for teaching and student success.
- Members of the school community must hold high expectations with clear objectives to ensure student achievement.
- Strong parent and community involvement is necessary for student success.
- Learning thrives in a nurturing and collaborative environment.
- Students learn best when instruction is student-centered and active and curriculum is rigorous, dynamic and interdisciplinary.
- A 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment requires access to state-of-the-art technology.

#### **Core Values**

The core values shared by the John Muir community are: respect for and celebration of diversity and respect for all members of the school community as learners growing in expertise.

#### **Skills**

Upon matriculation, John Muir students will possess sixteen habits of mind that the esteemed Professor Art Costa, recently of California State University, Sacramento, defined as the dispositions skillfully and mindfully displayed by characteristically intelligent people when confronted with problems the solution to which are not immediately apparent.<sup>1</sup> These include: 1) Persisting, 2) Communicating with clarity and precision, 3) Managing impulsivity, 4) Gathering data through all senses, 5) Listening with understanding and empathy, 6) Creating, imagining, innovating, 7) Thinking flexibly, 8) Responding with wonderment and awe, 9) Thinking about your thinking (metacognition), 10) Taking responsible risks, 11) Striving for accuracy and precision, 12) Finding humor, 13) Questioning and problem posing, 14) Thinking interdependently, 15) Applying past knowledge to new situations, and 16) Remaining open to continuous learning. In addition, John Muir students will be able to apply – in all forms of communication – the core



concepts of the California Content Standards and the skills that support effective application of the concepts in school and in life.

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

### **Student Population**

The ethnic diversity and socioeconomic demographics of the enrolled student population – 1,358 students – mirrors those of its surrounding community and adds to the richness of the school experience. The students are primarily Latino/Hispanic (76.3%) and African American (23.3%). The most represented religious group is Christian, but there is an Islamic population of consequence. Moreover, the majority of students - 76.8% - qualify for the Free or Reduced Price Meals program.

The English learners (ELs) and Students with Disabilities (SPED) form important components of the John Muir student body. 32% of the students are ELs and 13% are classified as SPED. The following demographics also apply: Reclassified as Fluent: 28%; Foster Care: 3%; Homeless: 2%; and Gifted: 6%. The student body as a whole has been struggling to gain proficiency in core subjects. The school's 2010 API score is 567 and 17% scored "Proficient or Above" in English Language Arts and 14% scored "Proficient or Above" in math. However, data analysis by subgroups indicates that African American, ELs and Students with Disabilities have experienced the greatest challenges.

According to a recent survey and input from community meetings, the parents of John Muir students want effective teachers who understand them and their children, both linguistically and culturally. They also want John Muir to continue to enforce safety, discipline, and school policies, including the wearing of school uniforms. Finally, parents stated that they want John Muir to be a school where students are prepared well to succeed in high school, where the aspiration to attend and excel in college is developed, and where students learn and practice characteristics of respect and become contributing members of their community and beyond.

### **Strengths and Experience of the John Muir Faculty and Staff**

The John Muir Middle School staff is comprised of more than 70 teachers with over 300 years of instructional experience. Over 50% of the JMMS teachers have 10 years of teaching experience in at John Muir Middle School and the surrounding community, they are committed to the students, their parents and the academic success of the school. All of the teachers are inspiring educators and committed to and passionate about learning. They believe in the students, their parents and the success of the school. They are committed to refocusing, reorganizing, restructuring, and improving their work.

They are well prepared to teach, reach and support the students of John Muir Middle School. Extensive training and professional development – in areas including SDAIE methodologies, cultural responsive pedagogies, and English learner's Access to Core – have prepared John Muir's teachers to teach the diverse student population at John Muir Middle School. In addition, the teachers at John Muir have a long history of support and participation with core academic strategies.



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

John Muir is committed to preparing all of its students to meet and exceed the California middle school academic standards, graduate from high school, and be prepared for college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. John Muir's teachers and administrators will jointly create curricula that are culturally relevant and responsive, challenging, rigorous, of high quality and differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Teachers will base the content of instruction on the California Content Standards, and measure students' mastery of the subject matter on classroom observations, teacher/department-developed formative and summative assessments, student grades, periodic assessments, and CST results. Since the ability to communicate effectively – both orally and in writing – as well as the knowledge of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects are a must for student success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, these areas will be a primary focus of the John Muir curriculum.

John Muir is committed to educating all students and will employ several strategies to achieve this goal. For example, teachers will take advantage of field trip opportunities to provide real-world experiences for students. Another key instructional strategy at John Muir will be a student-centered, active approach to learning that focuses on questioning, critical thinking, and problem-solving. The strategy – Inquiry-based Learning – is based on the premise that when students are involved, they will learn (“involve me and I understand”). To develop curriculum and instruction, John Muir's teachers will use Lesson Design Study, a teaching research-and-development model that enables teachers to create meaningful standards-based lessons and then assess the effectiveness of these lessons throughout the school year.

To address targeted student populations, John Muir's teachers will use a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) approach, which aligns their curriculum, instruction, and assessment into a coherent system that provides ongoing information about student progress in core subjects, focuses high quality instruction, and ensures early intervention for students experiencing learning setbacks or difficulties. John Muir will also use culturally responsive pedagogy, connect content and concepts explicitly to student home and school experience, scaffold learning with graphic organizers and thinking protocols, and build student confidence by encouraging them to successfully explain their work and defend their thinking. Moreover, the proposed curriculum and instructional methodology for the 2011-12 school year will be based on proven-effective strategies for students acquiring proficiency in English or Standard English, and for students of limited economic resources.

Literature citations in support of these strategies include: The Center For The Future of Teaching and Learning, “Special Education: Every Teacher's Responsibility: All California Teachers Need Professional Development and On-the Job Support to Teach Special Education Students,” 2005; Gay, G., “Culturally Responsive Teaching in Special Education for Ethnically Diverse Students: Setting the Stage,” *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(6), 613-29, 2002; Ladson-Billings, Gloria, “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *American Education Research Journal*, 3(6), 465-91, Fall 1995; NuriRobins, Kikanza, R. Lindsey, D. Lindsey, and R. Terrell, *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002; Delpit, L., *Other people's children: Culture conflict in the classroom*. New York: The New Press, 1995; *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students*. Washington D.C: The Education Trust, November 2005; Noguera, Pedro, and Jean Yonemura Wing, *Unfinished Business – Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Our Schools*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006; and Thernstrom, Abigail, and Stephan Thernstrom, *No Excuses – Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Learning*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.



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

John Muir's proposed culture will be characterized by three critical elements: 1) high expectations for student achievement, 2) continuous improvement and, 3) a safe and nurturing environment that fosters learning. These elements are common to high performing schools across the country as exemplified in the school improvement research and literature of the last decade.

To develop this culture, John Muir will fully implement Personalized Learning Environments (PLEs); encourage and support collaboration among students, parents, teachers and administrators; develop programs to recognize and celebrate diversity; and enforce its safe school plan. Moreover, the school's structures – including calendars and daily schedule and dedicated time for Advisories, teacher inquiry, and professional development – and formal and informal classroom practices will evolve to support the effective, continuous learning environment of the future. Finally, relying on agreed-upon processes and protocols to simultaneously include varied stakeholder voices, use and share information, incorporate data, and link decision-making to the school vision and supporting goals, all school community members will feel empowered to have a meaningful and positive impact on their own learning and the students' learning and achievement.

John Muir will implement or expand programs, resources and services to support middle grade students acknowledged to be going through rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. Support will include dedicated staff, transition activities, Advisories, and peer mediation. John Muir has developed several programs to increase the number of students who are ready to go to high school and thus, to post-secondary education.

John Muir Middle School staff, teachers and administrators believe that parents must be involved in the educational lives of their children. Therefore, John Muir will create and continually refine means for parents to be empowered as decision makers and effective supporters of the school and their children's education.

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

Not required for proposal.

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

John Muir Middle School is located in the South Vermont/Vermont-Slauson neighborhood of Los Angeles, LAUSD District 7, and Service Planning Area 6. The students come from a densely populated, working class urban area of Los Angeles with a diverse and multicultural population of roughly 30,000 residents. Community members have strong pride in themselves and their neighborhood. The residents are younger and mostly single. 24.8% of the families are headed by a single parent and the average household size is 3.5 people, which is high for the city and county. The median household income is \$31,236, which is significantly lower than the U.S. average. According to a *Los Angeles Times* census, only 3.7% of residents 25 and older have a four-year degree – a figure that is low for the city and county. In addition, the percentage of residents 25 and older with more than a high school diploma is very low for the county.



Founded in 1922, John Muir Middle School has had a long and important presence in the South Los Angeles community and is a historic landmark. The school is centrally located in the community and has served as a meeting place for families for 97 years. In addition to the middle school and Magnet School, John Muir hosts an adult school, which provides ESL/GED classes.

John Muir benefits from a close proximity to all of these post-secondary schools. Just north of John Muir is world-renowned University of Southern California. Also close by are Los Angeles Trade Technical College, the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles Southwest College, and Los Angeles City College.

John Muir's proven-effective vision for parent and community engagement rests on the belief that meaningful engagement is a function of meaningful participation in the life of the school. Paramount to the strategy to increase community engagement, John Muir will improve the process of parents, teachers, and community partners learning together using the elements of shared leadership, skillful consensus building, and active participation in formal and informal decision-making bodies. Under the leadership of the principal, John Muir's leadership and school-level committees will facilitate, manage, maintain and appropriately cultivate the development of collaborative relationships with community partners and professionals in the fields of politics, law enforcement, health, education, and public service by inviting them to campus to conduct workshops, hold assemblies, and coordinate exhibitions.

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

John Muir will work collaboratively using the structures already present, including the School Site Council, the Compensatory Education Advisory Committee, and the English Language Advisory Committee as official decision-making bodies and faculty, department, grade-level, magnet, PLEs and Parent Center structures as advisory bodies to the Councils. To build a culture of trust, openness and transparency, John Muir will implement a shared decision-making model within its traditional governance model. This model, which is evident at high performing schools<sup>ii</sup>, will essentially put responsibility for decision making about budget, personnel and curriculum in the hands of the School Leadership Committee.

Ms. Miranda Conston-Ra'oof will serve as Principal of John Muir. She is the best suited instructional leader for this newly reformed middle school. She provided outstanding leadership for the Public School Choice 2.0 process. Under her leadership, the entire staff, teachers, aides, parents and students took time to examine instructional practice, their motivation to teach, and reasons for change. It is under her leadership that John Muir Middle School was brought together to develop and articulate a new vision for an established school. She is highly qualified to continue as John Muir Middle School's instructional leader, principal, director, visionary and believer in children.

The Administrative Leadership Team is committed to refocusing, reorganizing, restructuring, and improving its work. The Administrative Leadership Team is comprised of the principal and two assistant principals. During their short tenure as an administrative team at John Muir, they have respectfully unified the faculty; put effective systems in place for monitoring instruction, attendance, teacher and student data, evaluation of instruction, and professional development; developed the plan for Public School Choice 2.0; and are fiscally responsible school managers.

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

John Muir has chosen to operate with a traditional governance model based first on the belief that the single most important element that affects student learning and achievement is the quality of the interactions of adults in the school community – whether teachers, administrators, support staff, parents or other community members – with students. Explicit, transparent processes in each structural setting with an emphasis on building consensus for important decisions will support optimal school transformation results within the traditional governance model. Given the importance of the focus on students, the less a school community must shift its focus to implementing a new or different governance model, the more energy is preserved for actions that directly affect students. A second belief that supports the selection of a traditional governance model is that changed governance structure is not the key to improved student learning, and that, in fact, all the necessary attributes for governance of an effective school with high achieving students are present in the traditional model, if the potential of the attributes is developed to its fullest.



## SECTION TWO: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

## 2. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

**a. Instructional Philosophy:** *Provide a thorough description of the proposed Instructional Program and the underlying theory that drives it. How does the proposed Instructional Program align with the critical educational needs of the population of students you propose to serve? Include an explanation of what students should know and be able to do as well as the rigorous intellectual habits of mind, essential skills, knowledge and attributes they will possess upon matriculation that will prepare them to be successful adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

The underlying philosophy of the John Muir school community is that all children can and will learn. What students learn and the extent to which they learn depends on the beliefs, expertise and practices of the members of the school community, including the administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and the students themselves. To ensure high standards and high student achievement, John Muir will also incorporate the proven-effective instructional philosophy model: Rigor, Relevance and Relationships. High performing schools across the country all ensure that curricula and instruction meet these three characteristics. The International Center for Leadership in Education has developed the Rigor/Relevance Framework as a tool to examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The framework allows schools to simultaneously look at their educational program through the lens of Bloom's Taxonomy for rigor and the attributes of acquisition, application, adaptation and assimilation for relevance. The National Academies' publication, *Relationships, Rigor, and Relevance: The Three R's of Engaging Students in Urban High Schools*, substantiates the important role of relationship in the triad. Moreover, much of the evidence in support of the instructional philosophy articulated in this application is derived from the achievement results accomplished by the Muir Magnet School located on the John Muir campus. The instructional philosophy is currently lived out by the Muir Magnet school.

**Rigor**

John Muir's teachers and administrators are committed to creating curricula that are rigorous, challenging and based on the specific content and skills by grade level of the California Content Standards. Lessons will be constructed so that students are engaged in thinking, student-to-student questioning, inquiry, analysis, application, and evaluation. In particular, teachers will implement a problem-based instructional strategy that asks students to tackle real issues within core academic curriculum. Problem-based experiences will develop into projects that call on students to apply their learning, in a comprehensive way, to a challenging real-world question.

Furthermore, in an effort to maximize academic-engaged time, teachers and administrators will minimize distractions and transition time. Academic-engaged time will be supported by effective pedagogy and high-quality teacher-student interaction, as well as the strategic use of access to methodologies that guide teaching and promote learning for all students. Teachers will clearly define, teach and reinforce academic and behavioral expectations and appropriate student behavior using effective classroom management skills and by correcting students calmly and efficiently. Strategic scheduling – in which students are placed according to need – will also help to maximize academic engaged time.

Finally, John Muir's instruction will be focused on ensuring the students are prepared for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Since the ability to communicate effectively – both orally and in writing – as well as the knowledge of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects are a must for student success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, these areas will be a primary focus of the John Muir curriculum. Ultimately, when children matriculate from John Muir, they will be able to utilize a critical knowledge base and skill sets to that assist them in actively participating, creating, applying, and exploring complex solutions. Moreover, they will have higher order thinking, problem-solving and reasoning skills as well as the skills necessary to collaborate on diverse learning teams in high school, college, and selected careers.<sup>iii</sup>



**Relevance**

Teachers and administrators are also committed to creating curricula and instruction that is relevant to middle school students to ensure they stay engaged in and focused on the program. There are several ways that the curricula will be relevant. John Muir's teachers will collaborate across subject matter to develop curriculum that is interdisciplinary and based on elements of real-world situations. For example, students in the social studies class may be called upon to act as a legislative body proposing legislation to address an identified current problem, such as providing for post-secondary education for resident non-citizens. They would be required to research the current situation and represent the problem accurately, write the "bill" to rectify the problem, analyze the bill, arguing pros and cons orally and in writing, and revise and vote on their bill. In science, students could be asked to investigate the issue of local environmental pollution, researching pollution in their own neighborhood, applying their language and math skills to representing the problem both graphically and in writing, then proposing solutions that apply principles of science the results of which can be observed, analyzed and reported on orally and in writing. The goal is for students to develop and use critical thinking skills in every academic subject area.

To provide students with real-world situations and experiences, the teachers will also use inquiry-based learning where students identify an issue, develop a hypothesis to address the issue, test their hypothesis and report on findings. This strategy is based on the proven theory that when students are involved in the instruction, they will gain understanding ("involve me and I understand"). Inquiry-based learning is driven by the students' own questions (rather than by the teacher's lesson) – often developed in collaboration with a small team – and focused on discovering real solutions to real problems. Students are supported in understanding and using data to solve problems and ultimately help them develop and reach academic and personal goals.

To be relevant, the curricula will be designed to celebrate the diversity of the students. Teachers will put the learner's experience at the center of instruction and acknowledge the legitimacy of the cultural heritage of different groups. Activities will be designed to help build bridges of meaning between home and school experiences and explicitly engage students in valuing their own and other cultures. For example, in English classes, the literature used for response-to-literature assignments will be chosen from selections linked to the heritage of students in the classroom, providing opportunities to both value the cultures represented and compare and contrast the ways cultures address the basic elements of the human condition.

To ensure that all students achieve at high levels, teachers will use a multi-tiered, data-based approach to teaching and learning. Through variations to the intensity and amount of time students have to learn grade-level standards, skills, and concepts, teachers will use evidence-based instructional and behavioral strategies that provide access to the core curriculum and maximize academic engaged time. Teachers will also use the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) approach to identify potential learning gaps and enrichment opportunities for their students as evidenced by data. Teachers will constantly monitor their students' current observed performance comparing it to what is expected for them to know and be able to do according to California Content Standards. Multiple sources of data – such as classroom observations, progress monitoring tools, assessments, surveys, and interviews – will assist in determining the interaction between the instruction, curriculum, learning environment and the learner because the discrepancy and causal factors may lie there. Teachers will use this data to make focused, strategic and accurate instruction and intervention decisions for their students with the goal of improving their achievement outcomes. Parents will be informed and involved in the support of their child's progress and learning along the way.

Teachers will use the following lines of inquiry to support their efforts on addressing the attendance, academic and behavioral needs of all students, which include ELs, Standard English learners, Gifted and Talented, and Students with Disabilities within their classrooms: 1) Is the core program (Tier 1) meeting the needs of at least 80% of my students?; 2) If not, what might be the reasons?; 3) How will

the needs identified in the core program (Tier 1) be addressed? (i.e., what professional development do I need? What would be a necessary objective for common planning and collaboration time?); 4) For which students is the core instructional and behavioral program sufficient or not sufficient? Why or why not?; 5) What supplemental and intensive instructions are needed?; 6) How will supplemental and intensive instructions be delivered?; 7) Are the Tier 2 interventions currently in place meeting the needs of my students? (e.g., 80% of the students participating in Tier 2 intervention programs showing growth?); and 8) How will it be determined which students need to move to a different level of instruction and intervention?

### Relationships

Finally, John Muir's teachers are committed to forming meaningful relationships with each student and each other, based on the theory that children can and will learn in safe, respectful, healthy, and engaging environments that nurture and support their emotional, physical, and mental growth. John Muir will continue to employ structures – such as Personalized Learning Environments (PLEs) and Advisory periods – to assure that every student is connected to a significant adult in the school community. Students will also be encouraged to build meaningful relationships with each other. They will learn the important skills of negotiation and problem-solving by participating in peer mediation activities. Throughout the school day, students will have multiple opportunities to work together to apply problem-solving skills to the real-life issues that come up in a student community.

Relationships will also define the interaction between and among teachers and administrators. Administrators and teachers regularly collaborate with each other to design curricula and improve their practice. Administrators and the leadership team work in partnership with teachers and parents to design school policies and procedures.

### What Students Will Possess Upon Matriculation

Professor Art Costa, recently of California State University, Sacramento, defined 16 Habits of Mind as the dispositions skillfully and mindfully displayed by characteristically intelligent people when confronted with problems the solution to which are not immediately apparent.<sup>iv</sup> Upon matriculation to high school, John Muir students will possess these habits of mind: 1) Persisting, 2) Communicating with clarity and precision, 3) Managing impulsivity, 4) Gathering data through all senses, 5) Listening with understanding and empathy, 6) Creating, imagining, innovating, 7) Thinking flexibly, 8) Responding with wonderment and awe, 9) Thinking about your thinking (metacognition), 10) Taking responsible risks, 11) Striving for accuracy and precision, 12) Finding humor, 13) Questioning and problem posing, 14) Thinking interdependently, 15) Applying past knowledge to new situations, and 16) Remaining open to continuous learning. In addition, John Muir students will be able to apply – in all forms of communication – the core concepts of the California Content Standards and the skills that support effective application of the concepts in school and in life.

**b. Core Academic Curriculum:** *Describe the core academic curriculum that your proposed school will use. Provide evidence that the proposed curriculum is research-based, culturally relevant, connects with the lives of, has been effective for and meets the diverse learning needs of the student population you plan to serve and addresses the California State Standards. Additionally, outline the plan for Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation.*

John Muir is committed to preparing all of its students to meet and exceed the California middle school academic standards, graduate from high school, and be prepared for college and careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. All teachers will provide students and parents with a syllabus, course outline, grading rubric, supplies list, and description of each class to maximize student success and establish clear expectations for students. The specific curricula focus, objectives and instructional program for the core subjects are listed below.



**English Language Arts**

The English Language Arts (ELA) curricula focus will be on the various genres of literature and compositions – narrative, exposition, and persuasion – as well as response to literature/text. Teachers will continue to use instructional materials that include state-adopted texts – particularly novels and other works of literature – that link content to California standards for ELA and provide all students with a path to the elements of learning. Teachers will also continue to design curricula to incorporate a variety of learning styles and provide for motivation, reinforcement, retention and transference of learning to ensure that all students achieve proficiency. The department will explore creating and adopting a core list of standard literature for each grade level in coordination with the state standards.

Teachers will provide students with opportunities to think critically and creatively, engaging in the following areas: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Critical thinking includes, but is not limited to, applying and transferring content knowledge to real-life applications as well as across the disciplines. Teachers will systematically use the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model to provide purposeful instruction in developing students reading and writing skills, and training students to become intellectual thinkers and learners with whatever task they encounter.

Writing projects will encompass a variety of formats, including narratives, comic books, poetry, articles, research papers, newspapers, pamphlets and brochures. In addition, teachers will continue to encourage students to participate in semi-annual and annual national writing projects/essays. Oral presentations will include Spoken Word, PowerPoint presentations, iMovies or other digital media presentations, reader's theater, mock trials, and demonstration lessons. Based on an assessment of current learning at John Muir, the ELA teachers will also continue to emphasize vocabulary development.

Community resources will continue to be used to enhance students' knowledge. For example, John Muir will continue to build partnerships with community, higher education, and other educational organizations to provide enrichment instruction to students through tutoring, demonstration, projects, and other instructional activities. Students will be encouraged to create student-led conferences on a particular subject for their peers, teachers, parents, and community members. Also, John Muir will continue an established mentoring program in which John Muir students mentor elementary students from local schools.

Teachers will continue to provide students with various avenues for learning and assisted learning, including study island, teacher web, Brain Pop, Snapgrades, and iPad. In the future, John Muir's ELA teachers may incorporate additional resources/examples to assist with content of study. One example is an English Warehouse called Web Games, a web-based demonstration of lessons that reinforces content.

To gauge student learning in ELA, teachers will continue to evaluate students using the following methods: department assessments, long-range projects or inquiry-based culminating tasks, oral presentations, writing portfolio, department-writing compositions, peer observations, and content tests. Students will complete at least one culminating task per unit (narrative, expositions, response to literature, and persuasion) that incorporates both a writing and presentation component. Culminating tasks will also include interdisciplinary assignments, in which students may research, write, and present on issues, topics, and themes from other content classes.

To support learning for all students, including Standard English Learners, English Learners, and Students with Disabilities, teachers will continue to use Key Instructional Strategies that include Cooperative and Communal Learning Environments, Instructional Conversations, Academic Language Development, Advanced Graphic Organizers, and Web-based and software programs.

**Mathematics**



The goal of the mathematics curricula will be to develop critical thinkers through complex instruction and targeted interventions and assist all students to be successful in Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and higher mathematic courses in high school and beyond. Long-term and interim measures of growth and proficiency include scores of “Proficient” or “Advanced” on the CST, exemplary performance on the periodic assessments and passing all math classes including, Algebra I with a “C” or better.

To meet this goal, John Muir’s teachers have developed strategies for effective first instruction and intensive interventions at every grade level. To assure effective first instruction and follow-up intervention, John Muir’s teachers will use a common pacing plan that is based on California State Standards and the LAUSD’s pacing plan for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Algebra Readiness, and Algebra. At least two concept tasks will be implemented per semester and the teachers will incorporate project-based learning techniques to engage all students.

In addition to the core curriculum above, John Muir will implement a second intervention: the DART Model, an analytical approach to data analysis to improve school performance through targeted instructional change. The model has been used at other Local District 7 middle schools, including Edison Middle School, where teachers saw an improvement in their students’ math scores. This curriculum and instructional methodology has been found to be particularly effective for students acquiring proficiency in English or Standard English, and for students of limited economic resources.

The DART Model asks teachers to disaggregate data by subgroups, assess and prioritize students’ needs, review state standards and benchmarks, and target and align curriculum and classroom instruction to meet standards. John Muir will accomplish these tasks through five components: weekly assessment, “rescue assignment”/department homework, translations, and story problems. The weekly diagnostic aims to promote procedural fluency and will be given every Tuesday (short day). Data will be collected using Google Spreadsheets. Teachers will meet on the following day during conference period to discuss the data collected (e.g., identifying misconceptions) and share strategies (e.g., re-teaching) that will help students reach proficiency. The diagnostic will be different every week and will be customized based on the data collection from the week prior (i.e., a skill will stay on the diagnostic until 70% of the students can answer the question correctly).

The “rescue assignment”/department homework is an immediate intervention, given after the weekly diagnostic. If students missed a question, they will be required to practice similar problems on the assignment. Teachers will be responsible for collecting, grading, and integrating it to their grading system. Translations help students with the mathematical language. Each week, students will be assigned 10 translation problems and the teacher can divide the problems into 2 or 3 per day or 10 for the one day. Finally, story problems provide a systematic approach to attack word problems and will be given at least once a week using the story problem organizer.

The third intervention will be an intensive period for selected students in each grade level to build a conceptual understanding for the concepts identified by the data and assist students with department homework. Teachers and students will use ALEKS, a computer-based intervention program. The intervention class will implement the DART Model during the intervention period where the focus will be skills and support needed to access the core curriculum.

### **History/Social Science**

The curricular focus for History/Social Studies is the study of historical trends and current social, political, economic and cultural conditions. Instruction in this area will enable students to think, read and write like historians and build social skills, gain technological skills, form an ethical and moral perspective of life, and understand how to build networks that support ambitious goals for college and beyond, skills that will ultimately prepare students to compete and succeed in an ever changing global economy.

The History Department will continue to incorporate proven-effective teaching strategies into their lesson plans. Students will learn how to unpack evidence, search for evidence, create/use graphic organizers/thinking maps, and identify and determine the validity and reliability of primary and secondary documents. In each assignment and discussion, students will be encouraged to analyze and interpret the events of the past for trends and identify cause and effect. All major sections will have a culminating task that is culturally relevant and engaging. These tasks may include PowerPoint Presentations, student led-conferences, student-created websites, civilizations booklets, and posters/charts/exhibits.

History teachers will also use teaching strategies that the ELA teachers have found effective to maximize efforts to prepare students to improve reading, writing and speaking skills. For example, to develop and improve students' writing skills, teachers will assign essay writing, summary writing and formal reports. To develop and improve students' reading skills, teachers rely on autobiographies, biographies, novels, and newspaper editorials. To develop and improve students' speaking skills, teachers will use debates, share outs, and discussions, which are centered on essential questions, focus questions, and document-based questions. Teachers will assure that instruction develops all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy and uses formal tools and programs such as "Reading like a Historian via Stanford History Education Group," "Habits of Mind: Thinking, Reading and Writing like a Historian," LAUSD Instructional Guide, and "History Alive!" This curriculum and instructional methodology has been found to be particularly effective for students acquiring proficiency in English or Standard English, and for students of limited economic resources.

John Muir teachers will also use technology to effectively engage students to complete assignments/tasks as well as help build students' technological and research capacities. Students will have access to and learn how to use Internet resources such as: Presidential Libraries, History Channel, A&E Education, The National Archives, The Library of Congress: American Memory, World History Archives, U.S. Historical Documents Archive, Teaching American History, World History Sources: Analyzing Documents, and Brain Pop, among others.

In-class instruction will be supplemented by extra-curricular activities, which may include the following: Constitutional Rights Foundation – Courtroom to the Classroom; Constitution Day Celebration; Constitution Poster Design Contest; After-school Tutoring; Field Trips to Museums, Libraries, Court rooms, Law Firms and/or Historical Sites; Students of the Month/Students of the Year Certificates; and Parent Conference/Back-to-School/PHBAO.

John Muir recognizes that it can benefit from funds available to teachers from generous individuals and/or organizations. To further supplement John Muir instruction, teachers will apply for grant opportunities each year. The potential grants include: the Keeping History Alive grant, Perryman Fund grant, Teaching American History grant, the UCLA Teacher-Initiated Inquiry Projects grant, and the National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

The John Muir History Department is committed to preparing its students to communicate effectively and achieve the demands of the California State Standards, District Periodic Assessments and teacher-generated benchmarks. Data used to measure students' mastery of the subject matter will include classroom observations, teacher/department-developed formative and summative assessments, student grades, periodic assessments, and CST results. Teachers will work together to analyze data and plan lessons based on real-time and longer-term data generated by the measures. Data-based teacher inquiry will complement inquiry-based student pedagogy.

John Muir's history/social studies teachers will continue to improve their practice and understand that teaching to 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners requires that they learn new and relevant teaching practices. The Department will attend professional development sessions each year. The professional development opportunities include: Teaching American History Grant (TAH), Annual Constitution Conference, California Council for Social Studies (CCSS), LAUSD PD for History/Social Studies teachers, Museum

PD for History/Social Studies teachers, History Alive! Trainings, Scholar Series via UCLA History/Geography Project, Periodic Assessment Prep, CST Prep (students take a mock CST test prior to CST dates), and Lesson Design (unpacking standards), as well as weekly department professional development meetings. Moreover, the teachers will continue to collect and analyze real-time, periodic assessment and CST data to measure student progress and refine/re-align instruction.

### Science

The goal of the 2011-12 science instruction is to prepare students to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, and learners who engage in self-reflection (metacognition). Upon matriculation, students will be able to analyze relationships, prove and explain with evidence, evaluate the relevancy of data, create testable questions and transfer knowledge to other situations. Curricular focus will also be on addressing the needs of students in preparing for 21<sup>st</sup> Century demands.

Teachers will create interdisciplinary lessons with a focus on writing and literacy as well as incorporating technology for one unit project each semester. Science teachers will participate in a collaborative model of lesson planning that includes common assessments. In addition, the science teachers will collaborate with the English teachers to incorporate ELA standards for writing and reading into their curricula.

The Science Department's lesson planning is driven by the proven successful BSCS "5E Instructional Model" for science. The 5Es are Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. The BSCS 5E Instructional Model rests on a foundation of contemporary research on student learning, particularly in science. The model can be used for entire programs, specific units, and individual lessons and has played a significant role in the curriculum development process as well as the enactment of curricular materials in science classrooms since the 1980s.<sup>v</sup> This curriculum and instructional methodology has been found to be particularly effective for students acquiring proficiency in English or Standard English, and for students of limited economic resources.

To engage students, John Muir's teachers will continue to create lessons using a variety of cutting-edge technology such as SMART Boards, SMART Technology, Quizdoms, and laptop carts. In addition, teachers will engage students through inquiry projects on self-selected questions utilizing skills developed during the course of the year. Finally, students will be given the opportunity to see science outside of the classroom through guest lectures from various fields as well as participate in various science-related field trips and John Muir's annual science fair. Beginning in the 2011-12 school year, John Muir's science teachers will also encourage students to submit a majority of their assignments electronically (class work, homework, blogs, and online assignments), enabling them to learn science while also developing technological proficiency.

To determine student understanding and drive interventions or enrichment activities, teachers will administer short weekly diagnostic assessments. Activities will include online activities, lab activities and teacher-facilitated activities. Weekly diagnostics provide immediate assessment of student understanding and successfully comprehending the content curriculum. On a regular basis, teachers will also analyze student work using protocols and revise lessons accordingly to better address student needs. In addition, students will be able to track their own progress throughout middle school. Students will have an electronic portfolio, which will include their personal work as well as teacher evaluations, feedback, and areas for improvement that can be used as a qualitative measure of learning and progress. This measurement process builds on the work the science department has already implemented and with which the department has witnessed success.

This curriculum and instructional methodology has been found to be particularly effective for students acquiring proficiency in English or Standard English, and for students of limited economic resources. Please see citations at the end of the Core Academic Curriculum section to support individual subject-matter descriptions.



**Exploring Technology**

The curriculum of the technology program will be focused on problem-solving and understanding concepts that are rooted in current technology and the skills necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Curriculum will also be guided by the California State Standards. The goal of the Exploring Technology program is to prepare students for careers in technology and engineering. After the program, students will be ready to successfully transition to high school career pathway programs, participate and lead technology efforts in their homes, communities, and workplaces, and have the skills necessary to be life-long learners.

The program will promote a challenging curriculum to help students – including students with disabilities – enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Students will be provided the opportunity to understand how to create alternative solutions using critical and creative thinking skills, such as logical reasoning, analytical thinking and problem-solving techniques. To engage students, teachers will use activities that are project-oriented (80% of the time will be spent in the computer laboratory), and relate to real-life work skills. Students will work collaboratively in pairs – across gender and cultural groups – and share responsibilities for work and leadership roles.

To measure student learning, the teachers will conduct pre-tests and post-tests along with performance testing. Due to the wide range of abilities of the students, assessments may be more qualitative than quantitative. Teachers will continue to attend workshops and conferences on technology to ensure the curriculum reflects the latest technological developments.

**English as a Second Language (ESL)**

The curricular goals of the 2011-12 ESL program are to: reclassify English Learners (ELs) prior to matriculating to high school; successfully assist students in progressing through ESL levels 1 thru 4 and ensure they earn PRP status prior to entering high school; ensure students meet or exceed the API target for ELs; ensure students meet or exceed NCLB Annual Measurable Achievement Objective (AMAO 1,2,3,); and close the achievement gap between ELs and Reclassified English Proficient Speakers (RFEP's) and native English language speakers.

To accomplish these goals, the John Muir's teachers have set the following program objectives:

- Meet or exceed an annual Reclassification Rate of 15% or higher by grade levels 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>
- Achieve AMAO 1: Meet or exceed the percentage of ELs making annual progress in learning English by 3% each year
- Achieve AMAO 2: Meet or exceed the percentage of ELs scoring "Early Advanced" and "Advanced" on the CELDT by 5% each year.
- Achieve AMAO 3: Meet or exceed the percentage of ELs scoring "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the CST in ELA and math

To accelerate language acquisition for ELs at John Muir, the school will imbed English Language Development (ELD) and access to core via Specially Design Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) in teachers' daily lessons in accordance with the Master Plan Program for English Learners. Student learning objectives will be achieved by implementing the High Point curriculum in ESL courses and related supplemental resources and implementing SDAIE in content classes to make instruction comprehensible and the content standards accessible. Students will have access to Core Coach (TITLE III) assisting teachers in developing lessons that reflect student academic needs based on the most current data available.

In addition, all teachers will build a culturally relevant and responsive learning environment and EL students will be appropriately scheduled to ensure success. The ESL courses include: Enabling (A/B, 1AB, 2A, 2B, 3, and 4); Sheltered English Language Arts for Preparing for Reclassification Program (PRP) students; and English Language Skills (ELS) for 6th, 7th and 8th grade PRP students who have not been successful in reclassifying to Fluent English Proficient. EL students not meeting academic standards

as a result of first instruction and support, and demonstrating a difficulty with language acquisition will participate in the following intervention programs:

- English Language Acquisition Program (ELAP) provides ELs and Reclassified instructional support during the “regular” school day, before and after school and on Saturdays to achieve state ELD and subject area content standards.
- English Language Skills intervention courses designed for PRP students not meeting reclassification criteria in achieving a “C” or better in their Shelter English Class and a score of below basic on the ELA domain of the CSTs.
- Flex Period during the school day consisting of daily 40 minute period set aside for targeted intervention or enrichment. Intervention will focus on English Language Arts, English Language Development or math as determined by data analysis of EL student’s ELA CST’s scores, periodic assessment, and High Point E-assessments. Students not demonstrating proficiency on one or more of these assessments will be enrolled in intervention for their flex period. Students demonstrating proficiency will be enrolled in enrichment courses that challenge and promote their academic ability.
- Using the Problem-Solving Method student DATA analysis will result in one or more of the corrective actions. (Appendix A.1 for the Corrective Actions for Struggling EL Students).

EL students will be part of an academic interdisciplinary Personalized Learning Environment (PLE). PLEs will include ESL courses or standards-based academic-sheltered English and core classes that implement SDAIE and access to core curriculum strategies. Students in sheltered courses will be grouped by language proficiency level and utilize differentiated instruction.

Teachers will continue to monitor student progress in all subject areas using the five-week progress report cards and offer immediate intervention to students in need of academic assistance. John Muir will use portfolios for each individual EL student to guide, record and monitor progress toward English Language Acquisition and proficiency and ensure that teachers, EL students, and parents understand the reclassification criteria and use it as a target goal. Based on the data, teachers will provide targeted interventions for ELs struggling to reclassify and /or demonstrating proficiency in English Language Arts and or Mathematics.

Teachers providing direct services to EL students at John Muir Middle School will be CLAD-certified. Teachers will participate in continuous and targeted professional development to ensure they support EL students. Professional development will be driven by teacher input and student learning data analysis. English Language Development, SDAIE strategies and intervention will be ongoing points of professional development. The EL Program Coordinator, Access to Core Coach (Title III) and/or Local District EL support staff will facilitate professional development.

To promote daily and ongoing parental involvement in our EL student’s language and academic development, John Muir will ensure that parents are active, meaningful participants in the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) activities; school decision-making; and workshops that educate parents on effectively helping their child and promote academic success. Active parent participation will be facilitated by the EL Coordinator, the school’s Parent Center, LAUSD’s Language Acquisition Branch or Parent Community Service Branch, and the Adult Education CBET program.

### **Health and Physical Education (P.E.)**

The curricular focus for Health and Physical Education will be on how to be healthy and physically fit, and the importance of life-long fitness. More specifically, the standards-based instruction will be focused on the students’ understanding of the five components of physical fitness: flexibility, body composition, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular endurance. The goal is to promote 70% moderate-to-vigorous activity daily. Instruction will be taught through team sports and individual sports at quality fitness centers and community outdoor exercise “rooms” (e.g., Van Ness Park at Slauson Avenue and Van Ness) as well as through a series of guest speakers who talk to the students



about topics such as nutrition, fitness, and how to combat childhood obesity. Upon graduation, every student will be healthier and stronger, and have a greater understanding of lifelong fitness. A portion of the curriculum will continue to be dedicated to parental education, combating obesity, heart disease, and attaining a healthy fitness zone of body composition. Finally, instruction will also concentrate on social skills, prompting understanding of other cultures and tolerance.

To supplement in-school instruction, John Muir will seek funding for after-school fitness program and fitness programs for the parents and community. Additionally, the department will examine and increase offerings from Youth Services and Beyond the Bell After-School Programs, and the development of a Sports Academy that promotes academic excellence for student athletes.

### **Music and Performing Arts**

Through artistic perception – listening to describing and analyzing music – John Muir will create responsible citizens who will think creatively, analyze situations, demonstrate self-discipline, set goals and exhibit versatility. Aesthetic valuing of musical works will develop criteria for evaluating, deriving meaning and understanding human responses. John Muir's teachers believe it is essential for their students to become creative individuals who take risks, appreciate art and music, think divergently and are curious and inquisitive. The arts open up a world of shapes, patterns, rhythms, colors, sounds, movements, textures, symbols, relationships, perspectives and meaning that stimulate aural, visual and mental acuity. These building blocks of perception are directly related to the development of conceptual analytic skills including reading, writing, science and mathematics. Since, the arts require discipline, dedication and hard work, the arts also prepare student for long-term success in life.

Many students have not participated in music class before coming to John Muir. The core music instruction will continue to provide comprehensive, sequential, standards-based music instruction that supports and enhances the teaching and learning goals of the school community. On-going assessments of students in music/keyboards will be correlated to California Visual and Performing Arts Standards. Teachers will also provide assessments and recommendations of students to participate in the Gifted and Talented programs of the District. To provide a diverse learning experience, the music department collaborates with other arts colleagues K-12 in district efforts. John Muir also has an ELA/ELD intervention through music instruction, which provides supplemental English language instruction to ELA/ELD middle school students who are identified at "Below Basic" or "Far Below Basic" on the CST or who are designated at ELD levels of 1 through 4 and not meeting annual adequate progress criteria through music instruction.

### **Foreign Languages**

The curricular focus of John Muir's foreign languages department will be to help students become global citizens by gaining an understanding and appreciation of foreign cultures and to prepare them for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace. In a world where nations and peoples are ever more dependent upon one another to supply goods and services, solve political disputes, and ensure international security, an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures is paramount. Moreover, as globalization, mobility and communications are bringing the world ever closer together, understanding other cultures and language is necessary for success. Finally, foreign language competencies are important for jobs in the emerging/growing industries, including travel, engineering, and services.

John Muir currently offers Spanish, and will consider offering additional languages. Students will learn to communicate in another language and gain a better understanding of other languages in general. By participating in the course, students will also gain greater cognitive development in the areas of mental flexibility, creativity, and higher order thinking skills such as problem-solving, conceptualizing, and reasoning.

Additionally, students will learn how to use their native language more effectively. Research shows that foreign language learners have stronger vocabulary skills in English, and a better

understanding of the language and improved literacy skills. Several studies and test scores show that, with each additional year of foreign language instruction taken, students improve their scores on college entrance exams such as the SATs and ACTs. Therefore, an additional goal of the program is to produce higher achievement in reading of English and enhanced listening and memory skills. This curriculum and instructional methodology has been found to be particularly effective for students acquiring proficiency in English or Standard English, and for students of limited economic resources.

**i. Autonomy:** *Describe how you will use curriculum and instruction autonomy to maximize student learning.*

John Muir will use the curriculum and instruction autonomy to maximize learning in several ways. First, teachers will take advantage of field-trip opportunities to provide real-world experiences for students. John Muir seeks extended community support through student outreach programs offered by USC and UCLA as well as USC's and UCLA's academic support for professional development. Other opportunities include those present in the local community such as the Los Angeles Central Public Library, the resources of the Museum of Science and Industry, the Natural History Museum, the Los Angeles African American Museum, and the Latino Museum. Second, teachers will also engage students in project-based learning. For more information on project-based learning, please see Section 2d below.

Third, John Muir's teachers will use Lesson Design Study to develop curriculum and instruction. The Lesson Design Study process is a teaching research-and-development model that enables teachers to create meaningful standards-based lessons and then assesses the effectiveness of these lessons throughout the school year. The Lesson Design Study Protocols – developed and used by UTLA since 1993 – have been shown to improve performances by teachers and students throughout Los Angeles, especially at schools serving families in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Moreover, Lesson Design Study is a nearly perfect induction protocol for new teachers.

The objective of the Lesson Design Study process is to continuously develop and improve lessons and assessments throughout the school year. For each standard, teachers review the assessment data to check for understanding, identify what worked and what did not work to improve learning at both the learning-activity level and the teacher-student interaction level. Teachers then design units of instruction, lessons and assessments and identify their individual learning and training needs to improve student achievement outcomes for their own students. A calendar and scheduling will enable teachers to participate in Lesson Design Study as one of their regularly required duties.

**ii. Curriculum Development:** *If applicable, submit a timeline that outlines plans to develop curricula for the proposed school prior to school opening.*

Not applicable.

**c. Addressing the Needs of All Students:** *Articulate how the proposed Instructional Program will reinforce a commitment to different methods of instruction to meet the needs of all students, including students of poverty, students with special needs, students with disabilities, gifted students, and English Learner (EL) students and Standard English Learner (SEL) students.*

John Muir is committed to educating all students. In the following paragraphs, the identification process, personnel and specific strategies that will be used to address the needs of all students are described. The strategies contained within this section are informed by broad readings in education literature related to the unique needs of a John Muir's student population and include: Delpit, L., *Other people's children: Culture conflict in the classroom*, New York: The New Press, 1995; *Gaining Traction, Gaining Ground: How Some High Schools Accelerate Learning for Struggling Students*, Washington D.C.: The Education Trust, November 2005. Noguera, Pedro, and Jean Yonemura Wing, *Unfinished*



*Business – Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Our Schools*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006; and Thernstrom, Abigail, and Stephan Thernstrom, *No Excuses – Closing the Racial Achievement Gap in Learning*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

### **Identification**

A multidisciplinary team will identify at-risk students, develop a multidisciplinary intervention plan with benchmark success indicators, implement the plan, and regularly monitor student progress as part of scheduled inquiry-based professional development.

### **Personnel**

John Muir has personnel available to meet the academic needs of all students. The professionals include: an Intervention Counselor, who provides group and individual counseling sessions to mentor students with poor attendance and poor academic marks; Academic Counselors, who mentor and guide students to become productive students – academically and socially – and to perform at a higher level within the classroom, school, and community; Designated Instructional Service (DIS) personnel, provided by the Local District Special Education Office, who facilitate the delivery of counseling services for eligible students with assessed needs based on the Individualized Education Program (IEP); and an Occupational Therapy Professional, who provides group and individual counseling services to students and families. The counseling services are provided through high school and beyond.

### **Strategies**

John Muir will begin new strategies and continue successful instructional strategies to ensure all students are achieving at high levels. These strategies include:

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>): John Muir's teachers will use a Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>) approach, which aligns their curriculum, instruction, and assessment into a coherent system that provides ongoing information about student progress in core subjects, focuses high quality instruction, and ensures early intervention for students experiencing learning setbacks or difficulties. Teachers review interventions for ELA, math and other core academic subjects linked to RtI<sup>2</sup> guidelines. Depending on the needs of the individual classroom, teachers will create new interventions or refine existing interventions to ensure underperforming students are thoroughly supported and meet benchmarks in core academic areas. In some cases, teachers may adjust or modify LAUSD pacing guides to ensure student learning and understanding.

Educational models such as Lauren Resnick's Principles of Learning, Bloom's Taxonomy, Cambridge System for Improving Instruction and Evaluations, Cornell Notes, Socratic Method of Inquiry, DuFour Scaffolding, Thinking Maps, Designed Based Instruction, and Kaplan Intervention will be part of a bank of instructional strategies used to support RtI<sup>2</sup>.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: John Muir teachers will develop culturally responsive instructional practices across the curriculum that: put the learner's experience at the center of instruction; acknowledge the legitimacy of the cultural heritage of different groups including income, ethnic, and language groups; use a variety of instructional strategies to address learning styles; build bridges of meaning between home and school experiences; and explicitly engage students in valuing their own and other cultures. Teacher professional development will be informed by research including: Gay, G., *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research and Practice*, New York: Teachers College Press, 2002; Ladson-Billings, G., "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," *American Education Research Journal*. 3(6), 465-91, 1995; NuriRobins, Kikanza; R. Lindsey; D. Lindsey; and R. Terrell, *Culturally Proficient Instruction: A Guide for People Who Teach*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002.

Personal Learning Environments (PLEs): John Muir – its campus, staff, and students – will continue to be organized into four smaller learning environments, including the Magnet program. The development and implementation of John Muir's PLEs is centered on supporting student learning and improving academic

achievement. The middle school student faces unique learning and developmental challenges unlike that of elementary school and high school age students. A smaller learning environment, where caring adults foster deep and lasting relationships with their students, is a major component of PLEs. These smaller learning environments will also allow teachers and administrators the opportunity to effectively collaborate in order to improve their instructional design and enhance their professional development. Instruction in all PLEs will include a focus on differentiation to meet the needs of all learners; instruction will contain activities that are engaging, challenging, rigorous, and respectful of gifted learners. (Additional detail on the PLEs can be found in the School Culture and Climate section.)

Advisory Periods: John Muir has developed Advisory Periods to link each student with a caring adult knowledgeable about the student's learning and aspirations, and to engage students in practices to set and achieve their own learning goals. (Advisory Periods are described in more detail in the School Culture and Climate section.)

Participation in Boys to Men Program: John Muir will continue to participate in the successful Boys to Men program, designed and offered by the TYME Foundation. Boys to Men is an enrichment program with two components: tutoring and personal development. Students are engaged in extracurricular activities, learn social abilities and behavior within the school community, and gain self-esteem and self-management. Since 2003, the widely recognized program has aided more than 3,000 inner city male youths from the African-American and Latino communities.

#### **Students with Special Needs and Students with Disabilities**

In addition to key strategies for all students, John Muir will rely on strategies of particular value to students with special needs including: establishing regular routines; connecting content and concepts explicitly to student home and school experience; scaffolding learning with graphic organizers and thinking protocols; and building student confidence through successfully explaining their work and defending their thinking. Literature citations in support of these strategies include: The Center For The Future of Teaching and Learning, *Special Education: Every Teacher's Responsibility: All California Teachers Need Professional Development and On-the-Job Support to Teach Special Education Students*, 2005; and, Gay, G., "Culturally Responsive Teaching in Special Education for Ethnically Diverse Students: Setting the Stage," *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(6), 613-29, 2002. Please see Section 6.a and Appendix A.6 for a detailed description of John Muir's efforts to support students with special needs and disabilities.

#### **English Learner (EL) students and Standard English Learner (SEL)**

In addition to the key strategies for all students and the core curriculum described above, John Muir will continue to provide Title III Access to Core Instruction across all content areas and collaborate with teachers to identify and implement strategies to support EL and SEL students. The focus of attention for EL-designated students will be on progressive development as measured by CELDT and culminating in timely re-designation to RFEP status.

Strategies will include explicit use of and instruction on vocabulary of content area, practice with processes specific to content, such as the scientific method, and practices for linking student prior knowledge to expected new content area learning. John Muir will also continue to provide specific computer lab experiences and content to support English language development during school time and after school. Educator understandings and strategies have been informed by the following literature citations: Freeman, Yvonne S.; David E. Freeman; and Sandra Mercuri, *Closing the Achievement Gap – How to Reach Limited-Formal-Schooling and Long-Term English Learners*, Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002; Garcia, E., "Educating Mexican American students: Past treatment and recent developments in theory, research, policy, and practice," in J. A. Banks and C.A. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001; and, Suárez-Orozco, Carola, and Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, *Children of Immigration*, Cambridge, MA, and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2001.



In the 2011-12 school year, John Muir will implement UCLA School Management Program's proven-successful program to scaffold academic language development for students at all ELD levels and engage them in rigorous instruction at their level of proximal development of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. UCLA School Management Program will provide John Muir's teachers with a portfolio of effective strategies that engage culturally and linguistically diverse students in meaningful standards-based learning. The strategies help teachers explore the connection between what they do and how students learn, and gives them a greater appreciation of the strengths of their EL students. The goal is to develop exit strategies for each student and increase the percentage of students who re-designate.

### **Gifted and Talented Students**

The Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) instructional program will continue to follow legally mandated guidelines to meet the needs of GATE students with respect to identification, instruction, clustering, expenditures, and professional development. Aggressive search and referral practices at John Muir will support the district's goal of identifying students from underrepresented populations. Students identified as gifted will be clustered for instruction and other services across PLEs to ensure that both their needs and interests are well served. John Muir's GATE students are identified in a variety of categories (High Achievement, Specific Academic Math or English, Intellectual, etc.) and are not necessarily "high achieving" in every subject. These students need additional support from teachers who have been trained in meeting the social and academic needs of gifted children and who can create a challenging, yet nurturing, instructional environment. High performing students who are not identified as gifted will continue to be distributed throughout the PLEs. Professional development in the PLE that contains gifted and talented students includes strategies for working with gifted students, as well as differentiation strategies that can benefit all learners.

### **Foster Youth**

John Muir has a foster youth liaison, who assists in removing barriers to enrollment and academic success. The primary role of the liaison is to ensure that every student is in school and not effected by changes of foster settings. The liaison assists in obtaining records, court documentation, and completion of enrollment paperwork. A full-time foster youth liaison works at Local District 7 to assist with transitions between schools. In addition, John Muir will continue to provide the Children Uniting Nations – Academic Mentoring Program for At-Risk Youth in conjunction with LAUSD/Beyond the Bell and the Department of Children and Family Services. In the program, mentors provide one-on-one counseling, classroom support, tutoring, case management, and assistance to foster parents.

### **Students of Poverty and Homeless Students**

In addition to the strategies for all students, John Muir has a dedicated Attendance Counselor who helps homeless students and students of poverty come to and remain in school. The counselor will continue to work with each child to remove and/or address the barriers to attendance. In some cases, for example, the school will provide bus and public transportation tokens to students so that they can travel to school. John Muir will also help students facing monetary hardships secure sponsorships and grant funding.

**d. Instructional Strategies:** *Describe the instructional strategies that will be implemented at your proposed school to support the Instructional Program. Explain why these strategies are well suited to address the needs of the student population you plan to serve.*

A key instructional strategy at John Muir will be a student-centered, active approach to learning that focuses on questioning, critical thinking, and problem-solving. The strategy – Inquiry-based learning – is based on the premise that when students are involved, they will learn ("involve me and I understand"). Inquiry-based learning is driven by the students' own questions (rather than by the teacher's lesson) and therefore goes beyond the traditional and typical ways of learning. Students engage in a reflective process – often in collaboration with a small team – to discover real solutions for real problems.



The process is also inspired by a constructivist approach to learning, which allows students to build their knowledge base and discover how to learn. The outcomes of using inquiry-based learning are students who: are engaged in their learning; take metacognitive ownership of their own learning; develop analytic, synthetic and problem-solving techniques; probe deeply into content; and develop values and beliefs informed by their learning.

The process relies on a “Plan, Do, Check and Reflect” cycle. In the “Plan” portion of the cycle, students will select an inquiry question or a challenge and design a project to answer their inquiry question or meet the challenge. Part of the project design will be a system of checkpoints and standards and measures of progress, success, or failure. The “Do, Check and Reflect” portion of the cycle involves the students conducting their planned inquiry or carrying out their plan to meet the challenge, and applying their standards and measures of progress, success, or failure. A second-learning-loop also begins in the second phase, during which students discuss and document what they have done, and monitor progress or lack thereof at each planned checkpoint. As the students apply their standards and measures to the project, they will identify and re-examine assumptions, course-correct, and on completion reflect on what they have learned, and why it matters. They will also analyze their project and debate how to get better results.

The inquiry-based learning approach that involves students in their own investigation of real issues and problems is supported by current research into effective pedagogy. The recent book, *What We Know About Teaching for Understanding* by Linda Darling-Hammond, Brigid Barron, P. David Pearson, Alan H. Schoenfeld, Elizabeth K. Stage, Timothy D. Zimmerman, Gina N. Cervetti, and Jennifer L. Tilson, published in 2008, surveys current research on project-based, collaborative learning results and notes the many studies that identify the importance of driving questions that lead students to central concepts, investigations that involve inquiry and knowledge building, and authentic problems that students care about. The following literature citations also informed the emphasis on inquiry and project-based instruction for the diverse John Muir student population: Banks, J., *Educating citizens in a multicultural society*, New York: Teachers College Press, 1997; *Closing the Achievement Gap: A Vision for Changing Beliefs and Practices* (Second Edition), edited by Belinda Williams, Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003; Howard, G., *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know: White Teachers, Multiracial Schools* (2nd Edition), New York: Teachers College Press 2006; Ladson-Billings, G., *Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 2001; *The Skin That We Speak*, Edited by Lisa Delpit and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, New York: The New Press, 2002; and, Nieto, S., *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*, New York: Teachers College Press 1999.

**e. Early Care and Education:** *Discuss how you will reach out to and address the needs of young children, ages 0-5, and their families. Please refer to the Options for Including Early Care & Education (ECE) in the Operations of an Elementary School located on the Public School Choice website to view a comprehensive list of possible strategies used by school operators to integrate child development services in their program(s)*

Not applicable.



### 3. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

**a. Description of School Culture:** *Describe the culture and climate envisioned for the proposed school, particularly as it relates to academic achievement, student motivation to succeed, personalization and safety. Identify specific rituals, routines, activities, structures, etc. that will support the achievement of the culture and climate envisioned. Discuss how you plan to introduce and implement the rituals, routines, activities and structures with students, teachers, parents and other staff.*

John Muir's proposed culture will be characterized by three critical elements: 1) high expectations for student achievement, 2) continuous improvement, and 3) a safe and nurturing environment that fosters learning. These elements are common to high performing schools across the country as exemplified in the school improvement research and literature of the last decade. (See specific representative citations in the sections below.)

#### High Expectations for Student Achievement

Central to John Muir's future success is the school community's dedication to achieving high levels of excellence, achievement and accountability. Relying on agreed-upon processes and protocols to simultaneously include varied stakeholder voices, use and share information, incorporate data, and link decision-making to the school vision and supporting goals, all school community members will feel empowered to have a meaningful and positive impact on their own learning and the students' learning and achievement. There is a universal commitment from the school community to accountability, character, attendance and punctuality. Equally important, a cycle of individual goal setting and inquiry will give rise to students who appreciate and value academic achievement.<sup>vi</sup>

#### Continuous Improvement

The John Muir school community is committed to ongoing learning and development with the overarching shared goal of improving student learning. The school's structures – including calendars, daily schedule, and dedicated time for student Advisories, teacher inquiry, and professional development – and formal and informal classroom practices are currently evolving to support the effective, continuous learning environment of the future. In this environment, students will be self-directed learners, relying on themselves as well as teachers to set goals for and assess their learning and growth with a focus on contributing to and succeeding in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The same holds true for the other members of the school community. Teachers and others will assess and continuously increase their capacity to elicit profound learning.<sup>vii</sup>

All educators and support staff, will continue to participate in ongoing professional growth through professional reading, college enrollment, and conference attendance. For more information about continuous improvement as part of the professional culture, see Section Five: Professional Development.

#### Safe and Nurturing Environment

John Muir will continue developing a safe and positive school environment for students, educators and family members. Moreover, John Muir will build on its reputation as a community center, welcoming parents, other family members, and members of the community to participate in activities and events (for more details, please see Section Three: Community Engagement).<sup>viii</sup>

Deepening of the safe and nurturing environment to which John Muir aspires will be realized through activities supported by research that show the positive relationship between the sense of physical and emotional safety and capacity to learn and achieve. These activities include building relationships of value among school community members, especially between teachers and students, students with each other and teachers with each other. The elements described below further explain John Muir's approach to achieving a safe and nurturing environment.

Personalized Learning Environments (PLEs): John Muir's PLE vision is driven by the need to provide personalized, engaging and challenging instruction to all of its students and provides for the structure and



commitment needed to realize the larger school's mission, which is "to empower students with the knowledge and skills to live healthy and meaningful lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Research shows that when students have solid relationships with caring adults and each other at school, they are more likely to take an interest in school, be motivated to complete rigorous projects and assignments and find school more relevant. Thus, John Muir staff propose to organize the campus, staff, and students into four smaller learning environments, including continuation of the current Magnet program. This organizational structure is grounded in the belief that an interdisciplinary team of teachers who share a few hundred students in common for instruction and assume responsibility for their educational progress can have a powerful effect on student achievement. In preparation for this shift, John Muir staff crafted and agreed to a set of instructional commitments to which they will hold each other accountable within their interdisciplinary teams. These commitments derive from research-based practices that support the realization of the John Muir vision of high student achievement.

The goal of collaboration within each PLE will be to provide solid, engaging, relevant and effective first instruction while at the same time defining and implementing second and third tiers of intervention for students whose academic and social needs are still not being met. The support of out-of-classroom staff and advisors will be utilized to obtain optimal personalization.

Working within the context of "college and career preparedness," assigned staff and students within each PLE will collaboratively form their own unique identity. Each PLE will have specific and measureable goals, and host community-building activities to foster and solidify their identity and sense of community; PLE leads will receive additional training on how to facilitate meetings and professional development activities to assure that they are meaningful. Finally, commonly developed staff norms within each PLE will assure that all staff are active contributors to the success of their PLE.

Collaboration: John Muir will initiate structures including a repetitive calendar and protocols to support and foster collaboration among and between administrators, teachers, staff and parents. More detail on collaboration can be found in Section 5a. Professional Culture.

Respect and Recognition of Diversity: John Muir is a diverse community which provides a rich opportunity for learning from each other. Unique and common attributes of individual cultures will be shared through events such as cultural fairs as well as through use of curricular materials that include and honor multicultural groups. As explained in the Curriculum and Instruction sections above, culturally responsive pedagogy will support respect and recognition of diversity daily in classrooms. In line with John Muir's goal of increasing student efficacy, additional activities will be undertaken at student suggestion and through student efforts.

Safe School Plan: In compliance with the California Education Code (CEC), Section 35294, for California Public Schools, John Muir will continue to prepare and update a Safe School Plan that addresses such areas as violence prevention, emergency preparedness, traffic safety, and crisis intervention. John Muir will also continue to use various programs to encourage student-to-student collaboration and usage of conflict resolution strategies. These programs include peer mediation, anti-bullying programs, after school programs, a full-time psychiatric social worker and anti-gang interventions. Peer mediation and conflict resolution data show that these programs have worked – physical conflicts on and off campus have decreased. Additionally, through homerooms and Advisories, teachers will focus on building character and respect through the celebrated program of Character Counts. The school will extend its participation in mentoring, tutoring, and motivational programs with USC.

**b. Student Support and Success:** *Describe exactly what student success means at your proposed school. How will your school motivate kids to come to school and stay in school?*

Student success at John Muir means that students will gain mastery of the content standards for middle school students and flourish as young scholars, be prepared to excel in high school, and aspire to



and complete university degrees and/or other preparation for meaningful work. At the same time, success means that they will be contributing citizens who value themselves and each other at every stage of their education.

Students will be motivated by a curriculum that is taught through engaging project- and problem-based units of study, and through relationships built with teachers through Advisory period activities and with peers through cooperative learning activities. Teachers will ensure that students find the curriculum relevant to their lives and community and pace activities with adolescent in mind.

To help students track their progress, John Muir will institute a student portfolio system that will follow each student throughout his/her tenure at John Muir. With an advisor in their PLE, each student will review their portfolio and set goals for improvement. Each department will also work together to create a clear, common grading rubric that is based on the California State Standards for the discipline and grade level and regularly communicate the criteria to students so that they know how they can improve their grades. Each department will also create weights for each project in the final grade. As a result, the students will feel empowered to take charge of their education and see the value of doing so.

John Muir currently implements an “eligibility program” for its 8<sup>th</sup> grade students wherein students must meet minimum standards to participate in fun activities – such as field trips – and assemblies. In the 2011-12 school year, John Muir will apply this program to all students (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders). The eligibility program will be based on positive attainment of eligibility, with students aspiring to obtain at least 50 out of 60 credits, to earn ever higher subject matter grades, and receive satisfactory cooperation grades. To reinforce the expectations and eligibility requirements, John Muir will host assemblies and post the goals toward which to strive on the Student Display boards throughout campus. The fun activities will be hosted after each progress report to motivate students to improve their grades. Leadership students and student surveys will be used to generate ideas for the activities.

In 2011-12, each department will create a recognition program to honor improved student performance to motivate students. John Muir will also foster the development of student-initiated clubs and groups with an academic focus.

**c. Social and Emotional Needs:** *Describe the programs, resources and services (internal and external) that your proposed school will provide in order to meet the social and emotional needs of the students you serve. Explain how individual students will be identified and monitored on an ongoing basis at the school. Describe how the effectiveness of these programs will be measured.*

John Muir will implement or expand programs, resources and services to support middle grade students acknowledged to be going through rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. Support will include personnel resources, transition support and articulation programs, Advisories, and peer mediation.

#### **Personnel Resources**

Counselors work as part of a multidisciplinary team with teachers, parents, administrators, nurses, social workers, and other community stakeholders to ensure students are prepared for the challenges and demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The staff that will comprise the John Muir Counseling Program include: a Mental Health Counselor, to provide mental health counseling once per week to students on campus; a Psychologist who provides individual and group counseling to address social-emotional concerns; and a Psychiatric Social Worker, who provides individual and group counseling to address social-emotional concerns. Areas addressed will include anger management, grief and loss, crisis counseling conflict resolution, and social skills

#### **Transition Support and Articulation Programs**

In order to support the development of transitions that lead students seamlessly from elementary school to middle school and then into high school, John Muir envisions an aggressive approach to

facilitating these connections. Teachers will reach out to feeder elementary schools (nine identified schools) through visitations and presentations to students and their families that include an overview of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade experience. Other specialized outreach activities will include a 6<sup>th</sup> grade parent and student orientation, a two-day Bridge Program during the summer that allows incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to get acclimated with the campus prior to their first day of school, and a one-day walk through of the campus for students at Budlong Elementary, the school from which John Muir receives the largest number of students.

In order to facilitate the transition of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to high school, John Muir counseling staff will continue to monitor student credits at each reporting period to support students' transitioning to high school fully prepared to excel in college preparatory classes. In addition, counselors at the top 3 feeder high schools will be provided support in the programming of John Muir students. John Muir will continue to conduct effective and well-planned assemblies to inform students about A-G requirements, adding a coaching session for groups of students who may need additional help. John Muir will strengthen its relationship with the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP), a non-profit organization that promotes college awareness through interactive presentations to 8<sup>th</sup> graders, in order to increase the number of students who are able to participate. High school students will also mentor 8<sup>th</sup> graders in a personalized setting at both the beginning and end of the school year in order to promote student motivation and success throughout the year.

A Matriculations and Transitions Committee, led by the Assistant Principal, Secondary Counseling Services, will provide support in this process. The committee will identify strategies necessary to help students through these challenging transitions, and provide staff with necessary professional development to assure that all 8<sup>th</sup> graders enroll in high school. An important objective of this committee is to assure effective vertical teaming with feeder elementary schools and high schools.

### **Advisories**

In 2009-10, John Muir experimented with Advisories to link each student with a caring adult knowledgeable about the student's learning and aspirations, to engage students in practices to set and achieve their own learning goals, and to foster deep and lasting relationships between adults and their students. These relationships are intended to further the academic and social development of all students by providing them with a single caring adult who will support and guide their middle school career. Issues of academic need, social and emotional support, and family connections are best facilitated by an adult on campus who knows each of the fifteen to twenty students well. Student advocacy and academic guidance are therefore two of the key outcomes of the Advisory model.<sup>ix</sup>

During the first year of implementation, the Advisories grew together and became a safe, student-centered environment. Advisors knew their advisees and core teachers were developing lessons that address the needs of their students. John Muir's administrators and teachers have refined and revised the Advisory structure and processes to ensure they meet desired goals. In the future, to ensure personalization, each Advisory will be capped at 20 students and advisors will remain with the same students for the duration of their John Muir experience. All credentialed faculty members will be advisors in order to create the lowest student-to-advisor ratio possible. Advisors will work in pairs or triads within PLEs to support one another to ensure that the Advisory period is maximized as an instructional period. Administrators will support and monitor the implementation of the Advisory curriculum.

In order for the Advisory model to be most effective, continuous professional development will be provided so that all credentialed staff understand the purpose of Advisories, learn and practice the common elements of the program and have the opportunity to develop additional of practices that will support their work with students during this time.



**Peer Mediation/ Conflict Resolution Program**

The proposed Peer Mediation/ Conflict Resolution program was designed using researched-based social skills software titled, “Ripple Effects”.<sup>x</sup> In the program, students of the same age-group facilitate resolving disputes between two people or small groups. Students are selected as peer counselors based on their grades (must have a C or above average) and teacher recommendations. The training for peer mediators is approximately three weeks in length. In the 2008-09 school year, a pilot program was instituted and the John Muir student mediators satisfactorily handled 79% of the cases that arose.

Peer Mediation has proven effective in schools around the United States, changing the way students understand and resolve conflict in their lives. Changes include improved self-esteem, listening and critical thinking skills, and school climate for learning, as well as reduced disciplinary actions and fewer physical conflicts. Not only are these skills transferable outside of the classroom, but, in addition, the program exposes students to the fields of counseling, law and mitigation.

Based on student data and feedback from the pilot, in the 2011-12 school year, John Muir will provide opportunities for the peer counselors to attend off-site youth leadership conferences and trainings. In addition, John Muir will host large group (10-20 students) sessions for students who need support with the same type of behaviors (e.g., anger management, self-esteem, etc.). Another addition for the 2011-12 school year will be to ensure that students who have transitioned through mediation continue their social/emotional growth through counseling and other resources. Staff have set a goal of reducing the number of verbal altercations by 25%.

The John Muir counselors will use Google documents to track the number and types of conflicts, the number of conflicts by grade level, and the work load of mediators. The counselors will also survey the peer mediators and students in the program. This data will be used to monitor and manage the effectiveness of the peer mediation/conflict resolution program and make adjustments as necessary.

**d. College and Career Readiness:** *Describe the specific programs that your proposed school will provide to expose students to college and career opportunities as well as support them to be successful in whichever pathway they choose.*

To increase the number of students who are ready to go to high school and thus, to post-secondary education, John Muir has developed several programs to meet the needs of all students. Students participate in an articulation program with the receiver high schools. High School Counselors visit John Muir to inform students of high school graduation requirements, activities and opportunities on the high school campus. Students also participate in scheduled trips to the high school campus.

The college-going culture is celebrated all year thru college visits, college and career fairs, college-based activities and career-week opportunities to help students be college ready and successful in their post-secondary education. 8<sup>th</sup> graders take the ACT Explore test annually which aids them in finding careers that match their interest, choosing high school courses that will get them ready for college, and keeps them on track for college. College and post-secondary education discussions are embedded into the daily student life at John Muir and conducted formally by the school counselors and their counselees, and reinforced in Advisories. Students are provided with frequent opportunities to think and talk about their future plans and what they are doing now to prepare themselves to achieve their goals. Moreover, the AVID, Magnet, MESA and all other programs instituted at John Muir will continue to focus on a college-bound philosophy and implement a standards-base and college-bound curriculum.

Finally, John Muir faculty and staff will expand existing programs and offer several new programs to students to expose them to college. These programs include: NAI program with USC; a partnership with the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Early Academic Outreach Program; the USC Exxon/Mobil Summer Program; College Awareness Month; C5 Youth Foundation of Southern California; and coordination with USC’s Outreach Program.



**e. Parental Involvement:** *Discuss strategies to authentically and meaningfully engage parents and guardians in their children's education. Describe in detail the programs or resources that the proposed school will provide for parents and guardians.*

John Muir Middle School staff, teachers and administrators believe that parents must be involved in the educational lives of their children. Therefore, John Muir is committed to creating means for parents to be empowered as decision makers and effective supporters of the school and their children's education. Teachers and staff will reach out to all families, not just those who are always there, and involve them in several ways as supporters, advocates, and decision-makers. Moreover, John Muir makes a commitment to parent involvement over time, not just a short project or a onetime program. The goal is for parents to return to support the efforts of the school and inform staff about the successes of their children. The overarching goal is to move parents from involvement at school to engagement in their child's education. In the paragraphs below, the many opportunities to be involved and engaged that John Muir will continue and expand in the future are described. These activities were developed in close partnership with community families.

Parent Education: The goal of the parent engagement component is to help parents provide the best possible situation for the children. Part of the program is to educate families. This includes ensuring parents understand the key attributes of families whose children do well in school. Parent education is a two-way street: the parent component works equally as hard to educate teachers to the major fact that when teachers get to know families, they have higher expectations of their children and of the parents. Relevant parent education classes will be explored with the Manual Arts Adult School, which holds classes on John Muir's campus in the evenings.

Governance: There will be multiple venues for parents to participate in decision making and giving input at the school. Parent representatives will continue to serve on the School Leadership Council (a council proposed to simultaneously carry out the duties of the School Site Council and Local School Leadership Council), the Title I mandated Compensatory Education Advisory Committee and the English Language Advisory Committee, and individual PLE leadership councils. Additional information is charted in Section 4: Governance, Oversight and Leadership.

Parent Center: The acclaimed John Muir Parent Center will continue to offer opportunities for parents to serve as significant volunteer support at the site, and for parents to learn together around topics they themselves select. The Center is run by parent liaisons/directors selected to meet the needs of the community. The Center will also continue to provide parents with education and community resources and information, organize parental involvement in field trips, and provide space for adult classes.

In 2011-12, John Muir will expand the number of parenting classes offered to parents. Classes will cover topics such as: language classes (English and Spanish), how to motivate children, curriculum awareness, how to understand data and how it relates to my child, how my child compares to district/state/national levels, A-G requirements, technology, and employment development classes (e.g., resume writing and interviewing skills). Teachers as well as representatives from partner organizations – including UCLA, USC, Manual Arts Adult School, community-based PIQUE (Parent Quality Institute) and local businesses – will help teach and provide materials for the workshops. Courses will be taught in English and Spanish. Additionally, the Parent Center will provide technology access and education. The District is also launching the next phase of Connect Ed, which will allow parents to use the school's ISIS website to view their children's attendance and academic information.

Family Nights and Parent Events and Activities: Once a year, each content department and the Magnet will continue to host a Family Night where the parents are invited to come to school at night to learn about what their child has learned in the specific content area. The students will lead the parents through the various stations that they have created explaining the importance of concepts and conducting a related



activity. Parents will get a chance to observe their child as expert on a particular topic. Other activities to allow for parent-school collaboration include sports events, technology day where a child and parent can learn computer skills together, back-to-school events for parents, and a science fair at which students will have the opportunity to present their individual inquiry projects. In addition, the community expressed a need for increased programs for dads to participate in the school. Therefore, John Muir will incorporate father-son and father-daughter activities.

“Coffee with the Principal”: Once a month, parents will be invited to come to the school in the morning and visit with the principal and staff in the Parent Center. Topics will be as wide-ranging as updates about the school, school testing, API, AYP, and other measures of their child’s success. Parents will also network with other parents to build relationships around educational issues in a friendly and inviting environment.

Improved Communication: John Muir will take several steps to improve the communication with parents and create a supportive environment. John Muir will assure that campus aides and office personnel can easily communicate in both English and Spanish, or quickly find a resource to provide language-appropriate help for parents. Accurate and timely information – including grades and parent resources – will be provided online in English and Spanish through the school website. All mailings will be in English and Spanish. John Muir will also establish a formal liaison program between teachers and designated parents to create a communication web. John Muir will update its website to make it a better form of communication between the school and family/community members. The school’s mission, goals and objectives, weekly updates and messages from the principal, and updates from each department will be posted and regularly updated. The site will also list a course directory for each department, the student handbook, the teacher handbook, and all pertinent bulletins, policies, and procedures for the school.

Classroom Visitation Protocol: Working with the leadership teams, John Muir will foster the formation of an ad hoc committee of parents and teachers at the start of the school year to create a classroom visitation protocol based on UCLA SMP’s Classroom Walk-Throughs (CWT) protocol. The CWT protocol is used to gather observable data about student learning in a non-judgmental way. The focus questions drive at what practices are effective, rather than who is effective. The process focuses on results – that is, real-time information about what students are learning, with an eye toward being able to act on the information immediately. The protocol is appreciative – it asks What is happening that we want more of?

Parent Survey: Each year, John Muir administers the Local District 7 parent survey to determine what workshops parents want and the support parents need in participating at school. John Muir also administers the LAUSD Parent Satisfaction Survey with results reported in the School Accountability Report Card. In school year 2011-12, these surveys will be included as action items for the School Leadership Committee, assuring that the data they provide lead to effective actions at school.

**f. School Calendar/Schedule:** *Provide a copy of and describe the proposed school calendar and daily schedule for both faculty and students. In your response, please discuss how students and faculty will be grouped for instruction; the target class sizes and teacher-student loads; and how the proposed schedule promotes student achievement.*

### **School Calendar and Schedule**

Facilitated by the PSC 2.0 Design Team, the teachers at John Muir selected a new calendar and daily schedule. (Please see Appendix A.2 for a copy of the Proposed School Calendar. Please see Appendix A.3 for a copy of the Proposed Daily Schedule.) The new calendar will have seven instructional periods of 45 minutes and a 25-minute Advisory Period. During the Advisory Period, teachers will focus on building relationships, supporting the attendance/tardy policy, distributing information, test preparation, and counseling and mentoring. Instructional materials for intervention will include: Measuring Up, Bell Works, Accelerated Reader (AR) to improve decoding skills and develop reading comprehension, and Enrichment Courses (experiential activities and project-based assignments). The final



period – Flex Period – will be 48 minutes long and serve as the targeted intervention period for ELA and mathematics. Between each period, there will be six passing minutes and there will be one common 30-minute lunch for all students.

Teachers agreed to change the calendar to provide allotted times for Advisories, intervention, including additional math tutoring, ELA tutoring, silent sustained reading, accelerated reading, study skill instruction, and other extra offerings. For example, the last period of the day may be filled with academic clubs on Mondays, student council and service units on Tuesdays, study skill instruction on Wednesdays, sustained silent reading on Thursdays, and assemblies (school or team) on Fridays.

The revised schedule will promote student achievement by continuing to provide significant instructional minutes for all core content classes, physical education, and electives. The new schedule will allow for a 7<sup>th</sup> period that will provide students with specialized immediate assistance in addition to an after-school tutoring and summer intervention programs. John Muir's goal is to provide academic intervention early using RTI<sup>2</sup> strategies to promote academic success.

### **How Students and Faculty Will Be Grouped for Instruction**

Students and teachers will be grouped into four PLEs centered on supporting student learning, improving academic achievement, and enabling students to foster a deep and caring relationship with the staff at John Muir. Students will be in teams where each team will consist of the core content subjects. Students will leave the team for physical education and electives. Each team will share common planning time, discuss common and individualized student experiences, plan coordinated efforts in addressing student learning needs, prepare interdisciplinary lessons, and confer as an informed personalized learning community of teachers in increasing academic achievement for students within their team. The teams will integrate the academic core curriculum and learning objectives, and provide opportunity for flexibility and adapted group learning.

### **Target Class-Size and Teacher Loads**

John Muir Middle School is a QEIA that receives state funding for Class Size Reduction (CSR). For the school year 2010-2011, the school expects to be 100% complainant with its class CSR. The expected class size by grade level for 2011-12 will be 21.4 students per teacher in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 22.2 students per teacher in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 22.6 students per teacher in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**i. Autonomy:** Describe how the school will use scheduling autonomy to maximize learning time for students and collaborative planning and professional development for the faculty and staff.

John Muir will create a schedule to promote effective learning opportunities for students during first instruction. The flexible schedule provides students with the opportunity and time to apply the skills and knowledge learned in each content area to real-life experiences. The Advisory/flex period will enable the students to develop a connection with a caring adult who is knowledgeable about the student's learning and aspirations, and to engage students in practices to set and achieve their own learning goals throughout the school day. Time allocation for core content areas within the schedule will be evaluated and adjusted as needed based on student achievement.

**g. Policies:** *For Independent Charter Schools Only*  
Describe and/or attach the proposed school's policies as they relate to promotion, graduation and student discipline.

Not applicable.



#### 4. ASSESSMENTS AND SCHOOL-WIDE DATA

**a. Assessment Philosophy:** *Explain the proposed school's philosophy on student assessments. Provide evidence that proposed school's assessment philosophy is research-based and is aligned with the schools proposed Instructional Program.*

At John Muir, assessments will become an especially important tool to gauge student learning and guide instruction. Administrators and teachers will emphasize quality teaching and then check for understanding using informal classroom checks as well as more formal tests. Since data is viewed as a tool for continuous improvement – rather than as an end in itself – John Muir will provide straightforward access to data and train all members of the school community, including students, on how to read, interpret, reflect on, question, and utilize data to inform decisions, and set goals and objectives. Data and scores from all formal assessments will be posted on student electronic and paper portfolios to enable teachers, administrators, parents and students to compare results across years and among other classrooms and schools within the District and state. John Muir's teachers and administrators will use protocols that provide for reflection and dialogue on the meaning of data generated and how best to build on what is learned to make strategies even more effective for student learning. As described in Section 2b: Core Academic Curriculum above, teachers will use data to decide on next instruction and to surface important questions to learn more about student thinking. Administrators and teacher leaders will use data to guide the allocation of resources for and content of professional development (see Section 5: Professional Development for examples).

Data will include high-stakes data and real-time data from Classroom Walk-Throughs, analysis of student work, department benchmark analysis, RtI<sup>2</sup> reports, periodic assessments, and CST scores from the school and individual classrooms.

**b. Autonomy:** *Describe how the school will use assessment autonomy to maximize student learning.*

See the table below for more information.

**c. Student Assessment Plan:** *Describe the school-wide assessment plan for the proposed school. What formative and summative measures will you use to determine student progress and success? Include a table that details specific authentic formative and summative assessments (benchmark assessments, developmental screenings, unit exams, state-required exams, portfolios, etc.) that will be used for each grade level, the timing of their administration, the rationale for their selection and their intended purpose.*

Following LAUSD guidelines, John Muir will administer the periodic assessments for English Language Arts, social studies, mathematics and science as well as the California Standards Test (CST). In addition, with technical support from UCLA School Management Program, teachers and administrators will design, administer and analyze the results of formative and summative assessments to systematically monitor the impact of teacher-developed, standards-based lessons on student learning. For all subject-matter departments, UCLA School Management Program will provide the technical support to enable the staff to design formative assessments to establish instructional program baselines, monitor student learning of content, monitor student individual growth, and analyze data to systematically monitor the impact of the teacher-developed, standards-based lessons and assessments on student learning.

To help teachers and students track student learning, UCLA SMP will facilitate the design and use of student "portfolios," which will include evidence of learning and achievement while at John Muir.

Below is a table with the description, purpose, rationale and timing of each proposed assessment.

Assessment and Description	Purpose	Rationale	Frequency and Timeline															
<b>California Standards Test:</b> Summative State standards test administered by the State of California for each grade level and content area. Eng. Lang. Arts (6-8 <sup>th</sup> gr.) Writing (7 <sup>th</sup> gr.) Math 6, Math 7 & Algebra I Science (8 <sup>th</sup> gr.) History-Social Science (8 <sup>th</sup> gr.) FitnessGram (P.E.) (7 <sup>th</sup> gr.)	NCLB TARGETS for California Middle School (Percentage proficient or advanced) <table><tr><td></td><td>ELA</td><td>Math</td></tr><tr><td>2010-11</td><td>67.6</td><td>68.5</td></tr><tr><td>2011-12</td><td>78.4</td><td>79</td></tr><tr><td>2012-13</td><td>89.2</td><td>89.5</td></tr><tr><td>2013-14</td><td>100</td><td>100</td></tr></table> For John Muir, the goal is to exceed LAUSD targets.		ELA	Math	2010-11	67.6	68.5	2011-12	78.4	79	2012-13	89.2	89.5	2013-14	100	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The tests are a state requirement.</li><li>- Scores will allow John Muir to compare student achievement to other schools and state standards.</li><li>- The test measures adequate preparation of students to compete in any environment.</li></ul>	Administered 1X per year, typically the last week in May/first week in June over a 1 – 2 week period.
	ELA	Math																
2010-11	67.6	68.5																
2011-12	78.4	79																
2012-13	89.2	89.5																
2013-14	100	100																
<b>Periodic Assessments in ELA, Math/Algebra I, Soc. Studies, and Science:</b> Formative District assessment of a set of state standards as described in each content's District Instructional Guide. Administered by LAUSD under contract with Princeton Review	To gauge where students are demonstrating proficiency and provide insights into what still needs to be taught or reinforced on state standards in each content area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides benchmarks</li><li>- Helps teachers monitor progress</li><li>- Allows for comparisons to other students</li><li>- Provides basis for individual growth goals</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ELA – 3X/year</li><li>- Math/Algebra – 3X/year</li><li>- Soc. Studies – 3X/year</li><li>- Science – 3X/year for 6 and 8 and 1X/year for grade 7</li><li>- Algebra Readiness Assessment and Geometry Readiness Assessment at the end of each school year, administered by Princeton Review or UCLA MCTP</li></ul>															
<b>School Developed Common Literacy Assessment:</b> Authentic summative standards-based reading and writing assessment. The same prompt will be administered to students who have read the same text to measure narrative, descriptive, expository, or persuasive writing accomplishment.	To measure the effectiveness of the English Language Arts instructional program and literacy across the curriculum (i.e., interpreting theme in literature is similar to identifying a thesis in a science text).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Aids in program placement</li><li>- Helps teachers monitor progress for vertical alignment</li><li>- Creates common understanding of proficiency</li></ul>	Administered 2X per year: First and last month of the school year															



Assessment and Description	Purpose	Rationale	Frequency and Timeline
<b>Subject Matter Common Assessments:</b> Authentic formative standards-based assessments for each unit in each content area. Developed and administered by department.	To measure student proficiency in each standards-based unit in each content area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Helps teachers monitor progress</li> <li>- Provides a qualitative assessment of student achievement versus a quantitative assessment from the periodic assessment.</li> </ul>	Administered following each unit.
<b>Student Portfolios:</b> Formative assessment with each portfolio containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student-selected subject matter common assessments</li> <li>• Student form that records individual CST and periodic assessment data</li> <li>• Other teacher-selected samples</li> </ul> Administered by and collaboratively designed by teachers with technological support during professional development.	To track individual student progress by subject matter beginning with English Language Arts and Math in Year 1 and adding other subjects in the following years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides interdisciplinary support for each student within PLEs through their Advisories (e.g., identify necessary intervention or enrichment)</li> <li>- Provides opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own self-evaluation and progress monitoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory teachers will monitor student portfolios on an on-going basis.</li> <li>- Students will select work each semester for each content area.</li> </ul>
<b>The Explore test and the Preliminary SAT</b>	To gauge 8 <sup>th</sup> graders' verbal and mathematical college readiness skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exposes students to high school and college expectations</li> <li>- Provides personalized data for students' high school, college, and/or career path planning</li> <li>- Provides data to identify students for advanced academic programs and/or BRIDGE programs</li> </ul>	Students are tested once a year during the spring semester in their Advisory classes

**d. Assessment Development:** *If applicable, submit a timeline that outlines plans to develop curricula for the proposed school prior to school opening.*

Not applicable.

**e. Data Collection and Monitoring:** *Describe the school-wide data collection and monitoring plan. What data, including ISIS, will the school collect to measure student progress? How will the school use this data to inform programmatic and instructional decisions, assess student needs, intervene with students who need additional help, improve instruction, make adjustments to curricula and other school components and inform professional development?*

Departments, grade levels and PLEs will collect, monitor and analyze data from assessment to inform programmatic and instructional decisions and make adjustments to curricula, instruction, professional development, and other school components. The School Leadership Committee will use these analyses to monitor and evaluate the SPSA. The school calendar will allow time for teachers to collaborate on data analysis and next steps instructional planning based on data. The table below lists data that will be collected and how it will be used.

Data to be Collected	How It Will Be Used
School, grade-level, classroom and student scores on the <b>California Standards Test (CST)</b>	During professional development time, department, grade level, Magnet and PLE staff will analyze disaggregated data for critical findings and implications. Individual teachers will do so as well and guide their students in individual data analysis through the Advisory period. Results will be analyzed by departments to inform instruction, the design of future instruction and professional development. John Muir may incorporate a program such as DataDirector/DataScanner to facilitate the viewing, disaggregation, and analysis of student assessments.
Percent “Proficient” or “Advanced” in line with CST goals on <b>Periodic Assessments</b>	During professional development time, department, grade level, Magnet and PLE staff will analyze disaggregated data for critical findings and implications. Individual teachers will do so as well and guide their students in individual data analysis through the Advisory period. Results will be analyzed by departments to inform instruction, the design of future instruction and professional development.
Percent “Proficient” or “Advanced” on the <b>School Developed Literacy Assessment</b>	To learn the degree to which students write proficiently, ELA, ESL and Social Studies teachers will score the papers, select anchor papers, write commentaries on them and analyze the findings. Findings will be presented in a graph form by grade level, Magnet and PLEs and school wide. Findings will be shared with the staff to: a) refine the assessment and/or rubric as needed, and/or b) refine the instructional program through Lesson Design Study to increase student performance.
Percent “Proficient,” as determined by each department, on <b>Subject Matter Common Assessments</b>	By department, teachers will score assessments, select anchor papers, write commentaries on the anchors and analyze the findings. Findings will be shared with the Department, Magnet and PLE and School Leadership Committee to: a) refine the units and/or assessment through Lesson Design Study; b) refine the departmental instructional program, if needed; and c) validate or modify the SPSA.
Demonstration of a) individual student growth toward proficiency, and b) continual improvement of the quality of instruction through the <b>Student Portfolios</b>	Department teachers will review the contents of the student portfolio mid-year and end-of-the year. Findings will be shared with the Department, Magnet and PLEs and School Leadership Committee to: a) refine the units and/or assessment through Lesson Design Study; b) refine the departmental instructional program, if needed; and c) validate or modify the SPSA.
Real-time student data collected through <b>Classroom Visitation</b>	Teachers and parents will create a focus question based on the strategies they have been using and what they want to see in student learning behavior. An example might be: What evidence do we see that students are



Data to be Collected	How It Will Be Used
<b>Protocol</b>	applying strategies learned in ELA classes across the curriculum? Visitors spend 5-7 minutes in a classroom recording the examples that they see. They visit several classrooms, recording examples in each classroom. Later, all visitors gather to take part in a debrief that surfaces the patterns of student behavior observed, and uses participant dialogue to determine which patterns they would like to see more of, and what strategies might be used by teachers and parents to increase the behaviors they indicate. At the conclusion of the session, teachers and parents decide on a course of action to investigate and identify the focus question they wish to use when they visit again to see the progress toward their student learning behavior goal.

**f. Graduation Requirements:** *For all middle and high schools, describe the proposed graduation requirements, including how student progress will be measured to determine readiness to graduate.*

To meet the LAUSD culmination requirements, John Muir will use a systematic plan for creating an environment and culture that supports improved student achievement and social and emotional growth. In order for John Muir students to meet the increased expectations of passing the CAHSEE and meeting A-G Requirements, students will learn and master the California middle school standards and pass all classes in the 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade (Policy Bulletin 3815.0.)

John Muir students will receive a District approved Certificate of Completion if they meet the requirements for grades six through eight or utilize one of the options open to students who do not meet the minimum requirements. Students who do not initially meet requirements for participation in the Culmination Activity and earning the Certificate of Completion during grades six through eight may utilize the following five options: 1) earn a "C" or better in the second semester of the same course that demonstrates significant improvement to counter-balance a first semester "Fail"; 2) attend and pass intersession and/or summer school to offset a "Fail"; 3) engage in and successfully complete a pre-approved community service to raise work habits and cooperation marks; 4) participate in a District-provided attendance recovery program; and 5) request review by the school site Culmination Appeals Committee.

Participation in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade culmination activity requires that students meet the following five requirements: 1) pass all courses in grades six through eight; 2) have no more than two Us in Cooperation during the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year (the Us cannot come from the same teacher); 3) have no more than Two Us in Work Habits for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year (the Us cannot come from the same teacher); 4) have an attendance rate of 95% for grades six through eight excluding a serious, chronic, or major illness; and 5) abide by school and District policies with respect for student conduct and school property.

In order to provide John Muir students with the opportunity to meet culmination activity and completion of certificate requirements, each student will be provided with an Individual Culmination Plan. (See Appendix A.4 for the Middle School Individualized Culmination Plan.) The school will also have systems/programs in place beginning in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade to: celebrate and reinforce student achievement; identify at-risk students early and enroll them in appropriate interventions; provide academic intervention programs during the school day; provide an attendance recovery program; provide alternative instructional settings and option programs; ensure frequent and consistent school-to-home communication; initiate clubs and/or activities to motivate students to stay in school; and institute an adult mentoring program for at-risk students. John Muir counselors will conduct ongoing sessions with their counselee to inform them of middle school culmination requirements, self-reflection and analysis for moving forward to high school, college and beyond, and connecting with their future high school counselors.

## 5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**a. Professional Culture:** *Describe the professional culture you envision at the proposed school. Explain how the professional culture you envision reinforces the Instructional Program outlined above. Identify activities and structures that will support the achievement of the professional culture envisioned. Discuss how you plan to introduce the activities and structures to teachers.*

The professional culture– which is aligned with the overall school culture – will demonstrate inquiry-based continuous improvement, collaboration, innovation and respect for the needs of adult learners.

### Collaboration

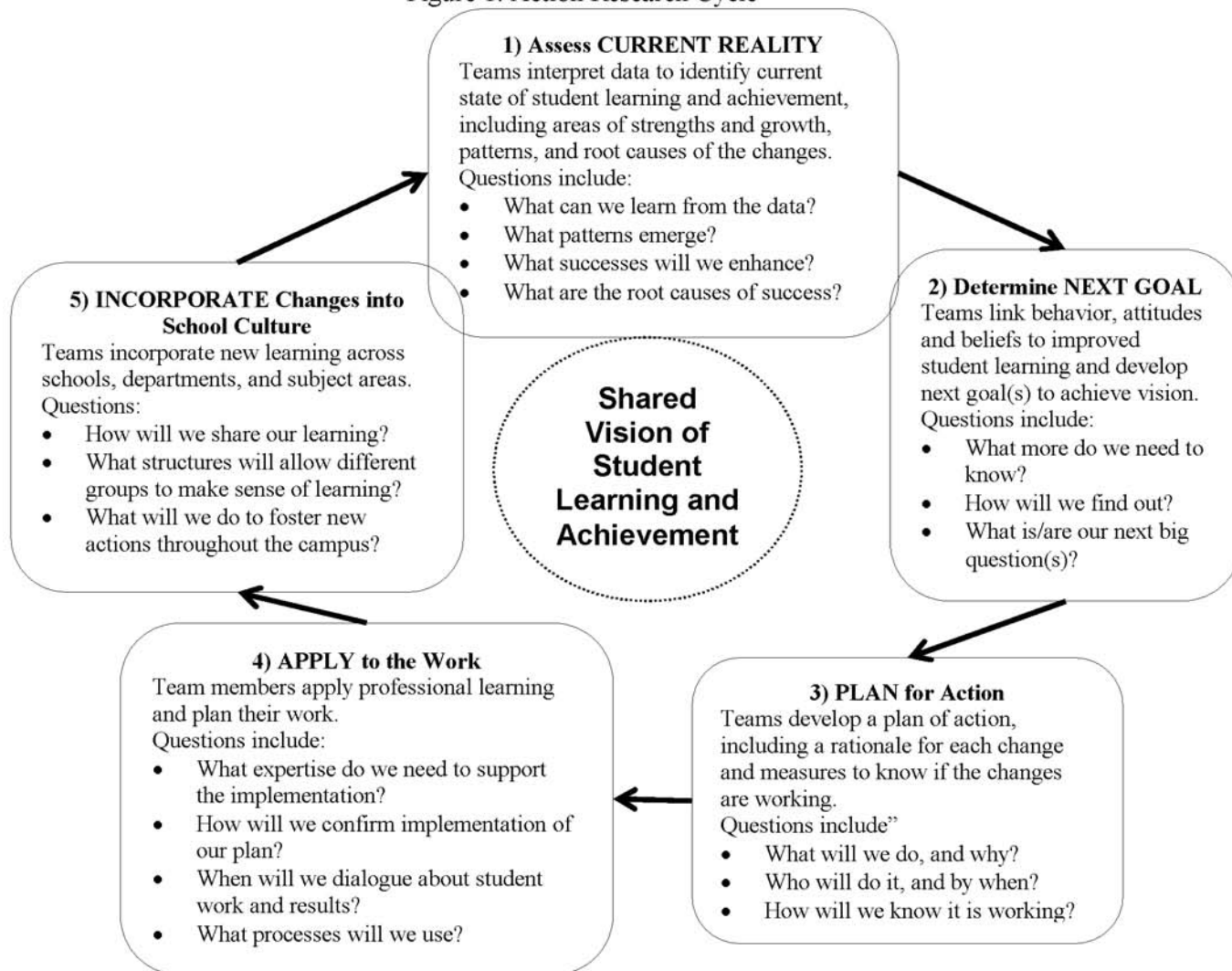
John Muir will initiate structures including a repetitive calendar and protocols for collaboration among and between administrators, teachers, staff and parents. Additional structures will include leadership teams that represent multiple roles within the school, defined settings for teachers and administrators to learn together, PLEs, and calendars that establish firm times and places for both leadership efforts and professional learning. John Muir staff already utilizes collaborative models in level-alike, subject-alike, and interdisciplinary teams. These models will now be linked to specific measures and metrics to assure a positive connection between their use and the results they generate. Expected areas of collaboration include identifying and developing curriculum, learning and perfecting new teaching strategies and designing effective projects and problem-based lessons. Department Chairs, PLE leads and others will participate in training to lead effective professional development to support the school vision for student achievement.

### Continuous Improvement and Innovation

Action research will serve as the underlying process for the work of the school-level committees and the shared practice driving continuous inquiry and improvement at John Muir. Action research is a proven model that provides groups or individuals with a standard procedure for testing and refining hypotheses and strategies for improvement. For an individual or group of educators, the Action Research Cycle has the following steps (Figure 1): 1) Use data to ASSESS the current reality (e.g., the level of student learning and achievement); 2) DETERMINE the new goal to meet the shared vision of student learning; 3) Develop a PLAN of action; 4) APPLY the plan to the work and Check the effectiveness of the plan in reaching the desired goal to sustain or refine the plan; and, 5) INCORPORATE the new learning across the school. Often the “check” phase reveals areas for improvement and so the cycle goes indefinitely.



Figure 1: Action Research Cycle



### Process to Introduce Activities and Structures

Throughout the 2010-11 school year, UCLA SMP will coach John Muir's teachers and administrative staff to assure experience with inquiry-based collaborative professional development that relies on Action Research as its model. This early preparation will allow professional development activities to be immediately useful and effective in the 2011-12 school year, the first year of Public School Choice 2.0 status.

**b. Professional Development:** *Describe what effective Professional Development (PD) will look like at your proposed school. Identify the school's goals and strategy for ongoing PD. Explain how the PD plan will be driven by data to build coherence and support the instructional program as well as build capacity to improve teaching and learning, school performance and student achievement. How will the PD program be differentiated to support teachers at various stages?*

### Overview of Effective Professional Development at John Muir

As described above, continuous improvement through Action Research will serve as the basis for ongoing professional development at John Muir. The professional development of John Muir's teachers, administrators and parents will be personalized, tailored to each teacher's and administrator's individual development plan and include information and resources, including subject matter knowledge

and learning strategies. Structurally, professional development at the school will be supported through professional learning communities, inter-disciplinary core teams, and at least 90 minutes each week for specific and individualized professional development. (See the Proposed School Calendar in Appendix A.2.) The following pages describe the assessment and goal setting process, links from professional development to teacher and principal evaluations, how professional development will build capacity and how professional development will be differentiated. UCLA SMP in coordination with department chairs will lead and then coach most of the professional development activities at John Muir.

### **Professional Development Assessment and Goals**

As a first step, administrators and teachers will develop an evidence-based, in-depth understanding of the unique needs of the school site and their role within the school. Experienced UCLA researchers and practitioners will help John Muir collect and analyze data to ascertain the current state of student learning at the school and classroom level and understand the underlying objectives, the school's available resources and assets, and how these inputs relate to the short-, intermediate- and long-term objectives.

Other data that will inform professional development selection are the results of the teacher-developed beginning-of-year and end-of-year common assessments designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional program in each subject and for each grade level, and the results of Periodic Assessments and the California Standards Tests.

In the first month of the school year, each teacher will meet with his/her supervising administrator to establish benchmarks of current performance. Benchmarks will include measures in four key areas – practice, student outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and contribution to the school community – to establish a benchmark of the teacher's strengths and areas of improvement.

### **Links from Evaluations to Professional Development**

Using a process for personal reflection, each teacher will self assess, based on currently available data on the key areas above to develop an annual individual development plan. The development plan will be reviewed with the supervising administrator and include the progress measures established by the department in collaborative department plans to improve student achievement in their areas of instruction. The plan will include challenging but realistic development goals and targeted professional development and training to reach those goals.

### **Build Capacity**

UCLA SMP's model of professional development focuses on developing the professional skills and enhancing the capacity of school leaders and teachers. Each professional development workshop focuses on sharing strategies and processes for improving instruction and school leadership through common standards for student learning, collaborative planning, and collegial learning, which are central to effective teaching. UCLA SMP works with the school's existing teachers and leaders to help them build on success to become more effective and able to help all of their students meet benchmarks and achieve at high levels. In the following paragraphs, the process for assessment for, goal setting for, design and development of, and implementation of a professional development program are described.

### **Differentiation to Support Teachers at Different Levels**

The first Tuesday of each month will be allocated to department meetings allowing for capacity building, lesson design and lesson planning. Additionally, the second and fourth Tuesday of each month will be allocated to whole school professional development as determined by the school leadership team and the professional development team using the RtI<sup>2</sup> problem-solving process. Finally, the third Tuesday of each month will be allocated to PLEs to continue to build capacity among their interdisciplinary teams.



**c. Teacher Orientation:** *Describe the induction program for new and existing teachers. Discuss how this program will prepare teachers to deliver the proposed curriculum, utilize the instructional strategies and differentiate instruction.*

Teachers who are new to John Muir will be introduced to policies and practices by the department chairs during department meetings and/or their PLEs during the PLE professional development time. New teachers will be entered into a “buddy system” with either their PLE lead teacher or a veteran lead teacher. In addition, the instructional coaches will provide support to new teachers in order to ease the acclimation process to John Muir’s practices and policies.

Lesson Design Study is a nearly perfect induction protocol for new teachers. Many new – and veteran – teachers comment that they wish they had learned Lesson Design Study during their university credential program because no one ever guided them through the process of actually writing lessons and assessments or evaluating how their lessons worked and students performed. The LAUSD District Intern Program teaches an abbreviated Lesson Design Study methodology course that the Institute for Standards, Curricula, and Assessments designed for them – its most popular course. In a recent survey, an overwhelming majority of new teachers who participated in Lesson Design Study said they felt more confident and effective because they were better prepared

**d. PD Calendar:** *Provide a tentative PD calendar/schedule that illustrates your allocation of time for PD activities throughout the year, including summer and collaboration time during the school day (if applicable). The calendar should include the areas of focus in support of the instructional program and the format of the PD. Additionally, discuss how the school calendar, daily schedule, interim assessment process, and staffing plans align with this calendar.*

The professional development calendar is provided in Appendix A.5. It is aligned with John Muir’s school calendar and daily schedule by addressing the topics that match the instructional program and will provide meaningful application for teachers at the time of delivery. The calendar is a practical timeline intended to address the present and future needs of John Muir teachers and students to assist them in effectively increasing academic achievement. It includes a weekly 90-minute professional development session on Tuesdays.

The seminar topics will reflect the needs of the school and the individual teachers as evidenced by data. Topics may include: designing units and assessments for various purposes, including: analyzing assessment data; modifying instruction based on data analysis; deepening subject-matter knowledge; conducting peer and stakeholder classroom visitations to observe the effectiveness of school-wide implementation of practices; and decision-making protocols. From the review of the assessment findings, staff will determine topics for professional development for the coming school year. The year-end review of the assessments will be repeated each year to continually refine the content for professional development seminars.

**e. Program Evaluation:** *Describe how the PD program will be evaluated to assess its success and effectiveness on an ongoing basis. Discuss how the program will be modified to address areas of need that are identified.*

John Muir will implement a professional development action research cycle to assess the success and effectiveness of the professional development program on an ongoing basis. As described in the sections above, the action research cycle provides real-time data that will be used to make adjustments in strategies as the school develops. Data will include feedback from participants and student performance data. The most valuable tool for evaluating Lesson Design Study is a daily journal that is written by participants, and read daily to inform the future course of the current and future seminars. There is a daily and overall evaluation sheet from each participant in the AFT-provided programs. Through their work in

formal teams, the principal, teachers, and families will continuously evaluate and modify their practice to ensure their actions produce the desired effects.

**f. Autonomy:** *Describe how the school will use professional development autonomy to create a professional learning community in which faculty have time to collaborate to improve instructional practice and student learning.*

John Muir will address access and equity in the classroom by focusing on the teachers' need for continued growth throughout their career at the school. Teachers will be engaged in the concrete tasks of teaching, assessing, observing, and reflecting on their communities of practice, which will garner a collaborative approach to sharing of knowledge and capacity building. They will be able to reflect critically on their own practice and ascertain new knowledge and beliefs about their effectiveness on student achievement. They will utilize the RtI<sup>2</sup> problem-solving process effectively, ascertaining the required steps to address the school's needs and connect their work to the work of the students. The RtI<sup>2</sup> problem-solving process will be used as a driving force for the reasons for a particular professional development. The curriculum and pedagogy of professional development will derive from effective research-based resources.

Teachers will also engage in the development of new structures and supports (e.g., professional development schedules, in-house resources) relevant to their professional learning communities, which will illuminate the processes of learning and development for their own professional growth. This process will involve the teacher as both a learner and a teacher in order to allow the teachers to view knowledge as constructed by and with practitioners for use in their own contexts (rather than as something conveyed by policy makers that is distant from the needs of the school).

Professional development will be conducted in professional learning communities, core subject departments, and school-wide according to data constructed from student performance. The structure of professional development will be determined by teachers' needs (during school day, professional development time, and evaluation processes). There will be strategic assessments of professional development (through teacher evaluations, classroom observations of implementation, and teacher surveys, and by UCLA SMP). Also, a professional development resource center on campus will be housed in the teachers' resource room.



## 6. SERVING SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

**a. Special Education:** *Explain how the proposed school will implement and monitor the special education compliance processes as well as instruction including assessment, Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) and the provision of special education supports and services utilizing the District's Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual as required by the Modified Consent Decree. Please complete the plan in Appendices C, D & E.*

The student population at John Muir includes the following:

- 193 students with disabilities
- 120 students with eligibility of Specific Learning Disability
- 7 students with eligibility of Mental Retardation
- 4 students with eligibility of Emotional Disturbance
- 3 students with eligibility of Autism
- 24 students with eligibility of Other Health Impairment
- 24 students with eligibility of Speech and Language Impairment
- 1 student with a low incidence of eligibility Hard of Hearing
- 1 student with an eligibility of Traumatic Brain Injury

### Special Education Staffing and Support

A Learning Center is the resource center for students receiving special education services in the Resource Specialist Program (RSP). Resource teachers are distributed equitably across PLEs as determined by the number of students receiving special education services in the RSP. This allows RSP teachers to effectively communicate the Individualized Education Program (IEP) needs of their students to their general education teachers and implement the services outlined in their IEPs. Special Day Program (SDP) teachers service special education students in the Specific Learning Disability (SLD) setting are distributed equitably across PLEs as determined by the number of SDP/SLD teachers. Emotionally disturbed (ED), mentally retarded (MR), and Autism (AUT) teachers will be assigned to one PLE respectively.

John Muir offers a set of programs and services that are designed to meet each student's unique needs. Students receive special education services and supports in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) based on each student's IEP. Least Restrictive Environments include: general education with accommodations or modifications; general education setting with consultation by related service provider (such as APE); general education setting with direct service by related service provider (such as SLI); general education setting with consultation by Resource Specialist Teacher, general education setting with direct services provided by Resource Specialist Teacher; and special day program when the majority of the school day is in the special education program. Students in the special day program have classes in the general education setting for an elective and physical education. Some students receive instruction for a core class in the general education setting when appropriate with curriculum modifications and instructional supports as identified in the IEP. John Muir provides priority programming for students with disabilities to ensure that students needing intervention and or enrichment can have access to those classes.

### IEP Process: Implementation

John Muir's special education teachers and staff use the Master Calendar report from Welligent to monitor Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting dates by a point person. IEP meetings are calendared in September for the entire school year on an "IEP meeting" spreadsheet based on the Master Calendar for the school year. (As additional IEP meetings are requested, they are added to the spreadsheet.) The spreadsheet details name of student, type of meeting, date, time, and location of meeting, case manager, general education teacher, administrator/designees, and related services personnel. All special education teachers, administrators, related-service personnel and support personnel (e.g., nurse and school psychologist) receive the "IEP Meeting" spreadsheet. (Revised spreadsheets are

disseminated as revisions occur.) The office technician uses the IEP spreadsheet to arrange class coverage so that both the special and general education teachers can attend IEP meetings.

Each month, the master calendar report is printed and reviewed to ensure that all IEPs are scheduled and held. Twice a month, the teachers and staff also run ID61 reports for Special Day Program and Resource Specialist Program to identify new enrolled students and assign them to a case manager and ensure their class schedule is appropriate. Once the IEP meeting dates are calendared for the year, a designated special education teacher “opens” all IEPs for the school year, a process that includes logging the meeting dates, times, and participants into Welligent in order to generate notifications. For example, parents are notified of IEP meetings four weeks and 10 days prior to the meeting date. General Education teachers receive written notification of and invitation to IEP meetings two weeks prior to IEP meetings.

Special education teachers also develop necessary assessment plans for three years and re-evaluations. These plans are reviewed with parents and logged in Welligent, along with appropriate assessors and participants for the assessment plans.

Before each IEP meeting, the special education teachers print and distribute the IEP documents to designated case managers for the meeting. Upon conclusion of each IEP meeting, the IEP is closed and locked and copy is provided to parents, the original IEP is filed, and needed follow-ups such as program or class changes are conducted immediately so that the IEPs can be implemented. Also case managers create “passports” for general education teachers to access the information so that accommodations and modifications can be implemented. All IEP meetings are held in a designated room with a phone for teleconferencing if needed. IEP meetings in which the school psychologist is a participant are held in the school psychologist’s office. In addition, bilingual support personnel are invited to attend IEP meetings in order to provide translation for parents at the IEP meeting.

### **IEP Process: Monitoring**

For the 2010-11 school year, John Muir will continue to monitor Special Education Compliance using the School Administrator Reports on Welligent. The monitoring process begins with each provider documenting the services for students in the Resource Specialist Program and students receiving services (e.g., Language and Speech, Counseling) using the Welligent service tracking system. At the end of the month, the provider prints, signs, and submits the monthly attendance forms to a designated administrator.

The designated administrator will monitor Welligent, tracking reports on services by service and the list all special education students enrolled at John Muir. The administrator will use the data to ensure services delivered match the proposed services outlined in the IEP as well as identify students who are not receiving the services listed in their IEPs. The designated administrator will also review the “Missing and OLD” IEPs reports to identify students whose IEPs are out of compliance and students who have out-of-district IEPs. Finally, the designated administrator reviews other Welligent Reports such as accommodations and modifications (IEP101, 121, 111), ESY (103), ITP Listing Report, IEP Listing (REP103), and MCD reports for compliance.

### **Extended School Year (ESY)**

Discussion about ESY occurs annually for each student with a disability. However, determination of ESY for students with disabilities is made after analysis of multiple data sources such as CST or CAPA, Periodic Assessment, progress of IEP goals and objectives, curriculum-based assessments, report cards, observations, student records, academic and behavior performance, etc. in order to determine students’ individual needs prior to the IEP meeting and is recorded on the district’s “ESY Data Collection Tool”. See Appendix A.6 for Service Plan for Students with Disabilities.



**7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

**a. Performance Goals and Metrics:** *Each applicant team is required to set clearly measurable student performance goals and mission-specific goals that will measure the success of your innovative school program. Schools will use the Performance Management Matrix, which will be available on the Public School Choice website in the coming month to provide this information.*

**b. Rationale:** *Discuss why the proposed school will track the mission-specific indicators selected.*

The table below lists the major educational metrics, goals and the rationales for each metric that will be used to monitor school-wide and subgroup progress. Although the information is not required in this application, John Muir's Design Team, teachers, and administrators created the metrics and goals.

METRIC	GOAL	RATIONALE
Annual Academic Performance Index (API) targets	The state will use year 1 as the school's baseline score. Year 2's target will be a <u>10%</u> increase of the difference between the state minimum goal of 800 and the school's baseline with the ultimate goal being to increase the yearly incremental gains based on school's scores in order to exceed the state's goal of 800.	John Muir will use the state's growth calculation target based on where the scores are after year 1 to determine academic growth target in order to successfully reach and exceed the goal score of 800. John Muir will continue to implement Response to Instruction and Intervention strategies to address student achievement needs, offer enrichment and intervention courses, ongoing tutoring, community and parental engagement, and PLEs to foster the whole child to meet academic success.
Adequate Yearly Progress	Incremental targets toward <u>49%</u> completion of the AYP targets by 2014	John Muir will follow the federal accountability requirements in meeting all the AYP performance targets and all the subgroups as determined by the ESEA.
Percentage of students scoring "Proficient" or "Advanced" on the CST	Increase the students scoring "Proficient" in ELA and Math by <u>8%</u> each year while decreasing the percentage of students scoring "Far Below Basic" and "Below Basic" by 10% each year	The AMOs will continue to rise every year so that by 2015, the numerically significant subgroups will score at the "Proficient or Above Proficient" level.
Number of students identified as gifted	Increase the number – school wide and by subgroup – to a minimum of <u>10%</u> of the school's population each year.	John Muir will work to increase the number of students that are identified as intellectually and artistically gifted. The instructional programs for all students will be based on the principles that our students will receive an education that will garner each student's individual capabilities, interest and needs. The learning opportunities provided here will help develop abilities to their highest levels possible; allowing students who are high performing to be easily identifiable each year.

METRIC	GOAL	RATIONALE
Percentage of English Learners reclassifying to Fluent English Learners	Increase the percentage of English Learners reclassifying to Fluent English Learners by <u>5%</u> each year according to state criteria.	John Muir will meet and exceed the established reclassification criteria that comply with the state and federal requirements. The guidelines of the ESEA require annual progress for English Learners in order to meet AYP and improve student achievement for all subgroups.
Percentage of Students with Disabilities performing at “Basic” and above on the ELA and Math CSTs	Increase the percentage of Students with Disabilities that perform at “Basic” and above each year.	John Muir will use Welligent to monitor student progress and offer intervention in ELA and Math beginning in the 6 <sup>th</sup> grade for SWD. We will provide appropriate modifications and accommodations of instruction and instructional practices to provide students with optimal means for success on the CAPA and CMA.
Attendance Rate	The district’s minimum student attendance rate expectation is <u>96%</u> . The school’s goal is to meet or exceed the district’s expectation.	In order for John Muir to achieve 100% proficient on CST for all subgroups, the attendance rate must be increase to the acceptable level of 95%. John Muir is geared to increase student learning by exceeding the district’s minimum student attendance rate.
Student Suspensions	The district’s minimum reduction of student suspensions is 5% each year. John Muir is currently at <u>17.7%</u> .	John Muir will follow the district’s reduction of student suspension rate with a goal to exceed that rate by increasing incrementally in order to reach 0% suspension by 2015.



**SECTION THREE: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT****8. COMMUNITY ANALYSIS AND CONTEXT**

**a. Description:** *Describe the community you seek to serve. Include an analysis of the strengths, assets, values and critical needs of the community. Discuss your rationale for selecting this community and why the proposed school aligns with community needs and expectations.*

**Overview of the Community**

John Muir Middle School (John Muir) is located in the South Vermont/Vermont-Slauson neighborhood of Los Angeles, LAUSD District 7, and Service Planning Area 6. The community is in a densely populated, working class urban area of Los Angeles with a diverse and multicultural population of roughly 30,000 residents. The majority of the residents are Latino and African American. Nearly 40% of the residents are foreign born. Mexico (53.2%) and El Salvador (26.3%) are the most common foreign places of birth.

The residents are younger and mostly single. 24.8% of the families are headed by a single parent and the average household size is 3.5 people, which is high for the city and county. The median household income is \$31,236, which is significantly lower than the U.S. average. According to an *Los Angeles Times* census, only 3.7% of residents 25 and older have a four-year degree, which is low for the city and for the county. Additionally, the percentage of residents 25 and older with less than a high school diploma is high for the county.

The student population of John Muir mirrors that of its surrounding community. The students are primarily Latino/Hispanic (76.3%) and African American (23.3%). 32% of the students are English learners. The majority of students - 76.8% - qualify for the Free or Reduced Price Meals program.

**Strengths and Assets of the Community**

Founded in 1922, John Muir Middle School has had a long and important presence in the South Los Angeles community and is a historical landmark. The school is centrally located in the community and has served as a meeting place for families for 97 years. In addition to the middle school and Magnet School, John Muir hosts an adult school, which includes ESL/GED classes.

The diversity of the community adds to the richness of the neighborhood. Major ethnic and cultural groups include Latinos from Mexico and Central America as well as those born in the United States but with a Latino, African American, or Korean family heritage. The most represented religious group is Christian, but there is an Islamic population of consequence.

Community members have strong pride in themselves and their neighborhood. Residential properties are well-kept, and small businesses in the neighborhood exude a friendly air. For years, the community has collectively addressed challenges, solved problems and united around important community issues including supporting each other financially and emotionally through difficult family transitions, hard economic times, and issues of community service that sometimes require positive collective action to resolve such as assuring safety through a visible police presence, and maintaining the cleanliness and repair of streets and sidewalks. John Muir volunteers, sporting identifying tee shirts, proudly work at the school, and wear their shirts into the community.

John Muir benefits from a close proximity to all of these post-secondary schools. Just north of John Muir is world-renowned University of Southern California. Also close by are Los Angeles Trade Technical College, and the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Los Angeles Southwest College is four miles south of John Muir, and Los Angeles City College is ten miles north on Vermont Avenue.



### Values and Critical Needs of the Community

The community has a strong desire for and is serious about their children attaining a good education. The Vermont-Slauson community is in need of some critical assets to ensure its long-term viability and health. Of primary importance, the community needs to build capital, retain human resources, establish new business and retain current economic resources. One key strategy is for the community to form stronger partnerships with vibrant businesses and educational intuitions to help its growth and development. In the coming years, John Muir will act as a key connector among businesses, educational intuitions and other resources in the community.

Additionally, there needs to be improved communication with the entire community. Because the major groups represented in the neighborhood speak different languages, the capacity to meet linguistic needs in all school and community endeavors is paramount. Many community resources are not fully utilized because of this language barrier between service providers and community constituencies. Further, communication styles and preferences across cultural and ethnic groups vary, requiring multiple methods of sharing information and gathering feedback in this diverse setting.

According to a recent survey and input from community meetings, the parents of John Muir students want effective teachers who understand them and their children, both linguistically and culturally. They also want John Muir to continue to enforce safety, discipline, and school policies, including the wearing of school uniforms. Finally, parents stated that they want John Muir to be the school where students are prepared well to succeed in high school, where the aspiration to attend and excel in college is developed, and where students learn and practice characteristics of respect and become contributing members of their community and beyond.

**b. Background/Support:** *Describe your team's history and experience serving this or a similar community. Demonstrate any existing connections or partnerships that your team has established within the community. Provide a list of community leaders, groups, organizations, institutions or individuals that have pledged support for the proposed school.*

### Overview of the History and Experience of John Muir's Leadership Team

The Administrative Leadership Team is committed to refocusing, reorganizing, restructuring, and improving its work. The Administrative Leadership Team is comprised of the principal and two assistant principals. Their combined experience in education totals 55 years and they have served students at John Muir Middle School and in LAUSD in the capacity of administration, teaching, coordinator, counselor, and advisor. At John Muir, they are instructional leaders committed to the successful academic achievement of all John Muir students. They demonstrate and hold high expectations for the faculty and staff. They also systematically adhere to District mandates established for the responsible and safe operation of the school.

During their short tenure as an administrative team at John Muir, they have respectfully unified the faculty; put effective systems in place for monitoring instruction, attendance, teacher and student data, evaluation of instruction, and professional development; developed the plan for Public School Choice 2.0; and are fiscally responsible school managers.

### History and Experience of John Muir's teachers

The John Muir Middle School staff is comprised of more than 70 teachers with over 300 years of instructional experience. Over 50% of the JMMS teachers have 10 years of teaching experience in at John Muir Middle School and the surrounding community, they are committed to the students, their parents and the academic success of the school. All of the teachers are inspiring educators and committed to and passionate about learning. They believe in the students, their parents and the success of the school. They are committed to refocusing, reorganizing, restructuring, and improving their work.



They are well prepared to teach, reach and support the students of John Muir Middle School. Extensive training and professional development – in areas including SDAIE methodologies, cultural responsive pedagogies, and English learner’s Access to Core – have prepared John Muir’s teachers to teach the diverse student population at John Muir Middle School. In addition, the teachers at John Muir have a long history of support and participation with the Academic English Mastery Program (AEMP) and actively use instructional practices within this progressive and powerful program.

All John Muir teachers are trained in reading programs including, Accelerated Reader and Read 180, Language, and 21st century technology for example, the SMART Board. The teachers are also well versed in the CLAD and/or BCLAD strategies.

### **History and Experience of UCLA School Management Program**

UCLA School Management Program ([www.smp.gseis.ucla.edu](http://www.smp.gseis.ucla.edu)) was established in 1992, an outgrowth of a collaborative effort by faculty of the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSEIS) and other entities to design and implement a leadership training program under the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Restructuring Now (LEARN) for principals, teachers and other stakeholders in LAUSD. The mission of UCLA SMP is to support the transformation of public schools and their districts into sustainable learning communities where all students can achieve at high levels. Since its inception, UCLA SMP has worked with more 1,000 schools and school districts in California and other states. Its professional training and coaching programs, offered to all interested stakeholders (students, parents and guardians, administrators, teachers, and neighbors and other community members) have led to dramatic and proven improvements in student academic achievement. UCLA SMP’s faculty – comprised of former public school teachers, principals, and superintendents – provide full-time support to client schools and districts.

### **List of Supporters**

John Muir received letters of support from LAUSD Board of Education Member, Marguerite P. LaMotte, UCLA School Management Program, K-Mart, Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches, Community Centers, Inc., Community Services Unlimited, and Associated Administrators of Los Angeles. Please see Appendix A.7 for Letters of Support.

## 9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

**a. Engagement Plan:** *Explain the team's vision for engaging the community and the underlying theory that supports it.*

The John Muir vision for parent and community engagement is proven effective and rests on the belief that meaningful engagement is a function of meaningful participation in the life of the school. This idea is supported by research done by the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The goal is to unify the parents, teachers, and community towards a vision that develops students into 21-Century learners and citizens. Paramount to the strategy to increase community engagement, John Muir will improve the process of parents, teachers, and community partners learning together using the elements of shared leadership, skillful consensus building, and active participation in the formal and informal decision-making bodies.

Of equal importance to the parent and community engagement strategy is the meaningful involvement of parents, teachers, and community partners in instructional decision-making. Parents, teachers, and community members bring the insight of adults who know students beyond the school day and they bring the unique skills and understanding about what students know and are able to do. Parents, teachers, and community members will actively participate in John Muir Classroom Visitation Protocol, Instructional practices, Lesson Design, debriefs, and subsequent planning for additional partnerships.

**b. Key Community Partnerships:** *Discuss the specific ways in which community members will be included in the ongoing success of the proposed school. Describe the role of key community partnerships throughout the first five years of the school and explain 1) how such partnerships will further the mission and vision of the school, and 2) who will be responsible for managing the cultivation of these partnerships.*

Under the leadership of the principal, John Muir leadership and PLE Design Teams will facilitate, manage, maintain and appropriately cultivate the development of collaborative relationships with community partners and professionals in the fields of politics, law enforcement, health, education, and public service by inviting them to campus to conduct workshops, hold assemblies, and coordinate exhibitions.

John Muir will continue to strengthen and create the capacity for more partnerships with businesses, community organizations, and colleges to: develop and enhance the capacity of the PLEs; support students in preparation for high school and postsecondary careers/opportunities; support students and parents in utilizing outreach programs for improved academic achievement; provide students with hands-on experience working in their career of choice; prevent middle school drop-out; and build character.

John Muir will strengthen partnerships with K-Mart, El Super Market, JP Morgan/Chase Bank, Bank of America, Chaka Khan Foundation, Los Angeles Police Departments (LAPD), County Probation, Kedren, the Mayor's Gang Reduction & Youth Development (GRYD), Boy's to Men, YWCA (tutoring, recreation), Beyond the Bell, UCLA, USC (NAI, Exxon), and Community Service Unlimited (community gardening) programs. These partnerships and programs will support and increase student attendance, engagement, and academic achievement by providing students with extra curricular activities and interests that deepen their experiences at school. Additionally, these partnerships provide opportunities for students to participate in programs that promote academic improvement; support school-wide positive behavior; motivate students to develop character-building skills; and encourage school-wide involvement in constructive community activities.

John Muir will further develop the partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) thru the AVID program that is suitable for students with a GPA of 2.0. John Muir will expand



its partnership with post-secondary institutions such as: University of California, Los Angeles, University of Southern California and California State University, Dominguez Hills, and community colleges. These partners will expose John Muir students to higher education.

At John Muir, the role of the parent in the teacher-student relationship is vital to a successful school partnership and to student achievement. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend Open House, PHABAO, Back-to-School Night and Parent-Teacher meetings every five weeks to discuss their child's performance. Parents will be invited to attend informational meetings, help with fundraisers, and attend programs offered by our community partners. Each semester, surveys will be given to students, parents, and teachers to analyze the success and outcomes of the programs/activities provided by our partners. These unique and special collaborative relationships will be established to create bridges between the John Muir teachers and parents, lending to successful outcomes as well as, but not limited to, success in the classroom.

## SECTION FOUR: GOVERNANCE, OVERSIGHT and LEADERSHIP

### 10. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT

**a. School Type:** *Briefly explain the rationale for applying to operate your school as a traditional, Pilot, Expanded School-Based Management Model (ESBMM), Network Partner, Affiliated Charter or Independent Charter school?*

John Muir has chosen to operate with a traditional governance model based first on the belief that the single most important element that affects student learning and achievement is the quality of the interactions of adults in the school community – whether teachers, administrators, support staff, parents or other community members – with students. Given the importance of the focus on students, the less a school community must shift its focus to implementing a new or different governance model, the more energy is preserved for actions that directly affect students.

A second belief that supports the selection of a traditional governance model is that changed governance structure is not the key to improved student learning, and that, in fact, all the necessary attributes for governance of an effective school with high achieving students are present in the traditional model, if the potential of the attributes is developed to its fullest.

John Muir will work collaboratively using the structures already present – including the School Site Council, the Compensatory Education Advisory Committee, and the English Language Advisory Committee – as official decision-making bodies and faculty, department, grade level, magnet, personalized learning environment and Parent Center structures as advisory bodies to the Councils. Explicit, transparent processes in each structural setting with an emphasis on building consensus for important decisions will support optimal school transformation results within the traditional governance model.

**b. Applicant Team Capacity:** *List the members of applicant team filing this proposal. Please be sure to include each person's affiliation with the school (e.g., principal, teacher, parent, community member, etc.). Include a brief biography of those persons who will take a significant leadership role in the proposed school. Provide evidence to show why the team has the collective capacity to successfully lead/transform a school.*

The John Muir Public School Choice 2.0 Design Team members include (listed in alphabetical order):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Randell Brown, Technology Teacher         | • Kristen Harrison, Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor |
| • Jacqueline Carlyle, Instructional Coach   | • Lotrece Hamilton, Special Education Teacher               |
| • Miranda Conston-Ra'oof, Principal         | • William Judson, Teacher, UTLA Chair                       |
| • Phuong Dinh, Math Teacher                 | • Saul Sandoval, Assistant Principal                        |
| • Tyson Evans, Science Teacher              | • Sandra Stallworth, Title 1 Coordinator                    |
| • Olivia Fields, RTI2 Coordinator           | • Arturo Vera, Teacher                                      |
| • Kassandra Fitz-Dormer, Bridge Coordinator |   |
| • Karen Fitz-Williams, Teacher              |   |

The resumes of the Design Team members can be found in Appendix A.8. In the chart below, the people who will take a significant leadership role in the proposed school are described in more detail.



Member/ Title	Capacity
Dr. George McKenna Local District Superintendent	Dr. McKenna successfully changed a large inner-city high school (Washington H.S.) that had been torn by violence, low achievement, and lack of community confidence into a school with an attendance waiting list and nearly 80% of graduates enrolled in college. Afterwards, he served as Superintendent of Inglewood Unified School District, as Deputy Superintendent of Compton Unified School District, and as Assistant Superintendent of Pasadena School District. He also authored California legislation to permit parent release time from work to visit schools.
Daryl Narimatsu Local District Director	Mr. Narimatsu has served LAUSD for 11 years as an administrator and 6 years as a principal. Under his leadership, Bethune Middle School was one of the first secondary schools in Local District 7 to break the 600 API benchmark. He also served as Local District Operations Coordinator.
Michael Hopwood, Operations Administrator	Mr. Hopwood's career includes 17 years as an administrator, 8 years as an Operations Administrator (Safety & Legal Local District mandates). He was one of the initial participants in the Community Collaborative (Including members of LAPD, Sheriff's Department, LAUSD-PD, Probation Department, Local District Operations, School Administration, and Safe Passages), meeting monthly to discuss and resolve community crime issues.
Miranda L. Ra'oof, Principal	Ms. Ra'oof has lived in and served the John Muir community for 19 years as an educator and community advocate. She has been a teacher, counselor, and assistant principal at both Manual Arts and West Adams Preparatory (LAUSD) High Schools. She has served John Muir Middle School since 2009.
Olivia Fields, Data Coach	Ms. Fields began her teaching career as a Mathematics and Science teacher in 1974 for LAUSD. Her first teaching assignment was at John Muir Middle School as a Mathematics and Science teacher. She served as a consultant to the "Equalizing Educational Opportunities" project in Chicago, Ill. In San Francisco she assisted in opening the Youth Chance alternative High School. She has had an extensive professional background in business and corporate employment.
Bo Dee Burnett-Dove, Instructional Coach	Ms. Burnett-Dove has been a mentor teacher at John Muir Middle School for 11 years. For the preceding 10 years she worked in Sacramento schools. She has taught private voice and piano at Sacramento State University where she obtained her Masters in Composition degree.
Jacqueline Carlyle, Instructional Coach	Dr. Carlyle has taught English at middle and high school levels. For 4 years she was a Secondary Instructional Specialist for the LAUSD's Academic English mastery Program/Proficiency Plus office, providing on-going professional development to teachers, parents, and administrators to implement LAUSD's Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative. She has been an English Department Chair, UTLA Chair, and a professional development committee member.
Robin Bradley, Parent Liaison	Mrs. Bradley has been with LAUSD for 3 years. She assists parents in expanding their capacity to support their children. She is the community liaison from the school to the community.
Maria Sanchez, Parent Community Rep.	Mrs. Sanchez has been a Parent Community Rep. for 22 years. She has 5 children, all of which have graduated from John Muir Middle School.

**c. School Governance and Oversight:**

**i. Autonomy:** *How will you use governance autonomy to create a culture of shared leadership and decision-making focused on high student performance?*

John Muir is committed to using stakeholder-wide consensus processes to make decisions of significance under the purview of the councils and committees of the traditional governance model. Teachers, administrators and other stakeholders have agreed to engage in specific protocol-based development activities to increase John Muir's capacity to achieve consensus, and to assure that dialogue and discussion builds the trust necessary to make shared decisions that enhance the school's capacity to accomplish high student performance.

**ii. School Level Committees:** *Describe the decision-making bodies and general areas of decision-making responsibility for each body that will exist in the school. Detail how your school governance structure allows for a real and meaningful impact on school decision-making, and how they will interact with each other? Describe the process for gaining input from all stakeholder groups into decisions.*

To build a culture of trust, openness and transparency, John Muir will implement shared decision-making within its traditional governance model. This type of structure, which is evident at high performing schools<sup>xi</sup>, will essentially put responsibility for decision making about budget, personnel and curriculum at the school level in the hands of the School Leadership Committee, which merges the roles of a School Site Council and Local School Leadership Council while maintaining compliance with membership mandates. With this understanding, the principal will jointly develop the vision, mission, goals and strategies with members of the school community. School administrators will also share power and accountability for decision making among the team members. It is John Muir's assumption that teacher participation in decision making of curriculum and instruction will lead to instructional improvement and better student outcomes and that when teachers participate in school decision making, their commitment to the school increases.<sup>xii</sup>

All committees and councils will use protocols to support members as they: set norms, plan, look at quantitative data, consider dilemmas, share decision making, share learning, and use "appreciative inquiry" in which members build upon successes to improve student learning. John Muir's Public School Choice 2.0 Design Team members have differentiated between decision of convenience (such as dates for events), which may be decided by vote, and decisions of matter (such as the vision and mission of the school), which will require agreement by consensus. Consensus assures the district, the school, and parents that the administrators are working collaboratively with all members of the school community to bring about meaningful changes that can be sustained.

In the following paragraphs, the school-level committees are described in more detail. Together, school community members have established and will continue to refine the clear roles and responsibilities for each group, subunit and/or individual within the larger organization and how the work contributes to the overarching vision of improved student learning at John Muir. Given the roles and responsibilities, each committee will be responsible for making decisions and will be held accountable for those decisions.

**School Leadership Committee**

The School Leadership Committee will be an "umbrella" committee that meets contract, LAUSD, CDE and Federal requirements of the School Site Council and Local School Leadership Council. The committee will be responsible for: planning, monitoring and evaluating the activities and expenditures for the Single Plan for Student Achievement and programs operated at the school to improve student achievement; making budgetary decisions about Specially Funded Programs and all areas designated by LAUSD/UTLA contract for Local School Leadership Councils; and appointing committees to gather and analyze information, propose strategies for improving instruction and examine materials, staffing, or funding.



The committee members will seek input from each constituent group and advisory council to inform their discussion and decision. The committee will use protocols as part of scheduled meetings to gather input, and ensure that concerns and opinions of all stakeholders are heard. In addition, protocols will be used to assure follow through on decisions, and communication about implementation and results back to advisory councils and committees.

**CEAC (Compensatory Education Advisory Committee)**

The CEAC will meet independently to consider the needs and progress of program students. The members will provide the coordination, technical assistance, and any other support necessary to assist in participating in the planning and implementation of effective parental involvement and will serve as an advisory to the School Leadership Committee. Members will include parents or family members of participating students.

**ELAC (English Language Advisory Committee)**

The ELAC will meet independently to consider the needs and progress of program students. The members will provide assistance and advice in the development and implementation of the Master Plan for the Education of English Learners (ELs) and will serve as an advisory to the School Leadership Committee. Members will include parents or family members of participating students.

**GATE (Gifted and Talented Advisory) Committee**

The GATE Committee will meet independently to consider the needs and progress of their identified program participant students and will serve as an advisory to the School Leadership Committee. Members will include parents or family members of participating students.

**School Site CAC (Community Advisory Council)**

The School Site CAC will meet independently to consider the needs and progress of their identified program participant students. The members will include volunteer parents or family members of participating students (Special Education), district administrators, teachers and a student representative. Responsibilities for the committee will include maintaining an ongoing interaction between educators and parents, advising the District on the development of its Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Local Plan and Annual Services and Budget Plans, hosting training meetings open to parents and staff, and serving as an advisory to the School Leadership Committee.

**Personalized Learning Environment Advisory Committees (PLEAC)**

The PLEAC will meet independently to consider the needs and progress of students in their identified PLE, act as a support group for activities of the PLE, and serve as an advisory to the School Leadership Committee. The PLEAC will include parent and teacher volunteers and there will be one for each of the four PLEs.

**iii. Governing Council:** *Describe the composition of the Governing Council and the process for membership selection.*

Members of the School Leadership Committee will include the Principal, teachers selected by teachers at the school, other school personnel (certified and classified) selected by the other school personnel, and parent/community members selected by parents. (Certificated members to represent: Core departments, ESL, Electives and PE, each PLE, out-of-classroom teachers, and Health and Human Services employees.) The number of members selected will ensure parity among stakeholders and that input from all stakeholders is represented. The composition of this committee follows the state regulations for school site councils.



## 11. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

**a. Principal Selection:** *Please attach a job description for the Principal. If a candidate has already been identified, explain why this person is well qualified to lead the proposed school. Explain how her characteristics align with your school's unique mission and vision.*

School leadership is important to the success of a school or school system. Purkey, S. and Smith, M. (1983) "Effective schools: a review," *The Elementary School Journal* 83, 427-462, clearly documents that in schools where students performed better than expected based on poverty and other demographic characteristics, a "dynamic" principal was at the helm. Today more than ever strong leaders are essential to turning around poorly performing schools. John Muir Middle School is in the process of implementing reforms, motivating teachers and students.

One of the most important characteristics of an effective school leader is the ability to provide strong instructional leadership. Instructional leadership includes design of instructional strategies, supervision, evaluation of programs, development of curriculum, understanding the processes of teaching and learning, knowledge of new teaching methods, student construction of knowledge and skills in problems solving. A good instructional leader must devote a large portion of their time and energy in improving teaching and learning.

Another important characteristic, often times overlooked, is a connection to the community and to the hearts and souls of the parents, children, community leaders, churches, schools, and senior citizens. Essential to this connection is to know the student, the client, the future citizen of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A good instructional leader must believe that each and every child can and will succeed.

Research suggest that a particular task or characteristic of a good instructional leader is the fact that this leader makes regular visits to classrooms, communicates goals and promotes discussion of instructional. These effective leaders pay considerable attention to indicators of student achievement. They are committed to the success for all students and place particular emphasis on improving instruction for poorly performing students. These leaders are skilled in observing instruction and are able to give valuable feedback in ways that encourage and motivate teachers to improve their practice. These leaders are able to encourage school-wide dialogue around models of good teaching and quality student work, and everyone is held accountable for student performance.

Ms. Miranda Conston-Ra'oof is the best suited instructional leader for this newly reformed middle school. She provided outstanding leadership for the Public School Choice 2.0 Process. Under her leadership the entire staff, teachers, aides, parents and students took time to examine instructional practice, their motivation to teach, and reasons for change. It is under her leadership that John Muir Middle School was brought together to develop and articulate a new vision for an established school. She is highly qualified to continue as John Muir Middle School's instructional leader, principal, director, visionary and believer in children.

Her background supports the idea that children need to see leaders come from the community and be great leaders in instructional institutions. Her vision permeates John Muir's culture. She has the ability to take risks, seize opportunities and work to establish a cohesive, likeminded network of parents, teachers and staff. Her background as an instructional leader with West Adams Preparatory High School laid an excellent foundation for her to gain first-hand information about what academic experiences await middle school students. Her experiences at Manual Arts and Inglewood Unified School District gives her an advantage in understanding the need for middle school students to prepare for the competitive world of high school. Her background opens the doors for a much-needed articulation between elementary through high schools.

Lastly, excellent principals promote the involvement of teachers and parents in the decision-making process. Ms. Miranda Conston-Ra'oof is not threatened by this empowerment of teachers, parents



and students. She will be able to turn John Muir around because her background is strong, she is a part of the community, her successful children are products of the community and she not only believes that all children will and can learn she lives it each day. Her stability and belief that John Muir can change and become a 21<sup>st</sup> -Century school and excellent institution will help lead the transformation. She recognizes that John Muir has a long history of not making progress. She encourages teachers to change and she personally will support and work towards creating a new school based on a stronger pedagogical approach. With her leadership, John Muir Middle School will continue to grow, change and be around for many more decades, this time as a “Distinguished Middle School.” Please see Appendix A.9 for a job description of the Principal.

**b. Leadership Team:** *Identify any leadership positions beyond the principal position. Discuss the role the leadership team will play in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Instructional Program. Discuss how the leadership team will collaborate with the faculty and staff to set goals, develop and implement the curriculum, assess progress in meeting goals and hold each other accountable for meeting such goals.*

The leadership team is comprised of the principal, two assistant principals, and two instructional coaches, a Data coordinator, a Bilingual Coordinator and Subject Matter Department chairs. They are instructional leaders and professional that is serious about academic excellence for all John Muir students. In addition they have served students in the capacity of teacher, counselor, academic coordinator and school administration. All individuals on the leadership team are caring, committed, and creative, educators that are vested in the academic development and preparation of young citizens, excited about learning, and well prepared for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The John Muir Public School Choice 2.0 Design Team also exemplifies all the above qualities. The Design Team is comprised of volunteer John Muir teachers that met once a week since May 2010 to create a new John Muir for academic success. The plan for a new John Muir reflects the hard work and dedication of a team of creative educators who want to make a difference in the lives of students. The Design Team grew out of a need for collective input, buy-in, and genuine passion for the successful academic achievement of students attending John Muir Middle School.

Throughout the process the members met with parents, attended summer meetings, to work together to design a new vision for John Muir. The Design Team was inspired and motivated simply by a hope to establish a new and innovative school image and to create a refreshed learning culture.

**c. Principal Evaluation:** *Describe the annual process by which the principal will be evaluated. Please be sure to include the governing body or persons responsible for evaluation.*

Together, the Design Team, teachers and the Principal developed an evaluation process for the Principal. The table below lists the goals of John Muir’s principal evaluations and how John Muir’s evaluation process will meet the goal.

**Goals of the Principal Evaluation**

<b>Goal of John Muir Principal Evaluation</b>	<b>How Implemented in Evaluation Process</b>
To ensure student learning at John Muir	The evaluation measures will be tied to key strategies that John Muir's teachers, administrators and parents believe lead to increased student learning.
To reflect the complexity and sophistication of the teaching and learning process at John Muir	The evaluation will include multiple measures or data points that capture the complex, diverse and unique learning processes of John Muir students.
To improve the expertise of the John Muir principal	The evaluation system will include measures of expertise and be tied to professional development.
To provide clear indicators of principal's strengths and areas for improvement, with the goal of ensuring high levels of student learning	The evaluation system will be robust and include multiple measures and rating categories.
To provide clear mechanisms for John Muir principal to improve his/her leadership and management	The results of the evaluation process will help John Muir make strategic decisions about how to use its resources to best support the development of the principal.

**Principal Evaluation Process**

The principal evaluation process will be as follows:

1. In the first month of the school year, the John Muir principal and other school administrators will meet with the supervisor to establish benchmarks of current performance. Benchmarks will include measures in the key CSELS areas to establish a benchmark of the administrator's strengths and areas of improvement.
2. Using a process for personal reflection, each John Muir administrator will self assess, based on currently available data on the key CSPLS areas above to develop an annual individual development plan. The development plan will be negotiated with the administrator's supervising administrator and include the progress measures established school wide to improve student achievement and collaborative school culture. The plan will include challenging but realistic development goals and targeted professional development and training to reach those goals.
3. At regular and clearly identified points throughout the year, each administrator will be evaluated on the key CSPELS areas to track his/her progress against the stated goals and adjust and tailor his/her goals (if necessary) and professional development program.
4. Final evaluations will be based on administrator and supervisor consideration of overall progress as indicated by multiple measures in the key CSPELS areas. Final evaluation will meet or exceed current requirements, including timelines, under LAUSD Board policy.



**Measures of the Principal Evaluations**

<b>Area of Measure</b>	<b>Metric and Rationale – How the Metric will Measure/Monitors Teacher Progress</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Practice (35% of total evaluation)	Leadership Framework with multiple rating categories and section for comments to align principal practice to the California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders	Twice per semester
Student Outcomes (45% of total evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School-wide formative assessments to measure student learning throughout the school.</li> <li>- School-wide summative assessments to measure student learning throughout the school.</li> <li>- School-wide “value-add” analysis (to be developed by John Muir) to measure multiple indicators of growth in student learning</li> </ul>	Depends on the measure. Some will be done weekly and others annually.
Stakeholder Feedback (10% of total evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher and Staff Survey to provide a voice for staff in the evaluation process</li> <li>- Parent Survey to provide a voice for parents in the evaluation process</li> <li>- Student Survey to provide a voice for students in the evaluation process</li> </ul>	Once per semester
Contributions to the School Community (10% of total evaluation)	Survey of collaboration efforts and impact on the district and school community.	Once per semester

**12. STAFFING**

**a. Staffing Model:** *Discuss the academic and non-academic staffing needs of the school from start-up through year five. Include all personnel along with the number and type of positions. Explain how the proposed staffing model aligns with the mission, vision and Instructional Program of the proposed school. Additionally, discuss how your staffing model ensures adequate instruction and services to special education and EL students.*

John Muir Middle School will hire highly-qualified teachers and open every year fully staffed. All teachers will be evaluated yearly and for those who are struggling, they will be given guidance and assistance to improve. All teachers will be trained prior to the beginning of the school year on the new John Muir plan. For those teachers serving our specialized populations, which include Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and Gifted Students, they will be properly credentialed and trained to ensure that effective instructional strategies are being utilized. John Muir will adhere to Article IX - Hours, Duties, and Work Year, Transfers, Reduction in Force/Reinstatement and Salaries as described in the LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements.

**b. Recruitment and Selection of Teachers:** *Describe the criteria the proposed school will use to select teachers, and explain how the criteria align with your school's unique mission and vision. Discuss the schools planned mix of experienced and new teachers as well as any unique considerations needed to support the school design.*

John Muir will participate in the District's hiring fairs, advertise vacancies, contact the personnel specialist and seek applicants who are supportive of the reform efforts at the school. Prior to being hired applicants will demonstrate teaching ability by demonstrating a lesson to the interviewing panel lesson.

**c. Autonomy:** *How will you use staffing autonomy to create optimal learning-centered cultures for students?*

The John Muir leadership team will create optimal learning-centered cultures for all teachers by establishing a system for interviewing highly qualified teacher. The leadership team will conduct professional development, make observations during classroom visitations and concentrate on supporting struggling teachers. The leadership team will also support for building capacity for all teachers to create a learning environment that supports student success.

**d. Evaluation:** *Describe the evaluation process for teachers. For internal applicant teams only, please discuss how your proposed evaluation process connects to and/or furthers the recommendations of the District's Teacher Effectiveness Task Force.*

Together, the Design Team, teachers and the principal developed an evaluation process for the teachers. The table below lists the goals of John Muir's teacher evaluations, how John Muir's evaluation process will meet the goals, and how the proposed evaluation process connects to and/or furthers the recommendations of the District's Teacher Effectiveness Task Force.



**Goals of the Teacher Evaluation**

<b>Goal of John Muir Teacher Evaluation</b>	<b>How Implemented in Evaluation Process</b>	<b>Connection to Teacher Effectiveness Task Force</b>
To ensure student learning at John Muir	The evaluation measures will be tied to key strategies that John Muir's teachers, administrators and parents believe lead to increased student learning. Key strategies to include standards-based instruction and differentiated instruction.	Meets the Task Force's recommendations that evaluations "should be clearly related to an accepted skill set needed to be effective" based on California Standards and "should have a rubric so that teachers know what each standard 'looks like'."
To reflect the complexity and sophistication of the teaching/learning process at John Muir	The evaluation will include multiple measures or data points that capture the complex, diverse and unique learning processes of John Muir students.	Meets the Task Force's recommendation that evaluations "should include multiple measures or data points."
To improve the expertise of John Muir's teachers	The evaluation system will include measures of expertise and be tied to professional development.	Meets the Task Force's recommendation "professional development and support must be tied to feedback from the evaluations."
To provide clear indicators of individual teacher's strengths and areas for improvement, with the goal of ensuring high levels of student learning	The evaluation system will be robust and include multiple measures, rating categories (e.g., a five-point scale), and section for comments.	Meets the Task Force's recommendations that evaluations "should include multiple measures or data points" and have increased "number of rating categories."
To provide clear mechanisms for John Muir's teachers to improve their instruction,	The results of the evaluation process will help John Muir make strategic decisions about how to use its resources to best support the development of each teacher.	Meets the Task Force's recommendation "professional development and support must be tied to feedback from the evaluations."
To facilitate collaboration and communication	The evaluation system will provide a common language for Instruction and a clear set of performance expectations for each teacher.	Meets the Task Force's recommendation that evaluations "should have a rubric so that teachers know what each standard 'looks like'."
To identify mentor teachers and teacher leaders	By highlighting individual strengths, the evaluation system will allow administrators to clearly identify mentors and other informal role models.	Meets the Task Force's recommendation that evaluations "should have real ramifications" (rewards and consequences).

**Teacher Evaluation Process**

The teacher evaluation process is as follows:

1. In the first month of the school year, each John Muir teacher will meet with his/her supervising administrator to establish benchmarks of current performance. Benchmarks will include measures in four key areas – practice, student outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and contribution to the school community – to establish a benchmark of the teacher's strengths and areas of improvement.

2. Using a process for personal reflection, each John Muir teacher will self assess, based on currently available data on the key areas above to develop an annual individual development plan. The development plan will be negotiated with the supervising administrator and include the progress measures established by the department in collaborative department plans to improve student achievement in their areas of instruction. The plan will include challenging but realistic development goals, a timeline for the goals, and targeted professional development and training to reach those goals.
3. At regular and clearly identified points throughout the year, each teacher will be evaluated on the four key areas to track his/her progress against the stated goals and adjust and tailor his/her goals (if necessary) and professional development program. An administrator-led evaluation will occur at least two times per semester/once every 6 weeks. Depending on the individual development plan and needs, a teacher may have additional informal evaluations (e.g., by peers, coaches, and/or specialists) during the semester. All formal and informal evaluations will include a debrief session/follow-up conference on the same day of the teacher observation preferably or within one week of the evaluation.
4. Final evaluations will be based on teacher and administrator consideration of overall progress as indicated by multiple measures in the four key areas – practice, student outcomes, stakeholder feedback, and contribution to the school community. Final evaluation will meet or exceed current requirements, including timelines, under LAUSD Board policy.

#### Measures of the Teacher Evaluations

Area of Measure	Metric and Rationale – How the Metric will Measure/Monitors Teacher Progress	Timeline
Teacher Practice (35% of total evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher portfolio with sample student work, lesson plans, and evidence of framework to measure content knowledge and teaching.</li> <li>- Teaching and Learning Framework (modification of STULL to be refined by teachers) with multiple rating categories and section for comments to measure teaching and classroom management practices that John Muir believes leads to increased student achievement. Includes peer observations.</li> </ul>	Twice per semester
Student Outcomes (45% of total evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formative assessments to measure student learning and adjust instruction accordingly.</li> <li>- Summative assessments to measure student learning.</li> <li>- “Value-add” analysis (to be developed by teachers) to measure multiple indicators of growth in student learning</li> </ul>	Depends on the measure. Some will be done weekly and others annually.
Stakeholder Feedback (10% of total evaluation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent Survey to provide a voice for parents in the evaluation process</li> <li>- Student Survey to provide a voice for students in the evaluation process</li> </ul>	Once per semester
Contributions to the School Community (10% of total evaluation)	Survey of collaboration efforts and impact on the school community, grade-level, department, and/or school team. The contribution depends on the individual teacher and his/her development plan. Contributions could include leading a club, presenting or facilitating at a staff PD session, participating in an intervention, providing tutoring or other support services, teaching an elective, being a mentor teacher, or joining a committee.	Once per semester



## SECTION FIVE: FINANCES

## 13. FINANCES

**a. Financial Sustainability:** *Discuss how your school will sustain its vision, mission and goals relying only on regular District funding or charter funding.*

As an existing LAUSD school, John Muir will receive funding through LAUSD's transparent budgeting process (using COST Center controls) and Average Daily Attendance (ADA). John Muir also receives funds from Title I, ELL Program, Federal Stimulus Funds, Special Education programs, and the QEIA grant. QEIA funds are based on meeting the yearly goals.

John Muir's proposed budget is consistent with all parts of the proposal and aligned to the mission, vision, and philosophy of the school. As stated in our vision, John Muir aspires to be a place where excellence in teaching and attention to the physical, social, emotional, and academic needs of all students are nurtured and inspired in a safe, creative, and challenging learning environment. Its mission is to provide a safe, clean, supportive, engaging and challenging learning environment that supports all students and prepares them for academic, social, and personal success.

In order to support the vision and mission, monies will be spent to build more instructional leaders amongst our staff. In addition, John Muir will support and refine personalization for each student at John Muir by increased implementation of the curriculum thru the PLEs with instruction, intervention, and college and career building that stress rigor, relevance, and improved relationships providing a variety of services for our students and parents.

Our monies will also be used to provide personnel to meet these goals through smaller class size for greater personalization and to provide needed to support service providers to students and parents in a community that lacks many of these services.

**b. Additional Funding:** *To the extent that the implementation of your proposal requires additional resources beyond existing District or charter funding, please specify how the school plans to raise additional funds.*

Each core academic department will pursue grant opportunities to supplement their instructional budgets. (Potential grant opportunities are discussed in more detail in 2b above.) Any additional funds that become available will be aligned to our educational philosophy, mission, vision, and instructional program.

**c. Autonomy:** *Discuss how your proposed school will use budgetary autonomy granted via Transparent Budgeting to ensure that expenses are aligned with the mission, vision, instructional program and goals of the school. Please outline your school's priorities from start-up through year 5.*

As an internal LAUSD team, John Muir will adhere to all LAUSD practices and procedures regulating the control and expenditure of funds and will follow LAUSD guidelines on all matters of fiscal soundness and legal compliance. In years 1-5, the John Muir leadership team – which includes all parent and teacher councils, stakeholders, and students – will annually review data that is pertinent to student achievement in making all decisions. To bring the decision makers closer to the budgeting process, John Muir leadership team will concentrate on personnel and efforts for transparent communication, training, use of school data, and validation of all stakeholder concerns. And in keeping with the school's core mission of incorporating rigor, relevance, and building relationships to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner and high performance school, budgetary autonomy via transparent budgeting priorities will include the information in the following paragraphs.

**Priority Year 1:**

- Maintain and hire staff that will support the vision and mission of the new John Muir student achievement plan.
- Utilize the categorical and QEIA funds to align and implement staff with the instructional program based upon the student achievement data.
- Provide training to the staff in the implementation of the new John Muir student achievement plan.
- Conduct a needs assessment for academic intervention.

**Priority Year 2:**

- Review year 1 data and revise the current Single Plan for Student Achievement to address sub-groups and areas for improvement.
- Develop further the plans for the PLEs, related to building relationships and student achievement.
- Implement a rigorous professional development program and training that focuses on strategies to improve student achievement.
- Conduct a needs assessment for academic intervention.

**Priority Year 3:**

- Continue to review student achievement data with all councils, teachers, and parents and target the sub-groups for intensive support via funding.
- Conduct a needs assessment for improved technology and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century skill sets.
- Review Years 1-2 data to determine if academic goals have been met for subgroups.
- Continue to monitor and revise the SPSA and adjust funding to supplement student achievement and academic needs.

**Priority Year 4:**

- Conduct a needs assessment for staff to attend conferences and workshops to further support the selective strategies that will close the achievement gap.
- Revise and make adjustment for years 1-3 to support programs for improved student achievement (for example, Accelerated Reader and Read 180).
- Develop the capacity for the PLEs to effectively determine, analyze, and implement individualized protocols using transparent budgeting that will improve student achievement for their indentified student population.

**Priority Year 5:**

- Fully imbed the strategies that have been proven successful school wide.
- Ensure that the PLE is effectively functioning to meet the academic needs of all students.
- Continue to use all categorical and supplemental funds to ensure that the expenditures are impacting positively on student achievement (for example, closing the achievement).

**d. Budget Development:** *Describe the process for developing the annual school budget, ensuring input from a broad cross-section of stakeholders.*

John Muir guarantees full transparency in its budget development and monitoring. Financial monitoring will be done by District personnel as well as periodic checks by John Muir's fiscal specialist, leadership team, and School Site Council.

As a program improvement school, the accountability matrix will be developed collaboratively with all stakeholders, seeking out the most effective programs that have the greatest results to implement in order to close the achievement gap. The matrix is developed in collaboration with and with support from the Local District and LAUSD to ensure that the matrix adheres to all bargaining unit agreements,



federal guidelines, and mandates of the specific funding and adheres to all state and federal guidelines for expending all funds.

General funds delivered to the school site will be overseen by the appropriate council and or committee, depending on source. Funding will support the strategies, activities as described in the Single Plan for Student Achievement.

As an internal LAUSD team, John Muir will adhere to all LAUSD practices and procedures regulating the control and expenditure of funds and will follow LAUSD guidelines on all matters of fiscal soundness and legal compliance. John Muir will maintain detailed financial records and control sheets available for external and internal review and audit by LAUSD as requested.

To ensure fiscal soundness and legal compliance, the school will use Front End, the district's electronic budget management system, to generate regular financial reports for SSC meetings, parent advisory committee meetings and management. For further transparency, the Categorical Program Advisors (CPA), Senior Office Technician (SOT), and the principal will maintain control sheets to manage each budget that they supervise with support from the Local District, as needed. The CPA and SOT will meet once a month with administration to review budgets. They will report to the parent advisory committees and School Site Council once a month. Monthly budget updates will be provided to the School Leadership Council and the Department Chairpersons by the administration. The school will maintain control sheets to manage each budget they supervise, seeking assistance from the Local District's Fiscal Specialist and Local District Categorical Program administrator, when needed. The control sheet is a manual record of expenditures to be compared regularly with Front End results.

## SECTION SIX: IMPLEMENTATION

## 14. IMPLEMENTATION

**a. Implementation Plan:** *What elements of the school proposal will be implemented in the first year? How many years will it take to achieve the full scope of the proposal as written? Submit a timeline that outlines the rollout of all elements of the proposal from start-up through year 5. Attach Appendix G.*

See Appendix A.10 for Implementation Plan. See Appendix A.11 for the Assurances Form.

**b. Waivers:** *For Internal Applicant Teams Only*

*If an internal applicant team intends to alter any existing right of teachers provided under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between LAUSD and UTLA, it must first secure a waiver of the Article and Section of the CBA that guarantees those rights. Typical examples of past plan elements that would require waivers are design team placement not according seniority, staff selection and extension of on-site obligation. Note that the inclusion of a plan element requiring a waiver does not guarantee that the waiver will be secured, as such waivers are negotiable.*

*All internal applicant teams are encouraged to review the CBA between LAUSD and UTLA as well as consult with the UTLA Chapter Chair at your school site for more information. You may also contact LAUSD's Staff Relations Department at 213.241.6056 for additional support.*

*Identify what, if any, waivers from LAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreements are needed to support and ensure the successful implementation of your proposed school. Complete and attach the Waivers Request form to request waivers needed in the 2011-2012 school year. The form will be available on the Public School Choice website in the coming weeks.*

Not applicable.

<sup>i</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habits\\_of\\_mind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habits_of_mind)

<sup>ii</sup> Elmore, 2000; Lee, Smith, and Croninger, 1997; Leithwood, 1992; Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003, Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005.

<sup>iii</sup> Daggett, Williard R. "Achieving Academic Excellence through Rigor and Relevance." White Paper for the International Center for Leadership in Education, September 2005, p. 1.

<sup>iv</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habits\\_of\\_mind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Habits_of_mind)

<sup>v</sup> Rodger W. Bybee, Joseph A. Taylor, and April Gardner, et. al., "The BSCS 5E Instructional Model: Origins, Effectiveness, and Applications," July 2006, BSCS.

<sup>vi</sup> *Hope for Urban Education: A Study of Nine High-Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Elementary Schools*, Charles A. Dana Center, Univ. of Texas (Austin), U.S. Department of Education, 1999.

<sup>vii</sup> *Continuous School Improvement* by Mark Smylie, University of Illinois at Chicago.

<sup>viii</sup> Akey, T. M. (2006, January). *School context, student attitudes and behavior, and academic achievement: An exploratory analysis*. New York: MDRC.

<sup>ix</sup> Related resources: *Caught in the Middle*, AEMP/Cultural Relevancy & Responsiveness, *The Advisory Guide*.

<sup>x</sup> Found online at <http://www.rippleeffects.com/>.

<sup>xi</sup> Elmore, 2000; Lee, Smith, and Croninger, 1997; Leithwood, 1992; Waters, Marzano, and McNulty, 2003, Marzano, Waters and McNulty, 2005.

<sup>xii</sup> Conway, 1984; Smylie, 1994; Smylie et al., 1996; Marks and Louis, 1997.