



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

TITLE: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

NUMBER: BUL-1600 Revised for Middle Schools

ISSUER: Robert Collins
Chief Instructional Officer
Secondary Education

DATE: September 1, 2007

ROUTING
All Employees
All Locations

POLICY: In order to provide for a more personalized and caring learning environment, to provide a rigorous, standards-based curriculum in an identifiable context for all students, to provide a portfolio of quality educational options for students, teachers, and parents, and to meet the Five Guiding Principles established by the Superintendent of Schools, District policy requires the design of new secondary school configurations and the redesign of existing middle school configurations into personalized learning environments (PLE) of approximately 150- 500 students. Currently, large comprehensive middle schools may serve more than 3,000 students and offer courses in a departmentalized structure. This bulletin establishes guidelines and procedures for the implementation of Personalized Learning Environments in new and in existing schools that house students in grades 6-8 in any configuration.

The Superintendent’s Five Guiding Principles are:

We will be a data driven organization that uses research and analysis to drive our decisions.

Each of our employees will be lifelong learners.

We will actively encourage change and innovation within the District. Innovation and creativity will be part of the fabric of this district.

We will empower and engage parents and we will partner with the community.

We will ensure the physical and emotional safety of every child in our schools.

This policy bulletin supersedes and revises Bulletin 1600 (Feb 28 2005) which included Middle Schools in SLC policy. Middle Schools are addressed specifically in Policy Bulletin 1600 MS (revised) which is issued concurrently.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

GUIDELINES: The following guidelines apply:

PLANNING AND APPROVAL OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PLANS

Elements of a Successful Grade 6-8 Educational Program: All educational programs that include students in grades 6-8 are to address the following elements in their planning efforts. These research-based elements are necessary; however, they may be implemented in differently within each school setting.

- **Common Vision** that leads to a safe, welcoming, and nurturing culture that is supported by the school community based on the Superintendent's Five Guiding Principles.
- **School Size and School Choice** that supports creating "smallness out of bigness" on all middle school campuses and provides significant choice to all students through the development of personalized learning environments and encourages increased communication between the instructional and facilities branches.
- **Leadership Development** for principals, school leaders, and parents necessary to provide the appropriate support to change the school culture and improve the academic achievement for all students.
- Provide high level and appropriate **Teaching and Learning Professional Development** that leads to rigorous quality instruction with high expectations in every classroom in order to support academic achievement for all students and that supports the District's instructional initiatives.
- Create **Deep and Lasting Relationships** between students and faculty, faculty and faculty, and parents and school staff; that provide the safe and supportive structures necessary and appropriate for the middle school aged child and their family over extended periods of time; and to create educational relevance and motivation for students that leads to greater academic success and the best opportunity to leave high school "college prepared and career ready".
- Develop smooth and seamless **Transitions** that lead students from the elementary to middle school and from the middle school into high school by developing strong communication and articulation connections with students and parents prior to and during the student's enrollment in the middle school.
- Develop **Measurable Educational** outcomes based on a variety of data that will inform school communities as to the progress that is being made in each personalized learning environment toward improving student achievement for all students; and for determining whether the plan for improvement is progressing successfully or requires review and revision.

Characteristics/Attributes: Personalized Learning Environments will incorporate common characteristics or attributes in their design: Unifying Vision/Identity, Rigorous Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Equity and Access, Personalization, Accountability and Distributed Leadership, Collaboration/ Parent and Community Engagement, and Professional Development (Attachment A).

Process for New Construction Schools: 1) The Local District Superintendent and school principal, with teachers and community stakeholders, create the vision, initiate the design, and determine the focus of each Personalized Learning Environment in the host school. 2) The Local District Superintendent completes and submits a proposal for a new school PLE Design Proposal to the Central SLC/PLE Committee for recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools for approval. 3) Reviewed by the Office of Strategic Planning and Accountability for alignment of the plan to the



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

District's initiatives and the Superintendent's Five Guiding Principles; 4) The Superintendent approves or disapproves the proposal. In the event the plan is disapproved, the Local District with support from the Office of School Redesign will provide technical assistance and the plan will be resubmitted to the Superintendent of Schools.

Process for Conversion Schools: 1) The school principal works with all school stakeholders (School Planning Team) to initiate the research and design process and to determine the impact of potential Personalized Learning Environments on programs at the school. 2) The principal presents the general work plan and School Impact Report to the School Site Council for information and input. 3) Individual PLE design team(s), composed of representative stakeholders, submits a letter of intent to the School Site Council. 4) With the assistance of the school's planning team and local district support staff, the individual design team(s) develops a proposal that supports the seven attributes and is supported by the School Impact Report. Then presents the plan to the School Site Council for recommendation to submit to the Local District Superintendent. 5) The Local District Superintendent recommends that the proposal be submitted to the Central SLC/PLE Committee. 6) The Central SLC/PLE Committee recommends that the proposal be approved by the Superintendent of Schools. 7) Reviewed by the Office of Strategic Planning and Accountability for alignment of plan to the district's initiatives and the Superintendent's Five Guiding Principles; 8) The Superintendent approves or disapproves the proposal. In the event that the plan is disapproved, the local district with support from the Office of School Redesign will provide technical assistance and the plan will be resubmitted to the Superintendent of Schools.

SPECIAL PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PLAN

CATEGORIES: Each PLE plan is to include a specific implementation reference to the following LAUSD initiatives:

1. Student Attendance Plan: It is expected that a formal plan for each PLE will address the student data, the strategies to be utilized, and the outcomes for improving student attendance rates within the PLE.
2. College Prepared and Career Ready Plan: It is expected that a formal plan for each PLE will address how the PLE will work with students to understand A-G requirements, to create a college going culture, and support the CTE Framework connections to the high school and careers.
3. Parent Involvement Plan: It is expected that a formal plan for the inclusion of parents, and the measuring of their increased involvement in the educational process will be included in the PLE Plan.
4. Special Education, SEL, ELL and GATE Plan: It is expected that a formal plan for addressing the specific needs of each identified group of students will be included in the PLE plan. This should include a review of student data, the research-based strategies to be used for improving academic achievement for each group, and a measurement of the academic outcomes for each student on a yearly basis.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

PLE Evaluation and Accountability: In response to the District Accountability: Transformation Metrics resolution adopted by the Board on July 10, 2007, the Division of Accountability and System-wide Performance is in the process of developing a Performance Measurement Plan that will identify and define the approach that will be used to measure the short and long term performance of middle schools and their transformation into Personalized Learning Environments. The Plan will require a yearly evaluation of each middle school and its PLEs. This Plan will be provided to the Board on October 10, 2007.

Each personalized learning environment will be evaluated yearly by the local district office utilizing the PLE Planning/Implementation Rubric and the following objective measurable outcomes by PLE:

1. STAR Assessment Matched Scores in English Language Arts
2. STAR Assessment Matched Scores in Mathematics
3. Percentage of Failing Grades in Core Courses
4. Student Attendance Rate
5. Parent Approval Survey
6. Other measures to be determined by the Local District Superintendent

PLEs not showing continuous improvement on the PLE Implementation Rubric and/or the objective measurable outcomes will:

1. Based on Year 1 Results: Complete a PLE Self Study. Identify barriers to meeting the minimum growth targets. Recommend changes of the original plan to the School Site Council to meet specifically identified student needs. Present recommended changes to the Middle School Director, Secondary Student Services to establish a cooperative work partnership between the local district and the PLE community.
2. Based on Year 2 Results: Complete a PLE Self Study under the direction of the Director, Secondary Student Services. Identify barriers to meeting the minimum growth targets. Recommend changes of the original plan to the School Site Council to meet specifically identified student needs. Present recommended changes to the Local District Superintendent, who will share the case with the Superintendent of Schools. The Local District will directly oversee implementation of the recommended changes, and will work cooperatively in a partnership with the PLE community.
3. Based on Year 3 Results: Local District Superintendent's direct intervention will require meeting with the leadership team and representative stakeholders of the PLE. Under the direct supervision of the Local District Superintendent, a PLE study that leads to the writing and completion of a new personalized learning environment plan based on objective and anecdotal information gathered over previous years will occur. The Local District Superintendent will have direct oversight of planning, implementation, and distribution of resources. The final plan will be brought to the SLC/PLE Central Committee for recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools for approval.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

School Impact Report: School Planning teams will be required to submit a School Impact Report to the School Site Council for approval. This report is intended to ensure that school facilities and resources are equitably shared and maintained, allowing for smooth transitions from the former comprehensive middle school to a fully integrated set of Personalized Learning Environments.

Professional Development and Technical Support: Professional development and/or technical support will be made available to PLE design teams upon submission of their letter of intent. This support will be provided by staff from the Local District and/or from the Office of School Redesign. The support includes meeting facilitation, providing middle school reform research and school models of success, and consultation on the planning, writing, and implementation process.

Appeals: It is intended that PLE design teams be provided with appropriate technical assistance so that all proposals will ultimately be approved by the Superintendent. In the event that a proposal is not approved, the design team has the right to appeal the decision to the Board of Education.

Central Small Learning/Personalized Learning Environment Community

Committee: This committee is responsible for recommending that SLC/PLE proposals be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools for approval after they have verified that the plans meet the LAUSD Attributes. In addition, this committee advises the Superintendent on specific issues related to the implementation of Small Learning Communities/Personalized Learning Environments. Membership includes representation from the following stakeholder groups: students, parents, community, local district staff, United Teachers of Los Angeles, Associated Administrators of Los Angeles, and central office staff. Various ex-officio members will be invited to committee meetings on an as-needed basis.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:

Timeline: 1) New schools will open structurally as Personalized Learning Environments and are expected to fully align with the attributes at the start of their second year. All students and teachers will be assigned to a Personalized Learning Environment. 2) Conversion schools will begin the process at different times, depending on factors such as Program Improvement status and readiness to move forward. Although some may take less time, it is anticipated that schools could take up to three years to phase in from conceptualization to full implementation with alignment to the attributes. The goal for the converted school is that all students and teachers will be assigned to a Personalized Learning Environment at the completion of the redesign process.

Connection of the PLE Plan to Other Required School Plans and Initiatives: The SLC/PLE plans should be connected directly to other school plans including the Single Plan and the Program Improvement Plan. The PLE plans should be connected to District initiatives, and identify how the PLE will implement those initiatives. The



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

alignment of these plans provides for coherence within the school and will reinforce the supports necessary for improved student achievement.

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the Superintendent of Schools

RELATED RESOURCES: Office of School Redesign (213) 241-3827.

ASSISTANCE: For assistance or further information, please contact your Local District Director of Support Services.

DRAFT



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

ATTACHMENT A

Characteristics/Attributes of Personalized Learning Environments

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

1. **Unifying Vision/Identity**: A shared vision aligned to the Five Guiding Principles of the Superintendent, created by a group of educators, support staff, students, parents, and community who comprise the personalized learning environment and who assume responsibility for the learning of every student through a distinctive and focused standards-based curriculum.
2. **Rigorous Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**: A standards-based educational program embodies high expectations for every student so that they achieve grade-level standards, use appropriate technology, district adopted textbooks, and materials to support instruction in order to meet high school graduation requirements and A-G college entrance requirements, and graduate college prepared and career ready.

Instruction is adapted based upon learning needs within a rigorous culturally relevant and linguistically responsive curriculum; student performance is measured to report on progress and accomplishments and to inform future instructional practices. Multiple forms of standards-based assessments are used including benchmarks by the district. Additionally, school indicators are used as measures of school progress including, for example, attendance, dropout rates, suspension rates, etc.

3. **Equity and Access**: Every student will participate in a rigorous quality curriculum that is culturally relevant and linguistically responsive to their unique learning needs, thereby eliminating achievement gaps between groups of students; and offering every student and family choice of a quality educational program.
4. **Personalization**: A demonstration of sustained and mutually respectful personal relationships where every student is well known by a group of educators who advise/advocate for them and work closely with them and their families over time. The size of a Personalized Learning Environment is appropriate to its vision and mission, generally ranging from 150-500 students.
5. **Accountability and Distributed Leadership**: Members of the Personalized Learning Environment work together, share expertise, and exercise leadership to ensure that student achievement is the intended result of all decisions. They retain primary responsibility, appropriate autonomy, and are accountable for making decisions affecting the important aspects of the personalized learning environment.
6. **Collaboration/Parent and Community Engagement**: All members of the Personalized Learning Environment are viewed as critical allies and are significantly included in the school community (i.e., students, teachers, support staff, parents, administrators, business, and community partners). An ongoing partnership is aimed at supporting continuous improvement of student achievement. Authentic engagement of parents leads to sustained participation in critical school decisions and implementation of school efforts.



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY BULLETIN

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

DRAFT