

Legal Studies Proposal Application

1. **Name of Comprehension High School:** David Starr Jordan High School
2. **Name of Proposed Small Learning Community:** Legal Studies
3. **Location Code:** 8721
4. **Design Team Membership**

Name	Stakeholder Group	Contact Information
Rosa Trujillo	Administrator	David Starr Jordan High
Robert Whitman	Administrator	David Starr Jordan High
Nicole Washington	Counselor	David Starr Jordan High
James Powell	Teacher	David Starr Jordan High
Keith Morris	Teacher	David Starr Jordan High
Christopher Fairman	Teacher	David Starr Jordan High
Grace Lan	Teacher	David Starr Jordan High

Executive Summary

David Starr Jordan High School is one of fifty-five comprehensive high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. It is located in the community of Watts in South Central Los Angeles. Watts has the highest rate of unemployment and underemployment in the county of Los Angeles and contains the largest concentration of public housing units in the county.

Jordan High School and the community of Watts have undergone a metamorphosis over the past ten years. The United Way has named Watts “The Poverty Capital of the United States.” In our community, most families of five live on a median income of \$8,000 per year; single parents make up a large percentage of families; most live in one of three government owned housing units; gangs are in all sections of the community; many families do not speak or read English; reading levels of students are, basic, below basic and far-below basic; high dropout rate; and, one of every twenty adults in the community has three years of college experience; two have a degree, and, one has done graduate work.

Jordan High School provides educational services to 2,500 students in grades 9-12. The ethnic breakdown of students is: 76.5% Hispanic; 21% African-American; and, 2.5% all others. Within the ethnic population, significant sub-groups exist i.e., educationally challenged students; English Learners; Migrant Students; educationally and socially disadvantaged students and, Immigrant Students.

Jordan High met the API in ELA by increasing the number of students who are advanced/proficient from 7 percent in 2004 to 11 percent in 2005. Due to staff efforts, the attendance at Jordan has increased from last year. Attendance will continue to be a

concern for the entire faculty and they are aware of the importance of student attendance and how it directly ties into improved student achievement.

Jordan High School has made a commitment to inclusion classes. During the 2002-2003 school year, Jordan High School began enrolling students in special day classes in our Integrated Science classes. This inclusion process has steadily increased to where our students in special day classes are now accessing grade level standards in all core classes. In this process, special education teachers collaborate with general education to provide instruction to all students in an inclusion classroom.

Jordan High has retained its identity as a community school. Students continue to demonstrate a high degree of resilience in spite of their low socio economic barriers and the ongoing gang-related violence they experience in the community. Our students' attendance has been one of the highest in the district this school year as a result of hardworking staff and students' desire to learn.

Parents play a vital role in improving their children's education; they are present at Town Hall Meetings, Parent Trainings, and Volunteering during student lunch and various school activities

- During the 2004-05 school year, the first **Community Town Hall**, of approximately two hundred parents and community members, took place on December 1st, 2004. The next Town Hall will be on May 3rd 2005.
- **A Resource Coordination Team** meets monthly to effectively bridge the gap between the school and community through collaboration of resources, case management and planning, and information sharing.
- **A Human Relations Committee** has developed a Parent Leadership Training Program to empower parents to become better supporters/advocates for their child's education.
- **A Parent Volunteer Program** does outreach to parents and encourages volunteerism, training, and parent leadership.
- **Weekly Computer Training and Conversational English Classes** are offered to parents to increase their computer literacy and learn English.
- **Monthly Title 1 Meetings** serve as a support to parents with updates and parent initiated workshops.
- **The Community Representatives** serve as liaisons between the community, school, and parents. They conduct outreach to parents to encourage school-system advocacy and parental involvement.
- In early June 2005, Jordan High **honored 40 parents for their volunteer** efforts at the school.

For the first time in recent years, Jordan had a complete administrative team during the 2004-05 school year. There is no anticipated change in the school administration for the 2005-06 school year. This stability is a great strength for Jordan High.

There are many challenges that confront Jordan High School as we work toward providing all students with a high quality and meaningful education. Barriers to student academic achievement are:

Student Achievement

- High 9th grade fail/retention rate.
- Low re-classification rate.
- The API was not met in Math.

Teacher Quality and Stability

- High teacher turnover, amounting to 20% each year.
- The need for more *Highly Qualified* teachers in all content areas.

Communication

- Parents and teachers do not effectively communicate.

Safety

- A community in turmoil, due to poverty and gang violence, surrounds the school.
- The school's security is an ongoing concern, despite our efforts to increase staff and parents involvement in keeping our campus safe.

Materials

- Book losses are excessive due to student transience and lack of respect for textbooks' role in their learning.
- District budget and ordering procedures hamper the school's efforts to obtain materials in a timely manner.

School Facilities

- School facilities need an upgrade to create a nurturing, safe, and modern learning environment.
- The SLC's need upgrades to their facilities (wireless computers, contiguous classrooms, materials and sinks for science experiments, outdoor garden space, secure storage facilities, performance spaces, etc) to meet the vision of their community.

In order to support the restructuring of David Starr Jordan High School for the 2006-2007 school year, standards-based instruction will continue as a foundational element in the new small learning community designs that will be implemented. In order to increase improved student achievement, standards-based instruction will be delivered through the thematic or interest-driven curriculum embedded within the designs of small learning communities. Culminating tasks will directly reflect specific attributes of the small learning communities while at the same time retaining the rigor intended by standards-based instruction. At the heart of the restructuring, is a concerted effort to personalize learning. The primary force behind personalization is collaborating as true stakeholders. The scale and focus of small learning communities lend themselves to this endeavor. With a small learning community focused on pursuing a common interest, this interest will drive students, parents, classified, certificated and administrative staff to own their roles to ensure the success of achieving that interest.

Students entering 9th grade will be part of the Ninth Grade Academy at Jordan. All 10th grade students will be part of one of the new small learning communities developed at Jordan. All 11th and 12th graders will continue their education at Jordan in the current structure. In 2006-07, all 10th and 11th graders will be in a SLC and by 2007-08 all 10th-12th graders will be in a SLC.

In early March, the majority of Jordan's 9th grade students were given a survey to collect data regarding their career interests. The following careers received the most interest as a 1st choice (in order): Arts (Visual and Media Arts), Sports, and Health. The following ranked the highest for combined interest as 1st and 2nd choices: Sports, Arts (Visual and Media Arts), Health, and Performing Arts. Other careers that showed high interest include: Military and Polices Science, Information Technology, Dual Language Studies, and Social Justice, Law, and Politics. This data was used to develop the following plan.

In late March, teachers were surveyed regarding their thoughts about potential small learning community themes, their interest in participating in the upcoming school year, their interest in visiting successful SLC sites, and joining the school wide design team meetings. This data was used to develop the following plan.

Jordan High's goal is to keep students in school until graduation by engaging them in an interest-driven SLC so they will graduate and become life-long learners.

Unifying Vision

Mission of the Legal Studies Academy

The Legal Studies Academy provides students who have an interest and curiosity about the law, law-related fields, and legal and ethical issues which give them the ability to extend their knowledge beyond the typical high school program. The academy offers students the opportunity to embrace not only an academic curriculum that will prepare them for post-secondary education, but one that will also allow them career exploration within the area of legal studies.

Standards-based Curriculum, instruction, and Assessment

The academy has two major components: Justice and Public Policy and the Administration of Justice, which are further divided into special areas of study. At the end of the second year in the Academy (junior year), all students must declare their major strand.

In the Administration and Justice Strand, students learn about the legal system, major actors in the system as well as the roles they play which includes law enforcement, lawyers, the courts, and the correctional system. The goal will be for students to gain fundamental understanding of the system and consider potential careers.

The Justice and Public Policy Strand will allow students to explore broad interdisciplinary issues of justice. For example, current events, such as immigration, discrimination, and environmental issues will be student driven with an emphasis on project based-learning.

The Academy curriculum goes beyond the basic four-year high school requirements by infusing law-related units in the core subject areas of English, science and social studies and by providing students with specialized course work. Teachers develop cross-curricular lesson plans with common themes. Standards from all content areas (social science, English, science and math) will drive thematic planning at each grade level. Students will have additional opportunities to explore career options through job shadowing, training, mentoring, internships and volunteer opportunities.

The courses of study are extended via seminars on law-related subjects such as character education issues, law and medicine, law and literature, forensic science, forensic science and criminal justice. In addition, the Academy gives students the opportunity to experience the reality of law careers by emphasizing active learning in criminal investigations, job shadowing, and mock trials in our courtroom/ classroom. Before they participate in activities, what tools, habits of mind, and strategies will they learn to get to performing and experiencing these activities?

Standards-based Curriculum: Structure

The SLC will be organized and structured to maximize student learning. The schedule will reflect the following proposed 4X4 block schedule:

<i>9th Grade</i>		<i>10th – 12th Grade</i>	
7:45 – 9:15	Period 1	7:45 – 9:15	Period 1
9:15 – 9:20	Passing	9:15 – 9:20	Passing
9:20 – 10:50	Period 2	9:20 – 10:50	Period 2
10:50 – 11:25	Lunch	10:50 – 10:55	Passing
11:25 – 11:33	Passing	10:55 – 12:25	Period 3
11:33 – 1:03	Period 3	12:25 – 1:00	Lunch
1:03 – 1:08	Passing	1:00 – 1:08	Passing
1:08 – 2:38	Period 4	1:08 – 2:38	Period 4

The 4X4 schedule allows teachers to offer intervention during the regular school day to meet the academic needs of all students. With the extended time, teachers are able to engage students in hands-on activities causing them to become active participants in their learning process. The teacher then serves as a facilitator for student learning.

Teachers in the Legal Studies Academy will explore the possibility of using Project Based Learning as a tool for engaging students in standards-based lessons and assisting students in mastering the California State Standards. Through the use of Project Based Learning, students will begin to take ownership of their learning.

How are we going to get there_(Gap analysis and Action plan)

Equity and Access

Current 9th grade students are given a survey to indicate their interest in legal studies. Students who are tested as ELL in Levels 3 and 4 will be integrated into the SLC with other students. Students in Special Education are integrated into this SLC.

Teachers at Jordan have an opportunity to identify the SLC of their interest. Teacher-interests, coupled with A-G requirements and credentialing status, will be taken into consideration when making final teaching assignments. Teachers along with the administrator Legal Studies solicit teachers who have law expertise and are able to build partnerships with law-related businesses and organizations.

Personalization

The Legal Studies Academy will strive to promote a sense of personalization for every student. Classroom instruction will be tailored to address the diverse learning styles of all students. Students will be assessed using a variety of measures. Students' academic progress will be monitored regularly and discussed frequently with students and parents. Teachers will create a forum for which parents will be able to meet with them regularly.

Parents will receive invitations to attend Back to School Nights, Open House, and Parent Teacher Conferences from teachers in the Legal Studies Academy. Teachers in the academy will make a conscious effort to make parents feel welcomed. Parents will be encouraged to observe classes and volunteer in the academy.

The Legal Studies Academy will include an Advisory in which students will have an opportunity to bond with an adult and their peers. The Advisory will be well-structured to include student goal setting, advisee/advisor monitoring of achievement, democratic participation in establishing rules, resolving conflict, defining themes of inquiry, creating social activities, and selecting/managing service-learning projects. Community service projects will be law-related and may be executed by single or paired advisory groups, and larger service endeavors may be whole-team or whole-school projects.

Teachers in the Legal Studies Academy are housed in the Northeast Bungalows. Hence, students' classes are in close proximity allowing for brief teacher/student interaction between passing periods. Teachers (in the legal studies academy?) currently share a common conference period which allows for parent and student conferences.

The Legal Studies Academy will host its own awards ceremonies, honoring students who have maintained their grade point average and those students who have demonstrated academic growth. Students' work will be showcased in every class and on display for academy assemblies.

Accountability and Distributed Leadership

Staff collaborates and cooperates during a common planning period. During this planning period, teachers develop Standards-Based instruction and culminating tasks. Qualitative and quantitative analysis is used to measure student success and drive instructional decisions. An opportunity for effective input from parents, teachers, and students is acknowledged through parent meetings as well as special programs.

Collaborative Parent and Community Engagement

The Legal Academy seeks partnership with law-related organizations in the Los Angeles community or any independently appointed body by the government, such as the Coroner's Office, Police Departments, Correctional and Probation Departments, Colleges and Universities, the District Attorneys Office and commissions. Working with these institutions helps students understand the roles and functions of the different aspects of the legal system and exposes them to future career options. Students disseminate learned information to parents to make connections as they pertained to lessons.

How Will We Measure and Demonstrate Our Success:

Assessment

The assessments are holistic and embrace authentic, interdisciplinary projects. Each student is assessed and accommodated in accordance to their mode of learning. Classroom assessments are furnished with timely feedback of student academic progress.

As a culminating assignment, seniors will complete a project that is a hands-on experience focused on their chosen strand of study. The senior project requires consultation with the Academy coordinator, the initiation and completion of the project, a research paper describing the project, and an oral presentation of the project to a panel of adults prior to graduation.

What we Need: (time, resources, budget, waivers, support, and professional development)

Professional Development

Jordan High currently has a two-year professional development plan. Administrators, coaches, teachers, and the Leadership Team developed the professional development plan to meet the specific needs of the school as stated in the SAIT Corrective Actions and the Single School Plan. The school utilizes bank days, buy back days, common planning, Saturdays, after school, summer months, and winter break to conduct professional development for its teachers. Teachers also have the opportunity to participate in conferences and workshops led by various consultants throughout the school year and summer months.

Teachers in the Legal Studies Academy continue to participate in the professional development outlined in Jordan's two year professional development plan. In addition, professional developments are based on interdisciplinary, rigorous Standards-Based instruction; scaffolding methods; thematic units; differentiated instruction and behavior interventions. Teachers have common planning time to develop interdisciplinary and thematic units.

Administrative/Counseling Support:

Jordan High School has an Assistant Principal assigned to the Legal Studies Academy and a counselor. The administrator addresses personnel issues, organizes the SLC's budgets, and coordinates discipline procedures in collaboration with the counselor and lead teacher. The administrator facilitates staff developments and meetings.

The counselor will provide each student with a three year plan and review that plan regularly with the students and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s). (How will that be done?) The counselor will schedule classes for all students within the Legal Studies Academy and ensure that students meet the A-G requirements.

Graduates of the Jordan High School Academy of Law and Justice will have a complete understanding of how the American legal system functions, how well it serves its goals and what career opportunities are available to them. They will have a basic, academic knowledge of how the legal system developed and what challenges lie in its future. Our graduates will be well-equipped to begin training for a legal-related career or to pursue further academic studies in law, justice and public-policy.