

# Henry T. Gage Middle School

## Public School Choice 3.0 Watch School Plan

**Henry T. Gage Middle School Teacher and Community Collaborative**



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## A. Summary Analysis

### *1. Mission and Vision:*

#### **Mission Statement**

The mission of Gage Middle School is to prepare students in the Huntington Park community for success in high school, college, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Society. Gage Middle School will achieve this mission by providing thematic Academies with college preparatory programs where all stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community) are collaborating and actively engaged in the educational process. We will create a student-centered environment that unifies the efforts of family, community and school to foster **academic excellence, life-long learners, positive community leaders, and a sense of social responsibility.**

#### **Vision Statement**

Gage is a school that is intensely focused on improving academic outcomes. We believe that all students must graduate from high school and that all students are capable of going to college. We recognize that we are the gateway to success for our students in high school and beyond. We believe that it is critical to our students' success that we have a "One Team" commitment to pursuing one goal: **academic excellence** and fostering students who are **life-long learners, positive community leaders, and socially responsible citizens.** Our "One Team" will include all stakeholders, (administrators, teachers, parents, students, and community) and every decision will be based upon one central question, "How will this assist our students' academic success?"

Upon matriculating from Gage Middle School we expect that our students will know, understand and be able to fulfill our school vision of striving for academic excellence, life-long learning, positive community leadership, and a heightened sense of social responsibility. We believe that these traits are essential for academic success and for the growth and development of the individual.

**Academic Excellence:** Gage students, teachers, and parents value, expect and strive for academic excellence. Academic excellence represents mastery of the grade level content standards and a personal commitment to intellectual growth. To this end, Gage is prepared to offer every student a robust and rigorous curriculum that will prepare them to complete the A-G course sequence and pursue Advanced Placement courses in high school.

**Life Long Learners:** We are all life-long learners in the Gage community. Life-long learners have an intrinsic value for learning, they take ownership of their intellectual growth, and understand the relationship between their education and the fulfillment of their personal goals.

**Positive Community Leaders:** Gage students will develop the knowledge, skills and character traits to become effective leaders. Gage students will demonstrate initiative, self-motivation, respect for themselves and others, and most importantly, Gage students will have confidence in their ability to create positive change in their lives and in the lives of others.

**Socially Responsible Citizens:** Gage students will be socially conscious and service-oriented individuals who possess a firm understanding of the conditions that impact their community and their lives with a commitment to ameliorate those conditions, ensuring their personal success and the betterment of our community.

## 2. School Data Analysis:

The 2010-2011 CST data reveals the trends in student performance at Gage Middle School. Presently, Gage Middle School has an API of 652, an improvement of 94 points over four years. In ELA, 30% of all students scored Proficient or Advanced, an increase of 14.4% over the last five years. In Mathematics, 28.6% of all students scored Proficient or Advanced, an increase of 17.2% over the last five years.

The 2010-2011 CST data also shows that 37.9% and 53.1% of students scored Proficient or Advanced in Algebra I and Geometry respectively. In History-Social Science, 30.0% of students scored Proficient or Advanced. And in Science, 37.7% of students scored Proficient or Advanced.

CST data provides substantial evidence of positive growth in student performance. Gage has been successful in moving a greater percentage of students away from the FBB and BB scoring bands to the Basic, Proficient and Advanced performance bands. Figure 1., presents disaggregated CST data by grade and subject.

Figure 1. (California Standards Test -CST- 2009-2010 Data by Grade and Subject)

CST Test	%ADV	%PROF	%B	%BB	%FBB	Change in PROF/ADV from 2009-2010
ELA Gr 6	10.0%	19.0%	28.9%	23.9%	18.2%	-1.0%
ELA Gr 7	9.0%	25.7%	29.9%	18.8%	16.6%	+11.1%
ELA Gr 8	8.5%	17.7%	29.9%	21.8%	22.8%	-3.1%
Math Gr 6	8.9%	17.9%	26.7%	32.4%	14.2%	-4.2%
Math Gr 7	6.2%	24.5%	31.2%	26.5%	11.7%	+3.3%
General Math	1.3%	12.0%	30.7%	36.2%	19.8%	-2.7%
Algebra I	11.3%	26.5%	29.1%	27.9%	5.1%	-6.7%
Geometry	9.4%	43.8%	39.1%	6.3%	1.6%	-32.1%
History-Social Science	12.9%	17.0%	27.4%	16.0%	26.6%	+2.7%
Science Gr 8	20.8%	17.0%	19.3%	16.3%	26.6%	-6.0%

CST data of specific subgroups shows that Students With Disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELLs) performed better in ELA and Mathematics but are not progressing as rapidly as the rest of the student population.

- The percentage of SWDs who scored Basic or better in ELA improved from 8.6% in 2009 to 10.3% in 2010 and decreased to 9.2% in 2011.
- The percentage of SWDs who scored Basic or above in Mathematics improved from 14.1% in 2009 to 16.2% in 2010 and decreased to 16.0% in 2011.
- The percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) who scored Proficient or Advance in ELA improved from 1.4% in 2009 to 2.5% in 2010 and to 2.7% in 2011.
- The percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) who scored Proficient or Advance in Mathematics from rose 3.5% to 5.5% in 2009 in 2010 and decreased to 3.9% in 2011.

The improvement of SWDs and ELLs is marginal. These two subgroups are our top priority in terms of programming, intervention, instruction, and professional development. Additionally, we will focus on our Fluent English Proficient (FEP) population. FEP students are those who were classified as Initially Fluent English Proficient (IFEP) when first assessed with the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) or who Reclassified as Fluent English Proficient students by meeting predetermined benchmarks. Nearly 70% of our student population is FEP. 22% of our student

population is English Learners, yet 70% of our entire student population is not scoring Proficient or Advance in English Language Arts or Mathematics. FEPs are expected to perform in the Proficient and Advance range within two years of earning their classification. We will focus on our FEP population to provide the necessary interventions and instructional supports to ensure that our FEP students continue to make progress towards Proficiency.

It must be noted, that the data on ELLs does not take into account that once ELLs score Basic, Proficient or Advanced they typically reclassify and their scores are no longer included in the ELL data set. For a more precise appraisal of the performance trend of ELLs it is necessary to analyze the rate of reclassification.

The improved performance of ELLs is evident in the improved rate of students who reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (FEP). Reclassification rates improved from 2.72% in 2004 and peaking at 14% in 2010 (reclassification data includes our Math/Science and Technology magnet). The increase in the reclassification represents a statistically significant decline in the percentage of ELLs. Our ELL population has decreased steadily over the years, from a staggering 1545 ELLs (40%) in 2006 to 583 (22%) in 2011.

Gage Middle School is fully committed to improving student outcomes. We have an intense focus on improving the performance of our target subgroups; SWDs, ELLs and FEPs and on improving the overall quality of education we offer all of our students. To this end we set forth our plan, grounded on six pillars that will set and support the conditions for student learning and for fulfilling our mission and vision.

## **The Six Pillars of Our Success**

*Academies*

*Best Instructional Practices*

*Curriculum*

*Deliberate, Differentiated and Personalized Interventions*

*Environment*

*Family and Community Engagement*

### *Academies:*

Gage Middle School will be made up of four learning academies. We will have three academies plus one Math-Science and Technology Magnet. Academies are the forums for personalization, curricular specialization, enrichment, intervention, and social support. Students will select the academy of their choice and be programmed according to preference and capacity. We want every student to have a unique, meaningful and enduring learning experience at Gage. Academies will be instrumental in helping every student at Gage develop a sense of belonging and a sense of ownership over their education. A sense of belonging helps students develop intrinsic motivation for learning and increase



their academic efficacy (Faircloth, & Hamm, 2005). Academies will be instrumental in helping every student at Gage develop an affinity for learning and the ability to advocate for themselves as students.

## *Best Instructional Practices:*

We have identified the best instructional practices to meet the learning needs of our students, specifically to address the needs of our focus subgroups; our FEPs, SWDs and ELLs. We have an acute focus on instructional quality and effectiveness. The continual improvement of our instructional practices is the driving force of professional development for all employees. Professional development for teachers and out of classroom personnel includes the continual implementation of Professional Learning Communities to build instructional capacity by developing pedagogical knowledge, coordinating best practices, providing professional support, and maintaining a continual cycle of data analysis, setting instructional and learning goals, lesson design, implementation, intervention and evaluation. At Gage, we believe that teachers with strong competencies, substantive evaluation of their practice, adequate support, time, resources, and collaboration can improve instructional practices and ameliorate student performance.

## *Curriculum:*

A coherent and aligned standards-based instruction and a guaranteed viable curriculum are the best predictor of student success (EdSource, 2010; Defour, 2011). Gage’s plan calls for the implementation of an instructional plan that is grounded on California State Standards implemented through a Constructivist foundation. Constructivist theory posits that students build or “construct” their own meaning and understanding of the world (Brooks, & Brooks, 1999). As such, we offer a Project Based Learning (PBL) curriculum that provides students authentic and meaningful opportunities to develop their own understanding of the world by employing higher-order cognitive skills. A set of research-proven and teacher supported instructional strategies will support the PBL curriculum, serve as intervention, facilitate modifications for SWDs, and provide linguistic opportunities for ELLs to access to core academic content. The instructional strategies include: the AVID Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration and Reading (WICR) strategies and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE).

## *Deliberate, Differentiated and Personalized Interventions:*

An early and proactive approach to academic intervention is a defining element of high performing middle schools (EdSource, 2010). The Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) model is a systemic approach for providing differentiated and personalized instruction and interventions based on identified student needs along the academic, attendance and behavioral (attitude) domains. According to the National Center on Response to Intervention (2011), “rigorous implementation of RTII includes a combination of high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction; assessment; and evidence-based intervention. Comprehensive RTII implementation will contribute to more [timely] identification of learning and behavioral problems, improve instructional quality, provide all students

with the best opportunities to succeed in school, and assist with the identification of learning disabilities and other disabilities.”

## *Environment:*

Students need a welcoming, safe, clean, stimulating and nurturing environment to learn. Gage Middle School is a place of learning and personal growth. Every classroom is a vibrant and dynamic place of learning where students experience Project Based Learning. Every Academy offers specialized electives and activities that will engender in students a sense of school spirit, identity and a sense of belonging in school.

Our “One Team” strives for a culture of excellence and personal accountability. We envision students who are community leaders and socially responsible citizens. The Gage faculty and staff, working together with students and families, will transform the Gage Middle School into a training ground for the leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## *Family and Community Engagement:*

Our plan for family engagement and community partnerships will be aligned with the PTAs National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs that revolve around communication, parenting, student learning, volunteering, decision making and advocacy, and collaborating with the community ([http://www.pta.org/national\\_standards.asp](http://www.pta.org/national_standards.asp), retrieved August 21, 2011). The Family involvement and community engagement in the education process is beneficial to students, teachers, parents and the community at large (Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008). Our “One Team” will work to make parents and members of the community our partners. We will form internal parent and community engagement teams, as well as partner with additional community organizations, to engender parental leadership and family involvement, and build community participation. Gage parents will commit to ten hours of service per year at Gage Middle School working in three distinct domains; academics, governance and extra-curricular activities.

### **3. Applicant Team Analysis:**

The Gage Middle School Teacher Collaborative, authors of this plan, represent a collection of some of the brightest and most talented individuals working at Gage. Our team represents a cross section of proven administrators, special program coordinators, SLC Lead Teachers, National Board Certified Teachers, Department Chairs, educators certified in AVID, Thinking Maps, SDAIE, and members of various governance committees, who have the conceptual knowledge, the technical skills and the organizational skills to implement this plan and see Gage accelerate its growth.

Every member of this team has contributed to Gage’s 94 point API growth and it’s double digit AYP growth in ELA and Mathematics over the last three years. Our team includes individuals with impressive professional credentials including three National Board Certified teachers, two Doctoral candidates, four experienced and reform-minded administrators, a two-time Bravo Award winning teacher, eight administrative credentials, experienced counselors, GATE Coordinator, published authors, and BTSA providers.



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The strength of this “One Team” rests on several interrelated factors. The team has a strong background in specialized fields (curriculum and instruction, Special Education, ELD, finance, operations, authentic community engagement, teacher effectiveness) that provides the depth necessary to successfully implement our plan. Additionally, our “One Team” has a history of successfully working together. Our “One Team” will be able to seamlessly transition to the school plan when Gage reopens its doors in 2012. Lastly, this “One Team” has an unwavering focus on student outcomes and a “get it done” mindset to tackle the challenges that we will face in realizing our vision. Building the Public School Choice plan is an experience that forged us into “One Team”, dedicated to improving the education we provide to each and every student.

See Appendix F: Applicant Team History Data Sheet.

### **4. Informational Summary: (See Attachment 3)**

**Category One: Unwavering Focus on Academic Achievement**

**B-1: Curriculum and Instruction:**

***A. Instructional Program:***

**Instructional Philosophy:** Gage Middle School is committed to providing a rich and complete instructional program for all of our students, grades 6-8, which exemplifies high standards (educationally and personally) and academic rigor. Our instructional program is designed to achieve the highest academic growth for each student. We utilized research based and evidence driven data sources to choose for our students proven educational pedagogies and instructional strategies that will achieve greater student success. We will provide a personalized educational environment through the establishment of smaller learning communities (henceforth known as Academies) with themes that can lead our students into viable careers and successful college degree programs (LIS Waiver #6, TA page 3). Given our high expectations and the utilization of proven instructional/support methods in our classes, we will matriculate high achieving students who are well prepared for success in High School, College, and life.

Based on student data both current and historical, it is clear that many of our students have moderate to severe learning gaps upon arrival at Gage Middle School. Gage's performance data further shows that our critical student populations are SWDs, ELs, (specifically Long Term ELs), and FEP students who have not reached the Proficient or Advanced CST scoring bands. We understand that the majority of Gage Middle School students will need differentiated and personalized instructional support and overt scaffolding of academic content and language in order to be successful in the core academic instructional program. As such, Gage Middle School will employ the following research-based instructional framework that will form the basis of instructional delivery across content areas and Academies.

**Instructional Framework:** Our instructional plan has its roots in the California Content Standards. We focus on student-centered Standards-based curriculum and its instruction and we build our curriculum and instruction around a Constructivist paradigm. Constructivist learning theory posits that "knowledge is individually constructed and socially constructed by learners based on their interpretations of experiences in the world. Since knowledge cannot be transmitted, instruction should consist of experiences that facilitate knowledge construction" (Jonassen, 1999, 217). The primary goal of Constructivist learning theory is to foster problem solving skills and conceptual development and, therefore, a Project Based Learning instructional approach is most conducive for promoting opportunities for knowledge construction (LIS Waiver #2, TA page 2).

Project Based Learning is "...a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning essential knowledge and life-enhancing skills through an extended, student-influenced inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks" (<http://pbl-online.org/About/whatisPBL.htm>, retrieved, August, 20, 2011). Project Based Learning is an instructional approach built around authentic learning activities that engage student interest and motivation. These activities are designed to answer a question or solve a problem and generally reflect the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom.

Project Based Learning is synonymous with learning in-depth. A well-designed project provokes students to encounter (and struggle with) the California State Standards and central core content concepts/principles of a discipline. Project Based Learning is generally done by groups of students working together toward a common goal. Project Based Learning teaches students how to apply 21st century skills as well as understand course content. These skills include communication and

presentation, organization and time management, research and inquiry, self-assessment, reflection, group participation and leadership.

Performance is assessed on an individual basis, and takes into account the quality of the product produced, the depth of content understanding demonstrated, and the contributions made to the ongoing process of project realization. Finally, Project Based Learning allows students to reflect upon their own ideas and opinions, to exercise their voice and choice, and to develop their skills of inquiry. Project Based Learning is motivated learning: sustaining the doing, supporting the learning, and enhancing critical thinking skills of our students (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, & Krajcik, 1991). These projects will be aligned to California State Standards and will vary in length of time. Projects will be collaboratively developed and based on Academy themes. Project Based Learning is the foundation for fulfilling our school mission and vision.

Project Based Learning instruction will be supported by two research-based instructional methodologies: Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and the AVID methodology of Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration and Reading (WICR). These two methodologies are proven effective in making academic content accessible, building literacy and numeracy skills, and promoting the development and use of higher level cognitive skills, all skills that our students, and in particular our focus student subgroups, need in order to be successful. Figure 2 represents the conceptual framework of our instructional plan.

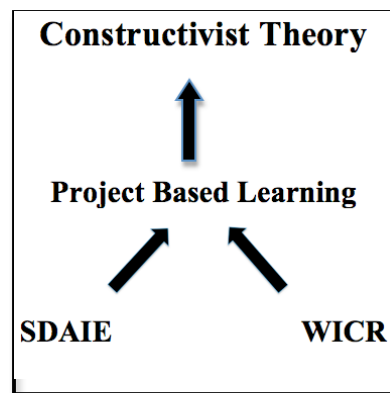


Figure 2.

### 1. Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English

**(SDAIE)** is a pedagogical methodology that focuses on providing differentiated lessons to help English language learners access and master rigorous core content. SDAIE strategies include the use of modified speech and explicit modeling by teachers, front-loading of academic vocabulary, cooperative learning activities, building student comprehension by the use of graphic organizers and other non-linguistic representations to categorize and organize learning, and frequent checking for student understanding through well-designed formative assessments (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollack, 2001).

**2. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)** is a program whose mission is to "...close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society" (Retrieved from [www.avid.org](http://www.avid.org), on August 22, 2011). AVID's college-readiness system is designed to increase school wide learning and academic success by raising expectations for student performance and providing students with effective, research-based classroom instruction. Taking the AVID approach school wide will be the catalyst for systematic reform. AVID not only guides effective classroom instruction, but provides engaging and meaningful professional development for staff, and promotes and fosters leadership focused on student success through rigorous courses.

Gage Middle School has provided a limited AVID program on its campus since 2001, starting with one elective class of 33 students on one of our three tracks. By 2006, AVID had expanded to 6 classes, serving students in the 7th and 8th grades on all three tracks. Because of demonstrated student success, as seen in student grades and standardized test data, the program in the current school year has been expanded to 9 elective class sections serving 231 students. Most notable, 74% of AVID students are earning high school course credit for Algebra by 8th grade graduation, completing a High School A-G requirement while still in Middle School. In the 2012-2013 school year, the AVID elective class will also expand to serve 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.

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The success of the instructional component of the AVID program comes from the AVID methodology known by the acronym **WICR**, for Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, and Reading, which are research based instructional strategies designed to prepare students for success in rigorous courses. According to Schmoker (2011), the primary reason that more students do not have the option to attend and succeed in college is because schools do not provide students with content rich curriculum focused around authentic literacy. In short, students do not have the literacy skills to succeed in rigorous classes. The WICR methodology focuses student learning on authentic literacy, providing students with the skills to do what Schmoker calls "purposeful reading, writing, and discussion" that enhances critical thinking skills around content (p. 26). WICR also provides an increased amount of rigor by requiring students to think, learn, process, and reflect multiple times on California State Standards-based material. Direct AVID instruction will be offered to students through the AVID elective period, however **instruction based on the four tenets of WICR will be collaboratively developed and implemented school-wide** to produce academic excellence, life-long learners, positive community leaders, and socially responsible citizens from Gage Middle School who will have the record of success and the confidence they need to continue their educations further.

The four major tenets of WICR will be infused across *all* content areas:

**Writing** - This AVID methodology includes a number of critical writing strategies. Writing to Learn uses summarization and Cornell Note Taking to organize student thoughts, questions, and to process new information. Writing to the Text brings the written word to life and provides students with tactics to approach the academic writing process. The use of advanced graphic organizers and Thinking Maps, and high-impact writing strategies such as Quick-Writes, Learning Logs, and Double Entry Journals, help to develop student writing and reflection skills in daily and weekly activities. The writing process and strategies the students learn are employed to produce longer compositions and projects in all content areas.

**Inquiry** - Inquiry includes instruction and exploration of content through structured higher-level questioning (i.e. Costa's Levels) teaching students to think not only about the content, but also about their own process to learn the content. Students are actively involved in Tutorials, Philosophical Chairs, and Socratic Seminars that gives them continual practice in using open-ended questions and processing directly related to rigorous texts and concepts. Inquiry strategies develop our students' abilities to actively discuss topics, information, and new or differing points of view with confidence and insight.

**Collaboration** - Collaboration includes the use of collaborative and cooperative groups, as well as lessons designed to increase accountable talk and the use of academic vocabulary by students. Group activities centered around content such as group projects and presentations, pair-share, peer editing, community service and other personally involving activities will provide a forum where learning and leadership development will take place.

**Reading** - Strategies such as SQ3R, KWL, Literature Circles, Reciprocal Teaching, and the AVID specific reading strategies of Marking the Text, Writing in the Margins, Summarizing, Pause and Connect, and Charting, provide students with extensive support before, during, and after reading that provide a purpose and create an interest in reading, as well as giving students multiple interactions with and critical abilities for in-depth analysis of texts.

With successful implementation of a systematic AVID approach to learning for students and adults, Gage Middle School aspires to be the first AVID National Demonstration Site in the Los Angeles

Unified School District.

### **Implementation of the Instructional Program**

Our curricular and instructional program is focused on evidence-based methodologies that have proven highly effective with similar student populations. Our instructional program is focused on addressing the learning needs and challenges of all our FEP students, English Language Learners (ELLs) and our Students with Disabilities (SWD), especially in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. Our instructional framework, in concert with our Six Pillars for Success, is appropriate to meet the goals set out in Section A.

To effectively implement our curricular and instructional plan and reach the highest student outcomes, we studied the findings from a report on the effectiveness of California Middle Schools. This study, published by EdSource in 2010 was based on 303 California Middle Schools. The data from the 2007-2009 research identified a set of characteristics as being the most “predictive” or correlated with increased student achievement. The guiding principles for implementation of our instructional plan are based on these characteristics:

1. Gage Middle School will **set goals for improved student outcomes on Standards-Based tests** (i.e. California Standards Tests, periodic assessments, etc.). The curriculum and instructional program will embody clear expectations for improving student outcomes for all students in all core subjects. The measurable goals set by the principal, teachers, and students will be used to evaluate and guide instruction.
2. Gage Middle School will **promote the school mission aimed at preparing students academically for the future**. Educators will consistently and regularly communicate to students the importance of middle school achievement to high school and future goals. Our curriculum and instruction will be designed to provide all of our students with strong foundational academic and study skills, to put them on track to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), and to prepare them for the academic rigor of the A-G course sequence in high school. Instruction will promote literacy across the curriculum and will use common strategies for teaching writing across the curriculum. Instruction will be guided by multiple formative and summative assessments to assure student success with a curriculum that will be examined for scope and sequencing of key standards.
3. Gage Middle School Middle School **teachers will be held accountable for demonstrating high levels of expertise and competence** in terms of: knowing State Standards, understanding the mapping of curriculum Standards to specific instructional practices/strategies, using student assessment data to improve teaching and learning, adapting curriculum and instruction to meet the learning needs of all students, specifically Fluent English Speakers, English Learners (EL), and Students with Disabilities (SWD), understanding adolescent development issues, and having the ability to make professional yet personal connections with students.
4. Gage Middle School **staff will deliver tight and coherent standards-based curricula using effective instructional practices**. Instruction will be closely guided by state academic standards and state-adopted curricula, including a focus on English Language Development (ELD) standards. Instruction will emphasize key standards in each grade and core subject; teachers will regularly collaborate around “breaking down” standards to identify prerequisite skills and ways to address them. Teachers will regularly collaborate on developing what Dufour (2010) called a guaranteed and viable curriculum and on the pacing, scope, sequence, common benchmarks, and common assessments to design and modify instruction in response to data on student performance.
5. Gage Middle School **administration and faculty will expect students and parents to share the**

**responsibility for student learning.** The Administration and teachers will actively inform students and parents about the importance of middle grade academics to students' futures. Administration and teachers will proactively communicate with parents and students in an on-going dialogue and reflection of student achievement. Gage Middle School will develop a parent contract for parent participation that enumerates specific opportunities and expectations for parental involvement in the academic, extra-curricular and the governance domains. Under this contract, parents will be asked to volunteer a minimum of ten hours on site per academic year. The specifics of the parent contract are discussed in the Parent and Community Engagement section of this plan.

***B. Core Academic Curriculum:***

**English Language Arts**

The English-Language Arts (ELA) department consists of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English. The ELA curriculum is based on the California state content standards for ELA for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and consists of four quarter-units of study: narrative, expository, response to literature, and persuasion. Teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL), Developing Readers and Writers Curriculum (DRWC), 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA, and special education classes are included in content-specific meetings, as appropriate. In grade level ELA teams, teachers collaborate to create multi-day, in-depth, standards-based lessons for each unit of instruction. The ELA department also maintains a Novel Center that contains a wide variety of class sets of literature to support supplemental reading.

**Instructional Strategies**

Specific strategies, activities, and materials are identified by the ELA department to improve student achievement. The use of "accountable talk"/academic discussion, use of academic vocabulary, and writing across the curriculum is required in all classes. Strategies to scaffold content will continue to be embedded in classroom lessons so that all students will be able to access core curriculum and achieve a high degree of mastery of content knowledge and skills. Classroom lessons incorporate Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and AVID methodologies including, but not limited to, writing frames, use of visuals/realia, advanced graphic organizers/thinking maps, WICR, and accountable talk/academic discussion strategies. Cooperative learning strategies are also used to increase students' participation in and progress toward mastery of academic content.

**Professional Development**

Teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to engage in collaborative inquiry using a District-approved protocol to improve instructional practice, monitor the implementation of the standards-based instructional program, analyze data on student progress and samples of student work to evaluate instructional effectiveness, identify staff development needs, and identify students for appropriate intervention, remediation, or enrichment services. Teachers plan and participate in professional development to assist each other in providing instructional and social support to English learners (ELs), including Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) students, and to students with disabilities (SWDs). Teachers plan and implement in-class accommodations and modifications to ensure the participation of students with disabilities in the general education ELA classroom. Teachers also identify, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of specific strategies designed to provide culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy to raise levels of student achievement for all students.



### **Assessments**

The ELA department utilizes a variety of assessments, including but not limited to, California Standards Test (CST), Periodic Assessments (PAs), Common Formative Assessments (CFAs), and baseline reading assessments. CFAs are created collaboratively by ELA department teachers and are utilized within each quarter unit. LAUSD PAs are administered at the close of the narrative, expository, response to literature units of study. The assessment data is used to inform instruction by indicating strengths and weaknesses, as well as identifying students needing intervention, re-teaching, or enrichment. A structured protocol, such as the Atlas protocol, is used to analyze student performance data to evaluate the progress of students, including those identified in critical subgroups (ELLs, SWDs and FEPs).

### **Intervention**

Individual teachers provide homework help and literacy support beyond the regular school hours. In accordance with the guidelines for Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) model (Tier 3, Tier 2, and Tier 1 Intervention), most intervention/remediation occurs within the regular class instruction periods through small group, peer tutoring, adjusted pacing of assignments, regular practice in reading fluency, vocabulary skills, reading comprehension strategies, and use of reader-writer notebooks/journals.

To fill the achievement gap of our Long Term English Language Learners and struggling reader and writers, Gage Middle School will use the Language! curriculum (Sopris West Publishing). Language! is a State approved curriculum for both English Language Development (ELD) and/or intervention curriculum. Language! also addresses the five research-based factors that most influence *reading* success: 1) phonemic awareness, 2) phonics, 3) vocabulary, 4) fluency, and 5) comprehension strategies. Gage Middle School has implemented a strong professional development course via a Master teacher who has decades of student success teaching Language! Gage has a blocked class schedule for students scoring Far Below Basic or Below Basic on their CST. These students receive one period of Language! coupled with one period of grade level English Language Arts.

The various English Language Arts instructional materials are carefully selected to accomplish the goals of the English Language Arts curriculum, which are to develop 1) fluent readers, 2) skilled writers, 3) confident speakers, and 4) thoughtful listeners. In line with the California State Board of Education, the standards are not altered for English Learners because doing so would deny them the opportunity to achieve them. Instead, support is given to them so that they may meet the standards. For example, teachers use SDAIE strategies to help make the academic content more comprehensible, including realia, differentiated instruction, and scaffolding of lessons. They break down assignments into more manageable parts and use graphic organizers such as thinking maps and other strategies. Also, reading, writing, listening, and speaking will be taught across the core subjects utilizing consistent strategies and focused on consistent outcomes.

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

ESL courses are offered to students who are in ELD Levels 1-4. Students are programmed in ESL block periods according to ESL level, not grade. ESL levels are ascertained by three measures, the CELDT, the CST and the DPI (Diagnostic Placement Inventory) as prescribed by LAUSD REF-5152. The ESL course of study includes 6 sections: ESL 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3, and 4. Each course is one semester long.

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### Curriculum

LAUSD adopted and Gage will use the Highpoint curriculum by Hampton Brown for ESL courses. The curriculum is designed to build mastery of the four domains of language -- listening, speaking, reading and writing -- using a wide array of learning strategies that involve all the learning modalities.

### Assessment

Every ESL student has an ELD Portfolio that includes evidence of learning across the four domains of language. Each section of the Portfolio is graded on a 1 to 4 scale. Students must earn a score of 3 in every section to pass the class. Students must pass the class with at least a "C" letter grade. Students who do not earn a "C" or better in the class will repeat the course the following semester.

Students are also assessed annually using the CELDT. The CELDT provides teachers with data to inform their instruction and also provides the student information about their English development across the four domains of language. Students must score at least a 4 in the Overall section of the CELDT and at least a 3 in each subtest of the CELDT in order to satisfy the CELDT requirement for reclassification.

### Intervention

ESL classes are not an intervention. ESL students are English Learners with specific linguistic needs and ESL classes are designed to address those needs. As such, ESL students receive two hours of ESL instruction daily. Additional resources are also provided ESL students, including in-class Teacher Assistants in ESL 1A-2A, homework help, school supplies, instructional materials, books, audio tapes, software, videos, and other instructional support. Counselors work particularly close with ESL students, specifically students who are recent arrivals from other countries. Counselors run support groups for students and help connect their parents to community resources. Counselors take great care in programming ESL students to ensure proper placement by EL level and with teachers who are highly qualified.

## Mathematics

In confirmation of Gage Middle School's Vision that our students will exhibit traits of **Academic Excellence, Life Long Learners, Positive Community Leaders, and Socially Responsible Citizens**, the Gage Mathematics Department will "continue to work in collaboration with all stakeholders to develop the students' habits of success in all areas of academics and life."

To realize our vision and accomplish our mission, the Gage Mathematics Department will host a positive, proactive attitude within our Professional Learning Community. We will maintain and progress in a perpetual cycle of improvement, consistent in **common successful practices, common successful instruction, and common successful assessments** among our teachers. As a result of our math teachers' collective efforts, our students will be able to master and demonstrate mastery of all math content. They will also master success skills for 21<sup>st</sup> Century life-long learning by developing the "Habits of Mind" behaviors of perseverance, focus, active listening, reflective thinking, precision, inquiry, discernment, adventure, and being open to new ideas with an autonomous disposition.

**"Common Successful Practices" will entail every math class modeling the Common Core Math Practice Standards and modeling the "Habits of Mind" behaviors as established by theorists, Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick.** Math Classes will have visual illustrations of the "Math Practice Standards" and "Habits of Mind" behaviors posted in their classrooms. This explicit identification of practices and behaviors will be an active part of the learning culture, as it becomes part of the students' and teachers' language of the learning environment. Students and teachers, through various forms of Inquiry and Project Based Learning, will explicitly act out the practices and behaviors. This will be

extensively established through a series of professional development that focuses on "Common Successful Instruction", implementing strategies conducive to the learning of all students, including English Language Learners, Students with Special Needs, the Gifted and Talented, and others.

The professional development of "**Common Successful Instruction**" will build a strong rapport within the **vertical articulation** of the 6th through 8th grade math teachers, and will include the Resource Specialists who aid us in creating a student-centered Least Restrictive Environment for our SWDs. Vertical articulation will also extend to our neighboring elementary and secondary institutions that we feed into and that are our feeder schools. All faculty members within these circles will collaboratively train and share their best strategies inclusive of, but not limited to, TIPS, SDAIE, AVID/WICR, differentiated instruction, inquiry and project-based learning, Cornell Note-taking, Common Core Math Practice Standards, Habits of Mind, technology integration, and RTII strategies/resources.

Through spiraling and scaffolding instruction we will reinforce prior knowledge of past grade level standards to support student mastery of current grade level standards and help students to make connections. Using the Learning Teams Protocol, heterogeneous groups (6th, 7th, and 8th) will create lessons that develop a concept across all grade levels, building students' conceptual connections. All grade levels will share these best practices following the various protocols to meet all students' needs. In PLC meetings, teachers will present successful strategies that they have used in class to support high rates of student achievement. Participating teachers will engage in interactive workshops to master strategies to be implemented into their own classroom. Observations of classrooms modeling successful practices will be open to all Math teachers.

#### **Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII)**

Data analysis at the inception of the year being an integral part of RTII, with timing as well, early intervention will be continue to be key. More importantly, moving to a traditional calendar, we will have math data from the previous year to identify children at risk early in the school year. Once at-risk students are identified, progress to mastery of key standards will be addressed monitored, and measured frequently.

Historically, for our students and district wide, indeed, for students across the nation, Number Sense has been a clear area of instructional need. This will be a launch strand, with others added as data indicates throughout the year.

Journal writing, part of Gage's commitment to writing across the curriculum, will also be a viable vehicle to monitor and measure student progress. Cognitive thinking can be both observed and measured through journal writing and the strategy lends itself well to addressing key standards. Grade levels will meet to identify those key standards based on high stakes assessment criteria. Journal writing prompts built around State Math Standards will be developed and refined using collaborative teams, and rubrics will be similarly developed to score student responses.

#### **Technology Use Within the Math Department**

To maximize student achievement, classes in the math department will utilize available technologies including laptop carts, SmartBoards, and computer labs to drive instruction, increase student engagement, and empower students to better understand mathematical concepts. Professional development will be available to assist teachers in incorporating and using technology to deliver instruction and provide additional access to content/media electronically. Additionally, parents and community members will be informed about the technology-based resources that are available to their children and will be provided access to those resources.

### **Parent and Community Involvement**

To increase parent involvement at Gage Middle School, parents will participate in various Math Department events/activities such as "Math Night", Back to School Night, Parent Conferences, Open House and Parent Workshops. "Math Night" will include a student expo and informational booths to promote our Parent Center workshops on student study skills/work habits, the coming implementation of Common Core State Standards, the high school A - G course requirements, and the importance of Math in everyday life. Parents will also be asked to daily review and sign their child's agenda to ensure that assignments are completed, and will be informed of scheduled assessments to ensure their child studies, and is well-rested and well-fed before the assessment.

## **Science**

The science curriculum for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade science is based on the California State Standards. For 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the curriculum consists of 7 units of study: Sub-Biology, Intro to Genetics, Evolution, Earth & Life History, and Structure, Function, & Physical Properties in Living Systems. Seventh grade students also receive one semester of the Health curriculum covering topics such as the body system, mental, physical and emotional health, nutrition, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and the human reproductive system and sexually transmitted diseases. Several district-sponsored programs, like "Keeping it Real", "Step Up", and HIV/AIDS prevention, supplement the Health curriculum. The curriculum for 8<sup>th</sup> grade consists of four units of study: Force and Motion, Density and Buoyancy, Chemistry, and Astronomy. Both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade units of study are strengthened by the use of science immersion units designed to provide in-depth understanding through an inquiry based approach to learning. Science electives include Exploration in Science, Environmental Science, Explore Aeronautics, Marine Science and Intermediate Science Curriculum Study and are offered by the science department to students in grades 6 through 8.

### **Instructional Strategies**

The science department is committed to the use of inquiry and exploration in order for students to access and master the science content standards. Students are guided through content through engaging methods requiring students to construct knowledge from new experiences as well as through prior knowledge. To accomplish this, the science department incorporates AVID/WICR strategies, including "Marking the Text", Cornell notes, cooperative and collaborative learning groups and hands-on, inquiry based lab experiences. Many SDAIE strategies, such as anticipation guides, graphic organizers, and strategies for vocabulary development are also infused in instruction to assure our ELLs have access to the content.

### **Professional Development**

Teachers will meet twice a month in their PLC to improve instructional practice, monitor the implementation of strategies and the district-mandated curriculum, analyze results from Common Formative Assessments and Periodic Assessments, and to identify student development needs. Teachers collaborate to create standard-based lessons and units of study, and take turns sharing best practices and student work.

### **Assessments: Science Department**

The Science department utilizes a variety of assessments, including but not limited to California Standards Test (CST), Periodic Assessments (PAs), Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and assessments from district created model lessons. The pacing of assessments, including periodic assessments will be determined by the science department to best facilitate the PLC cycle for continuous improvement and instructional pacing that meets the needs of students (LIS Waiver #4, TA

page 2). The assessment data is used to inform instruction by indicating strengths and weaknesses, as well as in identifying areas needing intervention, re-teaching and enrichment.

### **Intervention: Science Department**

In accordance with the guidelines for the RTII model (Tier 3, Tier 2 and Tier 1 intervention), most intervention/remediation occurs within the regular class instruction periods through small groups, adjusted pacing of assignments and use of science-lab notebooks. In line with the California State Board of Education, the standards are not altered for English Language Learners because doing so would deny them the opportunity to achieve them. Instead, support is given so that they may meet the standards. For example, teachers use SDAIE strategies to help make academic content more comprehensible. They will break down assignments into more manageable parts and will use graphic organizers such as thinking maps and other strategies to focus on consistent outcomes. Individual teachers provide help to students as needed during the regular school hours, as well as before and after school hours.

### **Technology in the Science Department**

As a former Integrating Mathematics and Science through Technology (IMAST) school, the science department maximizes the use of available technology to increase student achievement. Currently, the science department utilizes student laptops, Smartboard technology, and multiple online resources, such as Gizmos, Zingy Learning, and Brainpop, to enhance science instruction. Various programs and software also allow for timely feedback on assessments, giving students a chance to monitor their own progress and an immediate chance for the teacher to remediate or enrich the lesson. Technology is also used to allow students to present products of their work in a form that best matches their learning style, increasing interest and rigor in the science classrooms.

Professional Development of technology-based instruction will be provided to facilitate continued and increased integration of technology into science instruction.

## **History**

The History department at Gage Middle School consists of grades 7 and 8. Students in 7th grade study world history and geography from medieval times to the early modern era. Seventh grade students use the district-approved text, McDougal Littell's World History: Medieval and Early Modern Times. Eighth grade students study American history and use the district-approved text, McDougal Littell's Creating America: A History of the United States: Beginnings through World War I. Students are provided with a rigorous curriculum to encourage critical thinking and increased achievement on the district mandated periodic assessments and the California Standards Test.

### **Instructional Strategies**

In accordance with Gage's instructional plan, the history department follows a Constructivist approach to learning, providing learning opportunities that allow students to construct their own knowledge about the areas of study. Project Based Learning (PBL) is used to engage students in the academic content and to nurture specific skills that are critical in this particular field; inquiry, evidence analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, and conceptual mapping, as well as reading and writing. SDAIE and AVID strategies are used to scaffold academic content and language functions.

### **Professional Development**

The History department is structured as a PLC. The PLC will meet twice a month to engage in a cycle of continual improvement. The cycle of continual improvement includes evaluating performance data

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from CFAs, identifying areas in need of improvement, planning common lessons that integrate data-proven best practices, reviewing the implementation of the lessons and their imbedded interventions, evaluating student work, and planning for re-teaching.

The teachers in the History department will also look for opportunities for professional development outside the PLC. Teachers will attend professional conferences including, but not limited to, the AVID Summer Institute and the Teachers' Curriculum Institute: History Alive.

### **Assessments**

The History department currently has five Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) created by the department chair and co-chair. These assessments incorporate knowledge from released CST test questions and periodic assessments. Data from the CFAs drives the instruction, ensuring that all students have access and success with the History-Social Science core curriculum.

### **Intervention**

Intervention is woven into every lesson. Lessons are designed to meet specific learning needs. Specific strategies for intervention include collaborative groupings, peer tutors, and teacher/student conferencing. Teachers will offer time outside of the instructional period, including before and/or after school, to further support student mastery of the content standards.

## **Physical Education**

### **Mission**

The Physical Education Department mission is to provide all children with a quality instructional program in a safe, secure, and caring environment, so that they will demonstrate the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional outcomes necessary to be happy and healthy in a changing, diverse world.

### **Goals**

The Physical Education Department at Gage Middle School takes great pride in its program. It is the goal of the department to guide all students in learning fitness skills, sports, games, sportsmanship, and teamwork. We hope that all Gage students will make positive choices regarding their personal fitness and health that will last a lifetime. To support this goal our program consists of three components:

#### **1. Team and Individual Sports**

*SPORTS INSTRUCTION:* Each sport is taught as an instructional unit that includes individual skill instruction, and games rules, with a major emphasis placed on teamwork and fair play. During physical education classes, competition is de-emphasized, and respect and cooperation is encouraged.

#### **2. Personal Fitness**

*CARDIOVASCULAR ENDURANCE TRAINING/CONDITIONING:* Students will participate in a daily one-half mile or one-mile conditioning jog. The emphasis of the P.E. program is to help students improve in aerobic endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, and agility.

#### **3. Integrated Health Topics**

*HEALTH INSTRUCTION:* To further develop each student's knowledge and awareness of how to prevent injuries, fight disease, and make healthy choices where they connect to the physical education curriculum, students will learn about: healthy heart, proper nutrition, basic muscles, the adverse effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and the benefits of daily exercise.



### **Program Highlights**

- Small-size classes with a personalized, student-centered approach
- Regular cardiovascular endurance training
- Diverse skill work in sports and other physical activities
- Peer tutoring
- Self, peer and teacher assessment
- A safe learning environment — both physical & psychological

### **Program Outline**

While our emphasis is on Physical Education, we offer an interdisciplinary component and stress social skills and character development. We give target heart rate assignments using math skills to compute percentages and chart fitness development. Students learn the history of sports and practice skills through activities and assignments emphasizing personal goals and improvement as well as cooperative partner and group work. Students keep journals and folders to record or chart their progress and attitude development.

### **Character Education**

To build strong character within all of our students, character education instruction is included during physical education classes. Topics include honesty, integrity, loyalty, compassion, perseverance, and respect. All students are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and fair play during all activity. Teachers and coaches model these behaviors with students, colleagues, parents and all staff.

### **Social Skills Program**

Group initiatives and activities provide quality social skills and character building in a physical education setting. The program reinforces the social skills of encouragement, courtesy, compliments, helpfulness, caring, knowing names, and active listening. Each day is filled with a variety of activities that are directed toward teaching each of the above skills and are fun at the same time. Each class period is concluded with the teacher processing, with students, the goals of the lesson, its application, and what they learned from it.

### **Physical Education Standards**

**Standard 1:** Students demonstrate the motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

**Standard 2:** Students demonstrate knowledge of movement concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

**Standard 3:** Students assess and maintain a level of physical fitness to improve health and performance.

**Standard 4:** Students demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness concepts, principles, and strategies to improve health and performance.

**Standard 5:** Students demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Department**

The 6th Grade Department at Gage focuses on the four academic-core content areas: Math, Science, English and History. All 6th grade teachers are highly qualified, fully credentialed Multiple Subject

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specialists. They also teach an elective course in their area of expertise, including courses such as Geology, Creative Writing, Drama, Journalism, Exploration in Science, Art, Reading, and Adventures in Math. The core content classes are block scheduled so that students stay with one teacher for at least two consecutive periods, covering a different subject in each period.

This coming school year, we will offer 6th grade students who score Proficient and Advanced on their 5<sup>th</sup> grade CST a second semester Exploratory Elective Wheel option. They can choose to have 8 weeks in their choice of 2 selected Introductory classes in Visual Arts, General Music, Computers, Drama or Drafting. Those sixth graders scoring Basic, Below Basic, and Far Below Basic will receive intervention support in their second semester in a smaller class setting.

Sixth Grade teachers work collaboratively in two different settings. The first is subject content groups, where teachers collaborate on curriculum building, lesson planning, and specific instruction and intervention strategies to support student mastery of content Standards. Their second grouping is built around shared students, most often consisting of dyads with one teacher handling Math/Science and the other teacher providing English/History instruction. In these smaller groupings, the teachers work to assess and target specific academic and social/emotional needs of the individual students they share. In both groupings, 6th Grade teachers design cross-subject projects to establish instructional consistency, build academic language skills, and connect learning strategies. Sixth Grade teachers also collaborate vertically with 7th and 8th grade teachers to create alignment throughout the content areas and maintain their educational relationships with students as they move up in grades.

In keeping with our mission and vision, 6th Grade teachers are also responsible for shaping the middle school student into an organized, responsible, and hard working student who takes ownership of their own learning. Sixth grade is a transition year for our students and it is the goal of every 6th grade teacher at Gage Middle School to prepare their students to be successful in middle school and life, not just in 6th Grade. The goal of every 6th Grade teacher is to help their students become reflective independent learners who are prepared to be active members of their school community, and where ever else their lives may take them.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math**

Sixth Grade Math provides students with the building blocks that they will utilize to be successful in higher caliber math courses. Mathematical concepts are introduced, discussed, demonstrated, practiced, and mastered by the students in a sequential manner. The first Math Unit of study teaches fractions, percentages and decimals. The second Math Unit moves into Pre-Algebra and proportional reasoning. The third Math Unit introduces the students to statistics and probability. By the end of school year students understand measurement and simple Geometry. Throughout the entire year, Math reasoning skills are taught, reinforced, and emphasized in a Math journal. The fourth Math Unit of study reviews previous Math concepts/skills and prepares them for the Math section of the CST in the spring.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts**

The English Language Arts (ELA) teachers in 6th grade follow the same rigorous units of study outlined in the California State Content Standards as their 7th and 8th grade counterparts: narrative, expository, response to literature, and persuasive. This formatting provides a tight scope and sequencing of essential standards and skills as student mastery is developed through reading, writing, and oral language development. Sixth Grade students have access to the Accelerated Reader computer program to build reading comprehension and help students reach grade level in their reading ability. Sixth Grade teachers also have access to the Novel Center, provided by the English department, and teachers ask students to engage in 30 minutes of independent reading each day as a part of the homework expectation for each student. Sixth Grade ELA provides students the foundation in

academic language needed to understand their textbooks and to communicate effectively. A portfolio of the students’ best work in each unit of study is kept for each student and is later shared with parents at our student-led parent conferences. This portfolio, either a traditional folder or on a flash drive, will be shared with the child’s 7th grade English teacher in the following year.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**

Sixth Grade Science focuses on Earth Science, in accordance with the California State Standards. The textbook is broken into three Units of study called Components, being Plate Tectonics, Weather/Erosion, and Ecology, and the students also have a Unit of study in Health during their school year. In their Science classes, students undertake projects that demand that they work like scientists. They conduct experiments to test a hypothesis, analyze their data, and present their findings. All 6th Grade students keep a Science Notebook for data collections and journaling, which also provides them the opportunity to reflect on their learning and how it has changed with the new experiences provided to them.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies/History**

Social Studies/History for 6th Grade students covers Ancient Civilizations, from Early Man through Ancient Rome, as specified in the California State Standards. The curriculum uses the “GRAPES” framework (government, religion, achievements, politics, economy, and social structure) to closely look at each of the studied cultures. Teachers take extra effort to help students achieve mastery of the academic and study skills that will provide a foundation for History courses in later grades and prepare the student to demonstrate proficiency on the 8th Grade History CST.

### **Instructional Strategies**

Teachers in the sixth Grade Department have identified research-based best practices proven to increase student achievement. These instructional strategies, used by all Sixth Grade teachers in all academic content classes, have been conclusively shown to help Gage's students. These strategies include, but are not limited to CUBS (a Marking the Text strategy used in the AVID program), Accountable Talk/Academic Discussions, SDAIE and WICR strategies such as Cornell Notes, SQ3R, use of visuals/realia, Thinking Maps, Graphic Organizers, QuickWrites, Talking to the Text, Literature Circles, TIPS, and interactive notebooks. Scaffolding strategies such as modeling and partner reading are constants in 6th Grade instructional practice so that all students are able to access the academic content. In their classes, students most often work in flexible small groupings to increase student participation, comprehension, and practical understanding, and so that the students experience opportunities for developing collaboration, social and communication skills.

### **Professional Development**

The Professional Development program for Sixth Grade focuses on the diversity of student needs. Teachers meet twice a month to share best practices with each other, to collectively look at and analyze student data through student work samples, portfolios, and assessments, and to develop collaboratively instructional strategies that meet the actual needs of our students. Using student performance data, teachers also collaborate to create/revise curriculum maps with supporting Common Formative Assessments. This Professional Development work is an on-going process with teachers reviewing student performance data and creating or redesigning CFAs and instructional strategies to meet the immediate needs of all students they teach. Once a month, the teachers attend vertical articulation Professional Development meetings in order to collectively align their lessons and curriculum maps so that students are prepared for the academic expectations of 7th and 8th grade teachers. These meetings, whether horizontal or vertically aligned by grade levels, revolve around the collaborative efforts of 6th Grade teachers to rethink, retrain, and reflect upon their *own* best practices relative to their students' needs, whether through the integration of technology, the use of WICR and/or

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SDAIE strategies, or the review or design of thinking maps or graphic organizers to select those that which will most effectively support improved student achievement, understanding, and mastery of 6th Grade Standards and/or concepts.

### **Assessments**

The Sixth Grade Department relies upon a multitude of assessments types in order to effectively and accurately gauge the achievement of all students while addressing their diverse learning modalities. The assessments include, but are not limited to, California Standards Test (CST), Periodic Assessments (in Math, Science and ELA), Common Formative Assessments (CFAs), Accelerated Reader assessments (both the initial STAR Assessment and the on-going Accelerated Reader book quizzes), portfolios, project-based-learning, performances and performance assessments. The teachers, based upon student need, use test data from prior years to identify learning gaps, attendance patterns, and will appropriately re-test a student if needed for proper academic placement and/or social services. Teachers focus on and identify the essential Standards highlighted by the CST and PAs, and collaboratively create the CFAs to address the Standards and associated concepts. The Periodic Assessments (PAs) are aligned with the Units of study for each Academic content area and are given at the end of each Unit of study. PA data is used to guide re-teaching and reinforcement so that students are successful in their future classes and are best prepared to demonstrate their progress toward mastery on the CST at year's end.

### **Intervention**

Using data from the students' fifth grade year (CST scores primarily), students learning gaps are identified in both Math and English at the onset of the school year. Students who score Below Basic and Far Below Basic in one or both of those two content areas are scheduled into an Intervention elective to address their academic need. Additional intervention takes place in the regular classroom to help students reach the academic goals for sixth grade Math or English while they strengthen identified areas of weakness. Teachers also volunteer their time either during lunch or after school to meet with students and offer tutoring or further instruction. Peer-to-peer tutoring and scaffolding are part of the general classroom intervention strategy, as well.

### **Electives: Visual and Performing Arts and Technology/Media Department**

The Visual and Performing Arts and Technology Department at Gage Middle School play a vital role in rounding out and invigorating our rigorous instructional programs. The California Visual and Performing Arts Standards include the four disciplines of the Arts, Music, Dance, Theater, and the Visual Arts, and, at Gage, we include Technology/Media Arts as the 5<sup>th</sup> Arts discipline. For each of these disciplines we provide in-depth instruction in the following 5 strands: 1) Artistic Perception, 2) Creative Expression, 3) Historical and Cultural Context, 4) Aesthetic Valuing, and 5) Connections, Relationships, and Applications.

We teach culturally relevant and culturally responsive lessons which highlight and connect our students to their rich heritage and history of contributions in these fields. Our students get a uniquely rich and useful arts education to help them succeed in high school and further prepare them with 21<sup>st</sup> century technological skills. Our teachers are highly qualified, experienced, and bring to the classroom their personal expertise as well as their artistic passion for their instruction, collaborative lesson planning, and individual student success.

**VAPT Course Offerings**

<b>Courses</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<b>Visual Arts</b>	Gen. Art Ceramics Art Production	Digital Photography Art Production Ceramics Painting- Murals	Art Production Advanced Art Digital Photography Ceramic Painting- Murals
<b>Music</b>	Beg. Winds/Strings Percussion Guitar Mariachi	Chorus Guitar Mariachi Percussion	Senior Band Senior Orchestra Symphonic Orchestra Percussion Guitar
<b>Dance</b>	Dance Unit-PE Intro Movement	Intermed. Movement Dance Styles: Trends Groups Solos	Dance Styles: Trends Groups Solos Advanced Movement
<b>Drama</b>	Intro to Acting Interdisciplinary prod.	Intro to Acting Improvisation Script Stagecraft Language Arts-Choral Readings Interdisciplinary prod.	Interdisciplinary prod Script Improvisation Language Arts-Choral Readings
<b>Technology</b>	Exploring-Technologies	Exploring-Technologies Engineering Drafting Photoshop	Exploring-Technologies Engineering Drafting Photoshop
<b>Media Arts</b>	Intro to Media Arts	Intro to Media Arts Video Production Animation	Intro to Media Arts Video Production Animation

The Visual and Performing Arts are also an effective vehicle to involve our parents and the community by inviting them to view their children in yearly plays, video productions, by hosting the Annual Gage Festival of Music and Arts on our campus each Spring, organizing Fall and Spring Visual Art Shows, quarterly Musical Performances, and other musical competitions through out the school year. These events support our California Content Standards and nurture parent involvement, giving the community an awareness of our students' positive creative energy. We also empower parents through our ISIS Family Computer Module, instructing them on Saturdays in Computer Technology so that they can monitor their child's progress online at our website while acquiring the basics of computer use.

Our Visual Arts, Music, Dance, Drama, Technology, Media Arts, and Computer Teachers are the resident experts for our staff. They willingly serve as a resource for Gage faculty members who incorporate the Visual and Performing Arts and Technology/Media into their curriculums, collaborating on lesson planning and performances to showcase our students' skills and demonstrate their learning. Through Project Based Learning, hands-on experience, portfolio development, and Performance Based Assessments, learning becomes meaningful and tangible to our students. Gage students can show practical applications of their learning, make real world connections, and show authentic relationships because of our departments' collaborative ability to create powerful learning environments in our classrooms and in our lessons.

### **Computer Education/Media**

Computer Technology education introduces students to the concepts behind how technological systems work, specifically, systems that involve inputs, processes, and outputs. Computer technology instruction engages students in mastery of Computer concepts and skills including keyboarding, word processing, spreadsheets, e-mail, webpage design, PowerPoint presentations, movie-making software, and PhotoShop, and develops mastery of important ideas, concepts, theories, facts, and emerging media skills. Our Media Arts classes introduces students to and builds a foundation in multimedia applications through hands-on experience in video recording, film, photography, editing, script writing, animation, journalism, and reporting news and events.

### **Technology**

Exploring Technology is a problem-solving class that utilizes math, science, technology and engineering principles to challenge students to become actively involved in hands-on problem solving, interpretation of information, self-assessment, and other higher-level activities. In Exploring Technology students learn skills/concepts necessary to prepare them for an increasingly complex technological 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students are expected to use technology tools to support lifelong learning, collaboration, increase productivity, and promote creativity, to use technology resources to solve problems in the real world and to make informed decisions, and use technology media to collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and multiple audiences.

## **Academies -- Personalized Learning Environments**

The United Way of Greater Los Angeles conducted a study which highlights the important role of the middle school in a child's education; *Seizing the Middle Ground: Why Middle School Creates the Pathway to College and the Workforce* (United Way of Greater Los Angeles, 2008). Gage Middle School agrees with the findings of the United Way study, which advocates the need to provide students with small, personalized learning environments where teaching and learning support individual student success.

The 2012-2013 school year will be a year of transition for Gage Middle School as we finally return to a traditional school calendar. We are excited by the prospect of having all of our faculty and students on campus sharing the same calendar for the first time in 30 years, of having CST data and student records *before* our students begin classes, and of being in concert with the Central Office expectations for school calendars. To maximize the potential for this important change, Gage Middle School will provide every student with a Personalized Learning Environment through the establishment of Academies.

Academies will contribute significantly to our instructional program and the overall quality of the educational experiences that our students receive. Academies will provide the organizational and functional structures essential for fostering collaboration, purpose, personalization, specialization, enrichment and sharing of expertise. Additionally, the academies provide students smaller and more personal learning communities where each student is known and valued by teachers and peers. Consequently, students will be able to develop a sense of identity and belonging within their academy, and will feel supported by their teachers and peers. When students feel cared for by teachers, they care about their education (Valenzuela, 1999). For all these reasons, academies are a crucial feature in our plan to meet our mission of developing self-regulated learners who care about their education and for the well-being of others (LIS Waiver #6, TA page 3).



In the 2012-2013 school year, Gage Middle School will have three (3) Academies of approximately 600 students or less and one (1) Math, Science and Technology Magnet of approximately 300 students. The Academies will be: the Visual and Performing Arts and Technology Academy (VAPATA), the Health and Human Services Academy (HAHSA), and the Literacy, Language and Leadership Academy (L3A). The Academy themes were developed in collaboration by teachers, students, and parents and they are infused with excitement, student interest, and career potential, and committed to providing students with viable 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. The students will select their own Academies at enrollment and will stay with their Academy for the two or three years they are at Gage.

### **The Visual and Performing Arts and Technology Academy (VAPATA)**

VAPATA offers a rigorous Academic program grounded in the Arts, Technology, and Media. Highly qualified and experienced teachers will be developing the creative expression of students through Music (orchestra/band/voice), Visual Arts (General Art, Ceramics, Sculpture, Digital Photography, Art Production), Drama (Theater, Stage Craft, Script Writing), Dance (PE, Cultural Dance, Intramural Sports), Computer Technology (Web Design), and the Media Arts (Video, Video Production, Animation) for skill building and personal success. Standards-Based Interdisciplinary activities, performances, project-based learning, and student showcases will be infused with opportunities of self-discovery, creativity, and the use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century media.

The goal of this Academy is to provide equal and fair access to all for academic success and culmination. We support the larger Gage Middle School mission and vision statements for our students and have created unique opportunities for the development of our student's artistic, performance, and technological talents by engaging them in a meaningful 21<sup>st</sup> century skill building educational environment.

In VAPATA we expect to improve academic outcomes by offering a rich, diverse, and culturally responsive curriculum for our students where they will attain mastery of the Visual Arts/ Music and Performing Arts/Computer/Technological State Standards at each grade level while developing the traits of success outlined in our mission and vision statements. We offer a 6<sup>th</sup> grade Exploratory 'Wheel' of coursework in the Arts disciplines: Music -- instrumental and voice -- Dance, Visual Arts, Drama, Media, Technology and Computers. In 7<sup>th</sup> and 8th grades students may specialize and focus in greater detail in an area of preference and or ability.

In order to personalize VAPATA, students will have on-going displays of their student work on campus (and on our website) featuring their efforts both academic and artistic. Campus murals will be developed, created, and painted by students and staff. Quarterly Showcases and performances by students will be held for family/community in our spacious Multi-Purpose Room. In addition to the Talent shows, Art/Writing contests/shows/festivals, and musical competitions, we will form Specialized Enrichment and Academic Clubs. These clubs will be in the Arts, Music, Dance, Drama, and Technology/Media fields to further challenge and engage our students.

VAPATA is a network partner with like-minded local agencies to actively engage our students and raise student achievement by connecting them to their communities with field trips and via workshops with these partnership agencies. These agencies include, but are not limited to The Getty Museum and Getty Villa, Apple, Grammy Museum, LACMA, California Science Center, The Music Center of Los Angeles, including the Center Theatre Group and Education Division, LA County Arboretum, The Kodak Theater, and The Latino Film Festival.

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VAPATA will hold Academy-only assemblies monthly (with parents invited) to recognize and reward outstanding student achievement, success, improved citizenship, and perfect attendance by publically acknowledging their students' positive efforts. VAPATA will hold additional Family Movie Nights and College and Career Fairs with guest artists and speakers from the community coming to share their career insight and course-work for success with our students.

A VAPATA Community Service Project will be developed each year by the faculty, students and parents to directly give back to their community and instill in our students a better appreciation for helping others.

Our VAPATA students will all wear blue uniform pants and will all wear a select color polo shirt exclusive to our Academy. To better identify them on campus, our students will wear a matching color school issued picture ID daily. VAPATA will have Common Rules and Expectations posters in all VAPATA classrooms.

The special electives to support our Academy specialty include but are not limited to the following: General Art, Art Production, Ceramics, Digital Photography, Sculpture, Media Arts, Video Production, Theater Arts, Script Writing, Voice, Instrumental Music, (winds, strings, percussion, orchestra, band, jazz band, senior band), Cultural Dance, Latino Literature, Leadership, Guitar, Computers, Web Design, Stage Craft, Intramural Sports, Art History, Introduction to World Dance, American Intercultural History, and Foreign Language - Spanish or French.

All students in VAPATA will individually and collectively have portfolios. These portfolios may be traditional folders or on flash drives, but all portfolios will have evidence or examples of our students' instructional processing, performances and showcases on videotape for review and reflection (personal and group). In VAPATA we will vertically align our instructional strategies per grade and post in all classes for continuity and clarity. Academy Portfolios have 3 distinct sections: 1) Standards-Based Cross-Disciplinary projects (Academy created), 2) Evidence of Mastery of the Instructional Specialty. 3) Evidence of Mastery of the Schools' Mission statement. Grade levels will predetermine these three sections. Articulation between grades will take place to ensure that the work of the student builds on the previous year. Portfolios will be assessed according to these general categories: Connection, Selection, Collection, Reflection, and Evaluation. Assessments will be collaboratively developed in Academies.

The elements that make VAPATA unique are the exciting, rigorous Academic coursework, the Instructional Specialties, and the students' ability to select their electives whenever possible. These aspects empower our students to take charge of their own education and creatively express their personal uniqueness in a disciplined educational environment. Academic and Enrichment Clubs are developed around student needs and interests, further empowering them as leaders and shapers of their own educations. All teachers support them by utilizing and implementing a common program for Intervention which includes homework help daily, common-cross curricular skills, common instructional practices and strategies, common cross-curricular assignments, RTII-pull outs, student-led Parent Conferences and Academy-based Student Success Teams.

### **Health and Human Services (HHS) Academy**

The Health and Human Services Academy (HHS) introduces students to the exciting world of health, human services, and medical/technical fields, such as medicine, social service, and mental health industries/communities. Students will learn the importance of being an advocate in creating healthy communities through service learning opportunities and exploring their own sense of self. Dedicated

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teachers will acquaint students with various careers in the medical fields such as nursing, medical technologist, medical support services, therapists, and social workers through multidisciplinary curriculum and project based learning opportunities.

This Academy will focus on exposing students to the various health and health related technical fields of study, the educational opportunities, and the legal services provided to the community within our society. HHSA will teach the importance of being an advocate in creating healthy communities through service learning opportunities while exploring their own sense of self and education.

Students will acquire the skills to assess the physical, mental, social, and emotional health of themselves and others in order to increase their decision-making abilities. In order to become positive community members of a 21<sup>st</sup> society, they will have to be able to communicate in various modalities: orally, written, and through multiple uses of technology. Our students will be able to differentiate between the social issues of several communities and propose solutions.

HHSA will have four major Instructional Foci: 1) development of a positive self-image by all students with a focus on drug abuse, alcohol abuse, disease, and violence prevention, 2) examination of cultural and societal health and legal issues with possible solutions, 3) exploration of technical investigations and the experimental skills used in the science fields, and, 4) building capacity for physical/mental discipline, endurance, and collaboration in all educational contexts.

In order to achieve this HHSA will personalize the students' academic instruction. Students will have opportunities to work as interns within the Salvation Army, NECC, local nursing homes, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Courthouse, and the Huntington Park City Council and Police Department.

HHSA will form Academic Enrichment Clubs such as FTA, Health Advocates, Keeping It Real, Second Step, TUPE and other health related programs developed by LAUSD. We will create an End of the Semester Culminating Day Service Project to give back to our community and help our students to learn first-hand the benefits of helping others. We will develop a specialized PE Program that promotes active healthy student bodies making positive lifestyle choices as they mature. HHSA will vertically align instructional strategies per grade level and will post this information in all classes for student knowledge and clarity.

HHSA students will wear blue uniform pants with a select color polo shirt unique to our Academy only, and they will wear their matching color school issued picture ID daily. All teachers in HHSA will have Common Rules and Expectations posters in their classrooms. We will have many events to involve parents and plan to hold Parent education workshops, Family Day/Night, Academy Orientation Day/Night, Academic Showcases, Student-led Parent Conferences, Field Trips, and hold Career and College Fairs with Guest speakers.

To insure that all HHSA students maintain success we will implement many strategies of intervention - homework help daily, common-cross curricular skills, common instructional practices and strategies, common cross-curricular assignments, and Academy-based Student Success Teams.

HHSA special electives will include, but are not limited to, Our Global World, Exploring Our Global World, Youth and Law, Exploration in Science, Intermediate Science Curriculum Study, American Intercultural Heritage, Peer Mentoring, Cultural Dance, Exploratory Media Arts, and Theater Around the World, and our students will also be able to 'Passport Out' to general electives including Art, Music, Dance, Computers, and Foreign Language.

Academy Portfolios have 3 distinct sections: 1) Standards-Based Cross-Disciplinary projects

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(Academy created), 2) Evidence of Mastery of the Instructional Specialty, 3) Evidence of Mastery of the Schools' mission and vision statement. Grade levels will predetermine these three sections. Articulation between grades will take place to ensure that the work of the student builds on the previous year. Portfolios will be assessed according to these general categories: Connection, Selection, Collection, Reflection, and Evaluation. Assessments will be collaboratively developed in the Academy.

In the HHSA Academy all classes will develop and utilize portfolios for their student work. Some portfolios will be traditional (folders) and others will be on flash drives. These portfolios will contain the documents, evidence, and/or examples of processes, projects, performances or showcase activity for review and reflection (personal and group), as well as student grades.

### **Literacy Language Leadership (L3) Academy**

**Literacy, Language, and Leadership (L3) Academy** intends on creating leaders through academic achievement, with a focus on character building, academic success and personal pride, and by exploring the opportunities, present and future, for student participation in society, government, and community. Our Academy will build reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills through activities like Community Service Learning Projects, Readers' Workshops, Literacy Circles, Socratic Seminars, and project-based learning activities that focus on written and oral literacy.

The goal of the L3 Academy is to promote literacy, academic achievement and community leadership while nurturing student leaders who can speak, read, write, and communicate in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global community. Students will learn the skills fundamental to socially responsible, caring, and involved citizens. They will engage in "Mets Five Learning Goals" and Dr. Sandra Kaplan's idea of "Thinking Like a Disciplinarian." Students within this Academy will develop "Habits of a Scholar - Possess Academic Humility, Ponder Ideas, View Through Multiple Perspectives, Be Prepared, Set Goals, Take Intellectual Risks, Strive for Excellence, Possess Intellectual Curiosity, Save Ideas, and Persevere." Each classroom teacher in L3 will have this poster in their classroom and will model these habits for their students.

In L3, students will become more effective communicators utilizing academic language with content specific vocabularies. Students will study word origins and the connections that exist across cultures and time. In the areas of academic discussion and debate, students will use critical reading skills, creative writing techniques, and expository writing methods for expanding their personal expression. Language will come alive in this Academy by carefully crafted Standard-Based lessons that are collaboratively designed by highly qualified teachers who know how to empower students able to acquire and research information using a variety of traditional, current, and technical methods of inquiry. The students will become able to evaluate the validity of information presented to them while learning the questioning skills needed to be critical thinkers and responsible learners throughout their lives. The L3 Academy provides students with opportunities to apply their communication skills in socially responsible ways to improve or contribute meaningfully within their school through Leadership classes and school committees or within their communities through Community Service Learning Projects and other charitable activities.

All L3 Academy students will wear blue uniform pants with a select color polo shirt unique to our Academy only, and they will wear their matching color school issued picture ID daily. All teachers in L3 will have Common Rules and Expectations posters in their classrooms, as well as the poster, "Habits of a Scholar." We will have events to involve parents, including Family Day/Night, Academy Orientation Day/Night, Academic Showcases, Student-led Parent Conferences, Field Trips, and Career

and College Fairs with Guest speakers, and will work with the Parent Center to continue and support their very effective Parent education workshops. Academy-wide Assemblies will be held monthly in our MPR to recognize, honor, and inspire our students and students will actively participate in planning and presenting thematic Academy events once a semester. L3 students will also be required to take one semester of Leadership class in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The L3 Academy will create Academic and Enrichment Clubs with teacher sponsors in various fields of student interest such as Debate Club, Drama Club, Young Writers Club, or a Jeopardy Club, possibly developing competitions within their Academy by grade levels, and will be encouraged to participate in the Woodcraft Rangers afterschool program offered at Gage.

Special electives for L3 Academy will include, but are not limited to: Creative Writing (with a focus on genres by grade level content), Foreign Language, Speech, Debate, Drama, Script Writing, Leadership, Humanities (connecting with grade level content through literature, e.g. historical fiction, science fiction, era specific materials), Journalism, Photo Journalism, Film Workshop, MultiMedia, Introduction to Computers, Explorations in Science, Adventures in Math, and Calligraphy. The L3 Academy reserves the right to “passport” out its students for general elective courses, based on student need or interest, if necessary, and will accept other Academy's students on passport into its elective specialties, as class size allows.

The L3 Academy Portfolios have 3 distinct sections: 1) Standards-Based Cross-Disciplinary projects (Academy created), 2) Evidence of Mastery of the Instructional Specialty, 3) Evidence of demonstration of the Gage mission and vision statement. Grade levels will predetermine these three sections. Articulation between grades will take place to ensure that the work of the student builds on the previous year. Portfolios will be assessed according to these general categories: Connection, Selection, Collection, Reflection, and Evaluation. Assessments will be collaboratively developed in the Academy.

All students in L3 will have portfolios collectively and individually. These portfolios may be traditional folders and/or on flash drives, but all portfolios will have evidence or examples of our students’ instructional processing, performances, and showcases on videotape for review and reflection (personal and group). In L3 we will vertically align our instructional strategies by grade and post this alignment in all classes for continuity and clarity.

The L3 Academy is unlike others in that it is a *language-focused* Academy with an emphasis on academic achievement and character building to create future leaders for our school, community, and society. Through our uniquely developed curriculum, specialized student selected electives, Standard-Based Instruction, and Academy theme we align with Gage Middle Schools’ mission and vision statements to create life-long learners, socially responsible citizens, and positive community leaders.

### **Math, Science and Technology Magnet**

In the Math, Science, and Technology Magnet, all of our students have the capacity to learn and have an equal right to a quality education developed from the California State Content Standards. In our Academy every student will have the opportunity to realize their full potential in a college-going culture in which our students develop work habits and master study skills that can help them become lifelong learners and be successful in their future academic endeavors as well as their communities. Students are taught to become independent, self-directed and self-motivated learners through carefully developed collaboratively created lessons. Technology is used in all classrooms to support student mastery of California State Student Learning Standards. With Technology integration being used across curricula,



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we further promote our students' higher-level thinking and engage them in problem-solving strategies within rigorous academic context.

Students will develop their research skills and build upon them by developing an eye for details. They will recognize patterns and distinctions through activities that improve their abilities to observe. They will develop their abilities to analyze what *is* being observed. Independently and collaboratively, our students will make connections, conjectures and hypothesize about the "whys," and, finally, give meaning and definition to their experiences or ideas. This will be a part of our fundamental process for structuring our Magnet activities and Project Based Learning assignments to enhance our students' critical thinking skills in all content areas

Our Magnet curriculum is unique in that we develop students whose intellect, moral character, and identity provides a lifelong foundation for personal growth and academic excellence, while preparing to become positive leaders in their communities. Our students will learn to use technology daily in our classrooms, developing these skills to uniquely prepare them for the 21st century workplace. Our students will use technology as resources to access, interpret, analyze, synthesize, apply, and communicate information. In the Math, Science, and Technology Magnet, students will be involved in problem-solving and critical thinking activities that are connected to their real-life experiences in order to be prepared to compete in a future job market with careers that may not yet exist.

In the Magnet Academy, we personalize our students' environment and educational experiences in a variety of meaningful ways. We have a Magnet Family Fun Day for the entire family to take part, and we host Monthly events to foster class cohesion while providing healthy and lively small school competition.

We have a Student Advisory Board, a STAR Program -- Student Teacher Affective Relationships --a WEB Program -- 'Where Everybody Belongs' -- frequent Awards Ceremonies for academic success, perfect attendance, and improved behaviors, an All Magnet Field Trip, an Annual Gallery Walk, T-Shirts, buttons, grade level competitions, and our annual End-of-the-Year Family Potluck. Our students will wear blue uniform pants and a select colored shirt exclusive to our Magnet Academy, as well as a school-provided color-coded student ID that will be worn for heightened identification in the Math, Science, and Technology Magnet.

The special LAUSD electives we offer to support our instructional program include but are not limited to the following: Introduction to Computers, Film, Audio Production, Exploring Technology, Exploring Theater, General Art, Journalism, Exploring Science, and MESA.

The Math, Science, and Technology Magnet uses a variety of summative and formative assessments to evaluate student mastery of California State Standards and skills. This will be done via Portfolios: traditional, Video, and Digital formats, student-developed web pages, Common Formative Assessments, (collaboratively developed by students and teachers), Uni-dimensional assessments, How-to... (i.e., podcast, math topic), Video Obituary, Model UN, propaganda films, Elevator test (PAs, incorporating media), California Standards Test, and End of the Unit Projects.

The Math, Science, and Technology Magnet has other unique elements -- our enrollment is small enough that everyone really does know you by name! Strong learning relationships are formed with students, parents, and staff due to this small enrollment. Teachers closely collaborate throughout grade levels with vertical alignment, and portfolios transfer through the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. Teachers are highly qualified and are constantly innovating new ways to challenge and excite student learning and successful achievement. The Magnet Academy is already established at the Gage Middle School site and has an active, supportive Alumni Network, an ongoing iPod Pilot Program, a



partnership with the “On Location” (student filmmakers) Travelling Program, Info Tech, Introspective, Magnet Parent Support, Peer Tutoring Program, Homework Help, and our Student-Led Parent Conferences.

***i. Curriculum Development. (If applicable)***

NOT APPLICABLE

***ii. Management of Multiple Schools:***

NOT APPLICABLE

***C. WASC Accreditation:***

NOT APPLICABLE

***D. Addressing the Needs of All Students:***

The instructional framework alone will not help close the achievement gap of FEP, SWDs and ELLs. The instructional framework spells out the curriculum and instructional practices that will set the classroom conditions for learning. The Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) model is what will leverage the most progress for our lower performing students. Deliberate, personalized, differentiated and systemic interventions are one of our Six Pillars of Success and the RTII model is designed to help improve achievement for our target student population.

**Response to Instruction and Intervention**

Response to Instruction and Intervention has emerged nationally as an effective strategy to support every student. RTII is plainly defined as a general education approach to high quality instruction, early intervention, and prevention and behavioral strategies. RTII offers a way to eliminate achievement gaps through a school-wide process that provides assistance to every student, both high achieving and struggling learners. It is a process that utilizes all resources within a school and district in a collaborative manner to create a single, well-integrated system of instruction and intervention informed by student outcome data. RTII is fully aligned with the research on the effectiveness of early intervention and the recommendations of the California P-16 Council’s themes of access, culture and climate, expectations, and strategies. (CDE- <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rti/philosophydefine.asp>, retrieved on August 21, 2011).

A cohesive RTII process integrates resources from general education, categorical programs and special education into a comprehensive system of core instruction and interventions to benefit every student. The following core components are critical to the full implementation of a strong RTII model.

1. **High-quality classroom instruction.** Students receive initial high-quality, standards and research-based, culturally and linguistically relevant instruction in their classroom setting by highly qualified teachers. Our Instructional Framework and our Professional Development Plan support this component.
2. **High expectations.** A belief that every student can learn, including students of poverty, students with disabilities, English learners, and students representing all ethnicities, is evident in both the school and district cultures.
3. **Assessments and data collection.** An integrated data collection and assessment system includes universal screening, diagnostics and progress monitoring to inform decisions appropriate for each tier of service delivery. Gage Middle School will implement an Assessment Plan that will incorporate formative and summative assessments to screen, program, and support students according to their respective needs regardless of their Academy affiliation.

4. **Problem-solving systems approach.** Collaborative teams use a problem-solving systems process and method to identify problems, develop interventions and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention in a multi-tiered system of service delivery. Both the Professional Learning Communities and Academies will follow this protocol to support student success.
5. **Research-based interventions.** When monitoring data indicate a lack of progress, an appropriate research-based intervention is implemented. The interventions are designed to increase the intensity of the students' instructional experience. Based on our current student performance data, research based strategies that have proven to be effective with our focus student subgroups have been included in the instructional framework to accelerate learning and improve student achievement.
6. **Positive behavioral support.** School staff members will receive training on research-proven school-wide and classroom-based positive behavioral supports for achieving important social and learning outcomes. Teachers will work within their own Academies to implement common, researched-based classroom strategies to promote positive behaviors.
7. **Fidelity of program implementation.** Student success in the RTII framework requires fidelity of implementation in the delivery of content and use of instructional strategies specific to the learning and/or behavioral needs of the student. As the teachers in their PLCs and Academies collaborate more, common instructional practices will become more consistent. The use of common expectations, common instructional strategies, common rules and procedures, common assessments, etc, will become the norm. Scheduling and programming priority will be given to students in need of intervention.
8. **Staff development and collaboration.** All school staff members are trained in assessments, data analysis, and research-based instructional practices and in providing positive behavioral support. PLCs and Academies will use a collaborative approach to analyze student data and will work together in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the intervention process.
9. **Parent/ Family involvement.** The involvement and active participation of parents/families at all stages of the instructional and intervention process are essential to improving the educational outcomes of their students. Parents/families will be kept informed of the progress of their students in their native language or other mode of communication, and their input is valued in making appropriate decisions. At Gage, parents will be active partners in the academic growth of their children.
10. **Specific Learning Disability Determination.** The RTII approach may be one component of Specific Learning Disability determination as addressed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 statute and regulations. As part of determining eligibility, the data from the RTII process may be used to ensure that a student has received research-based instruction and interventions (CDE -- <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/rtiphilosophydefine.asp>, retrieved on August 21, 2011).

According to the National Center on Response to Intervention (2011), implementing RTII requires thought, purposeful planning, and continuous evaluation and refinement. The National Center on Response to Intervention presents RTII implementation through four stages:

**1. Exploring and Adopting:** During the Exploring and Adopting stage, sites 1) assess the needs of the site, 2) gather information about the RTII framework, 3) determine if there is a match between the needs of the site and expected outcomes of RTII, and 4) achieve a consensus among key stakeholders to put RTII into place.

**2. Planning:** The second stage of implementation is the planning stage, in which sites prepare for implementation. During this phase of implementation, effective use of data is central to the development of the action plan and in obtaining measureable benchmarks of progress.

**3. Implementing:** Full operation of RTII occurs when the RTII framework is embraced by practitioners and integrated into all schools and classrooms with integrity. RTII at this stage is “business as usual” and has become woven into the culture of the school. In addition, staff is skilled in data-based decision-making, instruction is evidence-based and culturally responsive, administrators and leaders support and facilitate effective practices, procedures and processes are routine, community members understand and accept the framework, and expected outcomes are clear.

**4. Continuously Improving:** This stage ensures that the RTII framework remains relevant to the needs of the district and schools. During this stage, sites evaluate their progress, adjust practices based on the evaluation and monitor changes to ensure sustainability of RTII (National Center for Response to Intervention, <http://www.rti4success.org/Howtoimplementrtianding>, retrieved, August 21, 2011).

Gage Middle School is currently between the Implementing and Continuously Improving stages. As we transition to the stage of Continual Improvement, we will work to improve our in-class and in-school interventions while increasing interventions during non-instructional hours. To facilitate this our faculty and staff will commit to at least two additional on-site hours per week to provide intervention for students outside of regular instructional time. This intervention may take the form of homework help, additional support for classroom assignment completion, extra remediation or enrichment activities, service learning opportunities, and other activities designed by Academies based on the needs of students (LIS Waiver #5, TA page 2). Academies will collaborate on designing a schedule for fulfilling weekly additional intervention hours.

Gage Middle School has been working with RTII for two years. Over the last two years Gage has undergone several structural changes to enact the RTII model. The following changes have made it possible to offer interventions during the school day.

- We implemented a seven period school day, in contrast to a six period day, to offer students who require interventions in both ELA and Mathematics a two-hour block in each discipline. A seventh period allows students who require intervention in only one discipline to take enrichment electives. Students who do not require interventions can take general electives or academic electives.
- We programmed students in ELA and Math classes according to their performance in the CST.
- We have added academic electives in English, Math and Science to provide students opportunities for acceleration.
- We increased time for collaboration by the PLCs over previous years.
- We offered a Sumer Bridge Program to incoming underperforming 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Under the supervision of the Coordination of Services Team (COST), we coordinated social-emotional services using a tiered model to dedicate time, attention and resources to the students with greatest need.

As we look to the coming school year (2012-2013), we will continue to scale up our RTII efforts by the following measures:

- An Academy period will be added to our school schedule. Students will meet in their Academy period twice a week. During that period teachers will be able to build rapport with students, build a sense of identity and belonging to the Academy, offer instructional support and intervention, check-in on behavior issues, plan Academy activities, work on Portfolios,

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and carry out other activities that Academies plan as part of their instructional program and themes. Each Academy will create a Homework Club for after school hours, offering tutoring to students at least two hours per week.

- Faculty and staff will commit to at least two additional on-site hours per week to provide intervention for students outside of regular instructional time. This intervention may take the form of homework help, additional support for classroom assignment completion, extra remediation or enrichment activities, service-learning opportunities, and other activities designed by Academies based on the needs of students. Academies will collaborate on designing a schedule for fulfilling additional intervention hours. (LIS Waiver #5, TA page 2).
- Woodcraft Rangers and Youth Services will provide students after-school tutoring and enrichment activities.
- We will continue to partner with the East Los Angeles College Jaime Escalante Math Program during the summer months to provide opportunities for acceleration in Algebra and Geometry.
- A Summer Bridge Program will be offered for underperforming incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Summer school, prioritized according to student needs, [based on available funding].
- Saturday school, prioritized according to student needs, [based on available funding].

PLCs will focus on the curricular and instructional components of RTII through professional development and the PLCs' work on the cycle of continual instructional improvement. Academies will focus on the attendance, behavioral and academic components of RTII through personalization, differentiation, common expectations, common instructional strategies and social-emotional support for students.

The instructional framework and the RTII model provide the appropriate theoretical construct to guide our team in systemically addressing the needs of our student population. The PLCs and the Academies provide collaborative working bodies for implementing the instructional framework and enacting the RTII model. These two strengths, compounded by our commitment to build a safe and encouraging school environment and to make parents and community members partners in our educational endeavors, will translate to an improvement in student learning and performance.

### ***E. Vertical Articulation:***

Gage Middle School will take a proactive approach to vertical articulation from the elementary school level and to the high school level. Vertical articulation will be an on-going process that ensures a smooth and seamless transition of students, data, and families within our District 6 area, including but not limited to the following practices.

1. Recruitment visits (Spring/Fall) to the elementary schools. These will inform incoming students of our Academy offerings and special programs unique to Gage as well as acquaint Gage staff with the elementary school teachers/staff nearby. This will develop partnerships which we will revisit within the school year as Professional Development, in which we visit the elementary schools again; verbally articulating with the elementary school staff our expectations and goals, and aligning our teaching strategies with theirs to reinforce positive gains while identifying and correcting ineffective strategies students may bring with them to Gage. Post-visit, reflective discussions will be held on site to improve our ability to support the achievement of our students.
2. The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation will be held before the start of the school year. The Orientation Program will serve to welcome students, acquaint them to the campus, the mission, and the vision of Gage Middle School, and to allow them to meet their teachers, counselors and other school personnel.

3. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientations (some elementary schools retain their 6<sup>th</sup> grade). 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade orientation will serve as a platform for students to reflect on their performance and set goals for the upcoming school year. Orientation is also the best time to reinforce our school mission and vision.
4. Elementary school students will be invited to visit Gage on pre-arranged dates to view Academy Showcases of students’ talents and work, tour the campus, visit classrooms, review school rules, policies, and get answers to their questions.
5. Parent Workshops, entitled ‘Transition to Middle School’, will be held on Saturdays to acquaint, train, and equip parents with the skills and knowledge they’ll need to help their children deal with the rigor and challenges of middle school and the pre-teen and early teen years.
6. Teachers will visit high schools/charter schools on prearranged PD dates (Fall/Spring) to articulate with the high school teachers by department or Academy the skills, abilities, and styles of portfolio of student work they’d like our students to bring to them when they culminate from Gage. This vertical articulation will be on-going and reflective in nature to ensure we are continually improving in meeting the needs of all our students and preparing them for their anticipated educational transitions.
7. High school counselor visits to Gage will continue with the programming of their incoming students prior to students' culmination.
8. Training for parents in the ISIS Family Module, a District-created web application, will take place on select Saturdays where they will be given ISIS Family Module accounts to access their students’ academic assignments, grades, and attendance.
9. Student records will be promptly transferred and this information will be accurately disseminated to relevant office, academy, and staff members so that the individual student's educational needs are quickly and best met.

***F. Early Care and Education:***

NOT APPLICABLE

***G. Service Plan for Special Education: See Appendix E***

**B-2. Professional Development (PD)**

***A. Professional Culture:***

Gage Middle School is committed to establishing and nurturing a collegial and collaborative culture where staff will be professionally accountable for student success. The professional culture will reflect an expectation of high student achievement based on clear, measurable goals for student progress, aligned to clear academic standards continually modeled and supported by school leadership and administration.

Staff ‘collaboratives’ will be organized as Professional Learning Committees (PLCs) formerly known as Departments. The Instructional Leadership Team (administration and teachers) will ensure that PLCs are established for all subject matter and/or courses, as well as grade level, interdisciplinary teams at the school. The “PLC concept represents an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (Dufour, & Marzano, 2011, p. 22).

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The professional culture at Gage Middle School is defined by the three core tenets of PLCs:

1. PLCs are based on the idea that the purpose of the Gage Middle School is to ensure that all students achieve at high levels. Therefore, the work of the PLCs is student centered. PLC members work to identify what students must know and what skills and dispositions all students must acquire. PLCs focus on what students have learned, not merely what has been taught. Members ask how student learning will be evaluated, what we will do with students who struggle and what we will do for students who have achieved mastery (Dufour, & Marzano, 2011).
2. PLCs function on a second idea. If we are to help all students learn, we must work collaboratively and collectively to meet the needs of each student. Therefore, the staff will have regular, job-embedded time to plan common lessons, develop common assessments, discuss students they share, and review progress and determine intervention or enrichment strategies for these students. Collaboration is based on collective inquiry, action research, experimentation, and data analysis. Recognizing that group commitments are required to implement common solutions to common problems provides a more productive way to improve student achievement (Dufour, & Marzano, 2011).
3. Lastly, PLCs reflect on their practice and are professionally accountable for outcomes. Staff “own” student success or failure, addressing the factors that are within our control. We commit to using data to evaluate defined outcomes, not merely intentions, and to ensure that data guides and modifies the ‘One Team’ attitude in PLCs, Academies, and individual classrooms (Dufour, & Marzano, 2011).

The professional culture of our school will center on common goals and structures that support collective inquiry to achieve excellence. Gage Middle School will function as a student-centered learning environment where educators are facilitators of student learning and achievement. For this reason, Gage Middle School is asking for a teacher commitment in the form of a Commitment to the Plan Agreement.

### ***B. Professional Development:***

Creating an effective professional development program is crucial to school reform, teacher instructional success, and student achievement. An effective professional development model incorporates school-site teachers, administrators, staff, and parents through collaboration, coherence, relevance, sustainability, and evaluation. Our professional development plan relies on PLCs to serve as the primary conduit for developing a community of learners and practitioners. In terms of professional development for educators, Dufour and Marzano (2011) posit that the central questions that should guide the work of the PLCs are: What is it we want our students to know and be able to do? How will we know if our students are learning? How will we respond when students do not learn? How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are already proficient? These questions align with the first tenet of the PLC process: our school exists to ensure that all students learn at high levels.

We are committed to the proposition that all students can and must learn at high levels. To achieve this level of success we must work collaboratively in a collective effort to meet the needs of each student. PLCs provide the foundation for this effort. The Instructional Leadership Team will facilitate the formation of PLCs and oversee and support the PLC process on a macro scale. PLCs will be formed according to academic content and grade levels. Student performance data will drive the cycle of continuous student improvement that is the core of the PLC process. The cycle of continual improvement is characterized by the following steps:



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1. Analyze student data to identify learning gaps, instructional gaps and other areas of student need.
2. Set SMART goals that are “(1) Strategically aligned with school and district goals, (2) Measurable, (3) Attainable, (4) Results-oriented (that is requiring evidence of higher levels of student learning in order to be achieved), and (5) Time bound.” (Dufour, & Marzano, 2011, p. 24)
3. Design instructional units or lessons that aligned with the identified needs. Instruction must include interventions based on the determined needs. Common formative assessments are imbedded into the instructional units.
4. Implement common units of study based on the California Content Standards.
5. Analyze the evidence of student learning to inform and improve instruction and practice.
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of instruction against SMART goals.
7. Develop strategic interventions to re-teach or imbed interventions in the following unit of study.
8. Re-visit and analyze student performance data for learning gaps, instructional gaps, and other areas of student need.

The PLCs and Academies will be supplemented by targeted school-wide, full faculty professional development on key topics outlined below. An inquiry-driven cycle will be congruently aligned with the design, implementation, and development of this multi-tiered PD plan cultivating a reflective professional community at Gage Middle School.

PLCs will meet bi-monthly. They will focus on building the capacity of staff to engage in ‘backwards planning’ to ensure that what is being taught (curriculum maps) and assessed is tied to key California content standards and that teachers are using research-based pedagogy. These PLCs will design common lessons by reaching consensus on matching key aforementioned instructional methodologies (PBL, SDAIE, and AVID/WICR) to lesson plan development, and then analyze the effectiveness of the application of common pedagogy on teaching practices and student learning. Also, in developing common formative assessments, performance assessments, and portfolios assessments, the Academies and PLCs will reach consensus on how to evaluate student work and check for student understanding of underlying standards/concepts. Both Academies and PLCs will use data from these assessments, as well as the CST, CELDT, and PAs, to guide and modify their instruction to meet identified student needs.

The work of the PLCs will also include implementation of the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) model. These collaborative teams of teachers will use the RTII system for identification, referral, and service of students in need of ‘intensive’ and ‘strategic’ intervention for pre-and re-teaching, discussing the needs of students that they share in common across subject areas.

The three (3) Academies will meet bi-monthly involving their faculty in the same effort to analyze and use data to guide instruction, share best practices of teaching, develop rigorous interdisciplinary lessons, common formative assessments for these lessons, and collaboratively develop showcases for student work. The prevailing thought is that **all** PD will embrace the same markers: A) teacher’s collaborative examination of curriculum and standards, B) teacher’s collaborative analysis of summative and formative data, C) teacher’s collaborative definitions of quality, rigorous student work via assessment practices such as, but not limited to, criteria charts and rubrics, D) teacher’s collaborative submissions of products/evidence (e.g., common lessons, common formative assessments, common performance-based assessments) that flow from a collective inquiry, and E) collaboratively documenting progress and learning across the small Academies with vertical articulation modifying instruction as indicated to raise student achievement. Failure to actively or adequately participate in the Academy will lead to displacement from the Gage community. The

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administrators charged with oversight of the Academies will hold staff members accountable for active participation in their Academy.

Gage Middle School’s Professional Development plan is dedicated to the proposition that all professional development activities must be practice-orientated with structured follow-up activities. Through the on-going use of collaborative time to refine and revise common lessons, develop formative assessments, and share instructional strategies and best practices; collaborative teams will take solution- centered approaches to address student achievement needs. The three instructional strategies (PBL, SDAIE, and AVID/WICR) will be focused on in the full faculty meeting and directly applied to a specific content area for meaningful application of strategy and teacher time.

To support teacher professional development, administrators will demonstrate instructional and educational leadership as detailed in the ‘California Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.’ The ‘California Standards for the Teaching Profession’ will guide teacher’s professional development programs. Professional development will use data approaches to enhance teacher learning and application of instructional strategies for raising student achievement. This will build a professional community whose domain sets the tone for common norms, active participation, and shared language, and nurture a One Team purpose centered on a results-oriented and thriving educational community.

### ***i. Management of Multiple Schools:***

NOT APPLICABLE

### ***C. Teacher Orientation:***

Gage Middle School will focus on introducing and reinforcing the Professional Culture described above with new staff members. Given the type of innovative school we are developing and the specific staff characteristics that we feel are desirable, it will be necessary to acculturate new staff to our mission, vision, values, and goals. To these ends, all faculty, staff, and administrators will experience an induction program, conducted during a four day retreat prior to the start of the school year to review our school plan, focus on school wide goals for the school year, review policies and procedures, set professional expectations, review the PLC process, continue professional development on Project Based Learning, prepare classrooms, and collaborate within PLCs. This four day professional development retreat, although autonomous from the regular school calendar, is crucial to ensure that all faculty and staff have the time and resources necessary to propel each and every class onto a road of successful implementation of our instructional program (LIS Waiver #7, TA page 3).

Teachers new to Gage Middle School will receive the support of a peer mentor. New teachers will be paired with a colleague from their PLC. Via peer mentoring, we aim to assist staff in becoming acquainted with the roles and expectations for PLC collaboration, as well as the school’s conception on how to analyze and use data to guide instructional practices. New teachers will also be supported by our Instructional Coaches and our AVID teachers. The focus will be on ensuring that teachers are supported, trained, and developed in relation to the instructional plan, and to our Six Pillars for Success.

Instruction that meets the needs of our student population is paramount. Our instructional framework is founded on Project Based Learning supported by SDAIE and the AVID/WICR methodologies. Our AVID teachers, who have been trained and certified as experts, will in-service new teachers on the AVID systematic approach to learning and WICR strategies.

The induction program for all faculty and staff and the mentoring program for new teachers will ensure a sound base of common knowledge for all our staff and ensures the continuous implementation

of our instructional program regardless of staffing changes.

***D. PD Program Evaluation:***

Because the majority of Professional Development will occur within PLC collaborations, the evaluation of Professional Development is essentially the method by which PLCs will be held accountable for their instruction. The high-leverage principal leadership strategies advocating for this include an evaluative role in monitoring: a) teachers’ examination of curriculum and standards, b) teachers’ analysis of summative and formative data, c) teachers’ definitions of quality, rigorous student work via assessment practices such as criteria charts and rubrics, d) submission of products (e.g., common lessons, common formative assessments) that flow from collective inquiry, e) teacher processing of Professional Development, strategies, lessons prior to implementation, and f) documenting progress and learning across PLCs with vertical articulation. For Gage Middle School, this will be an evaluative expectation for administrators charged with oversight and supervision of PLC teams. All Administrators will actively participate in Professional Development whenever possible to ensure their strong knowledge in each area and be able to model, support, and enrich their teachers as well as their students’ progress. In sum, Gage Middle School administrators will hold staff and selves accountable for active participation in PLC work (i.e., the teachers’ roles in collaboration and the subsequent follow through with agreed upon actions) with evidence of student achievement from multiple assessments.

Gage Middle School will implement Instructional Rounds which involves educators in structured peer observations of classroom instruction in order to discuss instructional practices linked to school improvement efforts, to identify instructional exemplars and benchmarks as strategies for systemic change, and to build common instructional practices. Instructional Rounds will be used to assess the “transfer” of Professional Development to the classroom by:

- a Observing classroom practices (*What are teachers and students saying and doing?*)
- b Debriefing observations (*What did we see?*)
- c Identifying the next level of work (*What will help us to know our teachers well instructionally in order to offer more targeted support?*) (Defour, & Marzano, 2009).
- d Providing prompt and relevant feedback on classroom visits/observations, within the day of the visit whenever possible.

Eight broad domains will comprise the focus of Instructional Rounds: 1) Instructional Delivery, 2) Expectations, 3) Student Engagement, 4) Learning Environment, 5) Extent of Academic Rigor, 6) Extent for Curricular Relevance, 7) Relationships/Personalization, and 8) Classroom Management. Timing of the Instructional Rounds will align with the work of content area/course PLC and interdisciplinary PLC foci. For example, PLCs implementing a common lesson would be a logical group to involve in Instructional Rounds. Likewise, PLCs providing targeted in-class interventions offer an opportunity for evaluating professional development under the Instructional Rounds method (City, Elmore, Fiaman, & Tietel, 2009).

Analysis of student work will form the basis of evaluating the effectiveness or the “transfer” of Professional Development impact to the classroom and students. Each PLC will examine multiple sources of data (common formative assessments, peer observations, and structured analysis of student work) to examine how the implementation of common research-based instructional strategies has impacted student achievement. Using protocols (ATLAS) that dissect student work into its component parts, and with prompts to stimulate teacher reflection, student work analysis will show definitively the extent to which classroom teaching and learning are changing. This data will direct Professional

Development priorities.

In addition, Gage Middle School will utilize a Professional Portfolio to be maintained by each staff member and Administrator *with* a PD Journal inside to document, process, and facilitate the transfer of Professional Development strategies taught/used in the classroom. This Journal will be used to annotate successes and struggles, providing a holistic evaluation of the impact of Professional Development and the assimilation of instructional strategies by staff. Teachers may share their PD Journals within their PLC, providing further evidence of how the implementation of instructional strategies is benefiting specific student subgroups, e.g., English Learners, Students with Disabilities and FEP students. The PD Journal will form the basis for promoting personal reflection, documenting and assessing each teacher's professional growth during the school year, and may be used at the teacher's discretion in his/her Professional Portfolio for the evaluation process.

### **B-3. Assessment and School-wide Data**

#### ***A. Student Assessment Plan:***

Gage teachers believe that the acquisition of knowledge and mastery of skills cannot be measured accurately and completely by any single assessment instrument. Gage will implement a holistic assessment plan that includes formative and summative assessments to evaluate progress toward mastery of the California content standards, attainment of essential skills as defined by each Academy, and the students' development of the character dispositions outlined in the mission and vision statements.

Gage Middle School's Assessment Plan is designed to create systems for evaluating students' knowledge and skills in order to diagnose learning gaps and better serve our students by means of programming, intervention, and acceleration. Data from student assessments will also be used to inform instruction and plan professional development for teachers. Assessment data will be the guiding mechanism in every PLC for developing and providing the best first instruction. The pacing of assessments, including diagnostics, common formative assessments, and periodic assessments, will be developed by the PLC to support the continuous cycle of improvement and instructional needs of students (LIS Waiver #4, TA page 2). This will ensure that the work of the PLC revolves around current and reliable indicators of student progress towards mastery of the content.

Gage Middle School's Assessment Plan calls for a two-prong approach to student assessment. Students will be assessed by traditional methods consisting of summative and formative assessments, as noted in our assessment plan chart (below), and by vertically aligned student portfolios.

The student portfolios will have three major components: cross-curricular assignments; evidence of mastery of essential skills as defined by each Academy; and, evidence of the development of the character dispositions outlined in the mission and vision (academic excellence, life-long learning, community leadership and socially responsible citizenship). Portfolios will be tiered. Student work will build upon the work from the previous year. The portfolios will be implemented through the Academies. Eighth grade students will need to publicly present their portfolio to a panel of parents, teachers, and students, and the student must earn a passing grade to be eligible to participate in the Culmination Ceremony. Most assignments or pieces of evidence in the portfolio will require a cover sheet from the student that explains the Selection, Connection, Reflection, and Evaluation of the work. The portfolios will not be a warehouse of student work, but rather an ongoing assessment tool that includes assignments carefully selected to chart the academic and personal growth of each individual student.

**Student Assessment Plan\***

Assessment	Type	Grade Level	Timing	Rationale
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Diagnostic	Diagnostic	6 <sup>th</sup>	Prior to 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Used for screening, program placement, and for identifying for intervention and or acceleration.
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Diagnostic	Diagnostic	8 <sup>th</sup>	End of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	Evaluating the effectiveness of instruction and mastery of California Math Standards.
Common Formative Assessment (English Language Arts)	Formative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	4 times per year	Monitoring learning and informing instruction, teacher collaboration and professional development.
Student Portfolios (Administered through the Academies and aligned to the Instructional Specialty of each Academy)	Formative/ Summative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Ongoing. Portfolios	Evaluating mastery of Standards and essential skills through work samples. Reinforce the principles of Project Based Learning.
Common Formative Assessment (Mathematics)	Formative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	9 times per year	Monitoring learning and informing instruction, teacher collaboration and professional development.
Periodic Assessments/ All content areas	Formative/ Summative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Ongoing/ varies by discipline	Monitoring learning, evaluating mastery of unit of study, informing instruction, teacher collaboration and professional development.
Accelerated Reader	Diagnostic	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Ongoing	Identifying reading level. Evaluating growth in reading ability.
California Standards Test	Summative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Annually	Evaluating mastery of State Standards. Used for program placement in intervention and/or acceleration courses.
CELDT	Diagnostic/ Summative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Annually /Ongoing for students who meet the	Ascertaining and measuring progress English Language Development in the Listening, Speaking,

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			requirements of the HLS and are enrolling in school in California for the first time.	Reading and Writing domains.
End of Course Algebra Assessment	Summative	7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> Students enrolled in Algebra	Annually	Formal summative assessment that evaluates mastery of the Algebra standards. Passing test secures high school credits in Algebra.
Course Grades	Formative/ Summative	6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Ongoing (8 grading periods per year)	Monitoring learning and progress toward mastery of California Content Standards.

\* The Assessment Plan will not be limited to the assessment instruments listed above.

### ***B. Graduation Requirements:***

Pursuant LAUSD BUL-3815.0, Gage Middle School will require that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students fulfill the following requirements to be eligible to participate in the Culmination Activity.

- A. Passing all courses in grades six through eight.
- B. Having no more than two Us in Cooperation during the eighth grade year (the two Us must come from different teachers when the student's schedule reflects multiple teachers)
- C. Having no more than two Us in Work Habits for the eighth grade year (the two Us must come from different teachers)
- D. Having an attendance rate of 95% for grades six through eight excluding a serious, chronic, or major illness
- E. Abiding by school and District policies with respect to student conduct and school property.

In addition to the aforementioned requirements for participating in the Culmination ceremony, Gage Middle School students must also earn a passing grade in their 8<sup>th</sup> grade portfolio, as evaluated by a panel of parents, teachers and students.

### ***C. Data Collection and Monitoring:***

The RTII model calls for early identification of students with specific learning needs. As such, data from the California Standards Test (CST), the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), the Diagnostic Placement Inventory, the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Diagnostic Test, and core academic grades will be analyzed to ensure proper placement of incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Additionally, CST and CELDT data will be used to screen and program 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> students for Tier I, Tier II and Tier III interventions in Math, English Language Arts or both, pursuant to LAUSD mandates.

Student performance data will be accessible to the entire Gage community, including students and parents. My Data and Secondary Student Information System (SSIS) offer the tools for analyzing data by cohorts or individuals, by test or even by specific tested academic standards. Disaggregated student data is key for student goal setting, lesson design and implementation, class programming,



professional development, defining instructional priorities, setting budgetary priorities, and for measuring the effectiveness of classroom instruction.

Assessment data from CST, CELDT and Common Formative Assessments developed by teachers in their PLCs will be used to guide instruction. PLCs will engage in an iterative process of data analysis. PLCs will evaluate performance strands, identify weaknesses, strengths and trends in student performance, and develop curricular maps and lessons to address those weaknesses. Lesson plans will include primary instruction interventions to meet students' learning needs.

Teacher observations will yield qualitative data about the implementation and effectiveness of instruction. Teachers will observe fellow PLC member teachers as they teach the common lessons. Observation data will be used to guide professional development, instructional decisions, and provide teachers an opportunity to reflect on their own practice.

**Category Two: School Culture, Climate, and Infrastructure**

***A. Description of School Culture:***

Students need a welcoming, safe, clean, stimulating and nurturing environment to learn. Students need to feel supported, they need to feel respected and they need to feel a sense of belonging if we expect them to develop a sense of academic efficacy and to become self-directed learners who take ownership of their own learning. A school's culture and climate contribute significantly to the academic success of students.

Gage Middle School is determined to create a climate and culture that provides every student the optimal conditions for learning. We will direct our efforts to improve the school culture and climate by focusing on high expectations for every child, student motivation, personalization, school safety and cleanliness, recognition of student success and by drawing from our rich institutional history to cast a new model of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Gage student.

**A Culture of High Expectations and Achievement**

One of the defining principles of PLCs is a common understanding that schools are learning communities that exist to ensure high levels of achievement for all students (Dufour, & Marzano, 2010). We believe that to perform at the highest levels we must build relationships with students and parents that function solely to support student learning and success. We embrace learning as a value. Collectively, faculty, students and parents form a community of learners committed to the success of every student. Our work is guided by one fundamental question: "How are we ensuring the success of each student?"

**Students Motivated to Succeed**

To improve student motivation one must build students' academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1996). Self-efficacy is a person's level of confidence in their ability to successfully complete a task. Low self-efficacy correlates with low motivation and conversely correlates with high frustration, which leads to task abandonment. Bandura (1996) presents four ways for building self-efficacy and therefore improving student motivation. When performing an academic task, the students' level of efficacy is regulated by the student's history of success or failure with that task, access to models, access to verbal persuasion, guidance and support, and by what a student is thinking and feeling while performing the task (Bandura, 1994; Hampton & Mason, 2002; Margolis & McCabe, 2006).

Gage will employ measures to strengthen student motivation that align with Bandura's principles. In the classroom, Project Based Learning, supported by methodologies (SDAIE, AVID/WICR) which scaffold and support content acquisition and language development, will help build the students' sense of success, will provide ample models for learning, and will help create a culture of collaboration where students feel supported and encouraged in their learning. Beyond providing good first instruction, we are providing systemic supports, by way of RTII, to identify and support students who are struggling academically, behaviorally or with attendance.

Student motivation will also be supported school wide. Academics will recognize the accomplishments of their students. Students who are struggling with behavior and attendance issues will be identified. Working in concert with Counselors and the Coordination of Services Team (COST) and supported by the RTII process, Academy teachers will develop actions plans to intervene and follow up on the needs of struggling students.

Part of our mission is to help students develop into efficacious, grounded and civic-minded leaders. We can only do this by providing the learning opportunities that will help students unearth that in

themselves. To motivate students we must remove the factors that subtract their desire to succeed or learn (Valenzuela, 1999). The work of counselors and support personnel is crucial in this process. They work directly with individual students to help them manage their challenges and teach them skills necessary for coping with problems, introduce the students and their families to community resources, and train the faculty and staff on how to better meet the social/emotional needs of students within the school setting.

Communication and collaboration with families is a critical element in motivating students, as family is always the first line of support for students. It is incumbent upon our school to assist families in creating those support networks in the home. We will actively recruit the families of underperforming students to attend parent workshops on topics that include, but are not limited to, instructional support in the home, managing study time in the home, improving parent-student relationships, planning for college admissions and financial aid, and understanding how to meet A-G requirements of high school.

### **Personalization**

Personalization is the guiding principle for each Academy. Personalization in the Academies begins with students choosing their Academy based on their personal interest. Students will choose one of three Academies: the Visual and Performing Arts and Technology Academy, the Health and Human Services Academy, or the Literacy, Language and Leadership Academy. Gage also has a successful existing Math, Science and Technology Magnet School on site.

Each Academy will be unique and will be organized around a framework designed to maximize student personalization as well as interest. The framework for each includes Academy Goals, Academy Instructional Specialties, a personalized identity within a small learning community, Specialized Electives, and Project Based Assessment with Student Portfolios.

### **Safety**

Student safety is paramount at Gage Middle School. While physical safety takes priority, providing an emotionally safe environment where students feel respected, valued, included, and nurtured is critical for academic success.

Student safety at Gage Middle School has improved dramatically over the last five years. Our data shows that the number of fights on campus has decreased, the number of disciplinary suspensions has decreased, gang activity is almost non-existent, and reports of bullying are in decline.

The improvements in school safety are due in large part to measures we have implemented to reinforce positive behaviors rather than focusing on punishing negative behaviors. For five years we have implemented "Character Counts", which focuses on character education through the teaching of the Six Pillars of Character: Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Respect, Honesty, Caring, Fairness and Citizenship. We have anti-bullying assemblies twice each year to clarify for students what constitutes bullying and to empower students who are being bullied to speak up and seek help. We promote positive behaviors and good attendance with Gage Dollars, which are awarded to students who exhibit positive character traits and good attendance. We established partnerships with the Fire Department to mentor our students and provide social-emotional support. We increased supervision personnel by bringing in parent volunteers to assist during the nutrition and lunch breaks, and we have used our discretionary monies to fund supervision aides.

Our efforts constitute a pro-active approach to building a safe environment and a nurturing school community that supports student success and well-being.

### **Orientation**

Our Orientation Program will be the first opportunity for our incoming students to get to know Gage. The purpose of the Orientation Program is to induct students into Gage's culture, to equip them with vital information and skills to ease their transition from elementary to middle school, and, most importantly, to build their sense of belonging to and ownership of their school community, essential elements for academic success (Faircloth, & Hamm, 2005). Orientation for 6<sup>th</sup> graders takes place during the summer break, prior to the school year. During the Orientation Program, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will be grouped by Homerooms. Their corresponding Homeroom teacher will facilitate a day's worth of workshops that focus on the following topics: the school mission and vision, academic and behavioral expectations, the Academies, study skills, goal setting, team building, collaboration, PE and school supplies, getting to know the campus, the teachers, the staff, and the resources available to students at the school.

The Orientation Program will vary for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. A full day program will also be provided to these grades, but along with aforementioned topics, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be led by their Homeroom teachers through a process of appraising their academic performance from the previous school year. Students will evaluate their CST performance data, CELDT scores for English Learners, and will write reflections based on their portfolio requirements and set academic goals for the upcoming school year. The activities in the Orientation Program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are designed to refocus and prepare them for a new school year, but they also support Gage's mission of creating life-long learners while preparing them for a successful new school year.

### **Parent Orientation**

Parents will be asked to attend a parent orientation that will run concurrently with their child's orientation. Parents will make a commitment of ten hours per year in the service of their child. [Service hours are defined as time spent on campus]. The Parent Orientation will be the first set of service hours that will count towards their ten-hour requirement.

The Parent Orientation Program will be modeled after the Transition to Middle School Parent Program that Gage has successfully implemented for three years. The program will include workshops where parents will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for them to support their children in the academic and social rigors of middle school. Topics include the school mission and vision, expectations for all stakeholders, how to fulfill the 10 hour service requirement, and the specific expectations unique to each Academy.

### **Parent / Teacher / Student Conferences**

The expectation is that all faculty, staff, and parents will attend Back to School and Open House Night and both of these events will be led by students. Student-led conferences will allow students the opportunity to showcase their work to their parents and provide students with yet another opportunity to take ownership of their learning. Student-led conferences also provide parents with a platform for engaging and collaborating with their children in their own learning. Teachers will also be available to meet with parents by appointment during their conference period. Parents, teachers or students can arrange appointments. Counselors will meet with every parent from their caseload to build the student's Individual Culmination Plan (ICP).

Parent meetings, including advisory committee meetings, will be scheduled in both the morning and evening to accommodate parent schedules. Flyers and bulletins will be available and accessible to parents and anyone who wants to know about the school and our events. Translation services will be available whenever possible. Information will continue to be accessible through the Gage website. Parents will be notified in a timely manner by mail, student flyer, and/or phone calls of all special events.

### **Academy Events**

Each Academy will host events that support and showcase their instructional specialty. Events may include awards ceremonies, student work showcases, academic fairs, portfolio presentations, field trips, recruitment fairs, or school festivals.

### **Clubs / Organizations / Extracurricular Activities**

Student clubs, organizations and extracurricular activities will reflect the interests of the student body but will also support our overarching mission, vision and the specialties of each Academy. Clubs and organizations will be organized by Academies, but membership in clubs and organizations will not be exclusive to any one particular Academy. Faculty members will serve as sponsors for clubs, organizations and extracurricular activities. Each Academy will have access to a "club house" where students can meet during lunch, or before or after school to conduct business.

### **School Festivals / Traditions / Rituals**

Gage Middle School hosts an Annual Spring Music and Arts Festival which invites the larger Huntington Park community and neighborhood school programs, businesses, and agencies to participate. At the day long festival, we celebrate our community, our rich heritages, the Arts (student and professional), dance, music, drama, photography, ceramics, reading programs, healthy lifestyles, food, community services, and, most importantly, families. We are very proud of this yearly event and are grateful to all who participate and enjoy the Festival.

We also have a tradition of sending a group of students to Washington D.C. every year during spring break to experience first-hand American History, bringing to life their studies and developing their understanding of the shaping of the United States. Teachers, students, and parents personally fundraise all monies for this trip and chaperone the students.

Gage has a traditional Canned Food Drive for needy families in Huntington Park area. This event is held in November/December and brings in thousands of canned foods for those in need. Students compete to bring in the most cans and are rewarded with Free Dress passes.

We have numerous Interdisciplinary Showcases throughout the school year including an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Colonial Day event with student dressed in the style of the Colonial era, reading poetry, acting in plays, doing Colonial dance, arts, and music of the era. A Pioneer Day is also held annually where students re-enact the trials of the pioneers crossing the Plains. Parents are welcome to come and watch the assemblies with various interdisciplinary activities taking place for different grade levels.

Another tradition at Gage Middle School is the College and Career Fair, held with visiting guest speakers, artists, community members, dignitaries, businesspeople, alumni, social servants, and representatives from local agencies. Students dress as professionals on this day and, from the presentations and student questions, gain insight and knowledge on how to plan and set goals for their own future careers.

There are numerous Visual Art Shows and Musical Performances each year at Gage. Our school Orchestra participates in the Annual Springtime Disney Competition as well as the LAUSD Middle School Honor Band and LAUSD Tournament of Roses Parade Honor Band.

Every Thanksgiving our school has a morale-building, competitive flag football game called the Maroon and Gold Game where the school is divided into a Maroon contingency and a Gold contingency by Homerooms. Students are allowed to join the appropriate teams and attend practice, then play in a semi-regulation game beginning first with the girls' game and then following with the

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boys' contest. The entire school comes out to watch the games for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periods with cheerleaders adding to the fun!

We look forward to building new traditions from the Academies who will collaboratively develop their own events based on the themes of each Academy and their individual student needs. This will further build school pride and contribute positively to school spirit.

Parents, students and teachers will also participate in our first ever school-wide Orientation Day, as we move to a traditional school calendar. This will become a new tradition and will take place before classes begin in August so that our ‘One Team’ can be introduced. This is also the day that individual student ID pictures can be taken, and student schedules can be given out and corrected, if needed. Administrators, counselors, and staff will be introduced to all, Academies presented, teachers met, and campus tours will be given to prepare for the opening day of a new school year for all stakeholders.

### ***i. Management of Multiple Schools:***

Gage Middle School is taking the best elements of its current student culture and building upon it for the future. Evidence of a revitalized culture focused on learning is already emerging at Gage Middle School. Students and teachers are proud of our current gains in API, school spirit and identity is more positive, our college-going culture is stronger than ever, supported by our weekly college-wear day, college fairs, and college field trips, and all of our 6<sup>th</sup> graders have taken their “Save Me a Spot in College” oath. Collaboration has become the norm for how we work as teaching professionals, sharing expertise and critically evaluating our instructional practices and our students’ work. Parent involvement and parent approval is increasing. Our campus is cleaner now, with new plants and flowers being planted and maintained by volunteer students and staff. An optimistic spirit of renewal and growth permeates the school grounds as we continue to work on the Six Pillars of Success to transform the culture of our school community.

### ***A. Student Support and Success:***

Student success will not be measured by any single metric. A successful student at Gage Middle School will demonstrate proficiency in content knowledge and skills as assessed by the California Standards Test, by earning passing grades in all classes, and by demonstrating mastery of essential skills as defined by their Academy. But a successful student at Gage Middle School will also be a self-regulated, confident, and efficacious learner advocating for her or his success. Student success also means preparing our students for the rigors of high school, specifically the A-G course sequence, for the challenge of post-secondary education, and, in keeping with our mission statement, preparing students who are socially responsible and pro-active community leaders.

Student success depends on our rigorous curriculum grounded on Project Based Learning as the principal pedagogical framework and on SDAIE and AVID/WICR as the primary instructional methodologies. RTII provides the systematic framework for identifying students who are not mastering the academic standards. The PLCs will use student performance data to identify areas needing improvement. Instruction will be designed to address identified needs, offering struggling students intervention during first instruction. Students who score Far Below Basic or Below Basic in English Language Arts or Mathematics will be scheduled into an appropriate intervention class. With a seven period schedule, students with severe learning or skill gaps can potentially have two English and two Math classes.



***C. Social and Emotional Needs:***

Gage Middle School support and mental services range from support services provided by a school counselor to a comprehensive, integrated program of prevention, identification, and treatment within a school. The ultimate goal for the school is to ensure that students get the proper support from the entire school community. When a student feels support from teachers, counselors, and other professionals, then the student is more likely to respond positively both socially and academically.

Gage offers various types of services and interventions. When a school has a culture of providing a positive, friendly, and open social environment, it ensures that each student has access to community and family supports that are associated with healthy emotional development. This approach is based on a philosophy that the best ways to have students internalize positive social and emotional behaviors are to have them learn in settings where social and emotional skills are directly taught, and where teachers routinely model and explicitly demonstrate positive behavior themselves.

If behavioral, emotional, family, or peer problems interfere with a students' ability to learn, he or she will not be able to succeed academically. For this reason, emotional support services are a critical part of an effective school.

Teachers will be the first line of defense for identifying students in need of social support or emotional services. The Gage community will be trained to recognize symptoms of mental health issues and to respond appropriately to these symptoms if they are seen in students. The process for referring a student to a mental health professional will be established in a written protocol and regularly evaluated for effectiveness. Once a student is identified, counselors will be the primary filter to ensure that a student receives proper services or intervention, either through existing services in school or external services/agencies.

The Coordination of Services Team (COST) will be utilized to evaluate and follow up with students who have been referred for mental or emotional support services. COST is also a system where support staff can collaborate and determine what interventions are most appropriate for the referred student's needs. The team consists of Counselors, School Psychologists, PSA, PSW and Deans.

***D. College and Career Readiness:***

Gage Middle School recognizes that building a college-going culture is indispensable for building the educational capital that our students need to be "college prepared and career ready." (<http://lausd.net>, retrieved on June 16, 2011) The faculty and staff at Gage Middle School believes this and is committed to preparing students for a full range of post-secondary options through structural, motivational, and experiential college preparatory opportunities (McDonough, 2008).

The objectives of our college-going culture require that school leadership commits itself to building a college awareness culture, that all personnel provide a consistent message that supports the college preparatory K-12 experience, that all counselors assume the roles of college counselors, and that all stakeholders act as partners in preparing students for college. The foundation of a college-going culture will be founded on nine principles (McDonough, 2005).

1. **College Talk** - The college message will be heard loud and clear at Gage Middle School. Ongoing communication about college will be the norm so that all students can develop a college-going identity. Student success will be framed in terms of college preparedness. The entire campus will be an information hub for college preparedness. A-G requirements will be posted in every

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classroom. College options for UC, CSU, Private, and Vocational Colleges will be displayed prominently throughout campus. Every Friday will be College Day, when students and teachers will wear College T-shirts, or college related gear and when college related activities will be held.

2. **Clear Expectations** - The AVID philosophy that all students should be held to high standards and given academic and social support to rise to or exceed those expectations will be embraced throughout the school ([http://www.avid.org/abo\\_whatisavid.html](http://www.avid.org/abo_whatisavid.html)). To achieve this, Gage will develop explicit goals of college preparation that are defined and communicated clearly, consistently, and in a variety of ways by families and all school personnel. Academies will employ student portfolios that include a section titled, My Path to College, (specific content to be determined), which will outline the students' educational goals and what they must do to reach them.

3. **Information and Resources** - The students at Gage have access to up-to-date, comprehensive college information. Homeroom teachers facilitate college-related projects that require students to acquire knowledge about college admission requirements, financial aid, scholarships, and high school success.

4. **Comprehensive Counseling Model** - All counselors are acting as college counselors and all student interactions with counselors are college-advising opportunities. Counselors will conduct Individualized Culmination Planning meetings with all students to review culmination requirements, to review the A-G requirements, and to help students develop college and career goals.

5. **Testing and Curriculum** - Students will be informed about necessary tests for high school graduation and college admissions including the CAHSEE, the PSAT, SAT, Explore and ACT. All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will take the Explore Test, a precursor to the ACT. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will also take the Algebra Exit exam to guarantee high school credits in mathematics, a step closer to meeting the A-G requirements. AVID/WICR strategies will be implemented school-wide and across all content areas to ensure that students are developing the skills essential for success in high school, college, and beyond.

6. **Faculty Involvement** - All stakeholders are partners in developing a college culture at Gage Middle School. The faculty are active, informed partners with counselors, students, and families. The faculty and staff will spearhead the efforts to involve and empower parents as advocates of student success. Faculty will be active participants in school-wide Career and College Fairs.

7. **Family Involvement** - Family members will have opportunities to gain college knowledge and understand their role in supporting their child through the educational process. Gage will offer parents workshops that will illuminate the factors and mechanisms in the K-16 educational path that might impede success and will work with parents to identify those factors for their children and present strategies for overcoming them. Parents will be partners in organizing and active participants in conducting school-wide Career and College Fairs.

8. **College Partnerships** - Creating active links between Gage Middle School and local colleges and universities can lead to field trips, college fairs and academic enrichment programs. Gage will try to reestablish its partnership with GEAR Up. GEAR Up is an amazing resource to build parent awareness on what it takes to make it to college and provides parents with tangible skills for helping their children navigate the college application process and the financial aid process. GEAR Up also awards scholarships to middle school students that are redeemed when the student enrolls in college.

9. **Articulation** - Gage will facilitate articulation between feeder schools and receiving high schools to facilitate a seamless transition for students and ensure that students have access to a rigorous and robust high school curriculum, specifically the A-G requirements.

### *E. School Calendar/Schedule:*

The school calendar and schedule were designed to take into account our students' needs. The first major change in the schedule is that Gage Middle School will transition from a year-round, Three Track Concept 6 calendar to a traditional school calendar. The second major change comes with a change in the size of our student population. Gage is projected to have a population of roughly 2,000 students, a drop of about 800 students. The third major change is a restructuring of our daily school

schedule. We believe the bell schedule that we have designed will allow for greater opportunities for intervention, enrichment, personalization, student choice and maximization of our instructional minutes in content courses.

During our first year of implementation, Gage will have a seven-period daily schedule, and two days out of the week we will add an Academy Period. The Academy Period is an 8<sup>th</sup> period, shorter in duration, and serves as a forum for Academies to forward their particular realizations of our mission and vision.

The daily schedule supports our school plan in several ways. It provides enough periods to offer opportunities for structured and differentiated interventions as well as acceleration throughout the school day. Students who need intervention in both ELA and Math can potentially have two periods in each discipline. Students who do not need intervention can have greater choice and opportunity for enrichment and accelerated electives, including specialized electives from each Academy. Our schedule also includes a 6-minute passing period to accommodate our students’ transition from one period to the next, since we have such a large campus and need a seamless start to the instructional period (Attachment 2 waiver).

The Academy Period offers each Academy a forum to conduct Academy business. Our leading Pillar for Success is our Academies. Academies will be the avenues for personalization, promotion of the school culture, enrichment, specialization, and parental engagement and ongoing involvement. The Academy Period is fundamental to our success and our students’ growth.

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## Henry T. Gage Middle School Bell Schedule (2012-2013)

### Monday and Friday

Passing	Period	Start		End	Duration
		7:23 AM	-	7:30 AM	7
	1	7:30 AM	-	8:23 AM	53
6	2	8:29 AM	-	9:18 AM	49
6	3	9:24 AM	-	10:13 AM	49
0	NUT	10:13 AM	-	10:31 AM	18
6	4	10:37 AM	-	11:26 AM	49
6	5	11:32 AM	-	12:21 PM	49
0	lunch	12:21 PM	-	12:56 PM	35
6	6	1:02 PM	-	1:51 PM	49
6	7	1:57 PM	-	2:46 PM	49

**49** minutes for each period

Extra 4 minutes added to period 1 to read bulletin and/or to distribute school materials

377 instructional minutes needed on a regular day

### Tuesday: Professional Development Day

Passing	Period	Start		End	Duration
		7:23 AM	-	7:30 AM	7
	1	7:30 AM	-	8:11 AM	41
6	2	8:17 AM	-	8:53 AM	36
6	3	8:59 AM	-	9:35 AM	36
0	NUT	9:35 AM	-	9:54 AM	19
6	4	10:00 AM	-	10:36 AM	36
6	5	10:42 AM	-	11:18 AM	36
	lunch	11:18 AM	-	11:53 AM	35
6	6	11:59 AM	-	12:35 PM	36
6	7	12:41 PM	-	1:17 PM	36

**36** minutes for each period

Extra 5 minutes added to period 1 to read bulletin and/or to distribute school materials

287 instructional minutes needed on a Professional Development day

### Wednesday and Thursday: Academy Period Added

Passing	Period	Start		End	Duration
		7:22 AM	-	7:30 AM	7
	1	7:30 AM	-	8:17 AM	47
6	2	8:23 AM	-	9:08 AM	45
6	3	9:14 AM	-	9:59 AM	45
0	NUT	9:59 AM	-	10:17 AM	18
6	4	10:23 AM	-	11:08 AM	45
6	5	11:14 AM	-	11:59 AM	45
0	lunch	11:59 AM	-	12:34 PM	35
6	6	12:40 PM	-	1:25 PM	45
6	7	1:31 PM	-	2:16 PM	45
6	Advisory	2:22 PM	-	2:46 PM	24

**45** Minutes for each period

Extra 2 minutes added to period 1 to read bulletin and/or to distribute school materials

377 instructional minutes needed on a regular day

***F. Policies:***

**Retention**

Pursuant to LAUSD policies on grade level retention, retention is defined as a placement option when there is reasonable expectation that the additional experience in a particular grade level will be in the best interests of the pupil. Any recommendation for retention of a pupil is based on a continuous and thorough analysis of the pupil's personal and educational development and the possible benefits to the pupil which might be derived from such retention. This policy is implemented on an individual basis by the local school administrative and teaching staffs in close consultation with the pupil's parents.

A. Roles/Responsibilities for Promotion/Retention of Pupils Promotion or retention of pupils is based on a pupil's reasonable progress in meeting District standards of achievement.

1. The responsibility for the individual pupils promotion to the next grade level is a shared effort among administrator, teacher, counselor/supportive staff, and parent. However, no decision to retain an elementary school student may be made without the prior written approval or consent of the students parent or legal guardian.

2. In order to establish a definitive profile of the progress of the pupil, certain records and appropriate documentation must be maintained.

- a. Teacher records must substantiate any recommendation.
- b. School organization data must substantiate alternatives or repeated opportunities for instruction.
- c. Cumulative files and other documentation indicate such items as performance test scores, progress, effort and attendance.
- d. Parent conferences must be held.

3. The teacher is responsible for assigning the final mark and for recommending promotion or retention of the individual pupil based upon an assessment of reasonable progress.

4. Parent conferences shall be held as soon as it becomes evident that a pupil is not achieving or maintaining reasonable progress.

**Retention in Middle School**

The retention policy at the middle school level is developed at each school within the limits established by Board policy. Failure to complete one or more of the requirements below may result in a pupils not being promoted.

a. Pupil success in the required and elective course content during any semester in Grades 6-8 or its equivalent as measured by teacher evaluation.

b. Pupil progress in emotional, physical, and intellectual growth; exploration experiences; assimilation and application of skills; and socialization.

c. Satisfactory completion of a course of study by achieving passing marks in courses representing at least 50 semester credits in the last two semesters. The completion of at least four semesters of attendance in a middle school or its equivalent.

d. Success with District standards.

2. The principal of the middle school may advance a failing pupil because of over age.

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3. In order to maintain standards, it is a generally accepted practice to demote the pupil who has a fixed number of failures. This may be two in a semester, three in a semester, two academic subject failures, or an accumulation of a given number of failures. The pupil who is required to repeat classes may be retained by:

- a. Placement in a homeroom one grade level lower than his/her original homeroom.
- b. Placement in an ungraded, an adjustment, or a non-privilege homeroom.

### **Graduation Requirements/ Culmination Requirements**

Pursuant to LAUSD BUL-3815.0, Gage Middle School will require that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students fulfill the following requirements to be eligible to participate in the Culmination Activity.

- A. Passing all courses in grades six through eight.
- B. Having no more than two Us in Cooperation during the eighth grade year (the two Us must come from different teachers when the student's schedule reflects multiple teachers)
- C. Having no more than two Us in Work Habits for the eighth grade year the (two Us must come from different teachers)
- D. Having an attendance rate of 95% or better for grades six through eight excluding a serious, chronic, or major illness
- E. Abiding by school and District policies with respect to student conduct and school property

In addition to the aforementioned requirements for participating in the Culmination Ceremony, Gage Middle School students must also earn a passing grade in their 8<sup>th</sup> grade portfolio, as evaluated by a panel of parents, teachers and students, to be eligible to participate in the Culmination ceremony.

### **Student Behavior Policies**

***See Attachment titled: Gage Middle School-Teacher and Community Collaborative-Retention Policies, Graduation Policies and Student Behavior Policies***

### ***B-5 Parent and Community Engagement***

#### ***A. Background:***

Gage Middle School is located in the city of Huntington Park, seven miles southwest of downtown Los Angeles. Huntington Park is densely populated with over 60,000 residents living within a three square mile area. According to the most recent available Census data, Huntington Park has a high proportion of foreign-born residents, 56% compared to California's average of 26%. Gage's population mirrors the ethnic composition of the community it serves. Currently, 99% of students at Gage MS are Hispanic, with only a fraction of one percent being African American, Asian, Caucasian, or American Indian. As a result, Gage Middle School is considered by the District to be a PHBAO (Primarily Hispanic, Black, Asian, or Other) school.

Huntington Park is a low-income community. The median household income in Huntington Park is \$23,000 less than the median household income in California. It is estimated that over 15,000 residents in the city live below the poverty line. The unemployment rate in the city is roughly 20% while the state's unemployment rate is roughly a high 11%. Over 85% of our students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program under Title I. The high percentage of eligible students for free and reduced lunch qualifies Gage Middle School as a School-wide Title I School.



According to our language survey data, 90% of our students list Spanish as their first language. This means that when our students entered our feeder school pattern as early as Kindergarten, 90% of them were assessed for English Language Proficiency. Our current student population consists of English Only Students (10%), Initial Fluent English Proficient Students (10%), Reclassified Fluent English Proficient Students (59%) and English Language Learners (21%).

### **Strengths of the Community**

Our community is a fountain of resources for Gage Middle School. Gage is located adjacent to a public library, the police department, a courthouse, a police museum, the Salvation Army, the Huntington Park Community Center and only two blocks distant to elementary schools from which we receive our students and from the high school to where we send our students. Our close proximity to these sites provides opportunities for learning. A major component in each of our Academies is the goal of providing students with authentic, meaningful, and service-oriented learning activities. Forming working partnerships with these schools and civic organizations will be instrumental in blending Gage and the surrounding community into one.

Huntington Park has a strong business community and we’ve been successful in working with the Huntington Park Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce has sponsored Gage’s Festival of Music and Arts for four years. The Chamber of Commerce and local businesses have also contributed to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington D.C. Over the last seven years, over 200 of our students have traveled to the Washington D.C. with the support of our community.

Perhaps the most formidable strength in our community is the community itself. Huntington Park is a port of entry for many immigrant families. The community is very accommodating to incoming immigrants, largely from Mexico and other parts of Latin America, easing the transition from their countries of origin to Huntington Park. Many service organizations provide support to families, including the Huntington Park Community Center, the public library, the Northeast Community Clinic, mental health organizations, and wellness centers.

Huntington Park is a community of close-knit families who value education and a strong work ethic. Gage recognizes hundreds of parent volunteers every year. Our Parent Center has been recognized for its excellent work of creating an inviting environment for parents to get involved with the school. We have volunteers who help with supervision, events and meetings, recognize the success of students, recognize the work of teachers, work in classrooms, and assist in offices. The most powerful aspect of volunteering is that it is those parent volunteers who become the parent leaders at our school. To build on this, at the behest of our parents, Gage Middle School will ask that every parent provide ten hours of on-campus service to support their child's learning.

### **Community Critical Needs**

The Huntington Park Community is 98% Hispanic and has crucial needs that we must address. There are three distinct and differing Hispanic populations in this town: the newly arriving immigrant population, the transient immigrant population, and the second or third generations of Hispanics, a population that has lived here for 20-50 years. These three unique populations present challenges for the community as well as distinct expectations.

We recognize that this community is a port of entry for many newly arriving immigrant families who have to adapt to a radically new culture, language, environment, and lifestyle very quickly. These families come here for a better life, but do not always know how to make this happen. They consciously make a parenting decision that changes their children's lives forever, as well as their own, and they do not fully realize the ramifications of these decisions. The reasons to immigrate to this country vary, but all want to have their families taken out of economic hardship or poverty. Yet, many

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find themselves in this situation all over again within a new country and are quite simply overwhelmed by it. These families often move frequently and often return to their home countries several times a year disrupting student learning, creating gaps in their children's educations, and often losing basic literacy skills in two languages.

On the other hand, students of the Hispanic families who have acculturated in the greater society, experience a sense of disregard in the school culture due to the fact that both school administrations and student-driven subcultures tend to divide students by gender, race, and socio-economics status (Valenzuela, 1999, 2002). Opportunities, resources, and services that would enhance their learning and increase academic achievement are missed or neglected. Parental expectations for students differ with their immigrant status and cultural norms as well. It appears that this devaluation of culture, language, religion, and ideals causes an intergenerational conflict that is exacerbated by juvenile rebellion and undermines respect in the parent-child relationship (Valenzuela, 1999, 2002). Parents are working as hard as they can and find it difficult to understand their child's schoolwork, and tragically become disengaged in their children's education.

Another issue that many, if not all, of our students face is the demands put on them *outside* of school. These demands range from the need to work to help supplement low family incomes, to providing childcare for siblings and other relatives, to surviving the daily threats from gang violence for their personal safety on the city streets. Starting in Middle School, many of our students are not only responsible for getting themselves to school and completing their school work, but are also responsible for ensuring that younger siblings arrive and return from school safely with their homework done correctly, too. Many of our students have other family obligations as well: a family business to help with or clean, a sick relative, or religious duties to complete. Despite these great challenges, or perhaps because of them, most of our students are resilient and persevering. Given the opportunity most students are capable of achieving their dreams and reaching their goals.

Huntington Park has the three largest schools in the nation within a one-mile radius. Miles Elementary, Gage Middle School, and Huntington Park High School are all overcrowded and will remain overpopulated even after new schools open and offer some relief. This community also lacks well paying jobs which could offer our families and students a pathway out of poverty, specifically in the areas of Technology and Media, the Health professions, the Arts, Science, and in the fields of Mathematics. The community also lacks significant resources available in other wealthier areas of Los Angeles. There are no bookstores, theater complexes, cultural centers, art galleries or artists' studios here. These circumstances are why we designed our Academies and Magnet schools with these themes in mind. The community, students, and families need these advantages and skills. At Gage Middle School, we can become the foundation for community enrichment and change.

We have parents who want to be involved in school activities, but do not know how, and are often apprehensive about language or cultural barriers. However, we have an established Parent Center to educate, train, and actively involve our parents at their child's school. Parenting classes and workshop trainings are offered to parents dealing with issues of parenting, student behaviors and educational choices/options. They can belong to a decision making council, such as CEAC, ELAC, SSC, or SDMC, chaperone on field trips, be a guest speaker, volunteer to supervise on campus, or help teachers in their classrooms. All Gage parents will now have a ten hour service commitment to Gage which will help us to help them become more engaged in the life of the school.

We recognize that safety is an important issue in our community and for our students because of the multiple gangs present in this community and nearby and the history of violence these groups have caused. However, within the community and on our Gage campus, we have a strong police presence. Huntington Park has an active and strong Neighborhood Watch Program that patrols, monitors, and

guards the streets, as well. Another community organization that assists in Huntington Park’s critical needs is the Neighborhood Improvement Program. This organization meets monthly with community members and focuses on identifying issues that members bring up, striving to find solutions to problems such as graffiti and its removal, parking enforcement, traffic enforcement, and coordinating services and information with the police to combat gang violence and drug trafficking.

Our goals are to empower parents to become involved and stay involved in school activities and their children’s lives, to support our students and their families in as many ways as possible for their personal and individual success, and to create a better community that they will value, protect, serve, and enjoy living in.

***B. Strategies:***

There is a considerable amount of research verifying the positive benefits of parent involvement in education. All stakeholders, students, parents, teachers, and the extended school community, share the benefits of parent involvement. Gage is committed to authentically engaging parents and guardians, but we recognize that our greatest challenge in engaging parents is in reaching those parents who have not yet shown an interest in doing so.

Parent involvement has a positive effect on student academics, behaviors and social development. Parent participation has been proven to improve student achievement results in reading, writing, mathematics, and homework completion (Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008). Parent involvement has also proven to be a powerful mechanism for influencing student behaviors. When parents are involved in schools, students demonstrate a higher degree of persistence, responsibility, and positive social behaviors (Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008; Herman, & Yeh, 1983).

Parent involvement also has positive effects on social development. Parental input is essential in the social development of a child. When schools and parents work together, they can provide the proper environment for turning out productive social individuals (Dahlmeier, 2000). Parent participation can lead to students building social capital, social skills, and academic efficacy. All this adds up to students experiencing more positive feelings towards school (Becker, Nakawaga, & Corwin, 1997; Anderson, & Minke, 2007; Smith, & Wohlstetter, 2009).

Parents also benefit from their own involvement. Successful involvement can make parents feel empowered and efficacious about their influence over their child’s performance in school. Parents who are involved more readily become active participants and decision makers in developing instructional programs; consequently, they become fountains of instructional support at home (Herman, & Yeh, 1983). Involved parents often experience increased satisfaction with education in general and develop a higher regard for teacher effectiveness and student learning. Participation at the school site is also essential for building relationships and raising the level of trust between the school and home (Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008).

Parent involvement also benefits teachers. Teachers feel more effective when the parents support them. Positive teacher-parent relationships build trust and establish a common sense of purpose. Additionally, as teachers get to know the parents, they get a better sense of the student’s learning needs, and they can work together to strategize on how to address those learning needs. Parent involvement leads to a partnership between teachers and parents for the purpose of improving student learning (Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2008).

Gage Middle School will employ strategies for parental engagement that align with the Parent Teacher Association’s National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. The PTA has enumerated

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six standards that have proven effective mechanism for augmenting parental involvement at school sites. The standards are as follows:

PTAs National Standards for Parent /Family Involvement Programs
Standard I: Communicating- Communication between home and schools is regular, two way, and meaningful.
Standard II: Parenting- Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
Standard III: Student learning- Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
Standard IV: Volunteering- Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
Standard V: School Decision Making and Advocacy- Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
Standard VI: Collaborating with Community- Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

To meet these Standards, Gage Middle School is asking that parents provide ten hours annually in the service of their child's education. During the Parent Orientation, parents will be provided with a compact that outlines the requirements and list various ways of completing them. Service hours must be rendered on site. Service hours must be completed in any one of three specific categories; Academic Activities, School Governance/Finance, and School Culture. A set of sample activities for each category is listed below.

### **Examples of Activities that Constitute Parent Participation**

Academic Activities	Governance /Finance	School Culture
<b><u>In School:</u></b> parent-teacher conference  parent-administrator conference  counselor-parent conference  academic workshops for parents  new school year orientations  classroom volunteer  <b><u>At home: (Expected to be done daily but does not count towards the ten hours of service).</u></b> monitor homework and study time  establish homework or reading time  provide rich learning opportunities at home  reinforce good work habits and lessons on responsibility  address behavior problems at school	become a member advisory committees  attend budget hearings  attend advisory committee meetings  provide input on school policies: discipline, uniform, grades, professional development, school schedule, etc.  complete school surveys  participate in hiring committee  attend School Board Meetings  attend Local District parent meetings  attend coffee with the Principal	chaperone school field trips  volunteer in a school office  participate in a Booster Club  join the PTA / PTSA  organize a school event  volunteer at a sporting event  help with a fundraising activity  present on career day  participate in a school mentor program  supervise a dance  co-sponsor a school club  participate in school beautification events  supervise the lunch area

Our team recognizes that generating family engagement will be a challenge; it always has been, more so at the secondary level. We have success with parents who have a history of involvement, but the question that will drive our efforts for improving family involvement will be: "How do we engage parents who are disengaged?"

In the past, we have used conventional approaches to communicate with parents and draw them in to our campus, but we are now preparing to take a different approach, one that focuses on building individualized and personalized interactions with parents that may yield long term, meaningful involvement. This year we have worked with One LA, a civic organization that partners with schools for the purpose of building community relations. Through our work with One LA we have learned strategies for conducting effective small group meetings, identifying parent leaders, developing coalitions of parents, and supporting them as they network and build relationships across the community. Much of the development of this plan came from parent input generated during our work with One LA.

Our team will also form a Family Involvement Task Force. The task force will be comprised of all stakeholders. Its mission is to improve communication, involvement and relations between the school and the home. Their strategies will be based on personalized interactions in form of community walks, home visits, personalized phone calls, emails and invitations. We are making genuine family involvement a foundational requirement and a top priority at our school.

### ***Key Community Partnerships:***

Community partnerships are important for supporting our instructional program. Partnerships provide opportunities for learning and specialized resources that our school cannot provide. Currently we have several partnerships that support our instructional program and that next year will support the instructional specialty of each Academy.

1. We have a partnership with East Los Angeles College that provides our students accelerated Math courses during their off-track time. Next year they will continue to provide classes to our students during the summer months.
2. We have a partnership with Northrop Grumman that provides our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with fieldtrips, resources, presenters, and career advice to foster interest in the Math and Science fields.
3. Youth Services and the Woodcraft Rangers programs provide after school tutoring and enrichment activities in the visual, performing and recording arts, sports, and other areas of student interest.
4. College and Career Clubs help build a college-going culture at schools by working with staff to promote awareness and implement strategies to help students envision themselves as college-bound students.
5. We have partnered with the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) that offers cohorts of parents focused workshops to help them help their children prepare for high school and college success.
6. We have partnered with Families in Schools to build parental leadership in the areas of school governance and data driven budgetary decision-making.

We also have several partnerships that provide services and resources to our students and their families. Healthy and happy students do better in school.

1. Our campus houses the Northeast Community Clinic which offers medical consultations, vaccinations and emergency care to our students and members of the community.

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2. Our campus houses the School Mental Health Unit that provides mental health services to our students and students from our local district.
3. The San Antonio Health Clinic takes referrals regarding students’ mental health concerns.



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

**B-6. School Governance and Oversight**

***a. School Type:***

Gage Middle School will remain a comprehensive school under a Traditional governance model. The Traditional governance model is defined as:

“[Schools under a Traditional governance model] receive instructional and operational support from a local district and are operated by the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education. Services such as facilities maintenance, material procurement, and food services are provided centrally. Enrollment is by school of residence and the District employs teachers who retain union membership. Budgeting for staffing is received as a norm, based on student enrollment and administered centrally.

“[Schools under a traditional governance model] develop successful partnerships with colleges, universities, community organizations and parents. The schools may be organized in different forms such as small learning communities or academies, and offer a variety of programs such as dual-language immersion or arts integration. Traditional schools follow Federal, State, and District guidelines and are governed by School Site Councils as clearly described in the California Education Code. Traditional schools do, however, have flexibility to waive Board Rules, District policies (except those that are necessary for compliance with state and federal laws), and applicable collective bargaining agreements.” (Retrieved 12/02/2010. PSC 3.0 RFP Draft)

Using the Traditional governance model will improve Gage's ability to transition from a year-round calendar to a traditional calendar, to adjust to the concomitant decrease in school staff, to implement and program the three Academies and a Magnet structure, and to retain the support of the local and central district in the implementation of our instructional program.

***b. School Level Committees:***

Five major committees, comprised of all stakeholder groups, will serve as the governance structure at Gage Middle School. The five committees are: the School Site Council (SSC), the Shared Decision Making Council (SDMC), the English Learner Advisory Committee (ELC), the Compensatory Education Advisory Committee (CEAC) and the Hiring Committee (HC).

The School Site Council, the Compensatory Education Advisory Committee and the English Lerner Advisory Committee will operate under the rules of LAUSD BUL-5430.0 that outlines the definition, function, composition, procedures and rules of each committee.

The Shared Decision Making Council is responsible for oversight and governance of the school calendar, school schedule, professional development and school policies.

The Gage Middle School Hiring Committee will oversee the staffing process. The Hiring Committee will be consist of parents, students, classified staff, the relevant Department Chair/Co-chair and the Academy Lead and responsible Administrator, teachers, and the Principal for the purpose of filling vacant positions at the school site. The Committee will recommend candidates and the hiring decision decisions will be made by at least two members of the committee present at the interview, one of who must be a teacher. Members cannot vote for a candidate by proxy. Members must be available and willing to participate in the hiring process as the need arises, including during vacation breaks. In the event of a committee vacancy, new members will be selected at random from a pool of volunteers. The Hiring Committee will develop further norms (bylaws) once it is formed.

## **B-7. School Leadership**

### ***a. Principal Selection and Duties***

#### **Selection**

This process will be aligned with the current LAUSD Principal Hiring process, as follows: currently, prior to applying to participate in the Principal Hiring process, candidates must first obtain a recommendation from their Principal Leader and Local Superintendent. Principal candidates are then required to undergo a process that consists of a knowledge based multiple choice test, oral interview and an "in basket" activity that requires candidates to prioritize and respond with written plans of action to various scenarios. If candidates successfully pass this process, they are then placed on an unranked Principal eligibility list. These candidates can then apply to Principal openings throughout the district.

Gage Middle School will then select potential candidates from the Principal eligibility list. These candidates will be asked to submit a resume, letter of intent and letters of recommendation. Candidates will be asked to describe and articulate their administrative experiences and expertise as it relates to Gage Middle School's mission and vision. The Gage Middle School Hiring Committee will then interview candidates through a process facilitated by the Local District that will include an oral interview, a collaborative exercise, and a professional development. The Hiring Committee will consult with the Local District on how to finalize and select candidates.

#### **Duties**

The principal shall be responsible to:

- Lead the school, working with the Leadership Team, to implement the Design Team's Plan
- Set the conditions of a collaborative, interdependent culture, where all stakeholders' voices are heard as the school takes ownership in ensuring student achievement, well being, and success.
- Set the conditions for a safe, welcoming and nurturing school culture and environment where learning is valued and operational structures are in place to support a learning culture.
- Provide leadership for and facilitate collaboration between the Leadership Team and all stakeholders to ensure the instructional plan is reviewed, monitored, and revised as needed to meet Federal, State, District, and school goals and benchmarks.
- Collaboratively work with all stakeholders, including the Leadership Team, advisory councils, and School Site Council in developing a budget that is clearly linked to students' needs and success, based on the vision, mission, and goals of the Design Team's plan.
- Ensure students are placed in the correct classes and Academies based on EL needs, IEP goals, student's interest, and ICP plan goals, and that student progress is reviewed and monitored systemically and consistently.
- Supervise and improve instruction.
- Interpret and implement school practices that uphold state laws, Design Plan reform efforts, and Board of Education rules, policies, and procedures.

### ***b. Leadership Team:***

The Gage Instructional Leadership Team is comprised of the following individuals:

Administration: being the Principal and Assistant Principals,  
Counselors  
Coordinators  
Department Chairs/Co-Chairs  
Academy Leads/Co-Leads  
SAA  
Tech Personnel Representative

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Support Personnel Representative  
UTLA Representative  
Parent Liaison  
Academy Student Representatives

The Instructional Leadership Team will meet once a month to review the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Instructional programs. Collaboratively and collectively they will set goals, agree on benchmarks, oversee viable implementation of the Standards-based curriculum, and assess progress in meeting goals and reaching benchmarks, while holding each other (as well as themselves individually) accountable for meeting and reaching these goals and achieving their benchmarks. The Instructional Leadership Team will collaborate with the faculty and staff at large, conduct faculty surveys to check for effectiveness of instruction, and analyze data and student work to monitor instruction and to inform decision-making.

### **B-8. Staff Recruitment and Evaluation**

#### ***a. Staffing Model.***

Driving our “One Team” approach is our shared mission to prepare students for success in high school, college and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Society. Upon matriculating Gage Middle School, we expect that our students will know, understand, and be able to fulfill our school vision of striving for academic excellence, life-long learning, positive community leadership, and a heightened sense of social responsibility. We believe that meeting our vision requires us to continually examine what we do for our students, how we do it for them, and if we are doing it well enough.

The students at Gage Middle School need a faculty and staff committed to their success. Our students need and deserve the very best teachers, the very best leaders, and the very best effort of these individuals. Above all, our students need a faculty and staff that believes success for each of our students is possible and who have the commitment to doing whatever it takes to make that success happen. Our strategy for student achievement rests on our Six Pillars for Success and the implementation of these Pillars requires a “One Team” approach. The membership of that “One Team,” is crucial to the effectiveness of our plan. It is critical that we have the right positions to implement our instructional plan through the Six Pillars, and that we have the right people in those positions.

The following positions are vital to the effective implementation of our school plan. In addition to an excellent core group of teachers, our plan requires the following positions to facilitate and support the implementation of our Six Pillars of Success and to meet the needs of our focus student populations: English Learners, Students with Disabilities and FEP students.

Position	Number of Positions	Candidate/s
Principal	1	Cesar Quezada
Assistant Principals	3	Juan Cortes, Karl Turner, Martha Valencia
APSCS	1	Joanne Kamiya
Counselors	4	TBD
School Nurse	1	TBD
Dean of Discipline	1	TBD
Psychiatric Social Worker	1	Hector Ibarra
Pupil Services and	1	Lenin Diaz

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Attendance Counselor		
Magnet Coordinator	1	Shakara Brembry
School Psychologist	1	Alfonso Gonzalez
Bridge Coordinator	1	Allie Harmon
Librarian	1	TBD
Instructional Coach	1	TBD
Categorical Program Coordinator (Title 1 and ELD)	1	Gregorio Verbera
Classified Office Staff	Specify classifications TBD	TBD
Parent Liaison	1	Carmen Morgana
Instructional Aides	Specify classifications TBD	TBD
Plant Manager	1	Victor Ibara
Custodial Staff	TBD	TBD
Tech/MCSA-Web	1	TBD
Campus Aides	10	TBD
AVID Coordinator	1	TBD

### ***b. Recruitment and Selection of Teachers.***

Staffing autonomy provides Gage Middle School and its Academies the opportunity to recruit and retain a stable, yet diverse, teaching staff. Teachers are expected to be masters of their content areas in order to effectively challenge students to master skills. They are expected to enhance student learning with rigorous differentiated instruction that is deliberate, meaningful, and Standards-Based in order to support varying student personalities and abilities. Each teacher will possess the required credentials and or certificates for teaching in the State of California. In turn, Gage Middle School seeks to maintain a superb level of Administrators who are hard working, proven professional experts in the various fields of Education they oversee. As such, we hold them to the same high expectations as for our teaching staff.

Initial staffing of Gage Middle School will be done “In-House”, taking into consideration, but not being limited to, the following variables: signing a Commitment to the Plan Agreement (all staff), enrollment numbers, District staffing norms, LAUSD displacements, retirements, waivers, resignations, and Collective Bargaining Agreements/Units.

Assuming that there will be teaching vacancies, we will seek the most highly qualified professional teachers available and, whenever possible, a resume-screening process will be used to identify individuals who possess the educational beliefs and skills for each prospective Academy as well as the greater Gage “One Team” Community. All applicants will be screened and selected applicants will go through an interview process.

A Hiring Committee will conduct formal interviews. The Hiring Committee will consist of parents, students, classified staff, Department Chairs/Co-chairs, Academy Leads (from the Academies with the vacancy), teachers, and Administrator from each Academy for the purpose of filling vacant positions at the school site. Hiring decisions must be made by at least two members of the committee present at the interview, one of which must be a teacher. Members cannot vote for a candidate by proxy. Members must be available and willing to participate in the hiring process as need arises, including during

vacation breaks. In the event of a committee vacancy, new members will be selected at random from a pool of volunteers. The Hiring Committee will develop further norms (bylaws) once it is formed.

Prospective teachers will share their instructional pedagogy and educational philosophy through the interview process and demonstrate knowledge of content skills and state content standards through model lessons and examples of student work (if applicable). The interview will be guided by an interview rubric with questions and LAUSD guidelines. Teacher applicants will be evaluated during the interview process on their depth of pedagogical knowledge, curriculum, instruction, their professional decorum, presentation, and overall potential for being a contributing member of our "One Team." All Staff members will sign a Commitment to the Plan Agreement signifying that they will support the mission, vision, and philosophies of their prospective Academy and the Gage Middle School plan.

Our teachers will work to support our vision for raising student achievement by providing intervention and will incorporate the instructional principles of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, interdisciplinary studies, project-based learning, AVID/SDAIE instructional methodologies, and integrated technologies. All staff is expected to take multiple roles within the school to better meet the needs of the students, such as Club Sponsor, Academy Lead, Service Project Coordinator, etc. Each teacher will develop a Professional Portfolio of their own Professional Development experiences throughout the year, including a Professional Development Journal to record, document observations, and reflect upon their own professional growth experiences throughout the school year.

All staff at each Academy must be comfortable and competent in the use of technology within the classroom, agree to implement their Academy's instructional specialty as well as the greater Gage school wide strategies, and support the needs of the students first. By requiring the fulfillment of these duties and expectations listed in the Commitment to the Plan, we can ensure a higher level of learning for students and even higher levels of professional teacher and Administrative accountability.

### ***c. Performance Reviews:***

Gage Middle School wants an evaluation process that is relevant to and has impact on student success and we will therefore follow the recommendations as outlined in the LAUSD Teacher Effectiveness Task Force, which will include multiple measures of effectiveness. We intend to use a broad based system of evaluating the performance of our teaching professionals to optimize student performance and achieve strong academic results. Therefore, multiple perspectives will be taken into consideration for our performance evaluations. A Professional Portfolio will be maintained by all staff and will contain entries and feedback based on the following parameters:

- \*Goal Setting
- \*Professional Portfolio *with* Professional Development Journal (observations/reflections)
- \*Feedback from:
  - \*Peers
  - \*Academy Leads
  - \*Administrators
  - \*Parents
  - \*Students

Student, parent, peer, and Academy Lead feedback and input will be provided to teachers and be reviewed by the teacher with an Administrator whenever possible. The purpose of feedback is to recognize the strengths of the teacher, guide improvement in instruction, and guide intervention/strategies to maximize student learning. We recognize that evaluations should serve as a developmental tool that will ultimately lead to improved lesson planning, improved teaching, and improved learning. The evaluation will provide the teacher with detailed information to create

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awareness of strengths and areas in which they can grow as an educator and as a professional expert in their content fields while continually meeting the needs of our students.

### ***B-9. Sharing a Campus***

**NOT APPLICABLE**

## **C. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT**

### ***C-1. Waivers:***

***See Attached: Waiver Identification Form, Attachment 2: Waiver Request Form***

### ***C-2. Budget Development:***

Gage Middle School aligns its budgetary priorities according to the needs of our students. All budgetary priorities support student learning and the instructional program.

### **Budget priorities from 2012-2013 to 2014-2015**

- Targeted services (academic and non) to SWDs, ELLs, Economically Disadvantaged and FEP students
- Increased learning time (interventions, summer school, Saturday school, tutoring services)
- Classroom and Student Support Personnel (CSR Teachers, Counselors, Librarian, Instructional Coaches, Coordinators, Teacher Assistants, Nurse, School Psychologist, Psychiatric Social Worker, Pupil Service and Attendance Counselor (PSA), Resource Parent Liaison, Office Staff, and Supervision Personnel).
- Professional development (Project Based Learning, AVID/WICR, SDAIE)
- Family and community engagement
- Technology, instructional materials, supplies

### **Budget Development Process**

Transparency is a key goal in the budget development process. The process is ongoing, iterative in nature, and requires all stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and the English Learner Advisory (ELAC), Compensatory Education Advisory (CEAC), and the School Site Councils (SSC), to analyze student data trends to strategize how to maximize resources.

The meetings held by the ELAC, CEAC, and SSC are all public meetings open to school personnel, district personnel, students, parents and the community at large. The budget development process involves these steps.

- The ELAC, CEAC and SSC analyze student performance data, evaluate the plan, and conduct a needs assessment (ongoing).
- The ELAC and CEAC make recommendations based on student performance data, evaluation of the plan, and the findings from the needs assessment (early spring semester).
- The SSC develops the budget based on the recommendations from the ELAC and CEAC, plus on their own analysis of student performance data, evaluation of the plan, and the findings from the needs assessment (early spring semester).
- SSC approves the budget for the following school year (April-May).



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Alignment of the budget, instructional goals, objectives, and intended student outcomes to the school’s plan will be critical to the success of the budget development process, and to the success of the plan.

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