City Charter Middle School
Executive Summary of Charter Petition

The Board of Directors for the City Charter Middle School (CCMS), respectfully submits this charter petition to the Los Angeles Unified School District for a 5 year charter to establish a grades 6-8 rigorous, college preparatory middle school program that will serve a diverse student population in Hollywood and the southern region of District 4, Northern region of District 7.

Our Mission
The mission of City Charter Middle School is to provide an exceptional education to a diverse student body. Through individual attention in a supportive and dynamic learning environment, students become creative and critical thinkers who ask questions, debate, and express ideas fearlessly and respectfully. With a focus on civic responsibility, public speaking and the written word, City school prepares students for a lifetime of meaningful work and ongoing service to a cause greater than themselves.

Our Educational Philosophy
At the foundation of our educational philosophy is a belief that learning should be an active experience that involves a community of educators, students and families. We believe that effective schools create a culture of caring and respect that supports all members in achieving their potential academically, socially, emotionally, artistically, and physically. To enable all to work together toward these ends, we believe in explicitly expressing our learning goals – derived from academic standards and school-defined behavioral and attitudinal objectives. We expect all involved with the school to support these convictions and to endorse a constructivist learning environment that nurtures, challenges, and values every member of the community.

Current research shows that a constructivist approach to teaching and learning develops deep and long-lasting conceptual understanding in students. When coupled with data driven instruction, project-based learning and multiple assessments, constructivism is even more effective. We, therefore, embrace these three practices fully. Teachers continually assess each student's progress through observation, interaction, and testing, and then design lessons in response to student needs. Similarly,

teachers will assess their own pedagogy's effectiveness in promoting student learning by examining their practices through action research projects.

Our Founders
CCMS is being founded by experienced educators and charter operators as well as former leaders from the Board of Directors of Larchmont Charter School (a K-6 project-based middle school that opened in 2005) and Valley Charter School (a K-5 project-based middle that opened in the fall of 2010). The Board members have experience in real estate, law, business, education, nonprofit organizations and charter schools in California.

Our educational founders include:
- **Dvora Inwood**, (Co-Founder) Founding Educator of Larchmont Charter School, Larchmont West Hollywood, Los Feliz Charter School of the Arts, Valley Charter Schools, et al; course creator for The New Teacher Project (designing courses to be used to credential teachers); former teacher at Los Angeles schools (Harvard-Westlake, Archer School, Aviva Center). BA, Harvard University; M.A. in Education, Stanford University.
- **Michelle Sorgen**, (Board Member) Teaching Artist at Street Poets, Inc., teaching poetry classes to at-risk youth, planning open mics for Los Angeles teens, writing curriculum and assembling an anthology of poems to be used in the Street Poets' workshops. Former high school English and poetry teacher at Los Angeles Schools (Campbell Hall, Polytechnic, and New Roads). Teacher of the "Writing and Imagination" class to gifted students through the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. Published poet, whose work has appeared in *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been*, an anthology of writing from the Iranian Diaspora, and *Witness*, a CD compilation of hip hop and oral poetry. University of Michigan, BA. University of Maryland, MFA in poetry. Michelle is recipient of the Virginia Voss award for poetry, and scholarships to the Bread Loaf and Squaw Valley Writers' Conferences.
- **Valerie Braimah**, (Advisory Board) Vice President of Instruction at the Alliance for College Ready Public Schools.Formerly the Chief Learning Officer at Insight Education Group, responsible for training and supporting teachers and principals, and for conducting school-wide assessments that inform comprehensive plans for sustainable school reform. Previous positions include: Leadership and Staff Development Coordinator for Leadership Public Schools, helped to found Leadership's first school site in Richmond, where she coordinated testing and intervention programs, helped design the Staff Development Plan for the school, and authored the Leadership Advisory Curriculum which was based on best practices in youth development, project-based learning, and service-learning; Staff Research Associate at the UC Berkeley Service Learning Research and Development Center, conducted national and local evaluations of educational programs; regional Service-Learning Director at Youth Community Service, a non-profit organization based in Palo Alto, provided consultation, training, and technical assistance services to teachers, schools, and districts, and published the Service-Learning Leadership Development Training Guide to help educational and community-based organizations build leadership capacity for their service-learning programs; Oakland Unified School District middle school teacher who also served as the school leader for professional development in Mathematics instruction. Valerie holds a Master's Degree in Education Policy from Johns Hopkins University. She is currently affiliated with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the California Charter School Association (CCSA), and the International Reading Association.

An additional co-founder of the school brings community-building, partnership-building, outreach and operational expertise:
 **Lindsay Sturman**: Founder of both Larchmont Charter School and Larchmont West Hollywood, Founding Chair of LCS Board of Directors, Founding Board of Directors for Valley Charter School. She spearheaded LCS's charter authorization and implementation, ongoing assessment of school operations, and strategic growth. She has raised over a million dollars for LCS, developed

partnerships with CBOs across the city and state, and was honored last year by CCSA as Volunteer of the Year. Television writer/producer, Ms. Sturman holds a BA from Harvard and a Masters from Columbia.

Our Community: Target Student Population

CCMS is partnering with Youth Policy Institute in their Hollywood Promise Neighborhood efforts in order to best recruit and serve students from the Promise Neighborhood in zip code 90028. CCMS will also recruit students from several neighborhoods in the Southern region of District 4 along a 4.8 mile West/East stretch from Carthay Center to the west (Olympic Blvd. and San Vicente Blvd.) and Macarthur Park to the East (Olympic Blvd. and Alvarado St.). The school will not have specific boundaries and will be open to all children in the State of California.

The following information is derived from data referring to zip codes 90057, 90005, 90019, and 90035 and from the demographic data of the student bodies in neighborhood public schools.
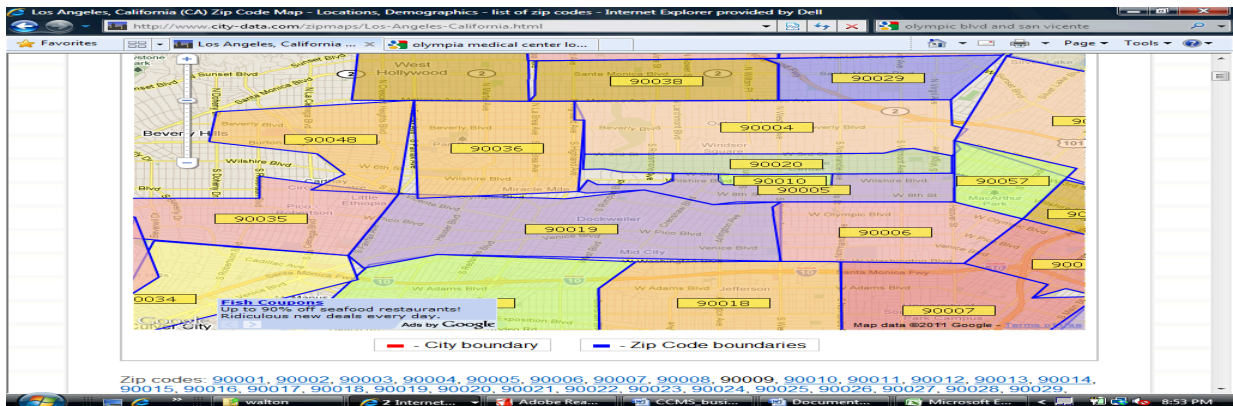
Ethnicity/Race

	90057	90005	90019	90035
Hispanic	33,901	27,112	36,223	3,156
	69.16%	58.38%	51.59%	10.84%
White	2,198	3,212	6,919	18,706
	4.48%	6.92%	9.85%	64.28%
Black or African American	2,509	1,786	16,318	3,154
	5.12%	3.85%	23.24%	10.84%
Asian	9,606	13,578	8,614	1,944
	19.60%	29.24%	12.27%	6.68%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific	6	13	57	19
	0.01%	0.03%	0.08%	0.07%
American Indian and Alaska Native	127	72	125	34
	0.26%	0.16%	0.18%	0.12%
Some Other Race	36	64	214	150
	0.07%	0.14%	0.30%	0.52%
Two or More Races	636	603	1,745	1,938
	1.30%	1.30%	2.49%	6.66%
TOTAL	49,019	46,440	70,215	29,101
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment of Adult Population	90057	90005	90019	90035
Less than 9th Grade	10,625	7,973	7,581	882
	34.84%	26.33%	16.44%	4.07%
Some High School, No Diploma	4,203	3,506	5,788	1,006
	13.78%	11.58%	12.56%	4.64%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	6,081	6,192	9,312	3,167
	19.94%	20.45%	20.20%	14.62%
Some College, No Degree	3,340	3,945	8,690	3,959
	10.95%	13.03%	18.85%	18.28%
Associate Degree	1,289	1,325	3,285	1,439
	4.23%	4.38%	7.13%	6.64%
Bachelor's Degree	3,677	5,251	7,849	6,798
	12.06%	17.34%	17.03%	31.38%
Master's Degree	792	1,267	2,387	2,657
	2.60%	4.18%	5.18%	12.27%
Professional School Degree	265	632	831	1,160
	0.87%	2.09%	1.80%	5.35%
Doctorate Degree	222	188	377	594
	0.73%	0.62%	0.82%	2.74%
TOTAL	30,494	30,279	46,100	21,662
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100

Financial Data – by zip code

Household Income	90057	90005	90019	90035
Less than $15,000	4,691	4,521	4,590	1,513
	28.84%	27.33%	18.66%	11.52%
$15,000 - $24,999	3,201	2,623	3,240	1,076
	19.68%	15.86%	13.17%	8.19%
$25,000 - $34,999	2,624	2,468	2,939	1,013
	16.13%	14.92%	11.95%	7.71%
$35,000 - $49,999	2,450	2,599	3,574	1,587
	15.06%	15.71%	14.53%	12.09%
$50,000 - $74,999	1,821	2,055	3,985	2,189
	11.20%	12.42%	16.20%	16.67%
$75,000 - $99,999	725	983	2,662	1,627
	4.46%	5.94%	10.82%	12.39%
$100,000 - $124,999	369	433	1,276	1,156
	2.27%	2.62%	5.19%	8.80%
$125,000 - $149,999	173	218	735	844
	1.06%	1.32%	2.99%	6.43%
$150,000 - $199,999	135	243	770	1,001
	0.83%	1.47%	3.13%	7.62%
$200,000 - $499,999	67	310	686	900
	0.41%	1.87%	2.79%	6.85%
$500,000+	9	89	136	225
	0.06%	0.54%	0.55%	1.71%
TOTAL	16,265	16,542	24,593	13,131
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Language Spoken at Home

	90057	90005	90019	90035
Speak Only English at Home	6,136	6,549	26,915	17,241
	13.69%	15.25%	41.24%	62.40%
Speak Asian or Pacific Island Language at Home	7,493	11,881	7,079	968
	16.72%	27.66%	10.85%	3.50%
Speak IndoEuropean Language at Home	457	618	1,517	5,153
	1.02%	1.44%	2.32%	18.65%
Speak Spanish at Home	30,182	23,469	28,746	2,565
	67.33%	54.64%	44.04%	9.28%
Speak Other Language at Home	557	435	1,009	1,701
	1.24%	1.01%	1.55%	6.16%
TOTAL	44,825	42,952	65,266	27,628
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

	Berendo Middle	*John Burroughs Middle (dist 3)	*Emerson Middle School (dist 3, but takes students in district 4)
enrollment	1899	1966	992
Grades	grade 6-8	PK-8	grade 6-8
API	661	829	714
Met schoolwide growth target	yes	yes	yes
Met subgroup growth targets	no	no	no
ELA CST gr 7 % proficient+	26%	66%	50%
Math CST gr7 % proficient+	33%	51%	24%
% White	<1%	8%	16%
% Hispanic	92%	39%	54%
% Asian	5%	32%	5%
% African-American	2%	15%	22%
Eligible for F/R lunch	96%	62%	57%
English language learners	42%	14%	18%

ELEMENT #1: Description of the Educational Program

In keeping with our respect for the 'backward design' technique[1] of developing an educational program, our educational philosophy begins with the end in mind. After reviewing research and schools that share similar learning goals to CCMS, we have concluded that a constructivist approach to teaching and learning is the most effective way of developing student mastery of both state standards and habits of heart and mind described as learning outcomes in this charter.

1. *Model Schools.* The following table identifies schools with similar educational philosophies. These schools approach teaching and learning in the same way as CCMS and provide evidence that this approach is successful with diverse learners.

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[1] *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 1998) is a theory of curriculum construction that involves the following process: 1) Identify desired results – learning outcomes; 2) Determine acceptable evidence – assessment data; 3) Plan learning experiences and instruction.

State	School	Testing Results		Diversity	Constructivist approach to teaching/learning	Emphasis on Projects, Presentations	Block Schedule
GA	Atlanta Charter Middle School	8th graders on Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT): Percent scoring proficient or above was 100% in Reading, 98% in Language Arts and 96% in Mathematics		40% Title I, 60% Black, 8% Latino	X	X	X
PA	Avon Grove Charter School	8th graders on Pennsylvania System of Standardized Assessments: Percent scoring proficient or above was 90% in Reading, 88% in Writing and 88% in Mathematics		N/A	X	X	N/A
GA	Rabun County High School	11th graders on Georgia High School Graduation Test: Percent at or above passing 92% in Language Arts and 94% in Mathematics		47% Title I	X	X	not block
Alameda, CA	Alameda Community Learning Center	API 865	Statewide/Similar 10/9	12% Title I, 39% non-white	X	X	X
Sanger, CA	Sanger Academy Charter School (K-8)	884	9/10	63% Title I, 81% Latino, 4% Asian, 1% Black	X	X	N/A
Clovis, CA	Quail Lake Environmental Charter	924	10/10	27% Title I, 29% Latino, 13% Asian	X	X	not block
Napa, CA	River Charter School	884	10/7	12% Title I, 17% Latino, 4% Asian, 13% multiple	X	X	X
Newark, NJ	Discovery Charter School (4-8 grade)	75%-100% of 8th graders at or above proficient on NJ ASK (assessment of skills & knowledge)		44% eligible for free lunch, 29% eligible for reduced lunch; 81% black, 11% Asian, 8% Latino	X	X	X

2. _**Research.**_ Evidence from research in the fields of cognitive science, brain function and education lead us to the following conclusions about the way learning best occurs. An educational program must:
● be relevant and authentic
● model and require high level thinking skills; be demanding and promote depth of learning
● incorporate language learning and multi-cultural education; celebrate and bring relevance to cultural and individual diversity
● model self-reflection and self-assessment
● construct a psychologically and emotionally safe environment where character development is taught and moral standards are high
● expect students to take responsibility for their school, their learning, and their community
● provide a variety of modalities to learning — visual, auditory, and kinesthetic
● offer students a degree of choice in terms of what they read, what they write, and what they construct as evidence of having met learning objectives
● involve parents and significant others in their child's education
● ensure teachers continually strive to teach students at their instructional level (ZPD-Zone of Proximal Development) based on ongoing formal and informal assessments
● "…invite students to experience the world's richness, empower them to ask their own questions and seek their own answers, and challenge them to understand the world's complexities" (Brooks and Brooks, pp. 5, 1999)

Research on specific curricular choices is in Section H.

Goals to Enable Students to be Self-Motivated, Competent, Life-Long Learners

● **Developing self-motivated learners**: CCMS believes that self-motivation requires students to internalize the benefits of learning. CCMS will, therefore, seek to connect students' personal interests and questions with curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Students will be empowered to choose community service and single subject-focused projects that have personal meaning to them. By beginning with each student's interests and questions, CCMS can provide students with the means of making connections between their studies, themselves and life beyond the school's walls.
● **Developing competent learners**: Students who can effectively express how they learn best can 'own' their education and be both competent and life-long learners. CCMS will approach this goal in three ways. 1) A weekly study skills course will guide students in accessing meta-cognitive

processes in order to learn how they learn best. The course will guide students in implementing strategies that will improve their approach to learning, studying, planning, organizing and taking responsibility for their growth as students and human beings. 2) A school-wide constructivist pedagogy that emphasizes problem-based learning and differentiated instruction assures that students are given manifold opportunities and a variety of support systems to achieve academic success. 3) The "backward design"` approach that teachers will take in creating all lessons and curriculum was chosen to ensure that learning objectives are clearly identified and met by students. In these ways, students will develop a solid foundation of knowledge and a competence in learning upon which they can build in the future.

- **Developing lifelong learners**: CCMS's emphasis on international understanding and responsible citizenship throughout the program will foster student appreciation for the many positive impacts their skills and abilities can have on the world. In addition, students will participate in a weekly Advisory class that incorporates a service learning curriculum. The aim of this class will be to demonstrate to students as they move from one grade to the next that the more they know and can do, the more they can improve the world.

Additional academic goals include mastery of the California State Standards, development of writing/speaking/debating skills and the school's definition of an educated person. All curriculum designs are directly aligned to the California State Standards, as indicated in the tables included in the Curriculum section of this Element. The standardized testing and benchmarking required by the district and the State of California will be just as much a part of our assessments as our curricular resources-generated tests/quizzes/investigations/labs/reports and faculty-constructed rubrics, project goals, student portfolios, and student exhibits. In addition, character development and social responsibility are inherent to our entire program and will be assessed through student and teacher evaluations.

The average bell schedule will be:

8:30 - 9:55	85 minutes
9:55 - 10:20	25 minutes
10:25 - 11:50	85 minutes
11:55 - 1:20	85 minutes
1:25 - 2:50	85 minutes

The central blocks of 10:25-11:50 and 11:55 to 1:20 will be broken in half to give students a staggered lunch period and to give them a 40 minute period of Spanish (or other foreign language) every day.

The half-block periods (40 minutes) will be used to offer students 6 non-core classes:
1) Physical Education, daily for 7th and 8th graders and 4 times a week for 6th graders;
2) Study Skills class once a week;
3) Advisory: a weekly class that guides students through service learning projects and incorporates Character Education;
4) Major: choice of electives focusing on writing, mathematics, engineering, or science
5) Music and Art: instruction in instrumental music class and/or Visual and/or Performing Arts

The decision to offer shorter but daily foreign language classes reflects research that demonstrated daily use of a foreign language increased comprehension and retention. By speaking and hearing Spanish on a daily basis, it is expected that students will develop a comfortable familiarity with the language. It should be noted that different levels of Spanish instruction will be offered in order to best meet student needs. Spanish-speaking students who demonstrate exceptional fluency in speaking, reading and writing the language will be offered a course in a different foreign language, to be chosen by the Principal.

Unlike foreign language instruction, the other core academic subjects do not rely so much on familiarity as on deep, conceptual understanding and analysis. Therefore, the core classes of Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts will be experienced in the longer blocks, every other day Monday through Thursday (called A/B days) and alternating Fridays. The longer blocks of time will allow students to experience math and science in a laboratory-like environment that will include hands-on 'investigations' and multi-step problem-solving. Similarly, the language arts and history courses will be able to include in-class writing, discussion, reading, and presentation activities.

The 25 minute period between 9:55 and 10:20 will serve as a full school Assembly (Monday), a grade level meeting (TBD day), and a clubs/activities time. It is also a time for students to seek out teachers if they have specific questions that need clarification. The 'Clubs' will vary depending on student interest and teacher sponsors. Ideally, the school will be able to offer clubs that bring students into state-wide or nation-wide competitions like Science Fair (incorporated into a MAJOR), Mock Trial, Speech & Debate, Model UN, Math Team (incorporated into a MAJOR), Junior Statesmen of America, and others. Clubs may also include Yearbook, Newspaper, Literary Magazine, Improv Comedy, Student Government, and other pursuits that result in campus-wide publications and presentations.

To bring this schedule to life, an example for a sixth grader could look like:

TIME	Monday/Wednesday	Tuesday/Thursday	Friday A/Friday B
8:30 - 9:55	History	Math	History/Math
9:55 - 10:20	Assembly/Clubs	Class Meeting/Clubs	Clubs
10:25 - 11:05	Physical Education	Physical Education	Advisory
11:10 - 11:50	lunch	lunch	lunch
11:55 - 12:35	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
12:40 - 1:20	Study Skills/MAJOR	Music	Music
1:25 - 2:50	Science	English	Science/English

A 7th grade schedule would be:

TIME	Monday/Wednesday	Tuesday/Thursday	Friday A/Friday B
8:30 - 9:55	Math 7	Science 7	Math 7/Science 7
9:55 - 10:20	Assembly/Clubs	Clubs/Class Meeting	Clubs
10:25 - 11:05	Spanish B	Spanish B	Spanish B
11:10 - 11:50	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
11:55 - 12:35	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:40 - 1:20	Music/MAJOR	Study Skills/MAJOR	Advisory
1:25 - 2:50	English 7	History 7	English 7/History 7

An 8th grade schedule would be:

TIME	Monday/Wednesday	Tuesday/Thursday	Friday A/Friday B
8:30 - 9:55	English 8	History 8	English 8/History 8
9:55 - 10:20	Assembly/Clubs	Clubs/Class Meeting	Clubs
10:25 - 11:05	Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
11:10 - 11:50	Spanish C	Spanish C	Spanish C
11:55 - 12:35	Study Skills/MAJOR	Music/MAJOR	Advisory
12:40 - 1:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:25 - 2:50	Algebra	Science 8	Algebra/Science 8

Instructional Design and Methodologies
We intend to utilize a variety of instructional methodologies to ensure all students are achieving academic success and developing the qualities CCMS deems essential for an 'Educated Person':

1) Data Driven Instruction: Teacher inquiry and research to guide curriculum development and pedagogical choices
2) Backward Design and Multiple Assessments
3) Family participation and community involvement in the educational process
4) Constructivism
5) Problem-Based Learning
6) Block schedule

The six strategies listed above and described below are critical to effectively serving the diverse population that CCMS anticipates serving. The research base for each strategy is described in the corresponding section, and establishes the validity of each strategy for

> *The kind of schools we need would use videotaped teaching episodes to refine teachers' ability to take the practice of teaching apart – not in the negative sense, but as a way of enlarging our understanding of a complex and subtle process... To teach really well, it is necessary to reflect on the processes of one's own teaching and on the teaching practices of others.*
>
> Eisner, E.W. (April 2002). The Kind of Schools We Need. *Phi Delta Kappan.*

maximizing the learning of all students. However, these strategies are also particularly effective for language learners, who will represent a significant portion of our projected student population. Karen Carrier in, "Key Issues for Teaching English Language Learners in Academic Classrooms," (Middle School Journal, November 2005) identifies three key issues ELLs face in the academic classroom:

- The amount of time required for second language acquisition
- The dual job of ELLs – learning content and learning the language
- The need for multiple modes of input and output

The CCMS instructional model addresses all three of these issues directly. Students are afforded extra time through the block schedule longer block periods allow teachers to frontload key vocabulary and concepts, and engage in multiple modes of instruction within one class period, therefore meeting the needs of diverse learners. The very nature of a constructivist education is designed to be student centered and build on student interests and prior knowledge. This approach will allow the teacher to easily tailor the learning experiences to individual students, and to allow students to acquire new content at a pace that is appropriate for them. Finally, the ELL student's need for multiple modes of input and output is directly addressed by problem-based learning, which provides students with real-worl applications and built-in visuals and realia to contextualize new learning.

1. Data Driven Instruction
Our instructional program will be driven by student data through two distinct data analysis proceses: Administrator-led Data Conferences and teacher-led action research.

a) Data Conferences
At least monthly, the principal will facilitate data conferences to engage teachers in conversations, reflection, and planning based on student achievement data. In order to support this process, the school will systematically collect and analyze student data on key demographic, behavioral, and proficiency indicators. Data will be collected through the implementation of a robust set of diagnostic and benchmark assessments that complement the state standardized test data (CST, CELDT, etc.) and provide continuous information about student progress towards standards. For example, the school may implement diagnostic assessments such as the NWEA MAPS or Pearson G●RADE and G●MADE. The selected assessments will provide data at least three times per year that informs student grouping, lexile levels, math placement, intervention and enrichment needs, and pre-teaching and re-teaching needs. Furthermore, teachers will be able to generate and administer (at least every 6 weeks) standards-based benchmark assessments aligned to their grade-level content standards. They will either have access to standards-based test item banks, or computer-based adaptive assessments (e.g. I Can Learn) that provide ongoing data about students' real-time mastery of grade level standards. Data-driven conversations will also focus on teacher-generated grades to ensure that grading policies are fair, equitable, and focused on student proficiency (as opposed to behavior, homework completion, or compliance). Each progress

reporting period (every 5-6 weeks), the principal will examine grade distributions, and engage in reflective conversations with any teacher demonstrating an excessive number of failing students.

Utilizing a technology accelerator (to be determined) such as spreadsheets (e.g. Excel) and data management systems (e.g. Data Director, PowerSchools, etc.) the school leadership will be able to track student growth on state standards and run analyses such as pivot tables to compare growth on two dimensions, correlation analyses (to address assumptions about student demographic factors and links to student achievement), and identify patterns of behavior and achievement that can be addressed through instructional and behavioral policies and practices.

Data-driven conversations will be principal led initially, but will eventually be the responsibility of departmental and grade-level leaders, who will develop the capacity to design common formative assessments, run data reports, and analyze data to inform instruction. Departments and grade levels will be provided with common planning time that they will use to examine data at least monthly. Even as the responsibility transitions to departmental leads, the principal will continue to supervise the use of data by teachers (through meetings with department leads and collection of data conferencing agendas and notes, and to monitor actual student progress through weekly examination of the data. In particular, the principal will monitor the progress of all subgroups (particularly language learners and special education students), and patterns of academic achievement or behavior that may indicate declining progress or inequitable outcomes among different sub groups. Any problematic data trends will be directly addressed through meetings with individual teachers and departments, and through the examination of policies that may be contributing to declining achievement or inequities. At all times, teachers will be expected to be able to articulate data patterns in their classrooms and describe what they are doing to raise the achievement of all students, and close any gaps that may exist.

b) Action Research
All teachers will participate in collaborative action-research[2] in their classrooms to make informed decisions about assessment, curriculum, pedagogy, and student services. Our definition of action research is "a process in which participants systematically examine their own educational practice using the techniques of research, for the purpose of increasing learning of students, their teachers, and other interested parties."[3]

Rather than send teachers to a variety of informative yet disconnected professional development seminars throughout the year, CCMS will place teacher inquiry, research and student assessment data at the center of its professional development model. Informally, teachers will look at student work and questions in order to inform their instructional practice. Formally, teachers will be trained to take an analytical approach to teaching, learning, and the analysis of student assessment data. Teachers will act as researchers in their classrooms to test hypotheses, gather data, and draw conclusions about their instructional practices. Teachers will then be expected to base their pedagogical decision-making on collective research and to share best practices regularly both within their grades and across grades with their department.

The five steps to action research include:
1. Problem Identification
2. Plan of Action
3. Data Collection
4. Analysis of Data
5. Plan for Future Action[4]

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[2] Since the process of becoming National Board Certified for teachers is "similar to action research" according to the nbpts.org website, CCMS will support teachers in every way possible in their pursuit of National Board Certification and will consider this pursuit to be the fulfillment of this instructional methodology goal.
[3] Caro-Bruce. (2000). Action Researcher: Facilitator's Handbook National Council of Staff Development.
[4] Adapted from the St. Louis Action Research Evaluation Committee

We focus on teacher research because implementing this model of teacher development has three necessary outcomes. First, our educational program will be focused on students needs, constantly modified in response to research findings. Second, our teachers will form a true community of learners as they take a more reflective and analytical approach to their instruction. Third, by supporting teachers who wish to become published researchers, we may begin to bridge the gap between educational theory and classroom practice.

Benefits of action research include:
- Creates a system wide mindset for school improvement – a professional problem-solving ethos.
- Enhances decision making – greater feelings of competence in solving problems and making instructional decisions. In other words, action research provides for an intelligent way of making decisions.
- Promotes reflection and self-assessment
- Instills a commitment to continuous improvement
- Creates a more positive school climate in which teaching and learning are foremost concerns
- Impacts directly on practice
- Empowers those who participate in the process. Educational leaders who undertake action research may no longer, for instance, uncritically accept theories, innovations, and programs at face value.
- Promotes student achievement

2. Backward Design and Multiple Assessments
CCMS teachers will plan all units of study with other departmental faculty using the 'backward design' guidelines described in *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, 1998). This strategy advises teachers to "begin with the question, 'What would we accept as evidence that students have attained the desired understandings and proficiencies' – *before* proceeding to plan teaching and learning experiences." There are three steps to this process:

1) Identify desired results: Using educational standards and additional goals, teachers will determine a three-tiered hierarchical set of learning expectations:
  a) Information and skills worth being familiar with
  b) Important knowledge and skills
  c) Enduring understandings

Teachers will answer four questions to help them select and prioritize these learning expectations:
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process represent a 'big idea' having enduring value beyond the classroom?
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process reside at the heart of the discipline?
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process require uncoverage? (meaning, what parts of these concepts do students typically have difficulty understanding)
- To what extent does the idea, topic, or process offer potential for engaging students?

2) Determine acceptable evidence: Teachers will select forms of evidence that can be assessed throughout the unit of study and include: informal checks, observation/dialogue, quiz/test, open-ended prompts, performance tasks, projects and presentations. At least one project/presentation per semester, in each subject area, will be required in light of research connecting assessment relevance to student engagement and achievement.

3) Plan learning experiences and instruction: Now that the learning expectations (knowledge and skills) have been identified, teachers will work together to determine the most effective teaching methods and select the appropriate materials and resources to achieve their goals.

Backward design of instructional units is a critical precursor to differentiating instruction for all learners. By clearly defining what standards students need to master for each unit, teachers can more effectively assess their level of mastery in relation to standards and develop targeted instruction to help all students meet those expectations. In the backward designed environment, teachers are knowledgeable about their curriculum and "can more effectively support the academic language development of our ELLs" by providing them with "the main ideas, the content specific vocabulary, and the sentence structures related to upcoming lessons." (Carrier, 2005). Furthermore, that intent of Backward Design is to build units that focus on meaningful, real-world, and authentic content. Such content has been shown to better engage middle-level learners as well as students in minority subgroups (Mayday, 2008).

3. Prioritizing community and family participation
The participation of families and the surrounding community is critical in meeting the needs of the whole child; such participation is therefore a top priority. Per the Brown Act, the public will be given time at pre-announced, publicized meetings to share views, concerns and questions with the Board. Parental voice and input is essential to the mission of the school and parent surveys play a significant role in the Board's assessment of the school. Furthermore, in order to maximize participation and create an inviting school environment for all parents, education and outreach materials will be provided in English and Spanish, and translators will be available at all school events.

Formal structures will include:

• Family education
Teachers, Administrators, parents, and community members will conduct socioculturally sensitive, hands-on workshops with parents of current students and prospective parents of children age 9-11 to enable them to help their children develop in mathematics and language arts. Our Study Skills course will prepare students to become tutors and mentors of elementary age children and we hope to provide our students with the opportunity to then teach other middle school students to tutor effectively. Through partnerships with community based organizations, we will build an adult education component that will serve the needs and desires of parents and community members in reaching their own academic and career goals. CCMS board members who lead Youth Policy Institute are committed to supporting the school's families through their multitude of family services programs.

• Parent/Teacher/Student conferences
Students will co-lead, with their Study Skills teacher, a conference two times a year in order to demonstrate complete understanding of their academic achievements, challenges and plans.

• Parent volunteers
Parents will always be welcome and encouraged to volunteer in the office and at school events as arranged with the teachers and office staff. In this way, parents may provide valuable and needed services and are empowered to effectively shape school programs and operations. As part of the Family Agreement with CCMS, a degree of parent involvement will be requested. This arrangement will be made with respect to the family's members' abilities and schedules and could take the form of volunteering at the school or volunteering from a more convenient location, in a way that suits the skills and interests of the family. CCMS recognizes that parents cannot be mandated to volunteer at the school site. Furthermore, CCMS recognizes that parents do not necessarily have time to give to the school and will never attempt to place a hardship or burden on families.

• Family Committee & Site-Based Council
All parents and guardians will be considered voting members of the Family Committee (FC). They will vote for parent representatives to the Site-Based Council. The parent representatives will then be responsible for working with the Principal to set up Town Hall style meetings as needed to ensure parent concerns are aired and addressed and to communicate school events, policies and news.

This council is based on similar structures that exist in schools that share educational goals, curricular choices and student demographics. The Aspire schools and a collection of successful, rigorous schools in Arizona provide the main models for this council which we define as follows:

> The Site-Based Council is a policy-making, advisory body that determines all items related to school operation. The Site Council include an equal number of teachers and parents (representing each grade level) and will report directly to the principal, only reporting directly to the Board when encountering serious, unresolved issues. An individual Board member will be publically identified as the Council's main contact should Board attention be desired. The council:
>
> - acts as an initial discipline review board;
> - addresses school safety issues;
> - reviews parental concerns;
> - determines budget priorities; and
> - sets policies that are unique to the school.

4. Constructivism

CCMS teachers will implement learning experiences grounded in constructivist learning theory, as described in previous sections of this charter. Numerous independent researchers have documented the success of the constructivist model of education with **historically under-served** populations, including at such schools as Sanger Academy Charter School in Sanger, Discovery Charter School in Newark, NJ, and the model schools on page 13. These schools and countless others have long demonstrated that when children from disadvantaged neighborhoods, including recent immigrants and ELL, are given the opportunity to attend a school like CCMS, their test scores and more importantly their self-confidence and whole development excel. (Amaral, 2002; Mester, 2008; Hollins, King, J. and Hayman, 1994; Mathison & Young, 1995; Thornton & McEntee, 1995; McCombs, 1994; O'Neil & Drillings,1997; Freire, 1995.)

The perspective outlined above is derived from a number of educational models: situated learning theory, expeditionary learning, experiential learning, project-based learning, and collaborative learning. In order to bring these theories to life, we will support our teachers in developing and implementing curriculum that includes real-world activities, multiple representations, metacognition, and critical theory.

It should be emphasized that CCMS believes that guidance must be provided to students. As noted psychologist Lev Vygotsky described in *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, the key to a learning experience within a student's zone of proximal development (ZPD) is "problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." Student discussion is essential to learning since the mental processes involved in formulating one's thoughts into words contribute to development and concept-formation. However, research has shown that *purely* discussion-based or collaborative learning can be ineffective if no student acts as a capable guide, if students treat each other with disrespect, or if students are reluctant to share their thoughts (Lewis, C. 1999). CCMS is aware of these potential problems and intends to sidestep them by always ensuring that appropriate guidance is taking place. One way is to model effective cooperative group and conflict resolution strategies, such as those used in programs such as *Cool Tools (gseis.ucla.edu)*, *Tribes (tribes.com) and Council (ojaifoundation.org)*.

Furthermore, the active learning strategies inherent in the constructivist approach are validated by the findings of *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (1999), an authoritative synthesis of research on learning that was jointly commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Science Foundation. The full text of *How People Learn* is freely available at the website of the National Academies Press (nap.edu).

How People Learn supports the scientific basis for constructivism in its section on "active learning":

New developments in the science of learning also emphasize the importance of helping people take control of their own learning. Since understanding is viewed as important, people must learn to recognize when they understand and when they need more information. What strategies might they use to assess whether they understand someone else's meaning? What kinds of evidence do they need in order to believe particular claims? How can they build their own theories of phenomena and test them effectively?….

In order to implement the active learning described in *How People Learn*, teachers will be given time and resources to fill their lessons with student-self-paced 'Investigations.' These activities will be designed to develop subject-specific skills in a problem-based learning environment and to develop skills and knowledge related to students' project work. Investigations are an effective way to develop deep and enduring conceptual understanding because they are structured activities in which students:
1. Use manipulatives and/or technology
2. Analyze both open-ended and specific questions
3. Transition from concrete to abstract reasoning at their own pace
4. Work individually, or in groups, depending on the specific investigation's design

Furthermore, teachers will be guided in utilizing a variety of representations, including the multiple intelligences and Lesh's translation model (see below) to ensure that students can best "take control of their own learning."

This active engagement of students in their own learning through highly structured yet creative learning experiences is the foundation of the CCMS understanding of constructivism.

5.   ***Problem Based Learning***
CCMS intends to infuse problem-based learning (PBL) experiences into the classroom as much as it is appropriate to do so because it is entirely consistent with a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. CCMS accepts the definition of PBL advocated by the Project on the Effectiveness of Problem Based Learning (PEPBL). This consortium of educational researchers organized by professors at England's Middlesex University, established criteria for defining the PBL instructional model in 2000 as follows:

- Curriculum is organized around problems rather than disciplines, with an emphasis on cognitive skills as well as knowledge.
- The learning environment uses small groups, active learning, and independent study, and it is student centered. Teachers are facilitators, providing knowledgeable structure for the learners.
- Outcomes focus on skills development and motivation, as well as abilities, for lifelong learning. (Newman et al., 2003)

Research thus far indicates that PBL is effective with diverse students in the K-12 context. In K-12 science instruction, for example, research has supported that problem-based instruction benefits

English Learners significantly (Amaral, Garrison, & Klentschy, 2002; Bredderman, 1983; Gibbons, 2003; Valadez, 2002).[5] Researchers (Gordon, Rogers, Comfort, Gavula, McGee, 2001) implementing PBL with an *urban minority, at-risk middle school* population over a two-year period found that students showed increased academic performance in science and improved behavior ratings. More recent researchers (Liu, Hsieh, Cho, Schallert, 2006) also found that *middle school students* had a better understanding of science concepts and felt more confident about being successful learners after they completed a computer-enhanced PBL unit. Overall, "young adolescents are more likely to engage in the classroom when they connect content and learning tasks with life beyond the classroom walls." (Caskey & Anfara, 2007; Learning Point Associates, 2005).

CCMS is committed to beginning this form of study in middle school because research has shown the *long-term positive* effects of this form of learning. For example, a study of 10th-grade Earth science students corroborated that PBL instruction improved their knowledge of the material as measured on an achievement test as compared to their peers in more traditional classes (Chang, 2001). High school students using PBL in pre-12th grade classes such as biology, chemistry, and Earth science, outscored their peers on 44% of the items on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) science test given during their 12th-grade year (Schneider, Krajcik, Marx, & Soloway, 2002).

6. Active learning strategies in a block

The choice of a block schedule is based on research demonstrating that a more active learning experience and deeper conceptual understanding results when students are given fewer classes each day that have longer periods. The traditional schedule of 6-9 single-subject, 40-50 minute classes each day requires students to quickly adjust to different teaching styles, homework requirements, tests, academic disciplines, and behavior codes. Teachers in this situation may interact with 100-180 adolescents each day. Over the course of such a fragmented day, learning in each class can often seem superficial, the workload can seem overwhelming and the teacher-student interactions can be quite limited.

Several studies support block scheduling on the ground that it *increases student achievement* (Fletcher, 1997; Khazzaka, 1998), *decreases discipline referrals* (Duel, 1999; Stader, 2001), *increases student attendance rates* (Queen, Algozzine, & Eaddy, 1997; Snyder, 1997), and improves school climate (Buckman, King, & Ryan, 1995). Canady & Rettig, in their book "Teaching in the Block, Strategies for Engaging Active Learners" (1995), summarize research findings and conclude that a block schedule:

● Allows students variable amounts of time for learning, without lowering standards, and without punishing those who need more or less time to learn
● Provides teachers with blocks of teaching time that allow and encourage the use of active teaching strategies, hands-on investigations and greater student involvement
● Increase opportunities for some students to be accelerated
● Reduce the number of classes students must attend and prepare for each day
● Reduce the number of students/courses teachers must prepare for each day

Some studies show mixed results and, upon closer examination of these studies, it becomes clear that there are many ways for schools to implement a block schedule. In order to maximize the benefits of a block schedule, CCMS will not merely stack 2 formerly 45 minute long lessons to form one 90 minute class. Instead, the longer class periods will be organized into 3 main parts that have been shown to produce an effective use of time: explanation, application, synthesis.

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[5] Despite these findings, effective PBL practices are generally lacking in schools that serve lower SES populations (Banks & McGee Banks, 1989; Chamot, 1983; Jones, 1985; Kessler, Quinn, & Fathman, 1992).

1) **Explanation:** mini-lecture, review previous lessons/homework, demonstration, reading, basic identification of what is to be learned, objectives, specific tasks to be completed

2) **Application**: bulk of the block, active learning strategies, students apply what teacher explained. Examples of 'application' formats include:
   - Seminar: Socratic questioning
   - Experience: Become a historian/mathematician/writer/scientist/etc.
   - Learning Centers
   - Group or pair work
   - Utilizing technology
   - Simulation
   - Guided practice (teacher observe and intervene)

According to Canady, Rettig (1996), 'providing "hands-on" active learning strategies during the application stage may be the most important determinant of the success or failure of teaching in the block.' CCMS's emphasis on constructivism ensures that 'hands-on active learning strategies' will be valued and utilized.

3) **Synthesis**: Teachers assist students in connecting explanation with application. Students reflect and review. Teachers assess learning through questioning, observations, or paper-pencil means. Teachers may re-teach.

G. Curriculum – Scope and Sequence

In designing the middle school curriculum, CCMS educators will utilize the 'backward design' approach. The ends will be the learning goals enumerated in the California state standards as well as school-designed outcomes derived from our definition of an educated person.

CCMS believes that certain textbooks and published curricular materials are essential as guiding resources in core courses, but all educators should be given the support and freedom to bring additional resources into the classroom in order to provide curriculum that is appropriate in meeting student needs.
Process for Selecting Curriculum, Materials, Instructional Activities
Curriculum, materials, and instructional activities will be selected by each of the core departments after a minimum of a year-long study and analysis. All materials that will be considered primary resources must be able to be aligned to California state standards. They must also be compatible with the school's emphasis on:
   - active learning strategies in a block schedule (with the exception of Spanish which is not in a block schedule),
   - problem-based learning,
   - cognitive science research that proves the curriculum and its recommended pedagogical methods develop conceptual and in-depth understanding, and
   - multiple assessments, including projects.

Secondary, or enrichment, resources can be chosen at the discretion of the teacher, with department chairman approval and must be used in a way that is compatible with the school's educational philosophy. The curriculum for the first years of the school has been chosen and includes:

   - SOCIAL STUDIES: History Alive! from Teachers' Curriculum Institute
   - MATHEMATICS: Pearson, Prentice Hall: Connected Math grades 6-8 and Algebra I
   - SCIENCE: Science Education for Public Understanding Program (SEPUP), publisher Lab Aids, Inc.
   - LANGUAGE ARTS:
     o Authentic literature choices (see CURRICULUM in Element One);

- o Holt, Rinehart & Winston's grammar books: English Workshop, First Course, Second Course, and Third Course.
- o Houghton Mifflin Co., Great Source, vocabulary texts: Vocabulary for Achievement, Second Course and Third Course;
- o Sadlier-Oxford's vocabulary texts: Vocabulary Workshop, Level F & G
- ● SPANISH: Adelante Level 1A, En Camino Level 1B, Ven Conmigo Level 1 Holt, Rinehart & Winston
- ● MUSIC: Essential Elements 2000 for Strings, Book 1, Book 2 (Hal Leonard Corp)
- ● STUDY SKILLS: age appropriate educational research articles on learning styles to be chosen by principal and faculty
- ● ADVISORY: multiple resources (articles, podcasts, documentaries) related to **current events** to be chosen by principal and faculty each month
- ● MAJORS: Current resources on US FIRST (firstlegoleague.org), current resources related to Science Fair (http://www.usc.edu/CSSF/), current resources related to writing contests (http://www.newpages.com/npguides/young_authors_guide.htm#contests), current resources related to Math Olympiad (http://www.moems.org/) and MATHCOUNTS (mathcounts.org).

The **History Alive! program** was chosen because research has demonstrated its success in raising test scores, engaging students and supporting teachers in reaching diverse learners (http://www.teachtci.com/tci-approach/research.html). Unlike standard curricula comprised of textbook reading followed by short answer questions, this program guides students in discovering information, reasoning through problems, debating issues, working in pairs and groups, reflecting on learning and demonstrating knowledge in multiple assessments. Resources for teachers explicitly state research-based practices to reach *English language learners*, *learners reading and writing below grade level*, *students with special needs*, and *advanced learners*. Research studies have demonstrated improved test scores for students *who initially tested below proficiency* and no negative impact on students who initially tested advanced proficient.

The **SEPUP science program** is itself a non-profit research project that has been tested and refined for over 20 years through a partnership between UC Berkeley and the National Science Foundation. It has also been the subject of countless doctoral dissertations, journal articles, conference papers, and federal studies. The research has been conducted on a wide variety of students with diverse learning needs from a range of geographical locations. The demographics of CCMS correspond to the demographics of these studies significantly because the majority of the studies have taken place in California schools. In studies comparing SEPUP students to non-SEPUP students, the SEPUP students have consistently, with statistical significance, demonstrated gains in content knowledge. In addition, several studies examined students' decision-making skills and found differences in student responses that generally favored SEPUP over non-SEPUP students (http://sepuplhs.org/research.html).

The **Connected Math Project** is also a non-profit research project that was funded by the National Science Foundation. Between 1991-1997, the NSF mandated the CMP develop a complete middle grade mathematics curriculum based on ongoing research. In 2000, NSF funded a 5 year research project involving educational professionals and CMP teachers in order to further review, revise, field-test and evaluate the program. More recently, research studying the revised CMP program in Texas and Arizona schools that have similar demographics to CCMS, demonstrated that CMP students outperformed non-CMP students, with significant growth on standardized test for *Hispanic, low SES and English learner populations* (http://www.connectedmath.msu.edu/rne/2006.shtml).

Research is also at the foundation for CCMS's choices in ELA curriculum. Research has demonstrated that English Learners, at-risk students and students with disabilities require multiple modalities of learning, contextualized learning and explicit, direct instruction. The multi-resource approach of CCMS's **Language Arts program** responds to these needs by incorporating explicit grammar and vocabulary textbook-based instruction, contextualized learning through authentic literature that gives teachers

choices to bring culturally relevant reading materials in place of more traditional texts, and multiple assessments and teaching strategies in the block schedule. In particular, researchers writing "Practical Guidelines For The Education Of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations For Instruction And Academic Interventions"[6], found that classrooms, in particular at the middle and high school level, are not spending enough time explicitly teaching 'academic language' in the form of vocabulary and grammar that is essential for students to become skilled readers and writers in academic contexts.

What follows are the descriptions of all core courses (Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, and Spanish) and non-core courses (Study Skills, Advisory, Music, Majors, and Physical Education).

Language Arts

The language arts program places a heavy emphasis on writing, speaking in formalized presentations, debating and reading comprehension.

To support students in becoming lucid writers and critical readers, CCMS believes a strong foundation in grammar and a broad vocabulary are essential. There will be explicit instruction in grammar utilizing the grammar text books English Workshop, First Course, Second Course, and Third Course (Holt, Rinehart and Winston) and supplemented by many more exercises and examples created by teachers and other resources. There will also be explicit approaches to learning vocabulary words utilizing the text books, Vocabulary for Achievement, Second Course and Third Course (Great Source, a Houghton Mifflin Company), and, for the advanced student, Vocabulary Workshop, Level F and G (Sadlier-Oxford).
In addition to these skills-based approaches, CCMS will emphasize a holistic approach to learning. To truly become a good writer and reader, one simply has to read and write – often and analytically. To these ends, each language arts course includes a rich and varied selection of literature, ongoing current events analysis, and weekly writing and revising of essays or longer papers. Students will always be in the process of improving an essay, a project, a presentation or a research paper.
Since a pillar of our definition of an educated person is "effectively communicates", students will be both writing and presenting their analyses of literature, their interpretation of current events, and their creative writing and their research papers/projects. Rehearsals of presentations will take place before the whole class or in small groups throughout the year in order to give students the opportunities to both improve their own presentation skills and help their fellow students improve. Students will also be asked to respond to presentations, both orally and in writing, in order to develop their skills in aural analysis and comprehension.
CCMS's approach to Language Arts is especially well suited to English Language Learners because of its explicit emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. In the books "Practical Guidelines For The Education Of English Language Learners: Research-Based Recommendations For Instruction And Academic Interventions"[7], the researchers found that classrooms, in particular at the middle and high school level, are not spending enough time explicitly teaching 'academic language' in the form of vocabulary and grammar that is essential for students to become skilled readers and writers in academic contexts.

Tables aligning curriculum, standards and assessments can be found in Appendix I.

History/Social Studies

The social studies program at CCMS will be utilizing the History Alive! curricular resources and additional primary and secondary resources to be chosen by faculty in order to support student investigations into multiple perspectives on historical events and concepts. Assessments will take the form of traditional unit quizzes and tests as well as homework assignments, essays, research papers, presentations and

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6 David J. Francis, Mabel Rivera Center on Instruction English Language Learners Strand, Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics, University of Houston; Nonie Lesaux, Michael Kieffer, Harvard Graduate School of Education; Hector Rivera, Center on Instruction English Language Learners Strand Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics, University of Houston.

7 David J. Francis, Mabel Rivera Center on Instruction English Language Learners Strand, Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics, University of Houston; Nonie Lesaux, Michael Kieffer, Harvard Graduate School of Education; Hector Rivera, Center on Instruction English Language Learners Strand Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics, University of Houston.

long-term projects. Teachers will utilize Socratic method seminar-like class structures in order to take note of student understanding, thus class discussion itself will be a formative assessment.
Tables aligning curriculum, standards and assessment can be found in Appendix I. Since a 1994 teacher survey revealed that 7th grade history teachers are unduly burdened by 11 major strands while 6th grade teachers have only 7 strands, CCMS will bring the first two units of study from the 7th grade course into the 6th grade course.[8]

Science

CCMS will adopt the middle school science program developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science, at the University of California, Berkeley. This curriculum, known as the Science Education for Public Understanding Program (SEPUP) is distributed nationally by LAB-AIDS, Inc. and supported by grants from the National Science Foundation. This program provides hands-on investigations, laboratory experiences and projects. It also lends itself to traditional, quantitative assessments in the form of tests and quizzes. Teachers will, therefore, be able to utilize a variety of pedagogical methods and a variety of assessments in order to best develop conceptual understanding in all students.

Tables aligning curriculum, standards and assessment can be found in Appendix I.

Mathematics

The CCMS mathematics program will utilize a variety of curricular materials. Homework assignments will be considered important formative assessments and windows into a student's conceptual understanding of the topics at hand. The assignments will be collected by teachers and graded as pass/fail in accordance with the following explicit requirements:

1) Did students, in pencil, attempt each problem
2) Did students, when unable to complete a problem, ask for clarification during the daily, in-class homework review period, and then take notes on their homework in *pen* or *colored pencil* to demonstrate that they have gained understanding of the problem

Teachers will be encouraged to create their own assessments that will change each year and can be kept by students. Students will be assessed in a summative manner on a weekly basis in the form of a quiz, a test, or a project. If a unit has a quiz and a test, the quiz will be considered in a more formative light, and students will be allowed to get "points back" on a quiz if they answer a comparable question correctly on a test.

Teachers will also be encouraged to seek out resources that they deem most appropriate to meeting their students' needs. The main curricular choices will be:

- Grade 6: Connected Math Grade 6 (Pearson, Prentice Hall)
- Grade 7: Connected Math Grade 7 (Pearson, Prentice Hall)
- Grade 7 Pre-Algebra: Connected Math Grade 8 (Pearson, Prentice Hall)
- Grade 8 Pre-Algebra: Connected Math Grade 8 (Pearson, Prentice Hall)
- Grade 8 Algebra I: Algebra I (Pearson, Prentice Hall, Charles/Smith 2006)

Tables aligning curriculum and standards can be found in Appendix I.

#2: Measurable Student Outcome

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[8] 7.1 Students analyze the causes and effects of the vast expansion and ultimate disintegration of the Roman Empire.

7.2 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Islam in the Middle Ages.

The measurable student outcomes for CCMS are designed to reflect our dedication to educate children so that they can flexibly apply the skills and information they have learned in school to a variety of settings. Student outcomes are derived from the California State Standards, standards developed to reflect our emphasis on writing/speaking/debating, and our definition of an educated person in the 21st century. Students will demonstrate progress toward meeting and exceeding these learning goals through their completion of subject-specific and community service projects, as well as through their performances on embedded assessments in our mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts programs.

Our students will take all standardized tests required by the state, and will participate in CST testing, which takes place in grades 6-8. By disaggregating the data and looking at individual students' results, faculty and staff will utilize test results to determine student's academic needs, and will create individualized learning plans to address these needs. Furthermore, school leaders will analyze test results from the perspective of teacher education. Gaps in student knowledge will become the focus of teacher action research in the classroom and will help determine appropriate teacher professional development experiences. As a result of these efforts, it is anticipated that scores will rise gradually throughout the first 5 years of the charter. By year 5, CCMS anticipates an API score of at least 850. These outcomes reflect our commitment to ensure that all of our students will grow to be literate, self-motivated, articulate life-long learners.

In Elements 1 and 2 and the appendices of the charter, every core subject for every grade is outlined in a detailed scope and sequence that includes the learning goals (state standards et al), the curricular resources, and the relevant assessments.

ELEMENT #3: Outcome Measurement Process

Assessment strategies
Students will be assessed by a range of qualitative and quantitative methods. The assessment tools used to determine students' progress toward achieving these outcomes will include, but are not limited to state testing measures, norm-referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, teacher observations, rubrics for projects and class work. CCMS views assessment as a process which allows teachers, parents, administrators, and students to evaluate the quality of learning. The tables in the charter delineate the various methods of in-house derived assessments that will be used and the frequency of their utilization. It should be noted that teachers will be given the flexibility to assess more frequently and use additional methods, should the need arise. Assessment is an ongoing process needed to determine student progress, and when progress is not advancing at the expected pace, both curriculum, pedagogy and assessment must adjust to best improve student learning.

Authentic Assessment
Our use of authentic assessment will take two forms, the first of which is daily on-going documentation that observes students' progress in reaching outcomes defined in rubrics and checklists and observes students' progress in a more general, narrative manner. Through this type of qualitative and quantitative assessment, the teacher doesn't just assess a final result, but assesses all of the student growth along the way. This type of assessment becomes "embedded" in the curriculum and is considered formative. The second form of authentic assessment that we will use is portfolio assessment and is considered formative, and eventually summative. Portfolios are an important element for student assessment within our project-based format. The portfolio will be a highly organized collection of work carefully select by both student and teacher. It will be on-going throughout the year and it will be analyzed by faculty periodically in order to adjust curriculum, pedagogy and assessment to the students' needs. It provides a structure that encourages multiple indicators of student progress. It does not measure one student against another. Instead, it reflects the progress of students who learn through interaction with peers and teacher while encouraging their individual responsibility to be creative and reflective.

Formal Assessment

- CCMS-created Writing Assessment grades 3 & 5
- CCMS -created Math Skills Assessment grades 2, 4
- LAUSD Periodic Math Assessment
- State-mandated standardized tests in grades 2-6

CCMS intends to demonstrate progress on the aggregate results of a standards-based report for each grade level. This report and standardized test data will be disaggregated to show how sub-groups; e.g. LEP, non-LEP, mobility, gender, etc., perform. Student, parent and employee satisfaction data will be handled in a similarly rigorous fashion as surveys will be designed and analyzed regularly to ensure the school maintains an inclusive, positive, stimulating community of learners.

CCMS will meet the following API growth indicators:
- Annual API will meet or exceed the established growth target
- All subgroups will make at least 80% of the school target
- The CAT-6 participation rate will be at least 90%
- Target API is 50 points above the average API (735) currently in the alternative schools listed at the beginning of this charter: 785

ELEMENT #4: Governance

CCMS is in the process of federal approval as a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. The non-profit benefit corporation (501c3) for CCMS will also be the non-profit benefit corporation for CCMS. Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws and the Board Handbook are included in appendices.

The Board of Directors is the governing Board of both the City Charter Middle and Elementary Schools. The Board of Directors is responsible for all legal and fiduciary matters involving both schools. The Board will also help ensure effective organizational planning by approving long range goals and annual objectives, and monitoring such issues as health and safety, and the use and maintenance of facilities. The Board will have the responsibility for hiring and evaluating the Executive Director/Central Administrative team. The Board will create committees as needed to address issues related to fulfilling the mission of CCMS. Possible committees include: Development, Governance/Nominating Committee, Finance, Strategic Planning and Assessment.

Stakeholders will have roles through:
- Advisory Board
- Family Committees
- Dean of Faculty
- Site Council

Families will be given a myriad of opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. All families will participate in elections of grade level representatives [GLR] (corresponding to the grade of their child) to the Site Council. All parents can also join any family committee in which they have an interest. These committees will be formed at the request of the Principal or at the suggestion of parents, pending the approval of the Executive Director. Possible committees include: Fundraising, Technology Support, Teacher Appreciation, Cultural Events, After School Program.

Faculty will elect a Dean of Faculty who will sit on the Site Council and up to two additional faculty members to also join the Site Council. These elections will take place each May for a term to run the following school year. The Dean of Faculty is the main line of communication between administration and faculty.

ELEMENT #5: Employee Qualifications

All personnel must commit to the mission and vision of CCMS. Employees' job descriptions and work schedules will be reviewed and modified as necessary to meet the needs of the school and students. The job descriptions will be based on the job duties and work basis as outlined in the charter.

The administrative positions for CCMS include:
- Executive Director (for all City schools)
- 6-8 Principal
- Dean of Faculty
- When the school reaches a student population of 360, an Assistant Principal may be added (job description to be created by Principal)

Evaluations will be performed twice a year. Performance measures will be used to evaluate all school personnel.

The Executive Director (leader of Central Administrative Team - only hired if two or more City Schools in existence) will be evaluated by the Board based on:
- Completion of required and enumerated (from job description) job duties
- Reaching objectives and benchmarks on the path to permanent school site, fundraising and financial sustainability
- Choice and oversight of school administration in regards to:
  - Implementing the charter and maintaining adherence to its guiding principles and requirements
  - Overall suCCMSsful school academic program and achievement of educational goals
  - High parental and community involvement

The principal will be evaluated by the ED based on:
- Completion of required and enumerated (from job description above) job duties
- Implementing the charter and maintaining adherence to its guiding principles and requirements
- Overall successful school academic program and achievement of educational goals
- High parental and community involvement
- Creation of a school atmosphere of enthusiasm, warmth, and cooperation among all parties
Assessment tools will include staff and parent surveys, site visit, portfolio presentation and a rubric.

Teachers will be evaluated by the principal based on:
- Student progress as referenced from assessment measures
- Effectiveness of teaching strategies
- Performance of job duties

ELEMENT #6: Health and Safety of Pupils

We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, healthy, and protective atmosphere in which every member of the community will grow and prosper. CCMS will ensure the safety of the students and staff by complying with the current LAUSD independent charter school standards and policies for health and safety as well as all state and federal laws, including Education Code Section 44237. Each new employee or non-parent volunteer who will work in contact with students must submit to a fingerprint scan for the purpose of obtaining a criminal record summary. This requirement is a condition of employment. Also, employees hired by CCMS will be required to have a Mantoux tuberculosis test per Education Code 49406.

The school health and safety policy will be annually updated and reviewed, in consultation with staff and the specified Sub-Committee. This policy will be distributed to all staff and parents.

The school is in early negotiations with several sites and is also applying through prop 39 to receive a potential LAUSD site.

At future sites, CCMS will comply with the Uniform Building Codes, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), access requirements, and fire, health and structural safety requirements. The Certificate of Occupancy and other pertinent records will be kept on file by CCMS.

ELEMENT #7: Means to Achieve Racial/Ethnic Balance

CCMS is committed to making diligent efforts to recruit students from various racial and ethnic groups so as to achieve a balance that is reflective of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district. CCMS will maintain an accurate accounting of ethnic and racial balance of students enrolled in the school. It will also keep on file documentation on the efforts the school made to achieve racial and ethnic balance.

We are targeting the Hollywood Promise Neighborhood geographic areas for recruitment and leveraging our partnership with Youth Policy Institute to ensure we present school information to all the families in the community. In addition, founding parents and volunteers of CCMS have been, and will continue to, conduct outreach events at parks, community centers, churches and pre-schools with a large percentage of ethnic and racial minority students.

We have designed an outreach plan that is expected to result in the creation of strategic working relationships with dozens of local organizations.

ELEMENT #8: Admission Requirements

CCMS will actively recruit a socio-economically and ethnically diverse student population from the District and surrounding areas who are committed to the school's educational philosophy and instructional practices. Enrollment will be first come, first serve basis. CCMS will enroll all pupils who wish to attend (Education Code Section 47605 (d)(2)(A)). If the number of students applying for enrollment exceeds the openings available, entrance shall be determined by random public drawing in accordance with Education Code §47605(d)(2) and all federal requirements. Enrollment to the school shall be open to any resident of the State of California.

Exemption from the lottery, in compliance with Federal law and non-regulatory guidance, will be offered to a small number of students who are children of school faculty and founding parents. The number of students receiving this exemption will not exceed 10% of the total seats. Exemption in the lottery will also be given to siblings of enrolled students, also in compliance with Federal law and non-regulatory guidance.

ELEMENT #9: Annual Audit

CCMS's Board of Directors will select an independent auditor and oversee an annual audit of the school's financial affairs to be completed no later than 4 months after the close of the fiscal year. The audit will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements as well as attendance and enrollment accounting practices. The majority of current Board members of CCMS have sat on the board of charter schools that have all been deemed financially responsible by every measure. We expect CCMS to be equally transparent and sound in its financial matters.

The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Controller General of the United States. All auditors will report directly to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. To the extent required under applicable federal laws for audits of the major federal programs, the audit scope will expand to be in compliance with the requirements

described in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133, audits of states, local governments, and nonprofit organizations. Should OMB Circular A-133 be rescinded, audits of the major federal programs will be conducted in compliance with standards and provisions approved by OMB.

ELEMENT #10: Pupil Suspension and Expulsion

Students learn best in an environment where there are clear expectations about behavioral and community norms that allow them to feel safe. In order to maintain a positive learning community, CCMS will develop and maintain a comprehensive set of student discipline policies through the work of a committee that includes all interested parents, guardians, students, and staff and is in accordance with California Education Code Section 48900.

A student handbook that describes these policies and is currently in use at Larchmont Charter School and the Youth Policy Institute charter schools will be looked to in creating the first draft of this school's policies. Each family will receive a copy of these policies and be required to verify that they have reviewed them with their children at the time of enrollment or at the beginning of the school year.

ELEMENT #11: Employee Rights

Staff at CCMS will participate in the federal social security system and will have aCCMSs to other school sponsored retirement plans according to policies adopted by the Board of Directors for the school's employees. The committee to recommend retirement plans to the Board of Directors must include representatives of the administrative, teaching, and clerical staff should members of these groups wish to be represented on the committee. CCMS retains the option for its teachers to participate in the State Teachers Retirement System (or a similar program) and coordinate such participation, as appropriate, with the social security system or other reciprocal systems. Non-certificated employees will participate in the Social Security system. If the school should opt to participate in the STRS, or any other systems, CCMS shall work directly with the Los Angeles County Office of Education to forward in a timely fashion any required payroll deductions and related data.

CCMS has contracted with California CharterWorks to handle our payroll and accounting services. The on-site financial manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements for coverage has been made.

ELEMENT #12: Student Attendance

No student enrolled in the LAUSD will be required to attend CCMS. Students who reside in the attendance area but who choose not to attend CCMS will have the option of attending another school within the district or pursue an interdistrict-transfer in accordance with existing enrollment and transfer policies of the district.

ELEMENT #13: Description of Employee Rights

Job applicants for positions at CCMS will be considered through an open process, and if hired, will enter into a contractual agreement with the school. Any district union employee who is offered employment and chooses to work at CCMS will not be covered by his or her respective collective bargaining unit agreement, although CCMS may extend the same protections and benefits in individual employee contracts. Unless the employees elect to be represented by an organization for bargaining purposes, all employees will be individually contracted rating in at a level competitive to the district's salary schedules. The individual contract will address, among other issues, salary, health and welfare benefits, work schedules and responsibilities, accountability measurements, and standards for performance evaluations. Employee contracts are year-to-year, renewable each March 1st.

ELEMENT #14: Dispute Resolution Process, Oversight, Reporting and Renewal

Public Comments: The staff and Board members of CCMS agree to attempt to resolve all disputes regarding this charter pursuant to the terms of this section. Both will refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process.

CCMS will adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints alleging any action which would be prohibited by Title IX, or Section 504. The Family Handbook and Faculty Handbook, attached in the appendices of the Charter, provide a first draft for these procedures.

Disputes arising from within the school, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, Board members, and partner organizations, will be resolved pursuant to policies and practices developed by the school. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will, as an initial step, refer any complaints or reports regarding such internal disputes to the Board or administrative staff of CCMS for resolution. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the person or persons complaining, LAUSD may, among other things, refer the complaining person or persons to the appropriate state or federal agency.

ELEMENT #15: Collective Bargaining

CCMS will be the exclusive public employer of all employees of the charter school for collective bargaining purposes. Unless the employees elect to be represented by an organization for bargaining purposes, all employees will be individually contracted.

ELEMENT #16: School Closure

In event of school closure, the assets and liabilities of the school will be disposed of by the CCMS Board of Directors to another charter school, non-profit corporation or educational entity in accordance with the asset disposition provisions of the school's bylaws. Only unrestricted funds will be used to pay creditors in respect to regulations stating that categorical funds including AB 602 funds from LAUSD must be returned to the source of the funds.

In the event of school closure, the Board of Directors will provide for the transfer of necessary pupil records to the LAUSD and/or attendance area district.