San Fernando High School
Smaller Learning Community Plan

Humanitas - A

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Unifying Vision and Identity

Vision Statement

The aim of the Humanitas program is to create a sense of personal identity and community. Humanitas is a rigorous, theme based interdisciplinary writing program. This school community is standards based and fosters realization of personal identity through critical thinking and exploration of culture and society. The Humanitas classroom incorporates cooperative learning, critical thinking, inquiry and intellectual rigor through thematic units relating to real life experiences. We hope to encourage students to make connections across the curriculum. Teachers create a nurturing, supportive, and safe learning environment. A Humanitas graduate is a culturally aware effective communicator with an interdisciplinary, liberal arts background which facilitates preparation for post secondary education. The ultimate goal is to enable the student to be a literate, productive member of society.

All stakeholders gave input into the planning of the Humanitas SLC through participation in surveys and meetings. The educational approach will be interdisciplinary, with teachers coordinating the units in the pacing plans of their courses to align with those of their teaching partners.

The program will be theme-based, with units reflecting universal truths that lead to the self-realization of the student as a productive member of society, with an awareness and respect for other cultures.

The program will be intellectually rigorous and based on state standards, with the goal of preparing the student for higher learning.

Instructional strategies will be incorporated into classroom practice and teachers will be encouraged to use student-centered, inquiry-based learning with a strong
emphasis on writing skills. Critical thinking skills will be fostered and developed. Students will participate in cooperative learning activities and will develop their own projects and portfolios. Classroom instruction will be reinforced by frequent field trips to various venues such as museums, science centers and colleges.

A variety of assessments will be used to guide instruction. Assessments will be formative as well as summative. These will include the quarterly district assessments and teacher-generated unit tests and assignments.

Projects will be standards- and theme-based and will also be aligned with the standards. Whenever possible, projects will be coordinated between teachers to reflect interdisciplinary mastery, including the demonstration of subject knowledge and its applications.

Humanitas will be based primarily on the needs of the students and secondarily on the needs of the community. We are in the process of community outreach and seeking partnerships with Mission College and CSU Northridge, which can be addressed in advisories. We are also exploring business partnership possibilities with the Department of water and power.

If it is found over time that certain students require intervention, they may be required to attend Saturday school, after-school tutoring sessions, or Intersession.

Parents will be contacted on a regular basis by teachers, both for intervention and for reports of improvement or of good progress. There will be meetings between Humanitas teachers concerning the students within their classes. Since many students will be common among various teachers, intervention will be more effective for those students. There will be regular parent-teacher meetings and social parent-teacher nights. Advisories will be periods in which teachers will be able to monitor the
academic progress of their own small group of students, and will be able to work with parents and other teachers to facilitate student progress and develop any interventions that may be necessary.

Humanitas will explore and establish partnerships and programs with the parents, employers and post-secondary educational institutions to provide students with in-service learning, job training, and the opportunities to continue their education after graduation.

The requirements of the program may be modified in the future to address changing student strengths and weaknesses. It is our goal to include students in Humanitas classes for at least 2/3 of the day.

Our plan is to reconfigure the small school physical space when the district determines that we return to a traditional calendar.

Lead teachers will work with SLC coordinators to facilitate the Humanitas Program. They will coordinate common planning time for teachers and organize SLC meetings.

Leaders will outline the goals and needs of students and teachers within the SLC. Problems as well as successes will be brought to monthly curriculum council meetings by the lead teacher to share with the school community at large.

Coordinators and teachers will meet with administrators to outline the needs and special funds available for the operation of the program. They will develop strategies for coordinating and implementing an interdisciplinary approach between teachers in the course of developing pacing plans.

Coordinators and teachers will work with counselors to ensure the correct programming of students into Humanitas courses; this would include ensuring that
students have the necessary pre-requisites before being programmed into a course of study.

The SLC team (comprised of selected students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and community members) will make the necessary administrative decisions for the *Humanitas* vision to be fully realized at the school site, including those decisions related to budget considerations, student conduct codes, facilities and equipment to be used, master scheduling of students, and coordination with the community and on-site police to ensure the monitoring of safety in and around the school.
Equity & Access

The Humanitas SLC is inclusive and draws students from all of our student population. The program includes general education, ESL, resource special education, special day class, and sheltered English students. Humanitas students are recruited. In the past, all SLCs visited the feeder middle schools to present assemblies explaining the SLC offerings to culminating students. Students and parents were offered a first, second and third choice of SLCs. They have no choice of track unless a sibling is previously enrolled on a specific track. Every effort is made to give the student the first choice of SLC. In the 2006-2007 school year, approximately twelve hundred middle school students will be bussed to an assembly in the San Fernando Auditorium for a presentation of all SLC offerings at our high school followed by a tour of the campus.

While highly it is desirable to have a discrete area set aside for our SLC, we have not been able to implement that as of yet. We are discussing ways to reconfigure our campus but may not be able to in the four years remaining before we are slated to return to a traditional calendar.

The Scholastic Performance Audit Team recommended that our school choose three school-wide strategies. The faculty voted to use Cornell Note taking, cooperative learning and graphic organizers to support student learning. The two graphic organizer programs are Action Learning and Thinking Maps. Humanitas teachers have received professional development training in these three school wide strategies and our goal is to make a continued effort to integrate these strategies.

Full inclusion of special education students is the ultimate LAUSD goal. To facilitate progress toward this goal, resource special education teachers collaborate and/or co-teach with general education teachers. The role of the resource teacher is to teach
strategies which will enable all students to more easily access the Humanitas curriculum. The special education learning lab program is intended to support all Humanitas students.

Interventions, which are provided when appropriate, are varied. The San Fernando High School secondary intervention plan includes intersession, the Extended Learning Academy (Beyond the Bell), a CAHSEE preparation seminar, CAHSEE Boot Camp, the Carnegie computer algebra program, the Developing Readers and Writers language arts program and after school tutoring.

In the 2006-2007 school year San Fernando High School implemented a Student advisory program. Humanitas students will be programmed into a Humanitas advisory to further the goals embedded in the Humanitas program and to help the students and faculty to create a sense of community and to enhance personalization.

While we are dedicated to providing our students with all of the required courses for college admission we are also aware of the critical role elective courses play in engaging students in a variety of activities and expanding their understanding of the inter-relationships between art, science, math, history, and literature.

Available to Humanitas students are electives in social studies, science, physical education, fine arts and technical arts. Fine arts electives include music, art, foreign language and Folklorico. Technical arts electives are drafting, print shop, auto shop, metal shop, wood shop and computer classes. Some electives are offered as R.O.P. (Regional Occupational Program) classes so that students can earn additional credits after regular school hours.
Honors classes are offered in English. Advanced Placement classes are offered in Spanish, Spanish literature, History, Physics and Calculus. Offering Honors and AP courses on several tracks in all the Core subjects is integral to the design of our program to ensure student choice.

The goal of the Humanitas - A SLC is to implement ongoing and effective assessment of student data. To that end, data is collected from multiple sources and disseminated at curriculum council meetings, faculty meetings, department meetings, SLC meetings and professional development trainings. In addition to these ongoing assessment evaluation programs, advisory teachers are now provided with student grades, both present and past to assist in enhancing student performance and to provide early intervention when required. A plan is in place to generate a personalized data sheet for advisory students so that they can monitor their own progress toward graduation and post secondary education.

Student data is generated in the following ways: the CST, core periodic assessments, attendance reports, AYP/API data, graduation rates, CAHSEE, students’ cumulative records, report cards, Project Grad follow through, and other in-house sources. During SLC and department meetings, data is analyzed, discussions take place, and any changes in practice or remediation are adopted and strategies for implementation are developed. Individually, advisory teachers will follow the progress of their specific students and adjust advisory programs and determine remediation resources for the students, as well as apprise parents of student progress. Our goal is that analysis of data will be ongoing.
Since our data is collected using a wide variety of testing instruments, a broad picture of student achievement is accessible to teachers, counselors, administrators and students in the Humanitas - A SLC.

The vision of the Humanitas – A SLC is to coordinate instruction between the disparate subject areas to create a more holistic understanding. Substantial data exists showing performance gains in student achievement by students in all of our demographics through the utilization of the Humanitas methodologies. It is of particular note that both graduation rates from high school and the percentage of students continuing on to post high school education are higher for schools implementing a Humanitas program.
Standards Based Instruction and Assessment

Course of Study

The Humanitas - A program at San Fernando High school meets all LAUSD/UC/CSU A-G requirements necessary for graduation from High School. The Humanitas - A program offers the following courses:

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<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>10th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English 9</td>
<td>English 10</td>
<td>Am. Lit./Comp.</td>
<td>Expo Comp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life Skills/Health</td>
<td>World History</td>
<td>US History</td>
<td>Econ/Gov’t</td>
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<td>Algebra 1</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Algebra 2</td>
<td>Auto</td>
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<td>ICS</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<td>PE</td>
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<td>Auto</td>
<td>Elective</td>
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<td>Art/Elective</td>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
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Interdisciplinary Instruction

Humanitas is an interdisciplinary program that works across the curriculum and incorporates many themes. The following themes have been developed for 11th grade. State Standards from each course and or discipline was used to develop each of the following themes. A natural place to begin was with the paring of American Literature
and Composition and US History typically taken by juniors. Some interdisciplinary themes which are under development for these courses include:

1. The American Character and Belief System
2. Making a Place for All: The Immigrant Experience
3. The Struggle for Equality: The History of Women
4. The Struggle for Equality: The History of African-Americans
5. The Struggle for Equality: The History of Native, Latino, and Asian Americans
6. Boom and Bust: The History of American Labor and Industry
7. War, Peace and American Foreign Policy
8. Presidential Character

As the Humanitas teachers continue to work together, this 11th grade model will be used for all grades. Teachers from each of the departments met during common planning periods, and Professional Development Days (PDD’s). During this time, themes were developed and agreed upon. These themes are based on the California State standards. Teachers from each department will use copies of the standards applicable to their discipline. Commonalities within each discipline were used to develop the overall themes. Within the themes, an essential question was developed for students to consider and analyze at the end of the unit. This question was used as a guide in preparing lessons. Now teachers continue to collaborate on lessons plans and teaching strategies during their common time. Specific school wide strategies are cooperative learning, Cornell note taking and thinking maps. Scaffolding is done throughout these thematic units as a way to reach all learning levels. Tutoring, Saturday
school and quarterly parent meetings support the student throughout the year. Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence is often used when deciding forms of assessment.

**Forms of Assessment**

The following forms of assessment are used to measure student performance. Core departments have periodic benchmark exams. At the end of each unit students are given a written exam which covers material from all Humanitas classes. This exam is graded by all the teachers involved in the unit. A portfolio is required of each student. The portfolio is a culmination of work done throughout the year. At the end of the year, teachers from relevant departments are involved in grading the portfolio. In addition to the portfolio, students are expected to create at least one documentary using multimedia equipment during the course of the year.

In addition to the exams given by the school and district periodic assessments for core courses, the state offers the CAHSEE and the CST. Humanitas special education students are given the KTEA, and the Woodcock-Johnson norm based assessment test as well.
**Personalization**

Students perform better when they feel included rather than marginalized. Our primary strategy for ensuring personalization is the use of a 28 minute advisory period, implemented in the 2006-2007 school year. The development of the advisories is addressed in section 7. Advisories are an effective vehicle for creating a rapport between the teacher and the advisory student, as the enrollment is limited to approximately 20 students. Students will also have the opportunity to develop supportive relationships with their peers.

During advisories, students are kept up to date on their personal progress as well as the classes and tests necessary for acceptance to a university. College representatives and the college center are providing the necessary forms and timelines for applying to college.

The SLC serves a population of about 425 students. The teachers collaborate on how to better serve the students enrolled in advisories. The teachers behave as adult mentors and role models for the students. Teachers have access to student work, student records, and grade reports to determine their progress. IEPs, CUMS, and the ISIS program can provide invaluable data about students.

A second step toward personalization is through teacher collaboration in regard to the successes or problems of students in their courses. Following the Humanitas model, teachers collaborate to create a theme-based curriculum which includes different cultures. Teacher-teams share students and work together monitoring students in their humanities classrooms. Each week during common planning time, teachers discuss the progress or difficulties students are having at school. As a team, teachers are able to
work to identify common problems or challenges and effectively support each individual.

The Humanitas SLC accommodates all learning modalities. In addition to the Humanitas model, Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences will be used as a guide in developing student assessments. Students will be assessed on their linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills throughout the year. All Humanitas teachers use the Cornell note-taking system, thinking maps and cooperative learning to assist different learning styles.
**Parent & Community Engagement**

Humanitas is a well-known and respected program with a rich history in the Los Angeles area. In the Humanities program teachers from various departments will meet and develop central themes and outcomes for the students. In addition, common planning time will be provided for teachers. Furthermore, Humanitas provides many opportunities for curriculum development through teacher centers, professional development training, web sites, partnerships with other Humanitas programs, regular meetings, and partnerships with local museums. The progress of the Humanitas – A SLC program is evaluated each year through the Humanitas Inventory.

To keep parents informed, our first open house is devoted to introducing teachers, curriculum, and materials to parents. At this meeting, parents along with the redesign team members will have the opportunity to discuss relevant issues, provide ideas, ask questions, collaborate, and evaluate the program. There is also student participation through the Humanitas Advisory rep meetings once a month. The students have the opportunity to shape the Advisory program to their own vision of what the program should be. Community engagement begins with the Urban Education Program and Humanitas.

As part of vertical articulation, the students from our feeder middle schools will come to SFHS in December to be introduced to the SLC programs. Approximately 1,200 middle school students will come to the auditorium for an assembly describing the programs offered. After listening to descriptions of the various SLCs, the students will have the opportunity to choose the one they prefer.
The Humanities program is writing based thematic program designed to bring various disciplines together. A goal of the program will be for the students to write an essay after each thematic unit that shows evidence of interdisciplinary instruction. These essays will show the success of the different subjects in collaborating in thematic instruction. The SLC teams will meet regularly to evaluate the essays and analyze the strengths and weaknesses to guide further instruction.
**Professional Development**

San Fernando High School is unusual in that it has created its own Professional Development Committee. Approximately 4 years ago, faculty and administration decided it would be in the school’s best interest to provide a collaborative vehicle for improving the clarity and facilitation of our school’s professional development needs. Membership on the PD committee was open to the entire faculty. We accepted a group of 25 faculty members among 3 tracks and one administrator. These meetings are public and open to all stakeholders. This democratic process has proven to be a successful model for the district. Decisions are data driven, based on student needs and district directives. Decisions made by the PD committee are approved by the leadership council.

SLC teachers meet in various ways for professional development, to include: programmed common planning time (daily/weekly), monthly SLC meetings, banked time Tuesdays (bi-monthly), professional development committee meetings (bi-monthly), monthly leadership council meetings, and monthly SLC lead teachers meetings. In the foreseeable future SLC’s will be involved with the School Site Council because after the implementation of SLC autonomy, categorical budgets will be shared by the individual SLC’s.

In school year 2005-06, the faculty was approached by lead teachers with the idea of advisories becoming our personalization piece for this document. Faculty approved this decision. During this period of time, we were assisted by David Rattray of UNITE LA and experts from CSUN to facilitate the transition from homeroom to advisory. PD time was devoted to collecting ideas and activities for the purpose of creating an
advisory binder to be used in all SLC’s at SFHS. Students in the then homerooms were polled about what they felt would be valuable to them during advisories. After this information was collected, teachers were offered the opportunity to select a few of these ideas/activities and develop a curriculum for advisories. The advisory design faculty submitted these lesson plans to the lead teachers and these plans were shared and consolidated among all SLC’s. Binders of the materials were given to each faculty member to utilize during advisory time. It is also important to note that each SLC chooses its own advisory activity, to include SSR, study hall, peer tutoring, etc.

Revisiting and revising advisory materials is an ongoing process in Humanitas A. We understand that things could change over time, depending upon student needs. At this point in time counselors and administrators are not assigned to advisories. We would like this to change in the future so that all certificated adults will be involved in the personalization process on a daily basis.

SLC PD aligns with SLC, school, and district goals in that the general topics of discussion during the various PD meetings is as follows: SLC issues, data analysis, looking at student work, general district directives, student needs as determined from Curriculum Council meetings, discussing interventions/remediation, sharing best practices, field trips, and guest speakers. These PD meetings are open to teachers and administration. Only some of the meetings are open to students: the monthly leadership council, SI, and SLC meetings.

A few years ago when we were a program improvement school, professional development was devoted to aligning curriculum and instruction with state standards. We continue to ensure, during PD within our SLC, that this process continues on a regular basis.
PD provides ongoing leadership development in that elected faculty and elected students have a deep involvement in the various leadership venues as explained earlier. Programmed common planning time is critical in the development of interdisciplinary teams, affording them the opportunity to create successful thematic lesson plans. UEP can serve our needs by providing financial support for off campus retreats, and sharing successful examples from other district schools to support this goal. In that we are embarking on the experiment of converting our comprehensive high school into SLC’s, it is our view that we are open to any data, information and support that will provide a successful outcome.

Student data is generated in the following ways: the CST, core quarterly assessments, attendance reports, AYP/API data, graduation rates, CAHSEE, students’ cumulative records, report cards, Project Grad follow through, and other in-house sources. During SLC meetings, data is analyzed, discussions take place, and any changes in practice or remediation are determined. Each Advisory teacher will follow the progress of their Advisory students. The Advisory teacher will adjust the Advisory program and determine remediation resources for the students, as well as communicate these needs to parents.
Distributed Leadership

The A track Humanitas SLC has two leadership positions, the lead teacher and the redesign team. The lead teacher is an elected position and the redesign team is made up of teacher volunteers. Each member of the SLC participates in grade level teams as well as the Advisory program. The SLC meets on banked time Tuesdays to plan and discuss methods of achieving student success. The redesign team meets as needed to work on SLC goals and projects.

In the beginning of the semester each member of the SLC receives the class schedules of the students in his or her Advisory to monitor the implementation of Humanitas programing. Each grading period the Advisory teachers receive the grades of their Advisory students. Based on each student’s performance, the Advisory teacher will determine if the students needs after school tutoring, Saturday school, or other forms if intervention. All teachers will have opportunities to discuss student performance at the regular SLC meetings.

The lead teacher of each SLC meets each week during period 5 on Thursday to discuss and analyze school issues. The meetings are facilitated by the School Improvement Coordinator with input from the administrator in charge of the SLCs and the UTLA Chapter Chair. Each SLC lead teacher represents the concerns of the SLC and their impact on the others. This body seeks administrative support to implement the common goals of each SLC.

The SLC lead teacher attends the Professional Development Committee meeting on the first and third Monday of each month to discuss professional development issues. Plans for school wide professional development as well as SLC specific training is determined at these meetings, using data from internal and external resources.
The lead teacher of each SLC also attends the Leadership Council Meeting on the first Tuesday of each month. The lead teacher represents the interests of the SLC and has voting power in school wide decisions to include budget, facilities, calendar, discipline, and professional development.

The SLC lead teacher represents the SLC in the Master Schedule Committee bringing to these meetings the special needs of each SLC. The Master Schedule Committee of each track builds the master schedule through collaboration with the counseling office.

Multiple members of each SLC attend district provided seminars and training related to SLC development, such as Character Counts, Asset Building, Avid, master schedule training, and others.

Towards the end of the school year, lead teachers and administrators will meet to review and evaluate the successes and challenges encountered.