Small Learning Communities

SLC Design Proposal

submitted to
Los Angeles Unified School District

I. SLC DESIGN PROPOSAL
RECOMMENDATION SIGN-OFF ROUTING SHEET

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<th>School Site Council Recommendation to Proceed</th>
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<td>Name of School:</td>
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<td>Verdugo Hills Senior High</td>
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<td>Name of Small Learning Community:</td>
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<td>School of Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td>UTLA Chapter Chairperson’s signature</td>
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Small Learning Communities

SLC Design Proposal

II. COVER SHEET

Name of School: Verdugo Hills Senior High

Location Code: 8914

Proposed SLC Name: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

Design Team Leader:

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SLC Design Proposal

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IV. LETTER OF INTENT

Dear Superintendent,

This Letter of Intent is meant to inform you of Verdugo Hills High School’s desire to implement a Smaller Learning Community, known as the School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”). The VPA will provide a fun, hands-on setting for any student interested in exploring their creative side, while gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of core academic studies. Students may explore Drama, Play Production, Theater Workshop (set, lighting, sound, costumes, and theater management), Animation, Screenwriting, Filmmaking, Music, Music Theory, Voice/Chorus, Dance, Drawing, Painting, Digital Art, and more, while courses such as English, Math, History, and Science will incorporate arts-related topics into their curricula, tapping students’ prior knowledge and areas of interest as pathways into academic exploration. The school will feature special presentations and guest artists from around Los Angeles, and there will be many opportunities for students to display their talents in plays, musicals, concerts, exhibitions, and competitions. Additionally, the VPA will seek out and develop relationships with local arts organizations such as the McGroarty Arts Center and the Foothill Performing Arts, as well as entertainment industry leaders in the surrounding community. Parental involvement will be a key component in the school’s success, both in playing a role in decision-making and in assisting and working with students on a project-by-project basis. No arts background or audition is required for a student to be admitted to the school – just an honest desire to work hard and explore one’s creative abilities.

The Arts, Media, and Entertainment industries are a dynamic sector that requires a combination of creative and technical knowledge and skills in producing and displaying works of art or artistic performance. Students concentrating in the visual arts express feeling and content through the manipulation of physical and visual objects and comprise a large number of industry occupations such as painting, sculpture, design, commercial art, photography, and cinematography. Those students studying the performing arts focus on the direct creation of art and entertainment by the individual artist, including theater, music, and dance. Supporting all these areas are students concentrating their studies on “behind-the-scenes” jobs, such as set design, costume design, lighting design, sound engineering, theater management, digital media and publishing, and numerous other career pathways.
Besides basic arts skills and knowledge, flexibility and creative adaptability to a rapidly changing professional landscape are key elements to an individual’s success in a career in the visual and performing arts. Consequently, students will be educated across multiple academic disciplines and career pathways, as well as from within various subdivisions of their primary pathway. Postsecondary education and training is expected for most skilled and semi-skilled occupations in this industry sector, and students in the VPA are expected to pursue such higher education.

John Lawler
Lead Teacher – School of Visual and Performing Arts
Verdugo Hills Senior High
VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE
SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

VISION BENCHMARKS

A. Extensive research has repeatedly proven that an education in the arts develops critical interpersonal, communication, and social skills in students. But even more important are the measurable gains made in academic achievement in all core content areas. The faculty of the School of Visual and Performing Arts has chosen this SLC because of a shared belief in the power of the arts to enrich students culturally and academically, and develop a community of independent yet collaborative learners. All stakeholders (teachers, students, counselors, parents, community, and administration) of our educational team are in the process of creating the vision and identifying the benchmarks signifying its tangible achievements.

B. The School of Visual and Performing Arts has agreed to meet as a group once per month to discuss the development and implementation of our vision. At least one student and one parent stakeholder, as well as our administrator and a member of the local arts community, will be invited to provide input and feedback at VPA Team meetings. The VPA Lead Teacher currently serves on the Design Team, and represents and mediates the issues and interests of the VPA and its stakeholders in such meetings. In an effort to keep parents involved in their students’ education, we will look into the possibility of creating on-line moderated discussion groups for teachers and parents. Parents and teachers could voice their concerns, opinions, and feelings about the education of our student’s school.

C. Students of the VPA are expected to fulfill all A – G requirements, graduate from school and pursue college or other post-secondary education or training, or be prepared to work in a creative or technical arts field. Whether pursuing an arts-related career or not, all graduates of the VPA will be well-rounded, collaborative, and independent thinkers with highly developed communication skills and inquisitive, creative minds.

D. The VPA’s vision, goals, and objectives align to all LAUSD initiatives by providing arts opportunities and education to students of all cultural backgrounds and subgroups, presenting standards-based, arts-related curricula, and fostering a supportive environment in which students are aware of a personalized experience from their faculty and other VPA students.

E. The VPA will structure its budget to maximize a student-centered use of funds, providing supplies and materials, professional development for teachers, guest performers and presentations, allocations for field trips, and other project-based learning. Additionally, funds will be budgeted to give a distinctly identify and demarcate the VPA area of our campus. The budget will provide resource specialists and ELL TA’s with specific training in the Jane Schaffer program (which is the backbone of our writing
program) in order to accommodate the needs of students who are struggling to meet state standards for writing skills. Additionally, resource specialists will be trained in the DRW program in order to meet the needs of special ed. students who are struggling with decoding, encoding, phonological concepts, reading comprehension, and other aspects of literacy skills.

F. The VPA will partner with stakeholders from the SLC, the greater Verdugo population, parents, potential employers, and the community, who will be invited to participate in the VPA Advisory Committee. The Committee will seek to develop relationships with local institutions such as UCLA, CSU-Northridge, CSU-Los Angeles, community colleges, and other post-secondary institutions.

G. Students of the VPA will hold SLC-wide assemblies that present the vision and goals of the school, as well as career pathways and post-matriculation strategies. Additionally, the VPA counselor will advise and guide students in class selection, fulfillment of A – G requirements, extracurricular involvement, and college or other post-secondary pursuits.

H. The VPA Team will meet with its key stakeholders, especially parents, to discuss and establish standards and expectations of student conduct, use of facilities, school safety, and other areas of concern. A master schedule is developed by the Lead Teacher with the principal and counselor for our school, and VPA teachers advise the counselor on student programming and related issues such as linking of classes across content areas. The lead teacher, counselors, APSCS, and department chairs worked together to create an SLC-specific master schedule last year. Lead Teachers’ collaboration with the counselors and the APSCS in drawing up the master schedule and creating protocols for student programming are areas under development as the school site discusses and determines resources to provide a counselor for each SLC. All these stakeholders will meet, discuss, and plan for the use of the budget after it has been allocated.

VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts ("VPA")

IDENTITY BENCHMARKS

A. The VPA is focused on the study, appreciation, and performance of the visual and performing arts. All teachers, administrators, and support staff in the school have selected the VPA and are in support of its shared vision and goals. Students and their parents select the school as either their first or second choice of SLC, and efforts are made to ensure that students who are especially passionate about the arts are admitted to the school.
B. The VPA is made up of approximately 350 10th–12th grade students who have selected the school as their first or second choice. Balancing is carried out to ensure consistent and equitable distribution of students by ethnicity, gender, and ability.

C. The VPA has many visual and performing arts courses integrated into its curriculum, including Drama, Play Production, Theater Workshop, Animation, Screenwriting, Filmmaking, Beginning Instruments, Chorus, Painting, Digital Art, and others. The Lead Teacher, the faculty, the counselors, and the APSCS collaborate to integrate SLC specific electives into the master schedule.

D. The VPA has proposed a contiguous space centered around McGroarty Auditorium, with Keltner Glen, the Band Room, Rooms 9 and 10, and the south wing of the Main Building all designated for VPA classes and performance. These areas will be clearly identified and demarcated with a color theme, way-finding signage, and student-work displays and kiosks. With a central teacher meeting area (Room 10), teacher teams will collaborate to incorporate cooperative and inquiry based learning models which will support the development of accountable talk and higher order thinking in the classroom environment.

E. The current VPA Lead Teacher is John Lawler, and its principal is Anne Harris. The Lead Teacher, department chairs, and counselor will communicate the successes and challenges of the SLC to the larger body of stakeholders in order to mobilize support of the entire school community.

F. Students must complete all A–G requirements, and in addition must take at least two aligned arts courses (i.e. Drama and Play Production) to satisfy the VPA graduation requirements.

G. The VPA Team will meet once per month (as outlined above) with its key stakeholders, especially parents, to discuss and establish standards and expectations of student conduct, use of facilities, school safety, and other areas of concern. A master schedule is developed by the Lead Teacher with the principal and counselor for our school, and VPA teachers advise the counselor on student programming and related issues such as linking of classes across content areas.

H. Students of the VPA will hold SLC-wide assemblies that present the vision and goals of the school, as well as career pathways and post-matriculation strategies. Additionally, the VPA counselor will advise and guide students in class selection, fulfillment of A–G requirements, extracurricular involvement, and college or other post-secondary pursuits.

I. Every effort is made to program VPA students into VPA classes (except for “global” classes such as AP) and at least 75% of any VPA class will be made up of VPA students.
J. As members of the VPA Team, parents and community partners will be instrumental in developing the vision and goals of the school, and in communicating those goals to students and the VPA faculty.

K. All SLC Lead Teachers and principals are members of the Design Team, and as such meet regularly (usually the first Tuesday each month) to share the accomplishments, challenges, and strategies incorporated in developing the identities of the schools.

VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

EQUITY & ACCESS BENCHMARKS

A. The faculty of the VPA agrees on the importance of addressing the academic needs and abilities of our diverse student population. We are all credentialed and certified to teach students of varying backgrounds, strengths, and challenges, and all incorporate and share successful differentiated instruction strategies such as SDAIE, Reciprocal Teaching, Thinking Maps, Multiple Intelligences, and others. The VPA has faculty members who are trained in various research-based teaching strategies such as SDAIE, Reciprocal Teaching, Thinking Maps, Cornell Note-Taking, Socratic Seminars, Carnegie, and LAVA programs. Our next steps in this area of instructional support include forming focus groups that share this information with all faculty members and a uniform plan of implementation across content areas.

B. No experience or audition is required for admission to the VPA, other than a student must be in the 10th – 12th grade and must have “an honest desire to work hard and explore [his/her] creative abilities.” No preference is given based on a student’s area of residence, and balancing is carried out to ensure consistent and equitable distribution of students by ethnicity, gender, and ability.

In the spring of 2006, Verdugo Hills implemented a thoughtful and successful process for deciding on the themes for its SLCs, and then soliciting students’ and parents’ input in narrowing down, learning about, and ultimately selecting an SLC. In the fall and winter terms, Verdugo’s Design Team held numerous meetings to discuss possible themes for SLC categories, and even the possibility of un-themed SLCs. Initially, there were approximately ten themed SLCs proposed, which were arrived at by an examination of other schools’ models, as well as the areas of interest and specialization of our faculty members. These proposed schools were presented to the entire faculty, and the faculty chose schools they were interested in being a part of. Next, we needed to know if those themes would resonate with a large enough population of students, so a non-binding poll was given to the entire student body to select and rank their preferences among the proposed schools (the two ninth-grade schools and the Multimedia Magnet were already established, and not included in the poll). From the poll, students selected the School of
Visual and Performing Arts, the School of Health, Fitness, and Biomedical Science, the Humanitas School of Urban Justice, and the School of International Studies as their schools of choice. Lead Teachers were then voted on by the faculty of each school, and in the early spring, informational seminars were held by each school to answer questions and address any issues parents had about the school or the enrollment process. Next, a series of assemblies were held to accommodate every ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade student and to screen a multimedia presentation by each school concerning the theme of that school and its unique requirements for participation. Every student was then given a School Selection form to take home and, in consultation with their parents, choose their top three SLC choices, have it signed by a parent, and return it to their counselor. The counselors promised to give every student either his or her first or second choice, and in fact, this was done. Still, if a parent or student was unsatisfied after the completion of this process, individual appointments could be made with counselors to enroll students in the school of their choice.

C. Students are admitted to the VPA after they and their parents select the VPA as either their first or second choice of SLC, and efforts are made to ensure that students who are especially passionate about the arts are admitted to the school. Whenever possible, students are programmed in elective courses according to their interests, and the counselor and Lead Teacher work on students’ behalf to ensure programming that satisfies graduation and college entrance requirements, as well as the wishes of each VPA student.

D. The VPA Team will assemble and review assessment and other data collected from the VPA student population and analyze it for strengths, weaknesses, and areas of concentration. The data will guide the VPA Team in developing new strategies and modifying existing strategies with the goal of overall increased achievement. VPA faculty members will also undergo AVID training in order to address the educational needs of students with qualifying GPAs and test scores. Teachers will use software to highlight problematic instructional topics and modify their curriculum accordingly. The VPA will effectively use the data from quarterly assessments and midterm progress reports in order to identify students in need of intervention.

E. The VPA faculty believes in the value of a diverse learning community, both from academic and individual standpoints. Students learn not only from their teachers, but from one another, and the VPA makes every attempt to capitalize on that powerful learning strategy. Therefore, we are committed to consistent and equitable distribution of students by ethnicity, gender, and ability. Students representing these groups will learn together in order to draw upon each others’ strengths and overcome their weakness in cooperative and inquiry based learning environments.

F. The VPA counselor and Lead Teacher help to provide a highly personalized, student-centered approach to programming, making every effort to place students in courses that are challenging and yet within their zone of proximal development. In addition to placing likely candidates into AP courses, the VPA will designate its own
Honors courses and select higher-achieving students for these more challenging classes. Our curriculum seeks to engage students in their zone of proximal development as it provides enough of a comfortable base while challenging students to work toward the next sphere of achievement level.

G. The faculty and support staff of the VPA esteems the value of a diverse and differentiated approach to instruction, and seeks to expose our students to the contributions made by differing cultures to the arts and sciences, in addition to the Western canon. This may include the art, dance, and music of local or international artists, or voices and stories of nontraditional writers and filmmakers. As VPA faculty, we will seek to have our students develop connections between their cultural values and those of the larger world community through providing them with arts-based learning experiences which focus on exploring and appreciating commonalities and differences.

H. The VPA will utilize the many intervention resources available at Verdugo Hills, including DRW for reading intervention, content-specific tutoring, and advisory periods that will provide a more personalized academic support. The Lead Teacher and counselor will mediate teacher-student-parent conferences to determine areas of academic need and to strategize an appropriate course of action. Teachers will maintain regular communication with the SLC counselor in regard to students in need, and the counselor will actively promote and enroll students in tutoring sessions as well as update her/his advisory teacher of the specific area needing improvement.

I. The VPA campus will be clearly identified and demarcated with a color theme, way-finding signage, and student work displays and kiosks. The VPA has proposed a contiguous space centered around McGroarty Auditorium, with Keltner Glen, the Band Room, Rooms 9 and 10, and the south wing of the Main Building all designated for VPA classes and performance. The designation of these instructional spaces will be by consensus of the entire Verdugo faculty, staff, and administration, and will be assigned equitably, so that all schools have the proper space needed to teach their content area in a safe and supportive environment.

J. All teachers, administrators, and support staff in the school have selected the VPA as their school of choice and are in support of its shared vision and goals. All SLCs have an equitable distribution of newer and more experienced teachers.

VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

PERSONALIZATION BENCHMARKS

A. One of the benefits of having a themed SLC such as the VPA is that the students receive certain degree of personalization just by being in an arts-infused environment.
Additionally, content in core classes will draw from many sources, including the contributions made by differing cultures to the arts and sciences. This may include the art, dance, and music of local or international artists, or voices and stories of nontraditional writers and filmmakers. The VPA faculty values the rich diversity of our student population, and will seek to draw on students’ prior knowledge, becoming aware of the global community through culturally relevant texts that speak to a wide range of students from diverse backgrounds. Already, the VPA has sponsored a professional theatre company performance by the Parson’s Nose Theatre Co. (in association with the Geffen Playhouse), arranged tickets to Geffen Playhouse productions for VPA teachers and students, and participated in the English Speaking Union’s Shakespeare Competition, with two weeks of personal coaching for all students involved.

B. The faculty of the VPA agrees on the importance of addressing the academic needs and abilities of our diverse student population and a diverse array of learning modes. We are all (or soon will be) CLAD-credentialed and are certified to teach students of varying backgrounds, strengths, and challenges. The VPA has many faculty members who are trained in various research-based teaching methodologies such as SDAIE, Reciprocal Teaching, Thinking Maps, Cornell Note-Taking, Socratic Seminars, Carnegie, and LAVA programs. These strategies and programs are utilized to support a diverse community of schoolwide learners. Both Direct Instruction and Cooperative Learning groups are utilized in a variety of lesson contexts. Our next steps in this area of instructional support include forming focus groups that share this information with all faculty members and create a uniform plan of implementation across content areas.

C. The VPA Team works closely with VPA faculty, counselor, and students to ensure their successful transition from grade to grade, and to align courses to fulfill A – G requirements, as well as the arts requirements of the VPA. Tutoring, reading intervention, and enrichment programs are available resources for students. Finally, extracurricular arts activities such as Band, Dance Team, Drama Club, and others provide a social and personal outlet that makes a positive impact on all aspects of a student’s development. Our SLC is creating advisories to better personalize the high school experience for our students. These advisories will also be the first step of any type of intervention. Additionally, vertical teaming, content-specific tutoring, reading intervention and enrichment programs are available to support students’ needs and development.

Responsibility for personalized attention to students is widely distributed in our community. Every member is responsible for helping students succeed and reach their highest potentials. Teachers and staff act as academic mentors and counselors for students. We strive to ensure that these crucial mentoring and support activities become regular parts of our students’ routine.

D. The proximity of classes to one another will contribute to teachers and students knowing each other more readily, and strategies such as team teaching will engender a
higher level of personalization. Interdisciplinary projects across content areas will allow teachers to better know students in the VPA.

E and F. Students in the VPA are fortunate in that they have access to many VPA teachers and mentors who are sponsors of a number of extracurricular groups and activities. For example, the Lead Teacher is the sponsor of the Drama Club and ComedySportz improvisation team, the music teacher sponsors the Drum Line and Marching Band, an English teacher sponsors the Dance Team, and other faculty are active as sponsors or supporters of the various programs available to students. Currently, nearly half of the VPA student population takes part in extracurricular activities on campus, and the interaction they have with their sponsors, outside of a classroom setting, is invaluable to their development and maturity.

G. The VPA teachers and counselor will make students aware of the many options available to them, with planning, upon graduation. They will guide students in developing a postsecondary plan focused on achieving their articulated educational and career goals. One way we are doing this is the implementation of a new comprehensive Stage Technician program. Recognizing that Verdugo Hills High School is situated in the heart of the entertainment industry, and capitalizing on the professional industry affiliations of several of our arts faculty, the leadership of the Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) SLC has decided to create an ROP/Perkins “Stage Technician” pathway. John Lawler, Lead Teacher of the VPA, has over twenty years’ worth of experience and contacts in the film, television, and theatre industry, and the VPA has hired Wes McBride, a professional scenic designer, illustrator, and long-time professional associate of Mr. Lawler’s, to teach a Theatre Workshop/Stage Design course. Additionally, Verdugo is hiring another associate of Mr. Lawler’s, Katherine Morrison (currently obtaining her ROP certificate and moving from the industry sector) to teach the Stage Technician pathway. Three 90-minute courses are to be offered each semester (exact titles TBD): “Introduction to Stage Tech,” which will teach students the mechanics of lighting, sound, and stage management; “Lighting and Sound Design,” which will teach students light, color, and acoustic theories, and script analysis as an entrée to the design process; and “Production,” which will be a practical application of the skills learned in the aforementioned courses in an actual production setting, either on a student production or working with professional artists- and performance companies -in-residence. Courses will be sequenced not only in the Stage Technician program, but with arts and industrial arts courses such as Theatre Workshop, Scenic Design, and a proposed state-of-the-art computer-aided design (CAD) sequence of courses. The sequencing of students will be greatly facilitated and enabled by a counselor dedicated specifically to the arts program, and the VPA Lead Teacher. In similar ways, students who opt for other paths in the arts will get individualized counseling and a tailored course outline so that they may graduate from Verdugo prepared for work or a rigorous academic or conservatory program.

H. The VPA Team, including parent and community members, will communicate important SLC information and developments to parents and other community
stakeholders on a regular basis, and will determine dates for periodic parent-student conferences, both school-wide and individually.

I. The VPA offers many extracurricular arts activities such as Marching Band, Dance Team, Drama Club, Drum Line, ComedySportz improv team, Anime Club, Chorus, and other organizations. Additionally, students have access to enrichment classes such as AVID, tutoring, and fourth period core classes.

J. The VPA principal, Lead Teacher, and counselor will have offices in a location that all students will know, and all the key personnel and VPA support staff will make a presentation before the entire student population early in the school year to introduce themselves and describe their role in the students’ SLC experience.

K. The VPA counselor, Literacy Coach, and school site Special Education department will work cooperatively to provide timely distribution of IEPs, 504 plans, assessment data, and other academic or behavioral reports in an organized manner. The aforementioned staff will be available to meet to discuss, clarify, and determine strategies to address the information provided.
VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

STANDARDS-BASED BENCHMARKS

A and C. All courses and electives available to VPA students conform to the LAUSD Approved Course Offerings outline, and all courses offered fulfill university admissions A – G requirements. All courses are structured to teach key concepts from the California state content and performance standards, and adhere to the school site-developed ESLRs. The Lead Teacher will work with the VPA counselor to ensure access to the A – G requirements, extracurricular involvement, and other recommendations for college or other post-secondary admission. The VPA will articulate its curriculum to its feeder middle schools as well as to several postsecondary institutions, and collaborate with such schools on future curriculum development and aligned instruction.

B. Courses in the VPA are structured around the theme of the visual and performing arts, using arts content, history, and societal commentary to make connections to core material. Additionally, the VPA faculty believes in the power of using the arts in their instruction to foster a richer, more creative experience for students, and tap into their various learning modalities. The Lead Teacher and VPA counselor will develop a Vertical Teaming articulation model that involves the ninth-grade SLCs as well as the middle school to provide a coherent and connected curriculum. The SLC counselor will actively relay information, guide, and advise students to meet graduation and college entrance requirements.

D. The faculty of the VPA utilizes a myriad of assessment strategies to measure student progress, including objective tests, formal assessment, project-based learning and assessment, as well as mandated assessment tools such as the CST and CAHSEE.

E. The faculty of the VPA agrees on the importance of addressing the academic needs and abilities of our diverse student population and a diverse array of learning modes. The VPA has faculty members who are trained in various research-based teaching strategies such as SDAIE, Reciprocal Teaching, Thinking Maps, Cornell Note-Taking, Socratic Seminars, Carnegie, and LAVA programs. These strategies and programs are utilized to support a diverse community of schoolwide learners. Both direct instruction and cooperative learning groups are utilized in a variety of lesson contexts. Special education and general education teachers collaborate in order to provide access and services to special education students. Our next steps in this area of instructional support include forming focus groups that share this information with all faculty members and creating a uniform plan of implementation across content areas.

F. The VPA utilizes the many intervention resources available at Verdugo Hills, including DRW for reading intervention, content-specific tutoring, and for 2007-08,
advisory periods that will provide a more personalized academic support. Also, Youth for Positive Change helps students acquire skills to improve academic performance. The Lead Teacher and counselor will mediate teacher-student-parent conferences to determine areas of academic need and to strategize an appropriate course of action. The VPA utilizes the schoolwide tutoring program for those students who exhibit academic need. Content-area teachers provide support for students exhibiting specific academic needs during common planning where students are able to access one-on-one or small group help. As resources become available, we look forward to developing advisory periods in which students receive guidance in the areas of work habits, study skills, motivational strategies, and content-area tutoring. The role of the counselor will also expand to identify at-risk students early and will collaborate with the advisor and teachers to guide the students into the appropriate and relevant intervention.

G. All VPA faculty and students have access to a wide variety of computers (Mac and PC) and other technology and media for instructional purposes. In their classrooms, teachers will use technology to enhance the students’ educational experiences. In the future, students will be able to use graphing calculators, web-based lessons, laptops, portable digital assistants, and wireless remotes in order to engage and expand their knowledge and participation in the classroom. Available resources include the library computer stations, mobile laptop computer carts (with broadband LAN and WiFi internet connectivity), digital cameras and camcorders, animation stations, videoconferencing units, LCD projectors, closed-circuit broadcasting network, and theater arts design technology (lighting control console, circuiting, sound mixer and acoustic design). Teachers will have access to LCD projectors to use in their classrooms. The VPA will focus also on updating current hardware in the classroom. Teachers will be trained on the effective use of grading software. Easy Grade Pro will be our common platform for uniform grade reporting.

H. The VPA Team collaborates with all academic departments to develop and determine course requirements, expectations, and grading policies. All VPA students are required to complete 1 – 2 rigorous, standards-based activities per class, per week. Students have access to a wide variety of instructional technology in the form of our Media Center, the Media Lab, the Mobile Laptop Cart, the My Access writing program, and the LAVA Algebra program. The VPA, working with the Technology Coordinator, will promote students’ use of software programs such as PowerPoint, Word, and web browsers. When working on Internet projects, students will be aware of Internet etiquette and appropriate use for classroom and homework.

I. The VPA (and the entire school site) has a common conference period during 4th period, during which time, teachers are free to collaborate on curriculum and the development of assessment tools, and compare assessment data or information on shared students.
VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

ACCOUNTABILITY & LEADERSHIP BENCHMARKS

A. The VPA Team members will demonstrate its responsibility for achieving VPA’s vision and goals by attending all required meetings on a regular basis, and generating a personal mission or belief statement that articulates his/her responsibility for the success of the SLC. Our team of teachers, counselors, and administration has collaborated extensively to create the infrastructure and materials to achieve our outlined goals.

B and D. The key leadership roles of the VPA are:

- Principal – Anne Harris
- Lead Teacher – John Lawler
- Counselor – Mina Huh

The roles of each of these positions and their responsibilities are outlined in a document generated by the assistant principal heading up our transition to SLCs, Hector Ornelas. The key leaders are members of the Design Team, where the concerns of the SLC are voiced and addressed. The VPA Team, made up of the aforementioned leaders, parents, students, community members, and support staff, articulate issues specific to that SLC, which are then deliberated and taken before the full VPA faculty and staff for consideration and action. The full VPA faculty works collaboratively to develop curricula across content and themes, as well as other issues germane to the school. The Lead Teacher serves as the liaison among the different groups and works with the counselors and administration to fulfill the requirements outlined for the position.

C. The faculty chairpersons and administrators of Verdugo first began pursuing the development of SLCs in 2002, and obtained a sizeable grant to prepare for the implementation of SLCs school-wide. Since that time, the principal and assistant principal, as well the support staff and other student service departments have been fully supportive of the move to SLCs in general, and of the establishment of the School of Visual and Performing Arts in particular. As we move into our second year, the Lead Teacher will work with counselors to incorporate teams into the matrix and program uniform groups of students into teamed tiers of classes.

E. The VPA Team has a breadth of expertise in pedagogy, assessment, curriculum development, and other areas. The Team will assemble and review data such as objective tests, formal assessments, project-based learning and assessment, as well as mandated assessment tools such as the CST and CAHSEE.

F. At the end of Term A and the end of Term C (midway points for each semester), the VPA Team will analyze gathered data for strengths, weaknesses, and areas of
concentration, and this data will guide the Team in developing new strategies and modifying existing instructional strategies.

2006-07 SLC Program Evaluation Meetings:

November 9, 2006
February 1, 2007
August 17, 2007

VPA Team members to attend:

Lead Teacher: John Lawler
Administrator: Anne Harris
Counselor: Mina Huh
Community Partner: Tim Borquez
Student Rep.: Chrissa Villanueva
Also: Interested parties

Informal meetings with Lead Teachers and AP:
Twice per month (or as needed) during 2\textsuperscript{nd} period

The VPA Team, consisting of the Lead Teacher, Principal/Administrator, Counselor, community partner, student representative, and other interested parties, will meet three times per year to evaluate the achievements and challenges presented by the program. The meetings will be called for the last Thursday of Term A, the last Thursday of Term C (midway points for each semester), and in mid-August of the summer break. The Team will discuss the SLC’s success in promoting its theme, and whether it is meeting the needs of its students and the community. Also, issues of equity will be considered, and modifications will be made to course offerings, student placement, and curriculum to ensure all students in the SLC have equal access to a high-quality education. Additionally, the SLC Team will examine the success of teacher collaborations and instructional strategies, analyzing data from the previous term for strengths, weaknesses, and areas in need of concentration. This information will guide the Team in developing new strategies and modifying existing instructional strategies. On a more informal basis, all of the Lead Teachers meet with Assistant Principal Hector Ornelas approximately two times per month during period two to discuss the needs of the SLCs as a whole, as well as individual issues. Evaluations are made of current programs, professional development is planned, and modifications are suggested for presentation to each SLC Team.

G. The VPA Team will work with LAUSD and District 2 support teams, as well as other SLCs in the Design Team meetings, in the ongoing development of our vision and achievement of our goals. The Team can avail itself of technical support from several sources available on our school site, and larger technical issues are addressed directly to the District’s Technical Support unit.
H. The VPA Team will meet with its key stakeholders, including parents, students, and community members, on the fourth Thursday of every month that school is in session, to discuss and establish standards and expectations of student conduct, use of facilities, school safety, and other areas of concern. A master schedule is developed by the Lead Teacher with the principal and counselor for our school, and VPA teachers advise the counselor on student programming and related issues such as linking of classes across content areas. The VPA team of teachers, counselors, and department chairs have taken full ownership and has been collaborating on building policies regarding the use of facilities, student conduct, budget allocations, master schedule, student programming, and the creation of a safe and welcoming learning community.

I. The VPA Team and the Design Team will collaborate in the development of an evaluation tool that will be used to periodically measure VPA’s success toward implementing its vision and meeting its goals.

J. The VPA Team believes that the success of its SLC depends upon the commitment of its stakeholders to the vision and goals it has established. The Team will convene a meeting in the fall term of each school year to outline, revise, and recommit to that vision and the goals it has collectively agreed upon.

VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

COLLABORATION, PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A. The VPA continues to develop partnerships with arts-related companies and organizations in the community and surrounding area. To date, the VPA has initiated student-centered programs with the Geffen Playhouse, the Pasadena Playhouse, Parson’s Nose Theater, Center Theater Group/Mark Taper Forum, LA Chamber Orchestra, Hollywood CPR (Cinema Production Resources), McGroarty Arts Center, Foothill Performing Arts, to name but a few. Additionally, the VPA shall create partnerships with postsecondary educational institutions in the area, and develop road maps for graduating students.

B. As the VPA builds and solidifies its relationships with community arts partners, it will engage their support and input in the development of programs, curriculum, and other opportunities for students.

C. Parents are integral members in the success of the VPA and its goals. The VPA Team, consisting of a selection of stakeholders such as parents, students, and community members, will meet (every fourth Thursday of the month) to discuss and establish
standards and expectations of student conduct, use of facilities, school safety, and other areas of concern. Parents are invited to visit classrooms as well as parent forums run by Parent Center Coordinator Deborah Kitsch). It is the goal of this program to be open and responsive to all stakeholders. Parents will be part of focus groups to chart the course of the SLC to ensure that student needs and parental concerns are always addressed. At the end of the school year, the seniors are rewarded with a reception to congratulate them and celebrate those students who have completed their high school years in our SLC. Seniors are encouraged to invite their families to celebrate with us. Families are full partners in the education process and as such, parents will be required to participate in the governance and/or any one of the various committees and councils that will be established. We strongly believe that parent involvement is instrumental in student academic success. Our Parent Center will include a parent hotline to address any concerns or questions that families might have regarding school functions or regarding student academic standing, attendance, and safety. The culture of our school will have as its foundation a close relationship with parents. It will be built on our shared ability to communicate and our capacity to address student deficits while encouraging and developing student strengths and skills. This collaborative effort will give the student the guided framework they will need to succeed in high school and beyond, and it will endow them with ownership of their own education.

D. The VPA Team and the school site Design Team each meet at least once a month at the Verdugo Hills campus, which is centrally located in Tujungu and easily accessible to all members of the community.

E. Informational brochures are printed each year by every SLC and distributed to students for their and their parents’ examination. Assemblies are held at the end of each school year for 9th – 11th grade students wherein each SLC makes a presentation on its thematic focus and school culture, and a formal school selection document is sent to all families. Students and parents rank their school preferences, and students are guaranteed placement in either their first or second choice school.

F. Parents and partners, in addition to meeting regularly to discuss and establish standards and expectations of student conduct, use of facilities, school safety, and other areas of concern, play an important role in evaluating the progress of the VPA toward the achievement of its vision and goals.

G. The SLC Team will meet on a regular basis, as mentioned above, and will advertise the location, date and time of the meeting to all stakeholders. The minutes will be published in a timely manner and distributed to all stakeholders.

H. As part of the VPA Team meetings, breakout groups of teachers and stakeholders will review student work and progress, and determine if lesson standards-based objectives are being met. The Team will analyze lessons for their relation to the standards, the VPA themes, overall effectiveness, and comprehensibility. The groups will reconvene to share out this information with the entire Team.
I. Individual VPA faculty members schedule independent meetings on an *ad hoc* basis several times per week to infuse their curricula with arts content, develop cross-curricular lessons, create lessons for team teaching, generate thematic group projects, and analyze student work product against a set of rubrics used throughout the VPA.

VERDUGO HILLS HIGH SCHOOL: SLC DESIGN BY ATTRIBUTE

SLC: School of Visual and Performing Arts (“VPA”)

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BENCHMARK**

A. VPA meetings are frequently and regularly convened to discuss instruction and strategies. Additionally, breakout groups of teachers and stakeholders will review student work and progress, and analyze lessons for their relation to the standards, the VPA themes, overall effectiveness, and comprehensibility. VPA faculty members schedule independent meetings on an *ad hoc* basis several times per week to infuse their curricula with arts content, develop cross-curricular lessons, create lessons for team teaching, generate thematic group projects, and analyze student work product against a set of rubrics used throughout the VPA.

B. The VPA Team will meet on the fourth Thursday of each month, begin promptly on time, and attendance will be mandatory. The faculty and administration members, students, parents, and members of the community will all be treated with equal respect, and all input and opinions will be valued and considered for implementation. VPA team members will regularly collaborate with students’ advisors and counselors to target student needs and give them a wide support network for their academic, social, emotional and academic needs.

C, E, F, and G. Professional development opportunities that focus on the incorporation of arts-related content and teaching strategies (aligned with state, district, and site-specific improvement goals) will be sought out and provided for all VPA faculty members, administrators, and the counselor, and, when appropriate, parents, community partners, and students. At present, the VPA has arranged a free PD training with LA’s Cornerstone Theatre Company titled “Theatre Tools in the Classroom,” which provides strategies for teaching in all subject matters using a variety of verbal and nonverbal techniques, and other similar opportunities are being arranged. Additional PD will focus on analyzing data across a spectrum of domains to arrive a focused, results-oriented approach to curriculum development and teaching strategies. Still other PD will seek to create a more personalized educational experience for VPA students, and helping the VPA faculty, staff, and administration develop a personalized environment in our SLC community. VHHS and all SLCs are in the midst of determining the adjustments necessary to the roles of teachers, counselors, and other staff in order to personalize the educational experience of students.
D. The VPA Team will assemble and review assessment and other data collected from the VPA student population and analyze it for strengths, weaknesses, and areas of concentration. The data will guide the VPA Team in developing new strategies and modifying existing strategies with the goal of overall increased achievement.

H. The VPA Team will gather assessment data and analyze it for strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing the most attention. The data will guide the VPA Team in its selection of PD topics for study and improvement.

J. The members of the VPA believe that effective and skillful leadership will be a cornerstone of its success, and to that end will seek out opportunities for its Lead Teacher and administrators to develop management, organizational, and overall leadership skills. Such skills will allow them to more effectively chart a course for the SLC that is innovative, personalized, aligned to standards and goals, and leads to greater student achievement.

K. The VPA will concentrate on PD that infuses content areas with more arts-related texts and materials, as well as teaching strategies not normally associated with all core subjects. Successful instructional strategies and pilot programs will be shared with all VPA faculty members, and further innovations will be developed collaboratively in the group. As teachers, advisors, counselors, and administration all collaborate within this promising structure of an SLC, we will seek and align professional development that supports thematic curricula, collaborative methodologies, lesson study protocols, common assessment tools, and parent participation, and community involvement.