

ASPIRE CHARTER SCHOOL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is not often that opportunities reveal themselves at the most propitious times. Therefore, when South Region ES #4 in South Gate became one of the sites for application, Aspire was thrilled. Aspire believes that strategic and *well planned expansion and growth maintains the excellence of its program* for students. Additionally, Aspire is honored to have garnered exceptional support from South Gate city officials and city staff.

Aspire Public Schools Charter Management Organization (CMO) was founded in 1998 by experienced educators and entrepreneurs to enrich students' lives and reshape local public school systems. Aspire is the first K-12 CMO started in California. Aspire has always been a fiscally solvent organization and has successfully opened and renewed 25 charter schools across California. No Aspire charter has ever been revoked and all have experienced positive audits.

Aspire's four-part mission is:

- To increase the academic performance of California's diverse students
- To develop effective educators
- To catalyze change in public schools
- To share successful practices with other forward-thinking educators

Aspire has a ten year history of starting and running high performing charter schools in California. Based on the 2009 Academic Performance Index, the *average Aspire school grew 16 times its state target*, and now is the **highest performing district in California** that has 10 or more schools that serve at least 50% low income students. Currently the Aspire organization operates 25 schools statewide. Aspire clusters elementary and secondary schools to create a K-12 feeder pattern.

Aspire opened its first school in Los Angeles in 2005 in Huntington Park and has added four additional schools to the **Huntington Park Cluster**. Having completed the HP cluster in 2009, Aspire is ready, and prepared, to grow a new cluster close by. Aspire could not have been more excited to see the Public School Choice Resolution pass and include a possibility of applying for a site in the nearby **community of South Gate**.

Aspire will proudly open South Region ES #4 and relieve the overcrowded neighboring schools. Aspire is committed to serving students from Bryson and San Gabriel Elementary schools. Aspire is proud that virtually all of its schools serve students from the immediate, surrounding communities.

Since Aspire has been extremely successful with similar student bodies at three elementary schools in Huntington Park, Aspire is confident it will experience similar student outcomes in

South Gate. Aspire demonstrates a proven track record: APIs at our three HP schools outperformed all the neighboring schools in Huntington Park, as well as those in South Gate in 2008-2009.

Aspire's vision is based on a philosophy of Five Core Values. These values are listed below and match the elements that comprise the application for South Elementary #4.

1. Collaboration : Working collectively to accomplish more than what is possible alone

Aspire strongly believes in the power of collaboration. Aspire educators collaborate daily on planning instruction and reviewing data. Teachers work together to make changes in the pacing of lessons when needed to move students to proficiency. Teacher teams are comprised of lead teachers (successful experienced Aspire teachers) and a small group of teachers at their grade level.

Aspire is eager to collaborate with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for special education by adhering to the Modified Consent Decree and with facility services to perform major deferred maintenance on the site itself.

2. Ownership : Individual and group accountability for results, actions and decisions

Aspire utilizes data to drive all decisions and instruction. Multiple forms of data are available to schools to diagnose and plan effective instruction and intervention. Aspire administers quarterly benchmark exams, as well as, individual tests (Cycles of Inquiry) for each standard. Results are disseminated rapidly by standard, content strand and/or proficiency level by the Aspire data team. A sample of a portion of a typical correspondence to a principal: "Based on the winter benchmark projections, we will create a list of AYP target students who are on the cusp of proficiency for additional academic supports." From this list, a principal can organize intervention groups immediately within the classroom and afterschool.

Aspire practices accountability in a variety of ways. Each school is held accountable for its results, as is each classroom teacher and principal and student and the Los Angeles Area Superintendent. Students are tested on each California state standard and staff regularly analyzes data to improve instruction. Data is utilized to guide remediation and re teaching. Aspire publicizes all data with students and parents. Pre and post test results, as well as Aspire Benchmark data are posted in every classroom so students and families can track and celebrate their growth.

3. Purposefulness : Deliberate action focused on the organization's goals and priorities

Aspire is focused on student outcomes. The Home Office in Oakland generates timely data reports to provide schools with needed information, student by student, content strand by

content strand. Each educator continually receives sufficient data to remediate, modify and/or accelerate instruction.

Aspire is also focused on College readiness. Each classroom is named for a college and uses the regalia and language of the university or college to message the “College for Certain” mantra to all students. Every morning all pupils chant their own college cheers to start the school day alongside their parents and community.

To further ensure positive student outcomes, Aspire has lengthened the school day and the school year. The Aspire school calendar provides a longer day (25 minutes longer than other local elementary schools) and a longer school year (187 days).

4. Quality : Commitment to excellence and the discipline to continually improve

Aspire is committed to providing exemplary instruction and a college ready curriculum for each student. The quality of curriculum, professional development and classroom instruction is monitored regularly by peers, principals and the Area Superintendent. Due to the small size of Aspire schools, (elementary schools are never larger than 350 students) no teacher or student is overlooked or lost. When teachers cannot meet the needs of the students, they are provided additional support by lead teachers, content coaches and administration. After a reasonable length of time and support, teachers who cannot improve, leave Aspire. The commitment and expectation level is very high for all staff and students.

Aspire’s curriculum has a proven track record across the state of California, as well as in Huntington Park, a neighboring community. The model is so successful that no Aspire school has been in Program Improvement. Aspire’s commitment to excellence is modeled by the entire educational staff. The Area Superintendent worked for 38 years in LAUSD; her most recent job in 2006 was to supervise South Gate elementary schools.

Aspire will recruit and select only the finest principals and teachers for South Region ES #4. The recruitment and selection process for staff is very comprehensive and rigorous because Aspire recognizes that the teachers and the principal are the keys to success. Home Office does the general recruitment for teachers and principals. For the principal, the selection committee will interview final candidates who have been screened by the Aspire Home Office and the Area Superintendent. The committee will include two South Gate community representatives, parents, as well as Aspire staff members. Once the principal(s) are selected they will begin to recruit and select staff.

Aspire traditionally opens schools by seeding them with experienced successful teachers. These teachers provide the foundation for the newer staff and assist in supporting and training new staff. The selection process for teachers is rigorous, comprehensive and includes a demonstration lesson. Following the demo, the entire staff interviews the candidate again.

5. Customer Service : Responsiveness to the needs of external and internal customers

Aspire searches for and nurtures community and business partners. In Huntington Park, Aspire has partnered with Disney Studios, Home Depot and Kaboom to build two playgrounds at two HP elementary schools. Kaboom has offered to partner with Aspire at the South Region Elementary #4 for a playground. Aspire worked to collect canned foods for the Salvation Army in Huntington Park and students from Aspire schools have participated in numerous community parades and activities.

Locally, Aspire has met numerous times with the Southeast Cities Coalition and members of the South Gate Mayor's staff and city officials.

In South Gate, Aspire has already joined in local meetings and activities, as well as, attended meetings of community leaders and many City Council meetings. The future plans for Aspire include partnering with South Gate Park to do joint activities with the school and the Department of Recreation.

Other major partners include:

- ☉ The Broad Foundation assists with facilities costs for new Aspire schools in Los Angeles.
- ☉ The Dell Foundation funds the Area Superintendent position and resources and supplies.
- ☉ The Gates Foundation funded a \$60 million *“College Ready Promise”* grant to improve college entrance rates and teacher effectiveness across five CMOs in Los Angeles.
- ☉ Teach for America utilized two Aspire schools as training sites in summer 2009 and provides candidates for teaching jobs at Aspire.
- ☉ Human Services Association (HAS) *“Pasitos”* Early Childhood Education Programs will occupy the adjacent South Region EEC #2 and operate a full-day prekindergarten program for four year olds. HAS will align its curriculum, parent education and teacher professional development with Aspire.

Aspire Attributes for Success:

- ☉ **Small sized schools.** All elementary school populations are less than 350 students so each teacher and student is held accountable for high performance. No one falls through the cracks.
- ☉ **Looping.** All elementary students stay with their teacher for two years. This accelerates the level of instruction and maximizes every learning moment.

- ☉ **College for Certain Culture.** Aspire focuses all students on going to and staying in college from kindergarten through high school. Each class has a college identity.
- ☉ **Quality of teachers and principals.** Aspire recruits and selects only the highest quality teachers and principals through a rigorous process. Each teacher and leader is held accountable for results.
- ☉ **Stable teaching staff.** Aspire boasts an 85% retention rate at the schools in Los Angeles.
- ☉ **Teacher training and support.** Training for all teachers is based on needs of the students they serve. Aspire does Aspire-wide, region-wide and local site professional development on a regular basis.
- ☉ **Data driven instruction and decision making.** Aspire utilizes data to drive all decisions and instruction. Multiple forms of data are available to schools to diagnose and plan effective instruction and remediation. Aspire administers quarterly benchmark exams, as well as, individual tests (Cycles of Inquiry) for each standard. Results are disseminated rapidly by standard, content strand and/or proficiency level. Teacher data teams and administrators analyze, diagnose and remediate constantly.
- ☉ **Additional instruction time, longer school day and school year** All Aspire students receive instruction for additional time each day, as well as for additional days each year.

Aspire Public Schools will be honored to continue our work at South Region ES #4. It is our mission to serve students. Our experience, our energy, our teamwork and our creativity will advance the future of our students. And, as a result of our collective work, great things will happen. Aspire has the will, skills and passion to rise to the challenges ahead.

ASPIRE CHARTER SCHOOL

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Pasa pocas veces que las oportunidades se presentan en el momento mas propicio. Por consiguiente, cuando la escuela elemental de la region del sur ES#4 se presentó como una de los sitios para el cual se pudiera aplicar, Aspire se emocionó muchísimo. Aspire cree firmemente que la ***expansión estratégica y bien planeada, y el crecimiento ordenado mantienen la excelencia de su programa para estudiantes.*** Adicionalmente, Aspire se enorgullece del extraordinario apoyo a su candidatura manifestado hasta el momento por dirigentes y empleados de la ciudad de South Gate.

Aspire Public Schools Charter Management Organization (CMO)- Organización de Administración de Escuelas Públicas Charter Aspire- fue fundada en 1998 por educadores de reconocido trayectoria y por emprendedores para enriquecer la vida de estudiantes, y renovar los sistemas de la educación pública local. Aspire fue la primera CMO K-12 fundada en California. Aspire ha sido siempre una organización solvente fiscalmente, que ha abierto y renovado 25 escuelas chárter a traves de California. Ningún chárter de Aspire jamás ha sido revocado y todos han recibido auditorías positivas.

La misión cuatripartita de Aspire es;

- Incrementar el rendimiento académico de la diversa población estudiantil de California
- Desarrollar educadores efectivos
- Catalizar el cambio en la educación pública
- Compartir prácticas exitosas con otros educadores progresistas

Aspire tiene diez años de historia en fundar y operar escuelas chárter de alto rendimiento en California. Basado en el Academic Performance Index para 2009 (API's = Indice de Rendimiento Académico) ***la escuela chárter Aspire promedio creció 16 veces la meta estatal,*** y en este momento es el **distrito de mas alto rendimiento en California** con 10 o mas escuelas sirviendo a por lo menos 50% de estudiantes de bajos ingresos. Actualmente la organización Aspire opera 25 escuelas a traves del estado. Aspire aglutina escuelas primarias y secundarias para establecer un recorrido continuo completo de K-12

Aspire abrió su primera escuela de la zona de Los Angeles en 2005 en Huntington Park y ha añadido otras cuatro escuelas para formar la **concentración de Huntington Park** . Habiendo completado la concentración HP en 2009, Aspire se encuentra lista y deseosa de arrancar con otra concentración de escuelas en zonas aledañas. Aspire no podría estar mas emocionada al ver que la aprobación de la Resolución de Escogencia de Escuela Públicas (Public School Choice Resolution) incluía la posibilidad de aplicar para una escuela nueva el la **comunidad vecina de South Gate.**

Aspire orgullosamente arbrirá le escuela South Region ES #4 y remediará la sobrepoblación estudiantil de las escuelas a su alrededor. Aspire está comprometida con servir a estudiantes de las primarias Bryson y San Gabriel Elementary. Aspire se enorgullece con el hecho de que casi todas sus escuelas sirven a estudiantes de las comunidades inmediatamente a su alrededor.

Dado que Aspire ha sido supremamente exitoso con grupos estudiantiles muy similares en Huntington Park, confiamos en que logrará resultados muy parecidos con los estudiantes de South Gate.

Aspire demuestra un formidable índice de éxito : **los API's de nuestras tres escuelas primarias en HP superan con creces los de todas las escuelas vecinas en Huntington Park, además de todos los de South Gate en 2008-2009.**

La visión de Aspire se basa en una filosofía de Cinco Valores Intrínsecos. Estos valores se enumeran a continuación y reflejan los elementos que constituyen la solicitud para South Elementary #4.

1. Colaboración: trabajando juntos para lograr mas de lo que se logra trabajando individualmente

Aspire cree firmemente en el poder de la colaboración. Los educadores Aspire colaboran diariamente entre si planeando la instrucción y revisando datos. Los maestros se colaboran para hacer cambios en el desarrollo de las lecciones cuando así se requiera para impulsar a los alumnos hasta el nivel de proficientes. Los equipos de maestros se componen de un maestro líder (exitosos maestros de trayectoria Aspire) y un pequeño grupo de maestros del mismo grado.

Aspire colaborara estrechamente con Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) en lo que se refiere a educación especial, siguiendo los términos del Modified Consent Decree, y en lo que se refiere a servicios constructivos para el edificio para su mantenimiento a través del tiempo.

2. Sentido de adueñamiento: la cultura de rendir cuentas por resultados, acciones y decisiones individuales y colectivas

Aspire se basa en datos , cifras y hechos para la toma de decisiones y para impulsar la instrucción. Múltiples fuentes de datos están a disposición de cada escuela para fines diagnósticos y para planear efectivamente la instrucción y la intervención. Cada trimestre Aspire tiene exámenes para calibrar cada nivel ademas de tests individuales (Cycles of Inquiry) para cada estándar. Los resultados son diseminados en corto tiempo por el equipo de análisis de datos de Aspire, discriminados por estándar, por contenido y/o por nivel de proficiencia. Una muestra prototipo del tipo de comunicación que el equipo de datos podría sostener con una directora, después de analizar los datos recogidos, sería: "Basados en los exámenes del trimestre de invierno, elaboraremos una lista de los estudiantes que están cerca al objetivo AYP y en la cúspide de proficiencia que requerirán apoyo académico adicional para lograr llegar a la calificación requerida." Con este listado la directora podrá crear grupos de intervención inmediata dentro del salón de clase, y para los programas de despues de la jornada escolar.

Aspire practica, de muchas maneras, la cultura de que se deben rendir cuentas y que todos debemos ser responsables de nuestros actos. Cada escuela es responsable de sus resultados, así como cada maestro por los resultados de su salón, cada director/a, cada estudiante y aún la Superintendente de la zona de Los Angeles . A los estudiantes se les hacen exámenes regulares sobre cada estándar estatal. Los empleados Aspire analizan datos con mucha regularidad para perfeccionar la instrucción. Datos son utilizados para determinar la remediación y la re-enseñanza. Aspire comparte todos los datos con

los estudiantes y padres de familia. Los resultados pre, y post examen, además de la calificación óptima a lograr para cada estándar Aspire son exhibidos en cada salón para que tanto los estudiantes como sus familias puedan monitorear su progreso y celebrar juntos su crecimiento.

3. Sentido de propósito: Acción específica enfocada hacia las metas y prioridades de la organización

Aspire se enfoca en los resultados de los estudiantes. La sede Principal de la organización, en Oakland, genera reportes estadísticos oportunos y frecuentes para suministrarles a las escuelas la información requerida, puntualmente , estudiante por estudiante, materia por materia. Cada educador recibe continuamente información estadística suficiente para remediar, modificar y/o acelerar la instrucción.

Aspire se enfoca adicionalmente sobre la preparación de los estudiantes para la Universidad. Cada salón recibe el nombre de una Universidad acreditada, y exhibe elementos decorativos propios de esa Universidad dentro del salón de clase para difundirles claramente a los jóvenes el mensaje " A la Universidad con Seguridad". Cada mañana, todo el cuerpo estudiantil canta la porra de la universidad designada de su salón, para comenzar el día, acompañados por padres y miembros de la comunidad

Adicionalmente, para asegurar resultados estudiantiles positivos, Aspire ha alargado la jornada escolar, y el año lectivo. El calendario escolar de Aspire asegura un día de clase más largo (media hora mas de instrucción que otras escuelas primarias locales) y un año escolar más intensivo y largo (187 días).

4. Calidad: Comprometidos con la excelencia y con la disciplina del mejoramiento continuo

Aspire está firmemente comprometido a proveerle a cada estudiante instrucción ejemplar y un currículo que lo prepara para la Universidad. La calidad del currículo, del desarrollo profesional, y de la instrucción dentro de cada clase son monitoreados con regularidad por compañeros, por el director y por la Superintendente de Area. Dado el tamaño reducido de las escuelas Aspire (las escuelas primarias nunca pasan de 350 estudiantes) ningún maestro o estudiante se descuida ni es pasado por alto . Si los maestros no logran satisfacer las necesidades de todos sus estudiantes, reciben apoyo y refuerzo adicional del maestro líder de grupo, de los capacitadores y de la administración. Si después de recibir todo el apoyo necesario durante un periodo razonable, el maestro todavía no alcanzan a mejorar su rendimiento hasta el nivel exigido por Aspire, éste debe retirarse de la organización. El nivel de compromiso y las expectativas son muy altas, tanto para empleados como para estudiantes y sus familias.

El riguroso currículo de Aspire goza de un récord comprobado de éxito a través del estado de California, y en la comunidad vecina de Huntington Park también. El modelo es tan exitoso que **ni una sola** escuela Aspire ha estado en "Program Improvement" el Programa de Mejoramiento.. El compromiso de excelencia en Aspire es modelado por el cuerpo docente en su totalidad . La Superintendente de Area trabajó en LAUSD durante 38 años ; su mas reciente cargo, en el 2006, fue como supervisora de todas las escuelas primarias de South Gate .

Aspire reclutará y seleccionará solo los mejores directores y maestros para la escuela South Region ES #4. El proceso de reclutamiento y selección del personal es muy completo y riguroso ya que Aspire reconoce que los maestros y directores son las claves del éxito. La Sede Principal se encarga de la primera ronda del reclutamiento general. Para el puesto de director de la escuela, se conforma un comité de selección que entrevistará a los candidatos que hayan sido pre-seleccionados por la Sede Principal y la Superintendente de Area. Este Comité de Selección incluirá a dos representantes de la comunidad de South Gate, a padres de familia, y empleados Aspire . Cuando ya ha sido escogido el (los) director/es éstos comenzarán a reclutar y seleccionar el personal docente.

Aspire tradicionalmente abre escuelas dotándolos de maestros exitosos de experiencia y reconocida trayectoria. Estos maestros constituyen la fundación sobre la cual se apoyan los maestros mas novatos, y son los que asisten, apoyan y entrenan a los más nuevos. El proceso de selección de maestros es riguroso, comprehensivo, e incluye una lección de prueba. Despues de la lección de demostración, el cuerpo docente en su totalidad entrevista al candidato una vez mas.

5. Servicio al Cliente: Atentos siempre a las necesidades de clients externos e internos

Aspire busca asociados communitarios y corporativos y los cuida.

En Huntington Park, Aspire se ha asociado con Disney Studios, Home Depot and KaBooM para construir dos parques de juegos en dos de sus escuelas primarias. KaBooM ya ha ofrecido asociarse nuevamente con Aspire para construir una zona de juegos infantiles en South Region Elementary #4 . Aspire coordinó la recogida de una gran cantidad de latas de comida para el Salvation Army en Huntington Park; estudiantes de las escuelas Aspire han participado en numerosos desfiles locales y actividad en, y con, la comunidad.

Localmente, Aspire se ha reunido en numerosas ocasiones con miembros de la Coalición de las Ciudades del Sureste, y con miembros de la oficina del Acalde de South Gate y otros oficiales de la ciudad.

En South Gate, Aspire ya ha participado en reuniones y actividades locales, además de asistir a varias reuniones con líderes de la comunidad, y a reuniones del concejo de la ciudad . Los planes futuros de Aspire incluyen asociarse con el parque de South Gate Park para actividades conjuntas de la escuela con el Departamento of Recreación.

Otros asociados incluyen:

1. La Fundación Broad que colabora con los costos de desarrollo de nuevas escuelas Aspire en la zona de Los Angeles.
2. La Fundación Dell que patrocina el cargo de Superintendente de Area , sus recursos e insumos.
3. La Fundación Gates que acaba de otorgar \$60 millones en financiación para "College Ready Promise" (Promesa de Preparación cabal para la Universidad)para incrementar la rata de aceptación a la Universidad, y la efectividad docente en 5 organizaciones de escuelas chárter.

4. Teach for America que utilizó las instalaciones de dos escuelas Aspire como campos de entrenamiento de sus maestros durante el verano del 2009 y que provee candidatos para puestos docentes en Aspire.
5. Human Services Association (HAS) "Pasitos" con sus programas de educación de la temprana edad tiene planes de operar el Centro de Educación Temprana , SOUTH REGION EEC #2 en el edificio adyacente , para proveer educación de pre-kinder de jornada completa para niños de cuatro años. HAS alineará su currículo, su educación para padres y el desarrollo profesional de su personal acorde con la de Aspire.

Atributos de Aspire para el **Exito**:

- **Escuelas pequeñas.** La población de las escuelas primarias nunca supera los 350 estudiantes con el fin de que tanto maestros como alumnos puedan lograr altos rendimientos. Nadie se queda sin la atención requerida para triunfar.
- **Pasando año.** Todos los alumnos en primaria permanecen con su mismo maestro por dos años consecutivos. Esto acelera el nivel de instrucción, y maximiza cada segundo de aprendizaje.
- **Cultura de "A la Universidad con Seguridad".** Desde Kinder hasta 12º grado Aspire infunden cada estudiante el ir a la Universidad y permanecer en ella hasta graduarse. Cada salón de clase está identificado con una universidad de renombre.
- **La Calidad de docentes y directores.** Aspire recluta y selecciona solo a los profesionales de la más alta calidad, por medio de un proceso riguroso. Cada maestro y líder es responsable de rendir cuentas por sus resultados.
- **Personal Docente estable.** Aspire ha llegado al 85% de retención de maestros en la zona de Los Angeles.
- **Entrenamiento de maestros y apoyo continuo.** La capacitación constante y el entrenamiento de todos los maestros se basa en las necesidades de los estudiantes que atienden. Aspire organiza con regularidad capacitaciones y desarrollo profesional a nivel de toda la organización, a nivel regional, y a nivel local .
- **Instrucción and decisiones impulsadas por datos, cifras y hechos.** Aspire utiliza datos estadísticos para la toma de todas las decisiones y para determinar la instrucción. Múltiples fuentes de datos están a disposición de las escuelas para diagnosticar and planear instrucción efectiva y remediación. Aspire hace exámenes trimestralmente para evaluar el nivel de los estudiantes, con pruebas individuales adicionalmente(Cycles of Inquiry) para cada estándar. Los resultados son diseminados muy rápidamente por estándar, por contenido y/o por nivel de proficiencia. Equipos de maestros y administradores analizan constantemente los datos para fines diagnósticos, y para tomar acciones correctivas.

- **Tiempo de instrucción adicional, día de clase más largo, año escolar más largo.** Todos los estudiantes en Aspire reciben más horas de instrucción en el día, además de tener un año lectivo más largo.

Para Aspire Public Schools sería un orgullo operar la escuela primaria South Region ES #4 y trabajar con la comunidad y las familias de las escuelas en South Gate. Servir a los estudiantes es nuestra misión. Nuestra experiencia, nuestro nivel de energía, y nuestro espíritu de trabajo en equipo adelantarán el futuro de nuestros alumnos. Y como resultado de nuestro trabajo colectivo, grandes cosas pasarán. Aspire tiene la voluntad, la habilidad y la pasión para enfrentarse a los retos que se avecinan.

PART 1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.a.i. Not for Profit: Has the organization submitted necessary paperwork to prove that it is not a for profit organization?

In accordance with California Charter School Law, **Aspire** submitted the 501(c)(3) paperwork for the two buildings of South Region ES #4. Aspire Public Schools (hereafter referred to as “**Aspire**”), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public benefits corporation, was founded in 1998 by experienced educators and entrepreneurs to **enrich students’ lives and reshape local public school systems**.

1.a.ii. **Student Enrollment:** Has the organization submitted appropriate waivers to automatically enroll requisite number of students from the impacted campuses that the new school is intended to relieve, and that the students coming from the attendance Regions of the designated overcrowded schools will be served first and foremost?

Students from the impacted neighboring elementary schools, the new school is intended to relieve, will be recruited. Aspire will work closely with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to ensure that all **students from the feeder campuses** will be enrolled. Aspire will work with LAUSD to apply for any necessary waivers.

1.a.iii. **Student Composition:** Has the organization agreed that the student composition at each new school must be reflective of the student composition at the school it is intended to relieve (in terms of demographics, including but not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, English Learners, Standard English Learners, students with disabilities, foster care placement), with ongoing review mechanisms in place to ensure retention and student composition at each school continues to reflect that of the overall school community.

Aspire South Region ES#4 will be divided into two small K-5 schools. One school (“house”) will have 15 classrooms and the other 16 classrooms with a combined total of 620 seats. South Region ES #4 is intended to relieve overcrowding at Bryson and San Gabriel elementary schools. Aspire will reflect the demographics of these schools:

DEMOGRAPHICS	BRYSON	SAN GABRIEL
Latino	98%	98%
Special Education	9%	10%
Gifted & Talented	4%	2%
Economically Disadvantaged	86%	93%
English Learners	30%	40%
Reclassified as Fluent English Proficient	13%	11%

1.a.iv. **Fiscal Solvency:** If an outside provider, have they provided financial data to demonstrate solvency?

Aspire, with 25 campuses in California including 5 in the LAUSD, has demonstrated financial solvency at every campus. Aspire has a history of starting and running successful charter schools in California.

1.a.v. **Special Education:** Has the organization submitted a signed agreement to adhere to and fulfill requirements of the Modified Consent Decree..

As evidenced at all 25 Aspire schools, all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act of 2004, are fully implemented.

1.b. **Student Population:** The applicant has provided evidence of success in serving students with similar demographics.

Aspire has been extremely successful at four schools in neighboring Huntington Park (Local District 6, LAUSD). Aspire’s middle school outperformed all middle schools in the southeast cities. **API scores at Aspire’s three elementary schools ranked #1, #2, and #3 in Huntington Park: Aspire-Antonio Maria Lugo 825, Aspire-Huntington Park Charter 818, and Aspire-Clarendon 786** (Aspire-Titan opened in 2009).

1.c. **Vision, Mission and Philosophy:**

- Are ambitious, measurable and attainable.
- Reflect educational philosophy and goals of planning team.
- Are clear, focused, innovative and compelling mission that will lead to high academic and social outcomes

- Components align together and holistically support the mission
- Vision is meaningful, measurable, and focused on high academic achievement
- Articulates the need for the school and the intended impact on students and the community
- Describes the school's grade structure from inception to full enrollment

Aspire's mission is to provide all students with an exceptional education that will allow them to excel inside and outside the classroom. The school seeks to achieve this mission by providing students a rigorous core curriculum, a well-trained staff, high standards and expectations, extended instructional hours and support, personalized learning opportunities, and early access to college-preparatory experiences. Aspire expects students to become self-motivated, competent, voracious, adept and life-long learners; prepared for college and the 21st Century world. Aspire's educational program is designed to **increase college-going rates for students who have historically been under-represented in college** and who face barriers accessing a college education, specifically:

- Students from low-income families
- Students whose primary home language is not English
- Students living in communities with low-performing schools and low college-going rates
- Students who would be the first in their families to attend college

1.d. Educational Plan:

- Thorough proposals should reflect the following characteristics:
- Thorough educational program that will likely result in academic success for ALL students via a personalized learning experience
- Standards-based, academically rigorous curriculum
- High academic expectations and strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at-risk
- Use of proven instructional models/methods
- Engaging, authentic, and culturally relevant instructional strategies
- Teachers empowered to determine and guide what and how students learn
- Connections between classroom learning and the community
- Pedagogy supports mission and has been proved effective with similar student populations

Aspire educators use the organization's Instructional Guidelines that are based on the California State Standards. Appendix 1 is an example of a Math instructional guideline, Appendix 2 is a sample Language Arts pacing guide, and Appendix 3 is an example of a 5-step lesson plan. Instructional Guidelines have been designed using research-based best practices and the California Standards. Instructional Guidelines are not a script, and good implementation of **Aspire's program requires highly skilled teachers**. Model lessons by exemplary teachers, visits to Aspire model classrooms, and coaching by the school principal all help individual teachers implement the Instructional Guidelines effectively. Broadly, the Instructional Guidelines require use of a variety of pedagogical strategies, including:

- **Explicit Instruction:** provides students a traditional form of teaching wherein the teacher presents the lesson and students individually demonstrate their new skills or knowledge.¹
- **Guided and Independent Practice:** Students are given multiple structured opportunities to practice newly and previously learned skills and knowledge. Practice opportunities are concentrated immediately after explicit instruction, and also distributed over the weeks and months following introduction of new skills. Practice increases students' retention of the newly learned material.
- **Problem Solving:** gives students a step-by-step process for determining a solution.
- **Inquiry:** presents students with a problem or question, around which they formulate and test theories to work towards a solution.

Technology is used as a tool for research, communication, and production. Students will have access to movable laptop carts or banks of computers throughout the school. Students exercise their higher-order thinking skills through simulations and presentations, their communication and production skills through electronic mail and publishing, and their research skills through use of electronic references, including the Internet.

¹ Adams, G.L., & Engelmann, S. (1996). Research on Direct Instruction. Seattle, WA: Educational Achievement Systems.

Curriculum Standards – Aspire schools use a combination of state adopted programs and elements developed in-house to build basic skills, higher-order thinking skills, and life-skills. Aspire’s curriculum is deeply rooted in California state standards, and is intended to be rigorous and relevant to students. Aspire’s curriculum is clearly articulated as a K-5 system and includes language arts, mathematics, science, and social science. Other subjects essential to a healthy and balanced life are also covered through classes or programs in visual and performing arts, health and nutrition, and physical education. Core curriculum materials are chosen by Aspire’s Chief Academic Officer through a collaborative process with instructional coaches, teachers and principals. In addition, individual classroom educators are encouraged to use flexibility and their professional discretion to supplement curriculum with a variety of texts and materials, depending on the needs of their students.

- **Language Arts:** To help students develop strong literacy skills, Aspire uses a comprehensive language arts curriculum based on meeting students’ personal reading and writing needs through individual and small group instruction using a variety of texts. South Region ES #4 will also use the portions of the state adopted *Imagine It* reading program that enhance reading instruction. Students progress through a series of guided reading lessons based on each student’s instructional level. Writing instruction uses the *Six Traits of Writing from the North West Regional Laboratory*: ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. Additionally, the school uses *Lucy Calkins’s Writer’s Workshop* to teach the writer’s craft.
- **Mathematics:** The math curriculum is based on the California state standards for mathematics. Currently, Aspire uses the Harcourt Brace mathematics program and is piloting Singapore Math in certain grades to ensure expectations are high and students learn from real-life problems.
- **Science:** The Aspire program examines scientific concepts in thematic units. The units emphasize investigation using the scientific method (generating hypotheses and designing experiments to test the hypotheses), and focus on application of the scientific method to everyday life. Content is aligned with the California State Framework. The school currently uses the *Full Option Science System (FOSS)* as a curriculum resource.
- **Social Studies:** The social studies content at Aspire is integrated into language arts and is designed to help students make sense of their everyday life in the midst of complex social, economic and political forces. The curriculum helps students become historically literate (including culture, geography, politics, economics, and ethics) and active, informed citizens (including U.S. policy and effective research techniques).
- **Visual and Performing Arts:** Appreciation and participation in the arts are essential to each student’s development. Music inspires students, helps ideas come to life by using multiple intelligences, and ensures cultural literacy. Art and/or music are offered as separate classes, integrated into core classroom thematic units, or offered as a before- or after-school enrichment activity.
- **Physical education:** Students are expected to develop their physical abilities and fitness. Physical education may also be offered as a separate class, integrated into core classroom thematic units, or offered as a before- or after-school enrichment activity. State and federally mandated physical fitness tests are administered. *Playworks*, a nationally recognized physical education and team building organization, augments the physical education program.
- **Technology:** Students are expected to develop technological proficiency in basic use of personal computers and the internet. Technology skill development is embedded within core classes.
- **Life Skills:** To be successful in the real world, students need to be able to work effectively together, listen to each other, make good decisions and lead respectfully. Aspire incorporates these “life skills” throughout the curriculum using the **CARES framework (Cooperation, Assertiveness, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control)**. Teachers will both model good behavior and explicitly guide students in learning how to cooperate and collaborate with one another.

To meet the needs of English Learners, Aspire has added a number of language acquisition teaching strategies to its core program, including Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English. Specifically, those strategies include:

- realia (real objects and materials)
- manipulatives (drawings, posters, brainstorming-clusters, graphs, tables, maps, props, multimedia presentations, storyboards, storymaps)
- visuals (study-prints, textbook illustrations, overheads-projected prints, reproductions of paintings and documents)
- graphic organizers (matrices, Venn diagrams and webs)

- planned opportunities for student interaction within the classrooms (creating a skit and acting it out, cooperative learning, collaborative groups and student-generated writing based on personal experience)
- engaging, authentic, and culturally relevant instructional strategies

All teachers have professional development in teaching English Learners in their appropriate content area, which includes **Guided Language Acquisition Development (GLAD) training**. The English Language Development Standards have been mapped to Aspire's Instructional Guidelines. Achievement data guides instruction and professional development as it relates to English Learners. Achievement data from publisher materials, teacher-designed assessments and Aspire's benchmark assessments are continually analyzed by subgroup and individual students. Results from the California Standards Test are reviewed with the Advisory School Council which has input into the plan to support English Learners.

Aspire teachers spend a lot of time planning and developing lessons and assessments. It is part of the *Aspire culture to collaborate* on lessons and decision making. Teachers meet regularly formally and informally. During any of these times, teachers and principals make decisions about scheduling and programs. Lead teachers work with their grade level teams to guide lesson planning and pacing. Modifications occur when data informs that a new direction is needed. Aspire's intranet includes many different models of lessons and assessments that teachers use as foundation for their work.

Aspire teachers plan projects that connect with the community. Huntington Park Aspire students and families donated 5,000 canned goods to support local destitute Salvation Army families for the 2008 Christmas season. Huntington Park City Council members were present at the hand-over. Projects are designed to take advantage of community resources and problems. Teachers use current events and issues as teachable moments and will continue working with the community of the new school.

1.e. Community Impact and Involvement: Does the applicant have a strong understanding of the community it wishes to serve?

Aspire's educational program is designed for students who have historically faced barriers accessing a college education. Typical Aspire students are from low-income families, English is not the home language, and they often live in communities with low-performing schools and high dropout rates. Aspire's work in Los Angeles has been with a **very similar community**. Also, the leader of the L.A. Aspire schools, while a LAUSD Director in Local District 6, supervised all the South Gate feeder schools to this new site.

Ramon Miramontes, Executive Director for the **Southwest Cities Schools Coalition** (Appendix 24), writes:

"Aspire has a proven track record of operating high quality public K-12 charter schools...It has demonstrated itself as a successful educational institution that offers a superb K-12 college prep academic curriculum to students...Aspire is a known entity in the Southeast communities and its teachers, staff and management personnel have earned the respect and trust of local stakeholders."

1.f. Leadership and Governance: The planning team should represent a depth and breadth of skills necessary to provide a high quality educational program that will result in:

- strong academic outcomes
- long-term vision to make this school a success
- tangible ties to community
- effective oversight
- strong financial and operational skills

Aspire is the **oldest public state charter management organization (CMO)** with a clearly defined focus. Aspire attracts educators interested in working in accountable, innovative, collaborative environments — teachers and principals who are themselves educational entrepreneurs. The Aspire Area Superintendent worked 38 years in the LAUSD in positions that included Director of the Charter Office and Local District Director. Some teachers and staff also bring District experience to Aspire. Teachers applying for Aspire experience a multiple-stage approach that includes: a resume screen, interview with a site hiring committee, demonstration lesson with students, and reference checks.

1.g. Fiscal Plan: Has the applicant team been able to effectively describe how their financial plan aligns to their academic plan?

Appendix 4 is a preliminary “2-house budget.” In addition to site expenses, **Aspire’s Home Office provides resources** such as Instructional Coaches and data analysis and support. School budgets are developed to maximize resources with academic targets. The focus, ***must achieve***, ensures that all schools **hit their state API target. The guiding principle for the budget process is “Put Students First.”** This manifests itself in several ways:

- At the school level, Aspire invests in things that help students perform, including **after school programs and reading intervention**
- Aspire is a **data driven organization**; using **Cycles Of Inquiry (COI)** and **benchmark assessments** throughout each school year to identify key areas of student performance that require more attention. When needs are identified, resources are deployed to address those areas.
- **Instructional Coaches** are provided to school sites based on student need; if a school shows an indication that there is a concern with student achievement, coaches are redeployed to that school.

PART 2 – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

2.a. Curriculum Map and Summary

- The scope and sequence is clearly presented, aligned with the school’s stated mission and the California standards
- There is evidence of effectiveness with similar student populations and rationale for selection
- Instructional techniques are clearly articulated and pedagogy supports mission
- The educational plan is flexible and can be adjusted once enrolled students’ performance levels and learning needs are assessed
- Demonstrates the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
- Plan defines strategies and approaches to be used for students who need intervention as well as for accelerated learners
- If school is using packaged curricula programs, plans to augment these programs are included

Aspire recognizes that there is no single pedagogical strategy that is best for all students. Therefore, South Region ES #4 will employ a range of pedagogies based on “best practices” in the field and the most current educational research. The following instructional methods will provide the best opportunities for all students to learn at high levels:

Project-based instruction – Projects create opportunities to apply learning to complex problems as well as to develop products that require written and oral expression, extended research, analysis and synthesis of information, planning, perseverance, and organization – all skills that are needed for success in college and the world beyond. Projects will also link the curriculum content with students’ real world experiences, making learning relevant and valuable to their lives outside of school. Research on authentic instruction indicates the importance of connections between classroom curriculum and the world beyond the classroom to enrich the depth and breadth of learning and student motivation.

Integrated curriculum – To facilitate deep learning and connections across subjects (e.g., social studies and language arts) teachers collaborate to integrate themes and concepts in designing lessons.

Culturally appropriate curriculum and instruction – A multicultural curriculum, and culturally sensitive pedagogy, enables students to appreciate and respect their own and other cultures and develop understanding and empathy for other perspectives.

Flexible supports – Many supports are provided within the classroom, the school and community. For example, pedagogical support might include literacy support, tutoring across subject areas, and second language learning.

Diagnostic assessment – Teachers will use a wide range of diagnostic assessments to evaluate both how and what students are learning.

Assessments inform decisions about the curriculum and teaching strategies to provide support for individual students. One important assessment component is the Aspire Benchmark System.

Aspire administrators standards-based assessments three times a year in reading, writing and mathematics – Results guide classroom instruction, individual student support and professional development.

Cycles of Inquiry (COI) – Teachers use data to inform their instruction through **Cycles of Inquiry**. Every two or three weeks teachers assess students on a designated state standard. Aspire does this for each standard. Data around students’ mastery is shared, analyzed and discussed at grade level meetings. These meetings allow teachers to identify and share successful instructional practices. **Teachers pre-and post-test all students on each standard.** Current COIs are posted in classrooms.

Integrated arts – Visual and performing arts are woven throughout the curriculum as a way to illuminate knowledge in the core subjects. Aspire teachers bring the community’s cultural resources into the classroom.

Integrated technology – Technology is a tool throughout students’ courses to provide them access to information and multiple methods of expressing their understanding.

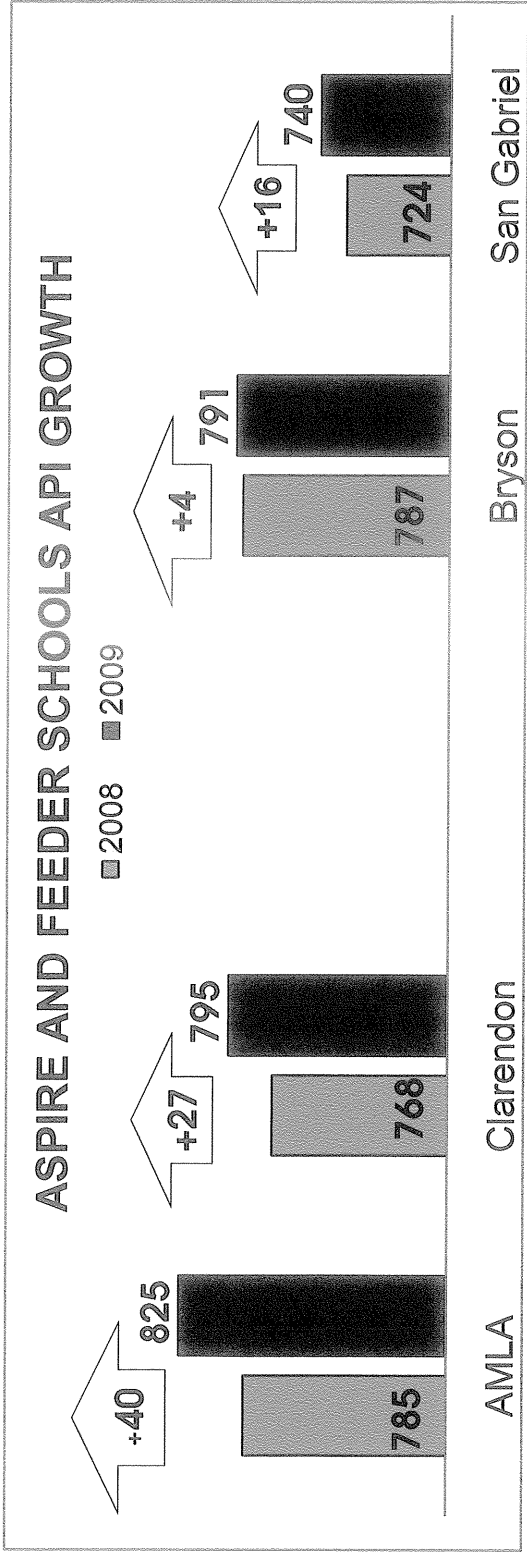
Authentic experiences – Students apply the scientific method to hands-on experiments and interact with peers on community issues.

Direct instruction and inquiry-based instruction – Teachers use both direct instruction and inquiry-based instruction. Direct instruction strategies include lectures, explanations and demonstrations through which students are expected to acquire concepts, instructions and information, learn to take notes, ask questions and clarify ideas in a whole class, small group or one-on-one format. Inquiry based instructional strategies have students identify problems, pursue information, pose and test hypotheses and draw inferences.

Research – Aspire believes learning best occurs when teachers apply the appropriate instructional strategy. Extensive research shows the importance of differentiating learning based on the subject, concept and student. Aspire’s Instructional Guidelines are based on research about each strategy. Differentiated reading instruction is supported by research.² Research done by Adam and Engelmann in 1996 supports direct instruction.³ Project based learning, integrating all subjects including technology and cultural differences, is supported through a summary of research collected by the Autodesk Foundation.⁴ Aspire also uses researchers Fountas and Pinnell on guided reading and Lemov’s work on student accountability.

2.b. Track Record of Proposed Curriculum: Has the applicant submitted appropriate evidence that the proposed curriculum is standards based, research based, and has been effective for the proposed student population.

Aspire’s success with similar populations is well documented. The LAUSD Charter Office affirmed, by sending current Aspire Charter School applications for Board approval, that Aspire’s current charters implement CA standards based curriculum, are research based, and have been effective with similar school populations. **Aspire’s API growth was greater than Bryson and San Gabriel, the two direct feeder schools, for South Region ES #4.**



²Janice A. Dole, Gerald G. Duffy, Laura R. Roehler, P. David Pearson. Moving from the Old to the New: Research on Reading Comprehension Instruction, *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Summer, 1991), pp. 239-264

³ Adams, G.L., & Engelmann, S. (1996). Research on Direct Instruction. Seattle, WA: Educational Achievement Systems.

⁴ Thomas, J. (2000). A Review of Research on Project Based Learning. San Rafael, CA: The Autodesk Foundation.

2.c. Addressing the Needs of All Students

- Defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Students with disabilities, English Language Learners, Standard English Learners, and other student characteristics
- Plan is well defined for addressing the needs of students in need of intervention, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
- Defines how the school will identify other at-risk students and address these students' needs
- Sets aggressive targets to ensure proficiency for all students

Aspire has *high expectations for all students* and is committed to working with students who are not meeting outcomes to help them achieve at expected levels. Students performing below the school-determined acceptable levels will be expected to attend before, during, or after-school Aspire programs. In addition, the key elements of the education program (small schools, small classes, longer school day and longer school year) are designed to meet the needs of under-performing students. **Aspire supports special education students** in compliance with state and federal laws. No student is denied admission to Aspire because s/he is in need of special education services. Appendix 5 details Aspire's Special Education procedures and safe guards.

2.d. Accelerated Learning: Plan indicates number of GATE and Advanced Placement (for High School) classes that will be offered and anticipated students served broken down by sub-groups. Plan also provides details on how they will increase the number of minority students enrolled in these classes.

Because **Aspire's Instructional Guidelines** are designed to differentiate and individualize instruction for students at different levels, students achieving above grade level can be effectively served at the School.⁵ For instance, the instruction during language arts allows students to be reading at their own instructional level. **Small class sizes** and **looping** also aid in differentiation of instruction because classroom teachers understand each individual student's needs. The variety of instructional techniques and materials provided in Aspire's program are cited as important features by the National Association for Gifted Children in the Gifted Educational Program Standards. Finally, any student achieving above grade level can be accelerated to a higher grade level at the discretion of the parent and principal. Flexible grouping provides students opportunities to collaborate, work at their own instructional level and be in heterogeneous groups.

2.e. Instructional Strategies: Instructional strategies are supported with research based evidence.

Support Systems for All Students – The key elements of our education program (small schools, small class sizes, “looping,” longer school day and year, and data driven instruction) meet the needs of all Aspire's students. Aspire provides a variety of systems to ensure that every student receives the support s/he needs to be successful.

Personalized Learning Plans – Every student will have a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). The PLP provides the teacher, parents and student with a common understanding of the student's learning style and objectives. Once each semester during **Student-Led Conferences**, the teacher, parent and student discuss the student's learning strengths and weaknesses, updates the PLP, and sets goals for the next semester. **By working closely with each student and family to develop an appropriate PLP, the school is able to respond to the needs of each student, including those who are achieving above or below expected levels.** This allows all students to receive appropriate interventions (e.g. after-school intervention or specialized classroom instruction). The PLP allows the school to help meet the general education needs of students with disabilities (Individualized Education Programs (“IEPs”) or 504 Plans, English language learners, students achieving substantially above or below grade level expectations, and other special student populations).

Strategies for English Learner Instruction and Intervention – To meet the needs of English Learners, Aspire has added a number of language acquisition teaching strategies to its core program, including: building on students' culture, language and experience; using dual-language strategies; teaching the second language through content; using graphic organizers; practicing English in cooperative problem-solving groups; and using computers and peer tutors to enhance language development. These classroom instructional interventions assist students to acquire grade level curricular content while learning English. Additionally, all teachers use the English Language Development standards to guide their second language students. Finally, any students not reaching the grade level standards will qualify for the afterschool interventions.

⁵ Gifted Education Program Standards, National Association for Gifted Children.

PART 3 – SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

3.a. School Culture

- The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning and alleviates negative behavior
- The mission is realistic and the applicant team has experience in creating new and effective school culture
- The plan to motivate students is clear, comprehensive, and models respect for diversity
- The plan sets high expectations for students and other stakeholders

Classroom looping – Aspire “**loops**” in kindergarten/first grade, second grade/third grade and fourth grade/fifth grade, meaning that students stay with the same teacher for two grades. **Looping accelerates learning** and allows teachers, students and their parents to have deep and continuous relationships. It also allows teachers to begin the second year with instructional knowledge about every student.

Culture of College for Certain (*¡Universidad con Seguridad!*) – Upon entry to an Aspire school one immediately sees college banners. Class identity is displayed on each classroom’s door. “**College for Certain**” is affirmed each morning when students recite their college cheer. Teachers and staff continuously reinforce the expectation that all students will graduate from college. **College for Certain** is further cultivated through artifacts, rituals, language and stories. Friday is college day and staff and students wear college attire. Adults use academic vocabulary on a daily basis. Town Hall programs and rituals vividly remind students that college is an expectation.

Cycles of Inquiry (COI) – A systematic way to analyze data is detailed in Section 4c. Data Based – Since data is such a large part of the work at Aspire, teachers are constantly analyzing results and diagnosing learning needs of students, groups and the entire class. Collaboration is a key component in ensuring school-wide success. **Benchmarks are given four times a year** and results determine larger data discussions and planning. Aspire teachers spend a lot of time discussing trends and challenges for organizing classroom instruction and planning groups for intervention.

Aspire’s Area Superintendent works with principals using data based inquiries. Any teacher struggling with outcomes is one who will be looked at jointly by the Area Superintendent and the principal. Each teacher uses additional assessments such as: DRA, publisher tests, and projects. **Data analysis is drilled down to specific student needs at each school by the Data Director.** Communication, such as Appendix 6, is sent to each principal at least two or three times annually.

- 3.b. **College and Career Readiness:** Specific strategies are identified to expose students to college and career opportunities as well as support them to be successful in college and a future career.
- Promotion policy is clearly stated and sets high standards with strong process for evaluation

Culture of College for Certain (*¡Universidad con Seguridad!*) In addition to the daily rituals (See 3a above) and expectation that all children will attend college, Aspire Public Schools is a recent recipient of the “**College Ready Promise**” (a cohort of Intensive Partnership sites) a \$60,000,000, seven year grant, from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to improve the rate of college preparedness for low-income, minority students. The **College Ready Promise** grant was awarded to a coalition of five public charter school management organizations in Los Angeles: Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, **Aspire Public Schools**, Green Dot Public Schools, ICEF Public Schools, and Partnerships to Uplift Communities (Appendix 24).

3.c. School Calendar/Schedule:

- Preference is given to plans that demonstrate an above average number of instructional minutes: Elementary Schools (Grades K -5/6) = 55,100
- School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that all students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
- School calendar supports all programs and needs of all students; including articulation of hours devoted to core subjects Regions
- Schedules that reflect student need and proposed educational model
- Schedules that support teacher collaboration and reduced student to teacher ratios

Aspire elementary schools have **187 instructional days, seven more days than single track LAUSD** schools provide, and twelve more than the legal minimum required for charter schools. In addition, **Aspire has three Saturday school days** where parents attend specially-designed academic programs with their children. Aspire’s instructional day is **twenty-five minutes longer** than surrounding schools. Students learn more when they are given more time to learn each day. With more time, teachers can cover topics with greater depth and breadth. Appendix 7 shows a Typical School Day Schedule. Each school, either separately or in collaboration with another Aspire school, may offer special academic programs during school vacations.

These programs include opportunities for acceleration (such as deeper exploration of a single topic) or intervention (such as extra work on basic skills). Appendix 8 is a sample summer school letter to parents.

3.d. Extracurricular Activities: The applicant offers additional programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address all students' social and emotional needs

In addition to after-school art and music, Aspire schools have **Playworks**, a nationwide nonprofit program that aims to improve both classroom behavior and academic achievement. *Playworks* uses play and recess as tools to support learning and build community. *Playworks* has developed a basketball league and after school baseball team that plays against neighboring schools. Aspire HP has a Drill Team at the middle school. A teacher coordinates an L.A. Marathon team that has successfully run the L.A. Marathon. The Woodcraft Rangers after-school program, has invited the school to participate in a flag football tournament in January. Plans are in place to expand flag football for the entire L.A. Region. Aspire expects these activities to continue at South Region ES #4.

3.e. Safe and Respectful Campus: Plan is in alignment with best practices identified in the LAUSD's Discipline Foundation Policy

- Demonstrates clear and thorough strategies to ensure the safety of all students
- Demonstrates a plan to address potential safety and discipline issues that may arise

Appendix 9 shows the Table of Contents for a very thorough Aspire Safety Plan that is developed for each site.

3.f. Health Mandates: Plan appropriately demonstrates how it will meet the needs of all students, including students with 504 plans and IEPs.

See Appendix 10 for the 504 Procedures used at Aspire schools.

4.a. Educational Goals and Metrics

- Plan has included an updated Accountability Matrix with appropriate targets for all students

Appendix 11.1 shows Tools for Measuring Student Outcomes

4.b. Student Assessment Plan

- Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with State standards, curriculum, and instruction
- Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
- Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
- Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
- Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
- Demonstrates the validity and reliability of the assessment tools and the plan to execute
- Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments.

Assessment allows teachers to observe individual student progress, the principal to determine the efficacy of individual teachers, and evaluate the success of the program as a whole. Multiple assessments (Appendix 11.1 and 11.2) are used because no single assessment provides sufficient information on students' learning in the three outcomes (basic skills, thinking skills, life skills). Students are assessed through state and nationally recognized tests (e.g. California Subject Matter Tests), Aspire-designed benchmark and/or interim assessments. Aspire also used day-to-day teacher-designed assessments (e.g. quizzes, unit tests), qualitative observations of the process of learning (e.g. teachers' anecdotal notes, student reflection logs, internship mentor reports), and examination of final products including an exhibition called ***Rite of Passage Exhibitions (ROPES)***.

4.c. Data Team and Instructional Team: Plan has identified how educators will use data in a collaborative manner to target supports for students and adults (i.e., professional development)

Aspire's Home Office provides extensive data analysis around the California Standards Tests and CELDT. Ongoing data analysis informs the instruction with suggested students to target, strand weaknesses and strengths, classroom growth, progress on the goals of *No Child Left Behind* and school-wide challenges. Student data informs professional development. The Home Office data team is run by **Aspire's Director of Evaluation and**

Assessment who meets with each principal, school data team, and teacher. In depth analysis of the weakest strands on the California Standards Test, each grade level, the school and the whole organization and analyzed, pacing plans are updated and instruction aligned with the findings. Appendix 6.1 is an example of how principals receive data drilled down to the student level and Appendix 6.2 is an example of a recent professional development.

Cycles of Inquiry (COIs) are systematic way for teachers and other educators to analyze data and work together to ensure that instruction meets the needs for all students. Data is collected and discussed through **Data Talks**, in which teachers and other educators analyze the data together and make instructional decisions .

COIs are a process for collecting data before, during and after a standard or concept has been taught. For example, before teaching a specific standard, or set of standards, teachers will administer a pre-assessment to diagnose how well students perform on that standard. Based on the pacing plan, teachers will then teach the standard for a period of time ranging from one to four weeks. During that time, teachers are consistently checking assessment data (known as exit tickets), to gauge how well the students are performing on the standards and use the data to refine their instruction. At the end of the time period, the teachers administer a post-assessment to determine how well the standard was taught and if students mastered the standard. If the majority of students did not master the standard, the teacher is expected to re-teach the standard, either through whole-group mini-lessons, or by pulling guided groups. After re-teaching the standard, teachers again administer a post-post assessment and use the data to gauge students' understanding of the standard. If a group of students still does not master the standard, teachers must continue targeting those students and teaching the standards. Class mastery of standards is a class average of 85%. Appendix 12 is an example of COI backwards planning and tests.

4.d. Data System: Plan confirms how they will partner with the District to fulfill the requirements of the Modified Consent Decree.

The school will partner with the District to fulfill requirements of the Modified Consent Decree.

4.e. LAUSD School Report Card: Plan details how will share appropriate data with LAUSD to ensure we capture student, parent and staff data and feedback.

Aspire shares all assessment data with students and parents and publishes student results annually through the School Accountability Report Card ("SARC"), in compliance with the California Constitution, California Education Code, and NCLB criteria.

4.f. Research and Evaluation: Applicants agree to participate in research and evaluation projects that collect and disseminate best practices.

Aspire participates in research and evaluation projects that collect and disseminate best practices. The Gates \$60 million grant is a research oriented grant on effective teaching methods. Currently, arrangements are being codified with Loyola Marymount's doctoral degree in Charter Education for doctoral students to conduct research on Aspire schools. Additionally, Aspire hopes to partner with the new operator of South Region ES #3 to share best practices.

4.g. Operational Goals and Metrics:

Does the plan adequately identify and discuss tracking of teacher retention, financial targets, fundraising targets, NCLB accountabilities, and LAUSD Modified Consent Decree Indicators.

Assessment Modifications and Accommodations Aspire assures that students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) or Section 504 are included in State standardized assessment programs with appropriate accommodations and modifications. These assessments include, but are not limited to the California Standards in accordance with their IEP or Section 504 plan (Appendix 10).

School-wide Outcomes and Methods of Measurement In addition, to measures of individual student progress towards outcomes, the School has school-wide goals for its Academic Performance Index (API), set by the Home Office and designed to move each school to at least an 8 Similar Schools Ranking (All Aspire Huntington Park schools are currently ranked 10). These Aspire-defined API goals are typically higher than the state's goal for the school. Additionally, the School expects to meet or exceed federal Adequate Yearly Progress goals. In the long-run, the school aims to have every student score Proficient or Advanced Proficient on the California State Test in every subject.

Use and Reporting of Data Data is collected, analyzed, reported and used regularly, at every level and in every subject area. Students are informed about their assessment results by the teacher, progress reports and report cards. Individually, and by class, students are engaged in the process of looking at their own performance data, setting goals, examining outcomes, and developing action plans in response to the data.

Parents are informed about their child's progress and the School's achievement progress. Students and parents discuss individual student achievement, progress towards graduation, and performance on state assessments under the direction of the classroom teacher during **Student Led Conferences** conducted twice a year. Parents also receive tri-annual standards-based report cards. Appendix 13 is a sample report card.

Parents of English Learners will also receive mandated communications on reclassification per Title III through annual CELDT testing results. Parents of students with IEPs receive reports according to the plan specified in each IEP. The School will comply with state and federal law regarding reporting requirements, including parents' rights to be updated on their child's IEP at least as frequently as the parents of nondisabled students receive updates on their children's academic progress. A few students take the California Modified Assessment (CMA).

Educators examine student performance data formally through a process called the **Cycle of Inquiry (COI) where each standard is pre and post tested**. Student outcome data also informs professional development plans for individual teachers, who may receive personalized coaching or outside training as appropriate. Staff members also receive and analyze school-wide data on student achievement during staff meetings, and use this data to help monitor and improve the school's education program.

The Principal, collaborating with teachers, instructional coaches and the Area Superintendent uses the STAR assessment results to create annual and targeted plans for increased achievement. The entire school has responsibility, and is accountable, for implementing the plan, measuring progress and ultimately improving student learning. Action plans in response to data often include school-wide professional development. In addition, results from benchmark tests for ELA and Math are analyzed by the staff and used to adjust pacing guides, direct re-teaching, and to provide intervention services for students.

PART 5 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

5.a. Professional Development

- PD activities that ensure personalized instructional adult development and the competence/professional growth among the school administrators/ teachers/staff (common preps, team meetings, etc.)
- PD activities that are aligned with the educational objectives of school

Aspire provides three levels of professional development: School, Region and Home Office. Each Aspire school has 2-3 hours of **school level** professional development each week. Each school "banks" time so one day each week has early dismissal to provide time for planning and professional development. The South Gate cluster will consist of the "two houses" constituting South Region ES #4. Professional development may sometimes include Aspire's Huntington Park schools. Aspire plans to collaborate with "Pasitos" – the adjacent early education center and with neighboring South Region ES #3 (an internal District school).

Region professional development includes additional collaboration across schools for data analysis training, sharing of best practices and some new teacher and staff orientation. Appendix 6.2 is a handout from a December professional development, conducted by the Director Data Analysis, on data analysis to inform instruction.

Home Office plans the new teacher orientation, principals and lead teacher meetings and retreats and other trainings that are needed across the Aspire organization. The Director of Data Analysis and assessment meets with every individual teacher, and principal, about student data throughout the year.

Other site team members are provided periodic formal and topical training sessions as well as real-time day-to-day coaching by functional experts in a variety of standards. In addition, all team members are encouraged to pursue external professional development opportunities in the form of

workshops or additional certification. Aspire may cover the cost of this professional development, or may provide financial assistance as part of the benefits package.

In accordance with Education Code Section 44259.1, which requires that teachers in the state of California earn their Professional Clear Credential through on the job mentoring and training, *Aspire established its own California Commission on Teacher Credentialing ("CCTC") approved Induction Program to help beginning teachers with a Preliminary Credential to earn their Clear Credential.* The School's teachers will be eligible to participate in this two-year program, which provides weekly or bi-monthly one-on-one instructional coaching. **By completion of the program, educators will have completed a portfolio showing evidence of their professional learning in each of the six Induction Standards in the California Standards for the Teaching Profession ("CSTP") framework.**

5.b. Teacher Orientation: Plan supports the induction of new teachers. # of PD days/hrs during induction is greater than other plans.

Teachers new to Aspire participate in 1-2 weeks of summer training to become fluent in the Aspire education program.

ORIENTATION TOPIC	HOURS	TRAINER/S
Overview of Aspire's Instructional Program	3	Chief Academic Officer / Area Superintendent
Classroom Management	8	Lee Canter / Instructional Coaches
Standards-Based Instruction ELA	20	Instructional Coaches / Lead Teachers
Standards-Based Instruction Math	16	Instructional Coaches / Lead Teachers
Teaching for English Language Learners	8	Instructional Coaches
Differentiated Instruction (Includes special needs)	8	Instructional Coaches
Cycle of Inquiry (COI) – Data Driven Instruction	8	Director of Data Analysis & Assessment / Instructional Coaches

5.c. PD Calendar: Plan clearly demonstrates alignment with PD calendar and instructional plan. Indicate how the # of hrs of PD compares to other plans

Appendix 14 shows Aspire's tentative 2010-2011 Region PD Calendar. Once teachers are hired, Aspire invests in their continued professional development. Teachers new to Aspire participate in 1- 2 weeks of summer training to become fluent in the Aspire education program.

5.d. Program Evaluation: Plan details how PD will be reviewed and revised to meet the needs of students and educators

Currently state-wide Aspire professional development is focused on increasing rigor in all academic areas. School site professional development is based on the needs of the students at each school. When there is a weakness in a language arts strand or in mathematics in a certain idea, then the coaches/and lead teachers do additional training in that area. Also, principals review data continuously and plan weekly training to close the gaps in outcomes at the school. Stakeholders regularly evaluate PD by completing hardcopy and on-line surveys.

PART 6 – PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

6a. Professional Culture: Plan clearly describes how educators and staff will work collaboratively to make decisions.

Collaboration is one of Aspire's five core values and is defined as working collectively to accomplish more than what is possible alone. Teachers at an Aspire school do most of their work together. **Lead teachers** direct a grade level(s), a small group that does cooperative planning and data analysis. This is done at least once weekly. The lead teachers meet weekly with the principal to plan and provide grade level input. Decisions are made at lead teacher meetings and approved or modified by the entire staff. Aspire's small size schools (houses) enables staff to work together as a cohesive community.

6b. Evaluation: Plan details how individuals will receive performance feedback and receive supports. Plan clearly states how the school will support individuals who are having challenges in helping students achieve.

Principals, as instructional leaders, provide on-site coaching. Teachers are organized into teams, led by an experienced **lead teacher who has the skills to mentor others**. Teachers collaborate and support each other to reach individual students' learning goals. Aspire's instructional coaches provide additional support, provide one-on-one consultation, conduct experience-based group sessions (e.g. New Teacher Support Program), and guide educators in their application for certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Teachers are also coached in the following topics by a lead teacher, instructional coach or principal throughout the year: (1) Classroom management, (2) Standards-based instruction – ELA and Math, Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) – strategies for teaching content to English Language Learners, (3) Rigorous instruction, Differentiated instruction, and (4) Cycles of Inquiry – Data Driven Instruction. Performance expectations and reviews are discussed periodically during the year. Performance reviews are formal, informal, verbal and written. Examples of ongoing reviews can include classroom walkthroughs, peer review, lesson observations and 360 degree feedback. The educator evaluation is based on planned and unexpected classroom observations, student growth data, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, parent and student feedback via a survey. Principals evaluate teachers at least twice a year according to criteria that are based on National Board Certification (Appendix 15). The principal's evaluation (Appendix 16), completed by the Area Superintendent three times each year, is based on the school's academic growth, self-evaluation, and survey results from parents, students and staff. Evaluation of the office manager (Appendix 17) is based on principal observation, self-evaluation, input from the Home Office and Area Superintendent, and completed annually by the principal.

6c. Feedback: Detailed plan on how feedback will be collected and used to improve academic performance of students.

Aspire is committed to increasing the academic performance of California's diverse students and developing effective educators. The Data Director regularly confers with principals and the Area Superintendent regarding teacher utilization of data. He examines trends and provides tools to continually improve instruction. Aspire practices related to performance management are a combination and balance of accountability and support. **College Ready Promise** is a \$60 million, seven year grant, intended to improve teacher effectiveness. Another support tool accessible only to Aspire educators is **MyAspire**. **MyAspire** (Appendix 18) **enables educators to access, share, create lesson plans, pacing guides, and rubrics**. It also provides information, guidance and assistance for student discipline.

PART 7 – SERVING SPECIALIZED POPULATIONS

7.a. Specialized Instruction: Plan clearly demonstrates how the school will use research based strategies to meet the needs of all enrolled students.

All students receive access to the core curriculum. Students receive support according to needs identified in the IEP. Analysis of data includes all students and teachers adjust instruction according to the data. Appendix 5 details Aspire's support for Special Education students.

7.a.i. Special Education: Plan details how it will implement and monitor the special education process utilizing the LAUSD Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual

Aspire identifies students who may have exceptional needs; assessing them promptly, and developing IEPs as necessary, in a timely manner. Aspire provides special education programs and services in accordance with students' IEPs. A full time Special Education Program Specialist oversees all IEPs: services, testing and other legal mandates. Currently the five Aspire schools have students identified with: Speech or Language Impairment (SLI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Autism, Other Health Impairment (OHI), Developmentally Delay (DD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Mental Retardation (MR), DEAF. **Special Education teachers are fully credentialed and hired by Aspire.** The hiring committee consists of an Administrator, Program Specialist, General education teacher and other certificated staff.

7.a.ii. Students with Disabilities: Plan details how it will serve students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment

Aspire believes in an education that **seamlessly weaves the services and strategies of general education and special education** to create an "every education" for all students that is achievable, and of the highest value. All students with disabilities are in regular classrooms and are mainstreamed in all school activities. Resource students have a combination "Push-in" and pull-out program. Collaborative teams co-teach, support each other's work,

share ideas across disciplines, knows how each other works, and how student learning is enriched by the strategies and concepts of multiple disciplines.

7.a.iii. **Extended School Year:** Plan describes how it will provide extended school year services to eligible students with disabilities.

All Aspire students receive the same extended school year calendar of 187 days.

7.a.iv **English Language Learner and Standard English Learners:** Plan details how it will identify and meet the needs of English Language Learners and Standard English Learners, including curricula and instructional strategies/practices to accommodate this group in a way that is culturally relevant

The School is committed to the success of its English Learner population, and support is provided within academic classes and in supplemental settings for students who need additional support for English learning (Appendix 19). The School will meet all applicable legal requirements for English Learners ("EL"), related to annual notification to parents, student identification, placement, program options, English Learner and core content instruction, teacher qualifications and training, re-classification to fluent English proficient status, monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness, and standardized testing requirements. The School will implement policies to assure proper placement, evaluation, and communication regarding ELs and the rights of students and parents. The School's program for English Learners is research based, supported by budget resources and professional development and evaluated regularly for efficiency and needed improvements.

7.b. **At Risk Students:** Plan details how it will identify and provide supports for students that are at risk.

Teachers are usually the first to identify students at risk. Looping helps teachers develop relationships with their students and parents and use their relationship to help identify problems before they develop. However, teachers are expected to be advocates for their students. They are expected to talk with parents, counselors, coaches, the principal and colleagues to discuss the student's behaviors or academic issues causing concern. If the behavior is beyond the teacher's ability to remediate, the case goes to a Student Study Team (SST). It is Aspire's philosophy to use all means possible to analyze and remediate negative behavior in lieu of punitive measures.

PART 8 – FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

8.a. **Identification:** Plan clearly states the school community that it will serve. Plan demonstrates applicant's knowledge of the community. Applicant demonstrates how the plan will address the needs of the community and their history with the community.

The school shall comply with all applicable legal minimum and maximum age requirements for admission. **Aspire will fill the 620 seats with children from Bryson and San Gabriel (feeder schools) Elementary Schools.** Together Aspire and the city of South Gate developed a comprehensive recruitment plan to ensure that all students from the impacted feeder schools will be identified and enrolled. This process may include going door to door to inform the community and provide identified families the pathway to South Region ES #4.

8.b. **Family and Community Engagement:** Well-developed community support should be addressed throughout the proposal:

- Community representation on the leadership team and letters of support
- Genuine interest among the community for the proposed school (via the advisory vote)
- Solid capacity to reach out to both the local and broader communities
- Family & student representation throughout the planning process
- Team has a strong understanding of the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
- Thoughtful strategy for integrating and establishing a presence in the community, engaging students and parents and soliciting buy in from community members
- Provides evidence of grassroots community support for proposed school and ability to integrate into selected community
- Indicates a clear process for soliciting parental engagement and empowerment concerning the academic and non-academic needs of students
- Vision for strategic partnerships is clear and sufficiently links the school to the community Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
- Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
- Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
- Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within schools

The **Southeast Cities Schools Coalition** has been working with Aspire for the last two years to open a cluster of charter schools in the southeast cities. When the Public School Choice resolution passed, this process accelerated. In late September, Aspire met with South Gate city staff and officials. Following a presentation and tour of Aspire's Huntington Park schools, the **South Gate City Council** and the **Alliance for a Better Community (ABC)** expressed support for Aspire to open South Region ES #4. Members of the South Gate city staff, ABC and the **Southeast Cities Schools Coalition** teamed with Aspire and initiated the community engagement plan (Appendix 20).

South Gate civic leaders envision that South Region ES #4, and like Huntington Park, will be the first of several Aspire elementary schools in a cluster followed with a middle school and eventually a high school with an early college partnership in South Gate. They also want South Region EEC #2, adjacent to South Region ES #4, to be awarded to **"Pasitos"** to provide a full day prekindergarten that transitions into Aspire; creating a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5 complex. There is genuine interest in the community for Aspire to open South Region ES #4 as evidenced by over 1,000 signatures attached to this application (Petitions follow Appendices). Signatures were obtained as part of extensive community engagement by Aspire's parents and civic leaders in the southeast and South Gate communities.

3.c. Key Community Partnerships

- Clear outline of services provided to the school
- Clear explanation for why the partner was selected and the due diligence conducted in the selection
- Timeline for development and establishment of relationship and all other responsibilities are clearly detailed and understood

- **South Gate City Council and Staff** – South Region ES #4 will be part of the small and cohesive South Gate community. Letters of Support from the South Gate City Manager and City Council are attached (Appendix 21). South Gate city staff helped plan Aspire's community engagement strategy and will participate on the Principal Selection Committee and Advisory Council. The City of South Gate encourages joint use of school facilities for community events and school use of South Gate Park and other city facilities.
- **Southeast Cities Schools Coalition** – has endorsed this application (Appendix 22) and wants to leverage resources and to help provide after-school support, summer bridge programs, literacy campaigns and parent education.
- **Alliance for a Better Community (ABC)** promotes an improved quality of life for Latinos in education, health, economic development, and civic participation throughout the Los Angeles region. **ABC brought "Pasitos" and Aspire together knowing how much a prekindergarten is needed in the community and also be a "perfect fit" with Aspire** (Appendix 23) to create a Pre-K through grade 5 learning complex.
- **The Gates Foundation** – \$60 million **College Ready Promise** grant to improve college entrance rates and teacher effectiveness (Appendix 24).
- **Teach for America (TFA)** supports the recruitment of a highly effective teaching force that demonstrates a diversity of skill sets, background and experiences, who are trained in culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, and who use data in a collaborative manner to target supports for students and adults (Appendix 25).
- **Disney Kaboom** – In Huntington Park, students and over 200 parents and community members and Disney staff transformed the playground into a "Kaboom" play area and garden. Teachers developed lessons about conservation, recycling, and composting. Students now compost biodegradable materials, from their lunches, knowing that organic waste can be returned to the earth as fertilizer to help conserve water, while maintaining the Kaboom play area and garden. **Kaboom has agreed to do the same for the new school.**
- **Dell Foundation** – provided a four year \$2.5 million grant to prepare urban children for college. Dell also funds the Aspire Area Superintendent position and resources and supplies (Appendix 26).
- **Broad Foundation** – assists with facility costs for new Aspire schools in Los Angeles.
- **Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)** – as at other Aspire schools, PIQE will provide parent education classes at South Region ES #4.
- **"Pasitos" Human Services Association (HSA)** – It is hoped that "Pasitos" will be awarded the adjacent South Region EEC #2, a 175 seat early education center. HSA will provide full day pre-kindergarten. Their philosophy aligns with Aspire and would, with state waiver, let students articulate directly into Aspire's kindergarten. "Pasitos" parent education will be held on the Aspire site and often combined with Aspire's parent education. HSA's literacy and language acquisition methods and materials are aligned thus facilitating continuity for students and parents. Full-day

prekindergarten is greatly needed in the community and this articulation will greatly improve academic success (Appendix 27.1 and 27.2) for the articulating students.

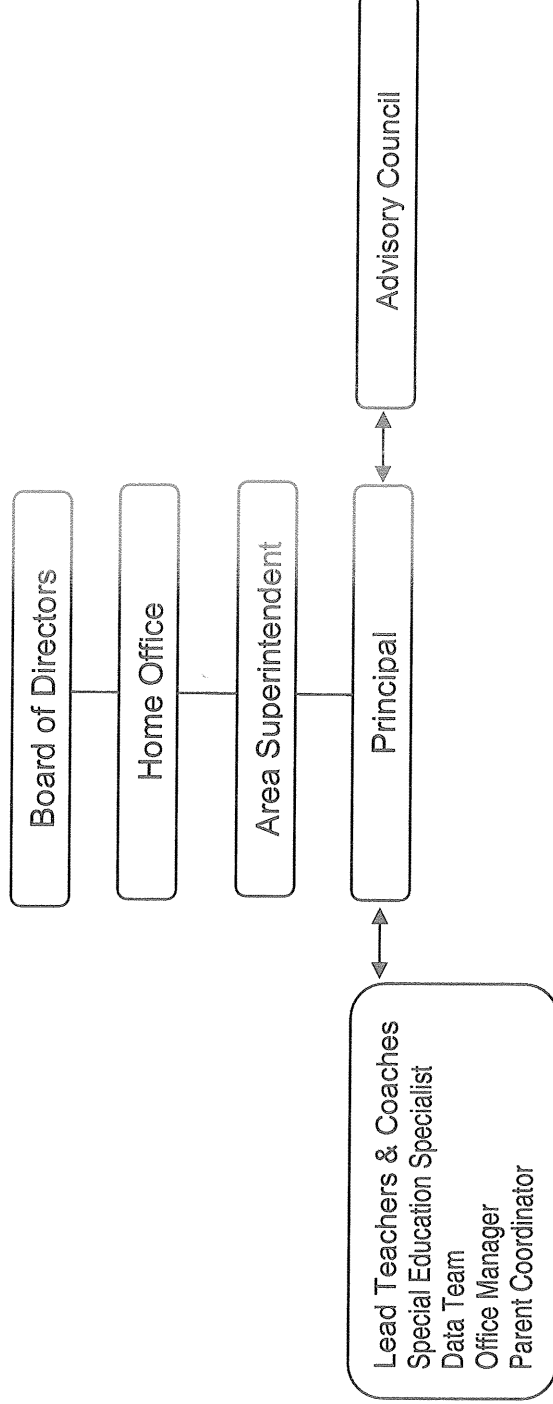
PART 9 – SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

9.a School and Advisory Organizational Charts A well-developed inclusive governance and organizational design should include:

- Appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power of school community members (including school leadership)
- An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program, financial management, and operations of the school
- Data used to inform leadership decision processes
- Effective processes for ongoing policy development, leadership team member development and self-evaluation
- Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- Includes concise summary of qualifications of local school advisory group members and how new members will be elected or selected
- Advisory group has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight and a development plan for all members
- Advisory group has demonstrated evidence of effectiveness with similar populations
- Advisory group policies reflect clear and appropriate guidelines for school type
- Demonstrates an understanding of the school advisory body that will ensure the involvement of local stakeholders
- Structure provides for real and meaningful impact from advisory body on school decision making.

Aspire Public Schools encourages all stakeholders to participate in and take responsibility for the educational process and educational results. Each school has an Advisory School Council (ASC), and holds the school accountable for the performance of its students. The ASC provides guidance and assistance for extracurricular activities and community events. The ASC conducts a lottery if enrollment exceeds capacity, and addresses school safety issues, reviews parental concerns and sets policies that are unique to the school.

Each Aspire "house" has its own ASC consisting of the principal, two teachers, two parents, a representative from the Southeast Cities Schools Coalition and a representative from the South Gate City Council. ASCs meet regularly and comply with the Brown Act (Open Meeting Requirement). Each school has a Parent Coordinator, a respected community leader from each school's local community. The Parent Coordinator helps identify and ameliorate parent concerns. The Parent Coordinator is a liaison between the parents and Principal.

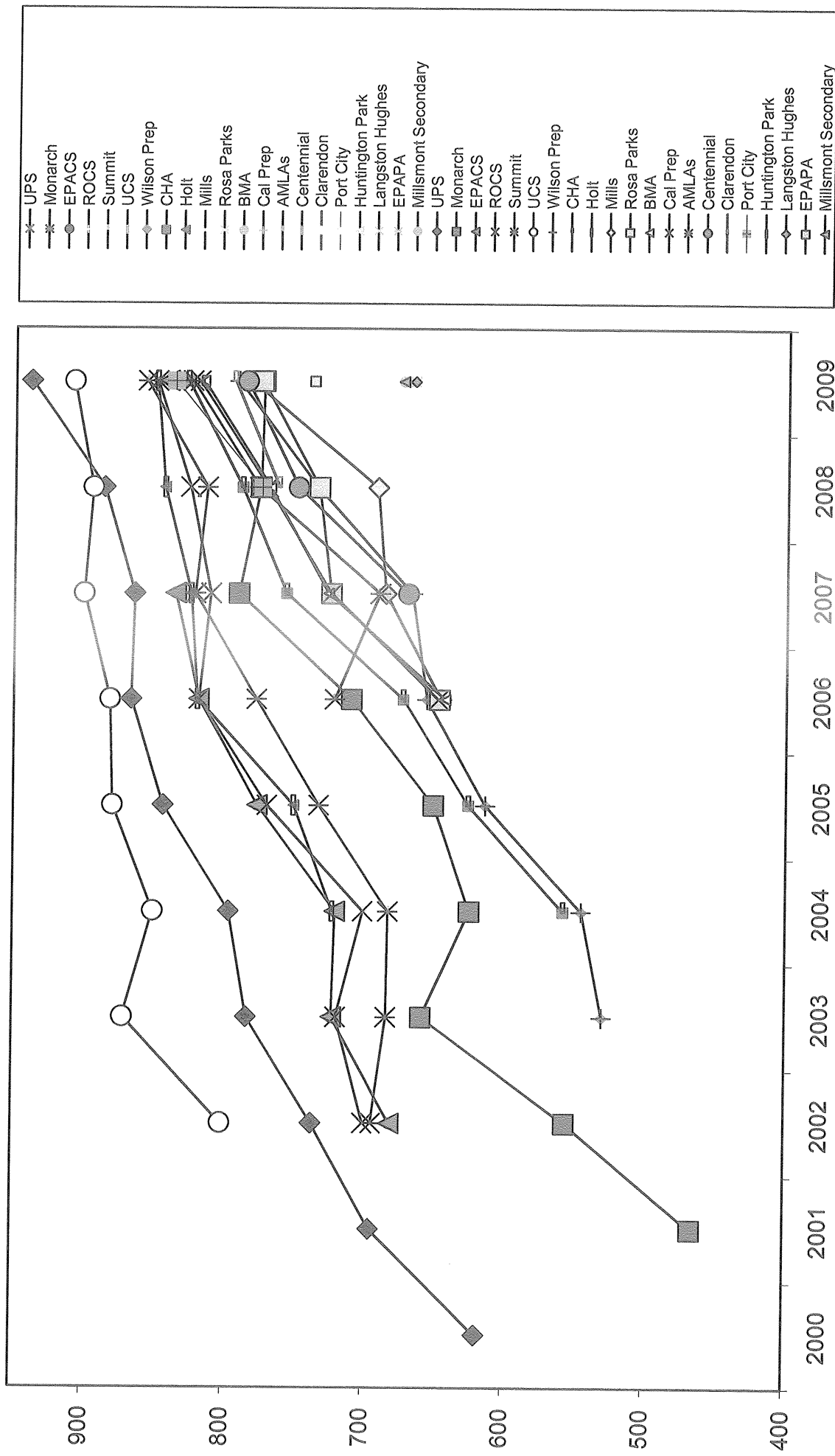


PART 10 – SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING PLANS

10.a. Leadership Team: has a proven track record of success serving students of similar demographics.

Aspire schools have a proven track record of increasing student achievement in California. All Aspire schools have API Similar School Ranks of 8 or above and all Aspire Huntington Park Schools have Similar School Ranks of 10.

Aspire's Historical API Scores



10.b. Staffing Model: Plans with lower teacher to student loads should receive a higher rating.

Aspire's small schools (houses) create learning communities where each student and family is known personally. South Region ES #4, designed for 620 students, will be divided into two elementary schools. Research shows that small schools allow students and teachers to develop intensive, long-term relationships that enable better conditions for teaching and learning.⁶ Aspire maintains a **20:1** student-to-teacher ratio in grades kindergarten through third, and **28:1** ratio in the fourth and fifth grades. Teachers provide each student time and attention to successfully achieve their personal academic goals.

10.c. Compensation: Compensation schedules represent competitive wages and benefits compared to other school districts.

Compensation Aspire provides educators and other staff with a base salary that is competitive with local school districts, based on experience and expertise. Pay increases are **not based on a step-and-column schedule**, but instead based on multiple measures of performance, including student growth, parent/student satisfaction, and principal evaluation.

Retirement Benefits All employees of the School who qualify for membership in STRS (including teachers and other qualified certificated employees) or PERS (the Office Manager and other qualified non-certificated staff) are covered. Employees contribute at the rate established by STRS or PERS. Aspire's Home Office works with the District or County Office of Education pursuant to Education Code Section 47611.3 to ensure that appropriate arrangements for coverage are maintained.

10.d. School Leadership: Plan details rigorous selection process to identify and select candidates to lead the school.

Selecting the principal is a very important activity to the Aspire organization. Aspire knows how significant the leader role is to the success of the school. Aspire recruits leaders from other school districts, organizations, as well as from talented educators within Aspire. The process of selection is comprehensive and rigorous. The Home Office screens all written applications. The Area Superintendents then rescreen and select potential applicants to interview. After these preliminary interviews, the Area Superintendent selects a final group to proceed to the next step. Finalists are interviewed by a panel of stakeholders at the school site who send their recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer for final selection.

10.e. Leadership team beyond the principal

- Staff hiring criteria procedures that are clear and aligned with the school's mission and educational design
- Well-depicted and strategically-allocated roles and responsibilities for faculty, staff, and administrators

As a public charter school organization with a clearly defined focus, Aspire tends to attract educators interested in working in more accountable, innovative, collaborative environments—teachers and principals who are themselves educational entrepreneurs. Varied, accelerated career tracks create further opportunities for professional growth. As a rapidly growing organization, Aspire can provide a fast career path for individuals with aspirations for professional advancement. Expanded leadership responsibilities for educators can be either in or outside the classroom, including lead teacher, model teacher, coach/trainer, curriculum specialist, and dean of students. Instructional coaches guide experienced educators in their application for certification from the *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*.

10.f. Recruitment of Teaching Staff

- Proposed team of teachers demonstrates a diversity of skill sets, background and experience
- Recruitment plan indicates how the applicant will recruit teachers who meet the required credentials to teach the unique student population including students with disabilities

A rigorous and sound process for selecting from the pool of teacher candidates (many from Teach for America) includes: a resume screen; interview with a site hiring committee; demonstration lesson with students; and reference checks. The principal is in charge of hiring decisions and collaborates with

⁶ A number of large-scale studies have demonstrated that small schools are more productive and effective than large ones. Findings from these studies show that students in small schools learn more and better, make greater progress toward graduation, persist in larger numbers, and behave better. This is all particularly true for disadvantaged students (Raywid, Mary Anne, 1999. "Current Literature on Small Schools," West Virginia: ERIC/CRESS). In addition, compared with students in large schools, students in small schools experience a greater sense of belonging, and their academic and personal self-concepts are more positive (Cotton, Kathleen, 1996. "Affective and Social Benefits of Small-Scale Schooling," West Virginia: ERIC.).

other staff and community members in making these decisions. **Aspire teachers are fully credentialed and meet all requirements set forth in applicable provisions of law, including Education Code Section 47605(l) and the applicable highly qualified requirements of NCLB.** Aspire offers a *Teacher Residency Program* (Appendix 28).

PART 11 – OPERATIONS

11.a. Internal applicants: will continue to use LAUSD operational services

11.b. External applicants: All external partners submitting school plans under the process described in this Resolution enter into a facilities use agreement. The facilities use agreement must include a commitment to contract with the District as the default provider of outsourced school facility support services, such as cafeteria, custodial, maintenance, security, supplies, and transportation services. The use agreement would further specify that the District must meet agreed-upon performance standards for competitive contracted services. These standards must be met within an agreed-upon time frame. If the District fails to meet these standards within this timeframe, and a timely discussion (between the external partners, the District, and classified labor partners) does not resolve the identified issues, then external partners may then contract with non-District providers for specified support services

Aspire will enter into a Master Service Agreement with LAUSD for two major services: (1) Welligent and Special Education, and (2) Major building maintenance and repair.

11.c. Master Service Agreement: All partners will agree to enter into discussion regarding the viability of master service agreements

Aspire will enter into a Master Service Agreement with LAUSD for two major services: (1) Welligent and Special Education, and (2) Major building maintenance and repair.

11.d. School Operations Experience: Plans indicate individuals responsible for coordinating operations at the school site.

South Region ES #4 will be divided into two Aspire houses (one house in each building). But, for purposes of facilities oversight, the site will operate as one facility. As this a LAUSD constructed and owned site, all facilities will meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and be approved by the local/state fire marshal. Principals and custodians will be Aspire employees. Aspire will use LAUSD facilities staff for major repairs. Aspire agrees to test sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms at its facilities to ensure that they are maintained in an operable condition at all times.

11.e. Operations Start-up Plan: Plan provides a timeline and schedule for the operations-related activities in the planning year to ensure a successful school. (Internal teams will work with School Management Services)

Aspire schools receive funding directly from the state pursuant to Education Code Section 47651. Any funds due to the school that flow through the District shall be forwarded to Aspire in a timely fashion. During the term of this charter petition, Aspire and the District will negotiate in good faith to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes the specific financial and service relationship between the two parties.

11.f. Operations Plan: Agreed upon service plan submitted (LAUSD Will provide a menu of services)

Aspire outsources major facility repairs and food catering. Aspire will contract with the district for major repairs. Aspire currently uses **“Revolution Foods”** for student meals. **“Revolution Foods”** serves organic foods with locally produced ingredients when possible. Meats, baked goods, and produce, meet Whole Foods Market’s quality standards and milk is hormone-free. *Revolution Foods* also provides vegetarian and dairy-free meals (Appendix 29). **Aspire is interested in collaborating with the District Food Services to reach similar nutritional guidelines.**

Aspire’s Home Office maintains fully staffed and operational **Instructional Technology** and **Data Analysis Divisions**. If feasible, Aspire is willing to use ISIS along with our current system.

PART 12 – FINANCES

12.a. Funding: Internal teams will receive funding via LAUSD's transparent budgeting process (based on student ADA). Charter providers will receive funding via charter funding formulas.

Aspire will receive funding pursuant to Education Code Section 47630 and its successors and will opt to receive its funding directly from the state pursuant to Education Code Section 47651. Any funds due to the school that flow through the District shall be forwarded to Aspire in a timely manner. During the term of this charter petition, Aspire and the District will develop a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the specific financial and service relationships between the two parties.

12.b. Budget Narrative A well-developed financial management plan should be feasible & sound, as indicated by:

- A budget consistent with all parts of the proposal, including school mission, educational program, and staffing plan to include the needs of all students including special populations.
- Resources aligned with school goals
- Fundraising targets and commitments

The 620 student site will be divided into "two houses." Each "house" will have its own budget. See Appendix 4 and Section 1G.

12.c. Internal Financial Controls

- Rigorous and consistent internal/fiscal control procedures documented

Aspire's financial records are public and can be found on the Aspire website. Appendix 30 describes Aspire's Audit procedures. Aspire currently operates 25 schools in California. Since the first Aspire school, none has been found out of compliance, or negligent, with regards to any financial audits.

PART 13 – FACILITIES

13.a. Facilities: LAUSD will provide facilities use agreement to be finalized by the Workforce Stability Taskforce.

South Region ES #4 is a LAUSD owned site. As such, Aspire will contract with LAUSD for all major facility repairs. Aspire employees include campus security and custodians.