

The School of Travel, Tourism, and Culinary Studies

A Small Learning Community of South Los Angeles High School # 1

*Proposal for the formation of a small learning community
for grades 9-12 located on the campus of South Los
Angeles High School #1 (Santee)*

*Note: The SLC is staffed and functioning; it opened when
the Santee complex opened in July 2005.*

(Revised Draft 1)

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Design Team

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The School of Travel, Tourism and Culinary Studies

T.T.C.

Introduction

Travel and tourism is a high growth, consumer driven industry that is forecast to more than double in size over the next decade. In the U.S., travel and tourism is the third largest private employer after health services and business, directly employing 7.2 million workers. In California the tourism industry is California's third largest employer and fifth largest contributor to the gross state product. Expenditures in 2003 amounted to an estimated \$78.2 billion annually, provided employment for more than 900,000 Californians, and generated \$5 billion in state and local tax revenue.

“Travel and Tourism” is the official, recognized name of this global industry and all of its components. As we work to create opportunities for our students by establishing and developing professional partnerships with industry experts and organizations, we share a common name and a common focus on educational and career pathways. The Culinary Studies component is one of the specialized pathways within our rigorous academic program. Our administrator and our whole SLC faculty collaborate in reviewing and evaluating our vision, our thematic curriculum, our career pathways, our teaching and learning goals, and other core issues that underlie our effort to ensure that all of our students graduate on time and are successfully prepared for the next step in their lives, whether it be career or college or both. The adults in our SLC meet at least

once yearly to reflect on and refresh our commitment and our vision. We extend this conversation to students and parents through presentations and discussions in community meetings, in classroom advisory periods, and through periodic surveys of students, businesses, and families.

Overview

The School of Travel, Tourism, and Culinary Studies prepares students for secondary educational opportunities and career pathways related to these broad and dynamic industries.

All of our students engage in rigorous, standards-based core academic courses and specialized elective courses designed to broaden their understanding of the academic competency required to pursue these opportunities. As students work to meet and surpass required high school proficiency, we design and integrate curriculum which focuses on managerial and highly skilled pathways. Student exposure to the necessary and important service aspects and semi-skilled job opportunities within these industries is a necessary program component, but we clearly articulate expectations for all students that they set and work towards goals well beyond entry level service jobs. We are working to develop partnerships within these industries to support students with hands-on learning opportunities through internships and service-learning as students evaluate the pathways that interest them.

All students have the option of selecting the School of T.T.C. based on their interest in pursuing educational and career pathways in travel, tourism, and culinary studies. Instructional staff reviews student achievement data to ensure appropriate placement and support for all students. Our staff works collaboratively with parents and all other stakeholders to form meaningful and lasting partnerships aimed at supporting continuous improvement of instructional practice and student achievement.

Unified Vision and Identity

Vision: *What do we hope to become?*

All students will graduate from The School of Travel, Tourism, and Culinary Studies on time, confident and well prepared for the next step in their life's pathway. These young graduates will be determined problem solvers who are competitive and confident in their academic competencies. They will possess marketable professional skills. They will be well-prepared for success in post-secondary education. They will possess a tolerant, global perspective, good technical skills, and an understanding of nutrition.

Mission: *Why do we exist?*

Our mission is to provide a high quality education while developing caring, competent and responsible world citizens who value learning and obtaining a global perspective. We instill expectations of high achievement in all students as we support their efforts to reach academic proficiency and prepare them to make informed choices about the educational and professional pathways available to them.

Our staff consensus on beliefs and values continues to grow as we regularly convene during time allocated for common planning and professional development. Discussion and reflection of our own practices as well as reviewing current research and best, most effective practices focusing on culturally relevant pedagogy and individualized instruction, enables us to share core values and beliefs. We use the recruitment and hiring process as a starting point in selecting personnel with common beliefs. We continue to refine the design of our instructional program as we move forward. We devote time to developing and sharing rigorous, standards-based lessons that will meet the needs of all students, and we encourage our teachers to share their best practices and to observe each other's classes. We modify our curriculum to meet the individual needs of our students. We are developing curriculum for our daily advisories that emphasizes the high

expectations we hold for our students for both academic achievement and making mature, responsible choices.

We have created an inviting atmosphere for parents and community members. Teacher teams meet regularly with students and parents to build relationships, get input, and provide comprehensive, constructive feedback to our students. Our students and teachers have benefited from the “power” of students and their parents hearing multiple constructive perspectives about how we believe that we can best support their success.

We are receptive to feedback from our students and parents. We also work to strengthen our partnerships with parents during Back to School and Parent Teacher Conference nights.

We have collaboratively developed a sequence of unique courses within our small learning community that meet the A-G requirements, including Culinary Arts, International Foods, Restaurant and Hospitality Occupations, Foods and Nutrition, and Hospitality Law. By partnering with other small learning communities, we recognize the benefits and increased course access for our students in the areas of fine arts, foreign language, technical arts, and technology. Simultaneously, we are working to increase opportunities for students from other small learning communities to participate in and benefit from our specialized course offerings. We have trained our teachers on standards-based curriculum design, and we support their work by providing multiple resources that enhance and inform their teaching and their learning.

We have ongoing discussions about course sequencing and developing interdisciplinary curriculum to tie in core content areas with culinary arts and foods/nutrition courses. In March 2006 a team of science, health, nutrition, and culinary arts teachers and our administrator visited a well established International Hospitality and Culinary Studies program in secondary schools in northern California to examine how they have built effective interdisciplinary curriculum. We are also continuing an ongoing analysis of the curricula of junior college, university and graduate programs specializing in culinary studies. This will help us form partnerships with post-secondary programs and also help us better design our own curricular offerings and better prepare our students for post- secondary academic success.

When we opened our school in July 2005, we used start-up monies to prepare our curriculum and purchase instructional and other necessary materials. Since that time, budgetary autonomy within the SLC has been limited. However, central management of our school budget has provided ample and adequate support and resources for our students and instructional staff. Following guidelines outlined in the Santee Complex Impact Report, we meet regularly with site administrators and with the staff of the other campus SLCs to discuss and allocate resources. Issues related to personnel, safety, school policies and procedures, student programming, and shared facilities are also topics of these meetings. In addition, we meet with and take guidance from site-based governance councils that include representation from teachers, classified employees, parents, students, and other groups. Through these collaborative processes, we are confident in our ability to reach consensus on the most appropriate ways to allocate money and resources needed to meet the needs of our students.

Our SLC is already a work in progress. We opened and began teaching students in July 2005. We plan to review our proposal, including our curricular offerings, our pathways, and our vision, on a regular basis through the various meetings and mechanisms described above.

We have partnered with our district's Perkins and Regional Occupational Programs to supplement our current resources. We have worked to establish partnerships with the Careers through Culinary Arts Program (CCAP) and held preliminary meetings with administrative staff from Abraham Friedman Occupational Center and Trade Technical Community College, which has a strong and well-established Culinary Arts program. Our students have benefited from our partnership with Perkins in part because of their assistance in finding teacher candidates that are highly qualified to teach our specialized courses. Currently we are working symbiotically with our Regional Occupational Program to supplement our culinary studies instructional team while increasing their city-wide culinary studies course offerings.

We also work with *El Cholo* Restaurant. Students visit the *El Cholo* site for training and orientation in restaurant operations. We are working to create opportunities for our students by establishing internships and apprenticeships to supplement their

academic intervention needs while they are off track. We have created opportunities for our students to cater and provide hospitality services by hosting a number of district and community events including a community awards and recognition luncheon at Friedman Occupational Center, the annual Adult School conference held on our campus, a campus luncheon meeting with U.S. Congressman Javier Becerra, and a panel discussion with U.S. Senator John Kerry that was held in our library.

Our classrooms, counseling and administrative offices, and teacher collaboration rooms are located in a contiguous space in the main building of our complex. There are common areas and facilities on campus that we share with other SLCs, but our classroom space is in a clear and recognized area that serves our SLC alone. We have effectively designed a shared space and room use plan, which we modify during every eight-week quarter. Classroom space is instructional space for student learning and activities. Our instructional team is flexible in modifying our space usage as needed. Our teachers also regularly meet and plan in our teacher collaboration rooms located within our SLC.

Rigorous Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

The School of TTC embraces a philosophy of high achievement expectations for all students through the delivery of rigorous and relevant, standards based learning opportunities built around culturally relevant curriculum that meets the needs of all our students, including our English Language Learners and other students with special needs.

Our SLC's specific course offerings and sequence of classes align to district graduation and university admission (A–G) requirements. Our school's curriculum is designed to ensure that all students are prepared for graduation on time and for admission to California's state universities. Curriculum is aligned with state content standards. Specific course offerings and our school's sequence of classes align with both content standards and state performance benchmarks.

In Joseph Murphy's work, *The Productive High School –Creating Personalized Academic Communities*, Murphy expresses his belief that expectations for student achievement are defined explicitly through the assessment system used to measure that achievement. In the School of T.T.C. authentic assessment supplements multiple forms of established standards-based assessments. In his book *Professional Learning Communities at Work*, Richard DuFour states that professional teachers focus on student performance and production. Their emphasis is on student performance and production in a real world context. Authentic, meaningful performance thus becomes a central tenet of their efforts to develop curriculum and assess student achievement. Teachers in professional learning communities recognize that teaching has not occurred until learning has occurred, and they act accordingly. All students are held accountable for demonstrating their proficiencies through authentic, project based and performance-based culminating activities. Professional experts collaborate with staff to evaluate student work. Administration supports teachers and students as they build their capacity to effectively design, demonstrate, and measure proficiency.

Teachers work collaboratively to design meaningful curriculum while helping students find purpose and make relevant connections to their own lives and their futures.

Students' sense of importance for learning is linked to their interest, relevance, perceptions of friends and parents. Students engage in school when they see learning as both personally possible and offering possibilities for personal gain. They are motivated to engage in learning when they connect work in school with their future, and sense of possibility is linked most strongly with perception of future extrinsic reward (Murphy, 2001).

The innovative physical and structural design of the school enables teachers to collaboratively design and deliver high quality instruction. In *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*, the authors believe that integrated teaching teams are a great first step to creating small autonomous schools within a large school because allegiance to teachers within common disciplines is greatly reduced when traditional departments are abandoned. While working with the same core teachers within this school, students are challenged to connect their learning by engaging in thematic, interdisciplinary curriculum. Teams of teachers partner to help students identify both their academic strengths and areas for potential growth. The staff supports the unique needs of all students, including English Learners, special education students, gifted and talented students, and others, by designing, implementing and monitoring a customized education plan, tailored to meet their needs and interests. Appropriate technology components are imbedded into all project-based instruction and all students and faculty are encouraged to further develop their technical competency.

To bring high-quality, high-interest curriculum to our students and to help students make connections between disciplines and complex, real-world experiences, our staff works hard to design and facilitate thematic, integrated, standards-based lessons in every class.

Here are a few examples of thematic, integrated, standards-based lessons that have been developed in our small learning community...

Example # 1: Using Algebra I Standard 15.0: (*Students apply algebraic techniques to solve rate problems, work problems, and percent mixture problems*). A Culinary Studies and Mathematics lesson focuses on analyzing different food preparation

techniques and different employee productivity levels to determine the most efficient or cost effective way to prepare food for a large banquet. Students enrolled in math and culinary classes must collaboratively demonstrate their ability to apply the appropriate algebraic formulas using the variables described above, to articulate their findings, and to support their recommendations with evidence.

Example # 2: Using U.S. History Standard 12.4 [2]: (*Describe the current economy and labor market, including the types of goods and services produced, the types of skills workers need, the effects of rapid technological change, and the impact of international competition*). A social studies and Hospitality Management lesson focuses on an analysis and forecast of the specific skills required and job opportunities available in the hotel management industry in the next five years. This work requires students to incorporate basic principles of *economics*, such as *supply and demand*, and basic concepts of *Math Analysis/Statistics* such as *probability*. Students present their five-year personnel staffing plan/forecast for a resort hotel, providing rationale based on economic and labor trends.

Example # 3: Using Chemistry Standard 10 [c]: (*Students know amino acids are the building blocks of protein*) and English Language Arts Writing Standard 2.3: (*Students write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports*). A Chemistry and E.L.A. interdisciplinary lesson focuses on a comparative analysis of the chemical composition and the nutritional benefits of different ingredients found in high protein foods. Incorporating components of the Health curriculum relating to healthy eating also becomes part of this lesson. Students present their research-based reports using evidence to recommend specific healthy, high protein menu choices. The culminating event involves Chemistry students presenting the chemical composition of ingredients, Culinary Arts students preparing and articulating the preparation process of a particular meal, Health students presenting the health and nutritional benefits of specific ingredient and menu choices, and—after all of this is done—all students and guests, including parents, sit down and enjoy a healthy meal together.

Data are essential to understand the disparity among current practice, current perceptions, and best practice. In the School of T.T.C. student achievement data will be the driving force behind instructional design and decision-making.

In her book, *Data Analysis for Continuous School Improvement*, Bernhardt states that there is a lack of the kind of professional development that is needed if teachers are to understand why data are important and how data can make a difference in their teaching. Further developing an understanding of why and how data can be utilized to improve our teaching and learning is a critical component of professional development in our learning community and, we believe, a necessary ingredient to achieving full student “buy-in” to the multiple assessment tools currently in use in our curriculum.

We use results from subject-specific periodic assessments to continuously modify instructional practices. All students, with the support of instructional staff, set specific, individualized proficiency goals and benchmarks and work to meet and exceed those goals. Innovative time management strategies are being put in place to allocate more staff time to analyzing data while balancing the time constraints of administering multiple assessments. Administering multiple assessments and compiling the resulting student achievement data has limited value without critical analysis of that data.

Equity and Access

Developing and maintaining a culturally and linguistically sensitive curriculum is essential to the success of our students. Through the development of a specific small learning community focusing on culinary studies, our school has focused on a subgroup of the student population. This subgroup, however, reflects the full range of diversity that exists on our high school complex's campus. Our SLC includes students from every significant demographic and ability grouping on the Santee Complex campus. Within our classrooms and our courses, we support heterogeneous grouping of students to ensure academic and personal development of all students.

We do not include or exclude students from admission to our SLC based on ability, demographic characteristics, or any other criterion other than students' and family's expressed interest in our school's theme and its supporting curriculum. Students who have not expressed a preference for a particular SLC when they first arrive at Santee are assigned to our school or to one of the others by lottery. Almost all our students come from within the boundary area of Santee High School, but we also accept students from outside the area who come to the campus from other areas as opportunity transfers, as voluntary transfers, or in other ways.

Through community meetings and informational meetings at our feeder middle schools, students and parents have the opportunity to become part of our small learning community. Students, assisted by their parents or guardians, are able to make informed decisions about admission based on aligning their own needs and interests with the course offerings and curricular pathways detailed at these community meetings. These meetings are then often followed up by individual consultations involving students and their parents working with SLC counselors and administrators to design a preliminary individualized learning program for the student.

With the assistance of student clubs, specialized courses, and extracurricular programs, we have multiple resources to assist various subcultures within our small learning community. We provide students with electives, their needed courses to

graduate, and college readiness. Next year we will offer honors and advanced placement courses within our small learning community. Beginning in Fall 2006, students from other SLCs on our campus will be invited to join A.P. classes in our school provided there is room, and—in turn—our students, if they choose, will be able to take A.P. courses that we don't offer in the TTC but that are available through other Santee SLCs. Developing partnerships with Trade Tech and other nearby colleges will also provide students opportunity to enroll in advanced classes and, in many cases, receive joint college and high school credit.

Our classes are made up of heterogeneous groups of students with mixed abilities and levels of achievement. Our teachers hold high expectations of their students and are committed to supporting our students in this diverse community through personalizing the educational experience of each student and through the use of culturally relevant and linguistically responsive teaching.

We provide targeted academic intervention through after school tutoring sessions, Saturday school, and Beyond the Bell. We also utilize specialized curriculum in English language arts such as *Studio* and *High Point/DRWC* and build in intervention strategies through our sequencing of classes in our 4X4 schedule, including such offerings as our four quarter Algebra 1 course.

The TTC, including classrooms, workrooms, storage areas, and offices, is located in a clearly demarcated area on the second floor of the main building of the new Santee complex. This is a safe and coherent area for student learning, and all of our students have equal access to the space.

Personalization

Personalization is a necessary aspect of instruction that makes the curriculum relevant to our students. The School of TTC builds in personalization by maintaining an appropriate size that reflects our ability to build strong teacher-student relationships that will span years.

Our daily advisory period is much more than a traditional homeroom. As our teachers assume the role of advisor, they have the opportunity to nurture and develop a close relationship with a small group of students. In most cases, these students will be with them in advisory for four years.

The advisory also enables our students to benefit from establishing strong relationships with their peers. The established relationships between students and teachers provide motivation and also provide higher expectations that both students and teachers are accountable for academic success. Multiple school wide programs provide students with the opportunity to interact with many of their teachers inside and outside of the classroom. Our teachers offer mentoring and routinely provide time to their students outside of the normal school day. Students enrolled in our SLC have other opportunities for learning outside the normal instructional day. These include after-school programs, dual enrollment in college courses, service learning programs, and internships, among others.

Teachers consistently reach out to parents through parent-teacher conferences, “Back to School Nights,” written materials, telephone and personal conferences, and other community-based activities. Students receive college and career planning and guidance from teachers, the school administrator, and the school counselor. This takes the form of verbal guidance as well as a written instructional plan and, in 11th grade, a postsecondary plan that is jointly written by the student and the school counselor. Development of this plan will become part of the advisory curriculum in 11th grade.

In addition, teachers build lessons that revolve around various learning types and abilities and adjust their classroom practice to take into account individual learning styles

and different modes of intelligence. In both advisories and in regular classes, students themselves are encouraged to create lessons for their peers based on their own experiences. Many of these lessons are culturally embedded, and this helps support student cultural pride and identity. In health and cooking classes, for example, students create and experiment with lessons in nutrition that derive their particular family and cultural backgrounds.

Regular verbal counseling from teachers, counselors, and the school administrator provides opportunity for closer understanding of student goals and needs. Our teachers provide our students multiple opportunities to succeed.

Accountability and Distributed Leadership

Our small learning community team members work collaboratively to reflect on and evaluate our work and the performance of our students as we continuously refine our plan. The leadership role is a shared responsibility for all teachers, our counselor, our administrative assistant, and our administrator. We work individually and collectively to realize our vision, make it a reality not just a goal, and uphold the high standards of behavior and achievement that we expect of ourselves and each and every one of our students. Our individual staff members continue to display initiative and leadership in both day-to-day management of our school and in the long-term planning that is necessary to keep improving our instructional program. At least once a year, we set aside time for the full staff to review and revise our SLC plan and revisit our vision. Students also participate in this review and reflection of our most basic values through activities in their advisory classrooms.

We regularly review and discuss student achievement data, and we work closely with our literacy coach, counseling staff, and feeder middle schools to ensure timely receipt of data, appropriate student placement, and evaluation of our instructional practices. Several of our teachers, our counselor and our administrator are experienced in analysis of school data. Accurate and timely data analysis and interpretation is a core value of our school, and we frequently focus on data and its uses during our professional development meetings.

Teachers in our small learning community hold leadership positions in the English language arts and math departments as well as U.T.L.A, our teachers union.

We work with the Santee complex administrators and with the principals of the other Santee Complex small learning communities to make sure that we develop fair and reasonable plans for sharing common space and for using the library, the athletic fields, and other specialized facilities and classrooms on campus. The SLC principals and the site level administrators have regular meetings where we work out our shared concerns and opportunities and where we share the visions, challenges, and successes of our various schools. At least once a year, we present and explain ourselves as a school to the

assembled staff of the Santee complex at a joint staff development meeting. We also work regularly and routinely with Santee Site Governance Councils that include representation from parents, classified staff, the teachers' union, and other school stakeholders. As part of our culinary studies curriculum, the TTC sometimes caters school wide special events and assists the site administrators and the other SLC principals with facilitation of food for presenters and special visitors to campus.

We take advantage of support provided by our local site administrators, Local District 5 resource and administrative personnel, and Central District offices to help expand, supplement, and support our educational effort.

Collaboration, Parent and Community Engagement Benchmark

Our staff is working to develop partnerships with junior colleges, universities, industry associations, hotels and restaurants. We continue to strategize on how to increase parent involvement in our school and encourage all parents to define their own roles. We plan on utilizing our parent center to host parent forums beginning in the school year 2006–2007. Currently, we use the parent center to host open house, parent conference nights, and parent meetings. We plan to survey parents once yearly to get their input and ensure that their voice is heard.

We maintain an open-door policy in regard to parents. Parents are always welcome in our SLC. They are invited to visit classrooms, confer with the counselor, staff, or administrator about specific educational needs of their students, or just share their ideas and concerns. Parents are also always invited to be part of school-wide events. Our culinary curriculum gives parents the opportunity to present recipes and teach traditional food preparation techniques, working directly with the students. We also plan to host a yearly multicultural luncheon, where parents and families can showcase their unique cultures and cuisines. Parents also are invited to come into Life Skills and social science classrooms during instructional time and share their experiences with coming to a new country. In American Literature classes, parents are invited to make presentations and participate in discussions centered on the idea of the American Dream.

Professional Development:

Thoughtful professional development strategies are designed with input from the instructional staff. The leadership team works collaboratively to establish the appropriate balance between district-mandated training and activities that address the specific needs of our teachers and students. Richard Dufour suggests that for many teachers professional development is synonymous with occasional daylong workshops where they sit passively while an alleged expert “exposes” them to new ideas and practices. The program is then assessed on the basis of the “happiness quotient”—the level of teacher satisfaction with the presentation—rather than on its impact on teaching and learning. Dufour recommends that staff development programs should be designed to develop thoughtful professionals who have the ability to assess and revise their own actions in order to improve the likelihood of success for their students. Weekly common planning time enables the faculty to determine the course and content of our professional development activities on an ongoing basis.

Supporting and “growing” new teachers is a critical component of the overall professional development plan. At Patrick Henry High School in Minneapolis, a school recognized for its innovative restructuring efforts, all first year teachers participate in a resident teacher program. Resident teachers have a reduced teaching load, which enables them to focus on their practice, reflect, observe other teachers, and participate in on-site professional development activities tailored to meet their needs. The School of T.T.C. is committed to designing creative ways to offer this type of strategic support for all new teachers while meeting the instructional needs of all students.

One strategy that we employ is surveying the instructional staff to determine their professional development needs. We also survey students to discover what they feel their teachers should know about their culture, teenage issues, etc. We want students to lend their voices as well and help us find ways to make their teachers better teachers. Administrators and parents also have an opportunity for input. We compile the data collected from all of the surveys and then create a Professional Development Curriculum based on the input we receive. This curriculum is also a place for implementing various

professional developments throughout the year that are specifically tailored to meet the needs of our teachers in our small learning community and to ensure that our personalization strategies continue to improve.

In addition, we seek partnerships with outside agencies, parents, and experts who can provide needed specialized training. Our intent is to set up goals and measurable objectives for our professional development plan.

We expect to hold ourselves accountable throughout this process. We want this to be powerful and meaningful work that will directly support our vision and that will keep the focus on our students and their academic and social needs. Among other things, we maintain our focus on alignment of instruction with academic standards and with outside accountability requirements, and we will use student data directly in a formative way to help us self-evaluate and make “midcourse corrections” that will keep us on the track of supporting high-quality, challenging, effective instruction that is carefully and appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all of our students.

Teacher buy in is enhanced during this process because we encourage our teachers to present and conduct training sessions. This is collaborative work from A to Z. Our meetings are also public. Parents are always invited to observe and to participate. We strive to create transparency, and we invite inquiry and analysis from anyone capable of and interested in giving it. We are a professional community that is focused on discovering, developing, and fostering best practice in education.