

**PSC 3.0 INFORMATIONAL SCHOOL PLAN SUMMARY**  
**FOR: HILDA L. SOLIS LEARNING ACADEMY**  
**PROPOSED BY: LOCAL DISTRICT 5**  
**FOR: EAST LOS ANGELES STAR ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mission & Vision of the School**

Vision: Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy will provide students a rigorous in-depth study of medicine, healthcare and technology while preparing college-ready graduates for success in STEM coursework and careers. Graduates will be technologically literate, possess a broad base of knowledge, superior collaborative skills and be inspired to innovate and lead in careers providing healthcare to the East Los Angeles community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mission: Our mission is to implement the Common Core standards in math and English language arts, use community resources and interdisciplinary, inquiry-based instruction to produce graduates who have met all A-G requirements, are critical thinkers, exceptional writers and possess the habits of mind of a successful individual.

**Designing Data Driven & Student Centered Instructional Programs**

The two most important instructional strategies that will increase student achievement at Hilda Solis Learning Academy are 1) increase instructional time in English Language Arts and mathematics to 90 minutes a day and 2) alignment of instruction to the Common Core Standards in those courses. The Garfield data shows that increasing time for English Language Arts and math instruction results in higher scores; and, by aligning instruction to the newly-adopted Common Core Standards, students will be working on internationally-benchmarked, college-preparatory standards using the most-recently published texts and curriculum. Common Core-aligned instructional guides for all English and mathematics classes have been completed and texts selected are all the most-recently published Common Core-aligned.

The overarching framework for designing data-driven instruction is a multi-tiered approach known as Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI<sup>2</sup>). Teachers provide instruction at each tier of service that is differentiated, culturally responsive, evidence-based and aligned to grade-level content standards. This level of personalization is achieved by utilizing assessment data collected in previous years as well as diagnostic testing upon arrival at Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy. This data is used to identify learning strengths and gaps, and speech and language fluency for each student in order to provide a personal learning plan that supports learning and achievement of college-ready status upon graduation. All students should and will have universal access to this high-quality instruction. Universal access refers to the right of all students to have equal opportunity and access to high quality, grade-level instruction and behavioral support, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, background, or disabilities.

Data from Garfield, Wilson and Esteban Torres high schools indicate the following:

- Approximately 20% of the student population is English Learners (EL). Only about 28% of those students are proficient on the CST for English Language Arts. In order to support all students to achieve proficiency in English Language Arts, we will have high expectations for all students, provide additional learning time in school by adopting a modified 2x8 schedule that reflects an emphasis on core academic courses, and differentiation through technology.
- Students With Disabilities (SWD) make up approximately 10% of the student population. Of those SWDs, only 11.8% score proficient or above in English Language Arts and 13.0% in mathematics, and over 50% score far below basic and below basic. In order to support all students, we will provide personalized and differentiated classrooms enhancing the adult-student relationships through advocacy and mentorship, and provide afterschool and Saturday tutoring for those students at risk of not meeting the standards.
- Approximately 87% of the student population is socio-economically disadvantaged. Overall, less than 50% of all students are proficient in both English Language Arts and mathematics. Therefore, in all classrooms, Common Core and state standards will be used to set goals, develop course outlines and create common benchmark assessments and interdisciplinary projects. Teacher collaboration time will be focused on refining and revising curriculum, developing assessments and projects and engaging in the problem-solving process.

Student-centered instruction includes such techniques as substituting active learning experiences for lectures, assigning open-ended problems and problems requiring critical or creative thinking, involving students in simulations and role-plays, using self-paced and/or cooperative (team-based) learning, and integrating technology through interdisciplinary projects. All students will participate in student-centered instruction at Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy preparing them for careers in healthcare and supporting the teaching and learning of the STEM curriculum along with a high degree of proficiency with informational and collaborative technologies. The design for the instructional program is informed by findings from a study of the ten “best practices” of high schools in California (National Center for Educational Accountability (2006). Just for the Kids – California High School Best Practice Study, 2004-2005. Sacramento, CA.)

### **Instructional Program**

Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy is committed to preparing students for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by having students:

1. Demonstrate proficiency of the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics.
2. Use real-world digital and other research tools to access, evaluate and effectively apply information appropriate for authentic tasks in the healthcare industry.
2. Work independently and collaboratively to solve problems and accomplish goals.
3. Communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools/media in varied contexts for a variety of purposes.
4. Demonstrate innovation, flexibility and adaptability in thinking patterns, work habits, and working/learning conditions.
5. Effectively apply the analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving.
6. Value and demonstrate personal responsibility, character, cultural understanding, and ethical behavior in all areas of their lives, with specific attention to situations that arise in healthcare.

In order to accomplish this, we embrace the following principles: 1) consistent high expectations for all students; and 2) personalized learning for each student in a safe environment. We believe that student learning occurs best when students spend most of their time on cognitively complex and rigorous learning activities. The level of intellectual challenge entails the use of higher order thinking, while focusing on appropriate standards-based content, and supporting contextual relevance to (healthcare) settings beyond the immediate activity. Students' experiences outside of the learning setting will be brought into instruction in positive ways and they are able to connect these experiences to the content. Students' learning environments will be rich and stimulating with well-established and efficient routines, ample technology, and evidence of student work. Students will interact in a culture of safety and collaboration, able to offer and receive critical feedback fostering the belief that all students are capable of mastering the learning at hand. Students will engage as partners in high-quality dialogue challenging one another to justify their assertions and probing for evidence. Opportunities for all students (ELs, SELs, SEDs, SWDs and GATEs) to engage in such discourse will facilitate oral language development. Students will clearly understand a learning goal and assessment criteria. Teachers will monitor the progress of students and provide personalized feedback to inform the improvement of their work.

Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy will serve the following student subgroups in the following ways:

Socio-economically disadvantaged students: 87% of the student population at Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy will fall into the category of socio-economically disadvantaged. School-wide supports for these students will be based on the beliefs that all students can and will succeed at our school because we are providing rigorous, relevant, coherent and personalized program of instruction. Specifically, all students in grades 9-11 will receive 90 minutes of English Language Arts and mathematics instruction daily, regardless of their level of proficiency. Additional time in literacy and numeracy will support them in becoming career- and college-ready, regardless of the post-high school path they choose. Further, students will have no more than four teachers for their academic classes. This will enable students to focus attention on meaningful learning and develop deeper relationships with their teachers.

Students with Disabilities / Special Needs students: Differentiation for students with disabilities and/or special needs might involve shifting the level of content, or process by which the students interact with the content, or the format of the evaluation of students' learning. Depending upon a student's strengths, the student may fall into any one of the three categories. For example, a student may excel in history, as it is an area of great interest to the

student. The student may have acquired a wealth of information and background knowledge. Perhaps the student has spent large amounts of time watching programs such as the history channel, has vacationed in historical places and perhaps spends a great deal of time researching history in his spare time. This student may pass a history pretest with flying colors. This student has become an expert on the subject. In the area of content, the student easily falls into the gifted area. On the other hand, a student with cognitive disabilities conceivably will be in the challenges area, as the student takes longer to master the subject, needs lots of reinforcement and may need modifications to meet the minimum content requirements. The student with cognitive delays may not even understand the concept of history, as it is a very abstract concept, and this student is continually working in the "here and now" to master what needs to be learned to live independently. History simply is not a subject this student may need. The student may work on parallel subjects, or the purpose of participation in the group may be to work on the student's social skills. The majority of students with learning disabilities will fall into the average range. Students with learning disabilities usually have average to above average intelligence, so the majority of students will be able to master the unit content but may need some accommodations such as material on tape, a person to help with the writing components, etc. The accommodations do not change the outcome of students' learning; accommodations only offer the students alternative ways to reach the outcome.

Gifted students: Gifted learners must be given stimulating educational experiences appropriate to their level of ability if they are to realize their potential. These students have the right to learn and to be provided challenges for learning at the most appropriate level where growth proceeds most effectively. At Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy we will personalize the learning experience for gifted students by increasing the depth and complexity adding layers to curriculum that immediately increases rigor and student engagement. These strategies provide flexible teaching methods that allow teachers to make conscious modifications to apply deeper level thinking.

English Language Learners / Standard English Learners: The faculty at Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy is committed to supporting ELs and SELs by designing instruction that includes the following strategies:

- **Cooperative and Communal Learning Environments:** are supportive and motivating environments that promote language acquisition by providing comprehensible input in developmentally appropriate ways. Working collaboratively in small groups with individually assigned roles to achieve an instructional goal, students learn faster and more efficiently, increase time on task, have greater retention, and feel more positive about the learning experience.
- **Instructional Conversations:** discussion-based lessons carried out with more competent others that help students arrive at a deeper understanding of academic content. ICs develop critical thinking, language, and linguistics by making connections between academic content, students' prior knowledge, and cultural experiences.
- **Academic Language Development:** teaches academic English by connecting it to the conceptual knowledge and vocabulary that students bring from their home and community environments. ALD promotes increased ability in students to communicate their ideas orally and in writing using academic English.
- **Advanced Graphic Organizers:** visual tools and representations of information that show the structure of concepts and the relationships between ideas to support critical thinking. Their effective use promotes active learning that helps students construct knowledge, organize thinking, and visualize abstract concepts.

## School Culture

Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy will provide a sound educational program for all students through its rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, its culture of high expectations for all students, the highly qualified administrators and teachers in a personalized and safe learning environment while partnering with parents and community in meaningful ways. Further a school-wide culture of respect, collaboration, inclusion and shared responsibility for making a contribution to the community will underlie all interactions. The school-wide focus of preparing students for careers in healthcare drive the elective course offerings the master schedule, the interdisciplinary learning opportunities, the student clubs and activities, and internship opportunities.

During a typical day, students attend four classes and a 20-minute Advisory period, They are actively engaged in student-centered learning activities utilizing their ipads for accessing course texts, interacting with web-based learning tools, maintaining their electronic portfolio, and researching healthcare issues. During math, students work collaboratively on a project using Geometers' Sketchpad to prove a conjecture. In English students construct arguments for an essay about the social issues that occur in a population that is medically underserved. There is

an investigation on the human circulatory system happening in science. During P.E. some students utilize the aerobic room, while others play volleyball in the gym. The 20-minute Advisory period allows for students to engage with a program called Ripple Effects, a computerized training intervention to build personal strengths, change behavior and address personal problems. Students feel important and part of a “school” family. Parents and visitors feel welcome and respected for their contribution to the school.

Extracurricular activities available for students include:

- Clubs and organizations: Healthcare Occupations Student Association, Los Angeles County Bar Association Peer Mediator Program, Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA), Chicanos for Creative Medicine (CCM), Academic Decathlon, Students Run LA (SRLA) and more
- Charles Drew University Saturday Science Academy
- Student Body Leadership

### **Parent Engagement & Involvement**

We believe that public schools serve as fundamental centers of community and that family and community engagement is an essential component for student success. Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy commits to building engagement capacity through effective communication with home and community, supporting parenting, encouraging volunteerism, supporting at-home learning, involving parents and community in decision-making and advocacy. These strategies will be utilized to meaningfully engage parents and guardians in the academic achievement of their students:

- Parent /Community Center located across from the front desk in the main office
- A formal written Family and Community Engagement Plan will be developed
- Quarterly parent meetings to invite on-going dialogue about student progress, budgets, and programs
- Student-centered evenings including Back-to-School night and Open House
- Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) nine-week institute for parents
- Guest speakers who are practicing healthcare professionals in the community to provide guidance towards success in a healthcare career pathway

### **Staffing**

To fulfill the mission of Hilda L. Solis Learning Academy, all teacher applicants interviewed will be scored on a variety of characteristics, not just on the basis of number of years in the classroom. Key among these will be their enthusiasm, willingness to be a part of a real learning community and unfailing commitment to:

- Developing and delivering student-centered standards-based instruction in a variety of learning modalities
- Integrating technology into the instructional program
- Implementing project-based learning
- Working collaboratively with colleagues to analyze data and student work, and take the necessary steps to modify instruction accordingly
- Developing interdisciplinary lessons for each grade level to connect classroom learning to real life situations that occur in healthcare careers
- Professional and/or teaching experience in healthcare careers
- Teaching EL and SEL students with sensitivity to learning styles and language development needs
- Planning for instruction that is culturally responsive and relevant
- Meeting the needs of students with disabilities
- Creating positive parent-teacher interactions
- Fulfilling more than one responsibility (e.g. club sponsor, SSC representative, coach, parent / community partner coordinator, etc.)
- Providing students a meaningful caring adult in the capacity of an Advisor

### **Applicant Team Contact Information**

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