



**PSC 3.0 INFORMATIONAL SCHOOL PLAN SUMMARY**

**FOR: SYLMAR PROMISE ACADEMIES**

**PROPOSED BY: YOUTH POLICY INSTITUTE**

**FOR: SYLMAR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Mission & Vision of the School**

The vision for Sylmar Promise Academies (SPA) is a place of learning on the Sylmar High School campus that academically challenges, increases relevance and empowers students to graduate and become prepared for the full range of career options after high school. The school will develop student cohorts, integrate academic and career technical education, and establish business partnerships while serving students and families in two small learning communities with career themes of health-medical and media-arts. The school will provide students a choice of enrolling in industry-themed programs of study. If students do not select these specific career paths after graduation they will still greatly benefit from communication, technological, leadership and industry skills they develop to foster self-confidence, personal growth, and strong foundational skills required for all successful careers. Through YPI’s Los Angeles Promise Neighborhood strategy, the school will provide a continuum of programs and services from pre-natal to older adulthood for all enrolled students and family members. Students will become active citizens, provide service to their community, take responsibility for their own learning, and develop habits of mind to be successful in high school, postsecondary education and professional careers.

Upon matriculation students will learn core academics and technical career information. They will gain an in-depth understanding of history and social studies, English, mathematics, science, a foreign language, visual/performing arts, technology, physical education, health, life skills as well as specific knowledge and experience in the health-medical and/or media-arts industries that offer strong career skills even if they choose not to target these careers upon graduation. In addition, they will learn computer literacy, different options for college and career pathways, and participate in service learning to connect and give back to the community. SPA will implement the District’s Individualized Graduation Plan aligned to the University of California and the California State University systems to counsel students regarding promotion and graduation requirements and monitor student progress toward greater student achievement. Students will have multiple pathways to college and career, and this plan will focus on academic, personal and career planning while incorporating data-driven decision making, the mastery of content standards and individual goal setting. Students by graduation will complete 230 credits (including required A-G credits), pass all courses with a grade of C or higher (basic proficiency), and pass the California High School Exit Exam. Student progress will be tracked at least twice annually, when students meet with their counselors to customize and revise their plans of study. Together with counselors and parents, students will regularly review their selected course of study to tailor changes to their evolving academic and personal goals.

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

**Key findings**

- CST Math performance is low. Only 7.1% of students scored in the Proficient/Advanced range in 2010-2011.
- Students performed better in ELA (32.9% scored in the Proficient/Advanced range). There is a large (and growing) disparity between ELA and math performance that needs to be addressed.
- Students with disabilities showed a -0.4 drop on both math and ELA tests.
- English learners scored very low on the CSTs (over 97% scored Basic or below in both ELA and Math).
- Only 14.9% of students are taking one or more AP courses and only 38.8% of 9th graders, 25% of 10th graders, 26.3% of 11th graders, and 19.3% of 12th graders are taking courses that are part of the A-G sequence.
- The graduation rate for 2011 is at 61%, and the dropout rate in 2009-10 was 12.9%.

SPA will design student services and interventions that prepare all students to graduate college-prepared and career-ready.

- The school will link rigorous college preparatory curriculum with technical coursework through two academies that focus on different industry sectors: health-medical and media-arts.
- SPA will integrate core curriculum with technical courses. Courses will meet the “A-G” eligibility requirements for admission to the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems and be delivered through project-based learning.
- Students will have work-based learning opportunities like mentoring, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, fellowships, and part-time or full-time employment.



- SPA will provide Career Technical Education through two study programs of that integrate core academic knowledge with technical knowledge to provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education and careers.
- SPA will integrate technology with the curriculum to ensure that students learn computer skills while pursuing academic and professional goals.

**Instructional Program**

The school will address the academic needs of all students and serve the following subgroups.

- Students with disabilities will be mainstreamed into regular classes with their state-required Individual Education Plan (IEP) and receive all allowable accommodations of their plans.
- Socio-economically disadvantaged students will be provided access to comprehensive wraparound services to address student and family needs that impact performance and achievement.
- Special needs students will receive differentiated instruction and educational support so that they can access the content standards.
- Gifted students will be able benefit from accelerated coursework as well as resources such as Khan Academy. This is an online-learning community that provides over 2,600 free micro lectures via video tutorials on YouTube that span a variety of academic topics (e.g. mathematics, history, chemistry, astronomy, biology, and physics). SPA will work with area community colleges such as Mission College to provide gifted students opportunities to take college classes for credit through concurrent enrollment programs offered on the school site.
- English Language Learners and Standard English Learners will have access to Specially Designated Academic Instruction in English Strategies including: integrating multicultural, interdisciplinary activities like media into every lesson and plenty of self-selected and pleasure reading time to develop literacy and comprehension.

**School Culture**

The school culture that SPA envisions is a safe, supportive, sustainable environment that promotes student learning, alleviates negative behavior and maximizes learning. It is a culture of high expectations and support that is respectful of and attuned to the diversity of student interests, strengths, and ways of learning. The school culture will have personalized learning environments with student cohorts in themed academies, and college and career awareness will be embedded in every school day. School culture will also be characterized by parent and community involvement to enhance and contextualize classroom learning.

A typical day: A student will arrive on campus around 7:30 a.m. and eat a nutritious breakfast. Students participate in a block schedule for their core curriculum. Each student will take eight classes per semester, and classes meet every other school day. These longer blocks allow for deeper exploration of subject matter and thematic integration to ensure content mastery. At 8:00 a.m. he or she will start the school day in an advisory period where s/he received guidance from his or her teacher about educational and career goals. After advisory, the student moves on to Success for All reading program where s/he participates in a reading block with peers. When SFA period is over, the next class may be English where the class is reading Frankenstein to develop reading skills. Next is a 30-minute lunch where the student can enjoy a healthy meal while talking with friends. After lunch, s/he moves on to Algebra, where the teacher may teach a lesson about medicinal dosages to connect math to the theme of the health academy. Or if she is in the media-arts academy, a guest speaker from Disney may be present to provide students with an introduction to the graphic design industry in the career technical education class for media-arts. The school day ends at 2:47 p.m., and the student will have the opportunity to participate in variety of workshops, internships, enrichment, extra-curricular activities, and community service after school from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Extracurricular activities that will be provided for enrolled students include:

- College preparation programs to provide college and career readiness services. Services include an individualized college plan updated each semester guided by trained College Ambassadors. YPI provides this through a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) program funded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Field trips to colleges and universities (over the past year, YPI provided college visits for more than 1,200 students).
- Service learning that combines academic work with service to help meet a need in the school or greater community
- Career-related student competitions, internships, youth apprenticeships.
- A BTOP Computer Center opened by YPI at the school with ongoing U.S. Department of Commerce funding
- Supportive services (job training, referrals for family members, adult education)
- Targeted enrichment and physical education services based on current YPI programs in the community



**Parent Engagement & Involvement**

SPA will meaningfully engage parents/guardians and families in the academic achievement of their children and create a welcoming, respectful environment for them. SPA will host community events with partners including YPI to encourage parents and community members to become involved in the school. Examples include:

- Family Extravaganza, an event where students showcased projects they created each semester;
- Big Sunday, an event where school families and community work together to put together a school community garden and provide specific improvements to the school and surrounding neighborhood;
- Family Summit, an event where families and communities come together to participate and learn about making healthy life choices through different workshops on physical fitness.
- Tax preparation services provided onsite to support families in getting the Earned Income Tax Credit and other financial benefits to which they are entitled.
- Financial literacy and computer literacy workshops provided by YPI with support of Citi Community Development and the opening of a Public Computer center at the school through YPI’s Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP) funding.
- Job fairs to support parents and community members find training opportunities and employment.

Promotoras (community members who reach out to parents and residents) will be used to engage parents and community members through home visits and phone calls to make people aware of available programs and services as well as answer questions and explain resources. Parents will be members of School Site and Leadership Councils, and the school will have a Parent Advisory Board that meets monthly for parents to receive information, share information, give feedback to school personnel, as well as plan school activities. All information and handouts for parents will be translated into native languages to support communication and involvement of parents in the school. The school will develop and operate a Parent Center to outreach to and involve parents, under the leadership of a Parent Center Director.

All parents/guardians will be strongly encouraged to attend an orientation at the beginning of each school year. They will be asked to sign a voluntary commitment form that describes their involvement in and support of their child’s educational experiences – committing them to work with the child at home, maintain positive and effective communication with teachers and school staff, ensure that their child attends school and arrives on time, enforce the school code of conduct, and enroll their child in academic enrichment programs. The school will urge parents to attend parent workshops and volunteer at the school with the goal of a minimum of 30 parent volunteer hours each school year. This goal is voluntary, and will be part of the ethos of community service embraces by SPA.

**Staffing**

SPA will recruit teachers and hire staff that acknowledge and support the academic, social, and cultural needs of the students. SPA will select only the most qualified, passionate, and dedicated teachers and staff for students. The school will look for characteristics that include the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to educate a diverse student population. Teachers will need to have knowledge in the specific subject are they are teaching (for example, English language arts or math) and be able to know how to complete the lessons and activities the students are expected to learn. Teachers will also need to know the appropriate standards that are related to instruction, activities that are appropriate for different age groups, components that make up a lesson plan, understanding of child development stages and how to manage behavior. The school will look for individuals who exhibit a commitment to meeting each student where he/she is in their stage of learning by building on his/her strengths and providing support in areas of that need improvement. Characteristics of effective teachers include: a positive attitude, preparedness, flexibility, creativity, a sense of humor, high expectations, compassion, and respect. Teachers must be aware and sensitive to the various ethnic backgrounds as well as language abilities and physical and mental capacity of all students and be able to adapt their methods of teaching accordingly.

**Applicant Team Contact Information**

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