



**South Region Middle School #3**

Board District 5 (Kayser) | Local District 6 (Lagrosa)

School of Social Justice and Service Learning at Walnut Park MS.....	APPROVED
Preparing for Success in STEM Academy (LD 6).....	PROVISIONAL APPROVAL
Institute for Environmental Science at Walnut Park MS.....	NOT APPROVED

**RATIONALE**

*School of Social Justice & Service Learning at Walnut Park*

- The team envisions a school that will improve the learning and quality of life in the surrounding community by emphasizing high academic expectations and a dedication to service learning and involvement in the community. The program utilizes research-based best practices and a thoughtful data analysis of the needs of students.
- The instructional plan is based on a thorough understanding of the needs of students, parents, and community members of the school. The program is rigorous and specifically designed to foster college/career readiness and interdisciplinary service learning projects.
- Dual language and real-world problem solving are key tenants of the instructional program and careful attention is paid to ensuring an organic vertical articulation with the local schools. The school will be organized into a small learning community (SLC) structure and each SLC will focus on two regional, national, or global service learning projects each year.
- Professional development is tied to the instructional goals and student needs.

*Preparing for Success in STEM Academy (LD 6)*

- This well-developed, comprehensive, research-based proposal responds to the identified need for STEM education in the local community. A thoughtful needs assessment was conducted to identify the gaps in English Language Arts, mathematics, and a need to accelerate reclassification rates, which the team addresses through an interdisciplinary approach to STEM instruction.
- The curriculum design is standards-driven and inquiry-based; the use of a digital curriculum is also included. Through the program, students become problem solvers, innovators, inventors, self-reliant, logical thinkers who are technologically literate as well as college and career-ready.
- In order to fully engage students in the instruction, the plan proposes a seven-period schedule with an additional flex period set aside for intervention.

*Institute for Environmental Science at Walnut Park MS*

- While this plan is nearly identical to that of the School for Social Justice and Service Learning at Walnut Park MS and shares many of its strengths, the Institute for Environmental Science (IES) plan seemed to lack the clear focus and mission of the other plans.
- The instructional program is underdeveloped, especially when compared to the Preparing for STEM Academy, which had a very direct and well-outlined plan for a STEM curriculum. One concern was that the IES plan referenced service learning, which signaled that the plan had borrowed heavily from the School for Social Justice and Service Learning plan instead of fully developing its own unique instructional focus.
- Given the strong ties to the School for Social Justice and Service Learning plan and the fact that the two writing teams were essentially the same, it may be possible and likely beneficial to integrate the two programs and incorporate the strengths of the IES proposal.



## **NEXT STEPS**

### *School of Social Justice & Service Learning at Walnut Park*

- Approval is contingent upon the enactment by UTLA of all waivers requested by the design team.
- Service Plan for Special Education – revisions required.
- The deadline to submit all revisions is no later than **5:00 PM on April 27, 2012**. Detailed information will be provided to the design team via a letter from the PSC team.
- The team must work in conjunction with the other school(s) on campus to develop a campus-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to govern the management of critical operations aspects of the campus such as how students will choose among the schools on the campus. It is important to note that no decisions impacting the campus shall be made unilaterally until this agreement is finalized.
- Further details regarding upcoming support activities including, but not limited to scheduling follow-up parent meetings, dates of upcoming workshops, implementation support over the summer, etc., will be communicated to the team by the PSC Team in the coming weeks.

### *Preparing for Success in STEM Academy (LD 6)*

- Approval is contingent upon the enactment by UTLA of all waivers requested by the design team.
- Clarification required – the writing team must provide further details regarding how the curriculum will be developed and what curriculum will be used in the fall.
- The deadline to submit all revisions is no later than **5:00 PM on April 27, 2012**. Detailed information will be provided to the design team via a letter from the PSC team. Additionally, a representative from the Intensive Support and Intervention Team or the Superintendent's Office will be assigned to support you as you consider the additional information that must be submitted.
- The team must work in conjunction with the other school(s) on campus to develop a campus-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to govern the management of critical operations aspects of the campus such as how students will choose among the schools on the campus. It is important to note that no decisions impacting the campus shall be made unilaterally until this agreement is finalized.
- Further details regarding upcoming support activities including, but not limited to scheduling follow-up parent meetings, dates of upcoming workshops, implementation support over the summer, etc., will be communicated to the team by the PSC Team in the coming weeks.