LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Small School Learning Communities

Characteristics/Attributes of Small School Learning Communities

Los Angeles Unified School District's "Small School Learning Communities" will have the following core of common characteristics or attributes guided by Board policy and the Superintendent's priorities as referenced in Closing the Achievement Gap: Improving Educational Outcomes for Under-Achieving Students. All attributes and practices should result in increases in student performance of standards and decreases in the achievement gap.

1. **Unifying Vision/Identity:** A shared vision created by a group of educators, support staff, students, parents, and community who comprise the small school learning community and who assume responsibility for the learning of every student through a distinctive and focused standards-based curriculum.

2. **Rigorous Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**: A standards-based educational program embodies high expectations for every student so that they achieve grade-level standards, use appropriate technology, district adopted textbooks, and materials to support instruction, meet high school graduation requirements and A-G college entrance requirements, and are prepared for post secondary experiences and the world of work.
   Instruction is adapted based upon learning needs within a rigorous culturally relevant and linguistically responsive curriculum; student performance is measured to report on progress and accomplishments and to inform future instructional practices. Multiple forms of standards-based assessments are used including some benchmarks by the district. Additionally, school indicators are used as measures of school progress including, for example, attendance, dropout rates, number of high school graduates, etc.

3. **Equity and Access**: Every student will participate in a rigorous quality curriculum that is culturally relevant and linguistically responsive to their unique learning needs, thereby eliminating achievement gaps between groups of students.

4. **Personalization:** A demonstration of sustained and mutually respectful personal relationships where every student is well known by a group of educators who advise/advocate for them and work closely with them and their families over time. The size of the Small School Learning Community is appropriate to its vision and mission, generally ranging from 350-500 students.

5. **Accountability and Distributed Leadership**: Members of the Small School Learning Community work together, share expertise, and exercise leadership to ensure that student achievement is the intended result of all decisions. They retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy, and are accountable for making decisions affecting the important aspects of the small school learning community.

6. **Collaboration/Parent and Community Engagement**: All members of the Small School Learning Community are viewed as critical allies and are significantly included in the school community (i.e., students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, business, and community partners). An ongoing partnership is aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student achievement. Authentic engagement leads to sustained participation in critical school decisions and implementation of school efforts.

7. **Professional Development**: Small School Learning Communities demonstrate implementation of central and local district training and resources. Continuous professional learning is focused on improving practice and performance as a vehicle for school improvement and program coherence. This is accomplished through collaboration, reflection, the analysis of student work and data, and a review of pedagogy. Common planning time is provided for teachers to gain in-depth knowledge of their content standards to work on lesson design review student work and performance data. Professional development is monitored and assessed regularly for effectiveness and implementation to ensure continuous school improvement.