



November 13, 2009

RE: Letter of Intent

Dear Superintendent Cortines,

I want to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Public School Choice process. I submit LFCSA's letter of intent today with cautious optimism: optimism, because I believe this process has the opportunity to truly empower our communities to choose a school model that will yield significant academic achievement for our students in the near future; caution, because my understanding of the currently proposed requirements for participating school operators would make it difficult for our organization to replicate the successful school model that we have worked so profoundly hard to develop.

My specific concerns include the following:

- The process must be designed to provide school operators with the necessary autonomy and control over on-campus service delivery that will enable us to make site-level decisions in the best interests of our students. Broadly requiring the use of district-provided services constrains our ability to make such decisions and misses an opportunity to move toward reform by giving the district the impetus to greatly improve its own service delivery models.
- School operators must have the flexibility to make programmatic determinations that have proven successful in our existing schools. As examples, we need to have the ability to use and rely upon the data systems that we have come to know and trust. We urge you not to layer on additional requirements for the sake of uniformity or administrative convenience at the expense of the "charter like" flexibility that has enabled us to succeed.
- The process must fully empower parents to make active choices on behalf of their own students. We request your leadership, in implementing this process, no let adult politics get in the way of good decisions for students. The process should position parents with the objective information to help them make well-informed decisions on behalf of their children, and should enable the RFP reviewers to select the best program. Opponents to this process have spread misinformation and untruths in our local Los Angeles communities that have done a disservice to families and this process. Although you do not have control over these sources, we request that you continue to act swiftly and firmly to denounce all such efforts, and that you focus on the best choices for parents and students.

Again, we thank you for creating this truly phenomenal opportunity to develop systemic change for the students of Los Angeles. We wholeheartedly support you in recognizing that the status quo is unacceptable and that change must be both urgent and thoughtful. It is clear, however, that in order for this opportunity to play out effectively, the process must look different than the process that is currently proposed. In order for us to feel confident in submitting a proposal on January 11th, the concerns listed above must first be addressed.

Please accept this letter of intent and the commitment to work with you to refine the process in the coming weeks to provide the programmatic autonomy and flexibility that has led to our success to date.

Formal Letter of Intent for LFCSA:

The following information serves as the Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts’ formal notice to LAUSD of our intention to submit a proposal for the 2010-2011 school year. The following information presented herein is non-binding; specific details provided below will be finalized in our proposal submission.

CST Information

Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts achieved an API of 858 on the CST for the 2008-2009 school year. We met 9 of 9 AYP criteria and achieved an 81point gain over our API of 777 for the 2007-2008 school year. We had 16 EL students and we reclassified 4 students or 25% during the 2008-2009 school year. This year we have 21 students classified as EL.

Organization Information	
Name of applicant	Los Feliz Charter School for the Art
Address	1553 Cassil Place, Los Angeles, CA 90028 (office) 1324 Selma Ave. Los Angeles, CA 99902 (school)
Phone	(323) 656-2810 (school office)
Website (if applicable)	losfelizarts.org
Main contact name and phone number	Karin Newlin, Principal (310) 480-4338
Basic Proposed School Information and Description	
Proposed neighborhood school/site name (must agree to serve all students in that community)	Valley Region ES #7 - Julie Korenstein School 7650 Ben Ave North Hollywood, CA 91605 Central Region ES #13 3200 Washington Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90018 Central Region ES #15 1723 W Cordova Los Angeles, CA 90018
Brief description of community engagement activities planned or completed	These are the steps that we will follow to develop an authentic relationship within the new community: Through City Council and Neighborhood Councils meetings we will learn who the leaders are in the community and hold conversations with the groups. We will recruit a community leader to our Board of Directors. Have a booth at three local street fair/farmer's markets to meet the community.

	<p>Visit all pre-schools in the area.</p> <p>Information pamphlets will be left at existing schools within the area as well as pre-schools and co-op nurseries. Host three Town Halls for interested parties to meet our staff.</p> <p>Invite key stakeholders to an informational presentation about LFCSA’s program and curriculum; then, solicit and incorporate their ideas into our program.</p> <p>Build a database from all of the above events.</p> <p>Tours of LACSA’s existing classrooms and informational meetings at the time of the tours will be conducted in the spring of 2010 at the Selma School Campus in Hollywood.</p>
<p>Brief description of proposed vision, mission, education plan, and partnerships</p>	<p>Vision: All children have the tools and confidence to be life-long learners.</p> <p>Mission: By encouraging exploration and collaboration within a diverse, nurturing, and inclusive student-centered learning environment, both students and teachers at LFCSA think creatively, flexible, and metaphorically.</p> <p>Education Plan: Los Feliz Charter School through the Arts is distinct among charter schools, committed to integrating best practices and a constructivist approach to learning that helps students develop the skills and habits of mind to participate responsibly as 21st century citizens. Bringing together seasoned experts, respected minds and institutions, the faculty of LFCSA engages in continuous professional development that transfers education research to practice ensuring academic success and achievement for all students.</p> <p>Our Core Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Nurture the “Multiple Intelligences” - Providing for Different Ways of Knowing • To Build Character and Responsible Citizenship <p>Our Practices</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A Constructivist Approach</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students are encouraged to develop questions to guide their learning. ○ Prior knowledge and different perspectives provide a starting point for divergent thinking that allows students to make

meaning through inquiry and problem solving.

- The collective knowledge of the group fuels conversation and reflection.

2. *Project-based, Problem-based, Child-centered Learning*

- Rigorous student-centered learning in a safe environment encourages collaboration, cooperation, and creativity in a variety of contexts.
- Students develop deep understanding of concepts through a process of learning that empowers them to apply content knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- Authentic assessment provides students with continuous feedback and self-knowledge for growth and improvement.

3. *Learning In and Through the Arts*

- The visual and performing arts motivate and engage students in learning across the curriculum
- Students receive regular instruction in the disciplines of dance, theater arts, music, and the visual arts.
- Students express their ideas and individuality through the visual and performing arts in social studies, mathematic, science, reading and language arts

4. *Continuous Professional Development*

- Job-embedded and formal coaching and training for teachers ensures the application of research-based best practices in teaching and learning.
- Teachers develop the habits of mind that enhance professional practice and creativity.
- Opportunities for professional growth and leadership contribute to the school as a learning community

5. *Character Development and Tools for Conflict Resolution*

- Students have opportunities to value the contributions of their peers through collaboration and cooperation in hands-on learning that occurs in math, science, social studies, reading and language arts, and the visual and performing arts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Self respect and respect for others, and respect for the environment are critical elements of every unit of study○ <u>Cool Tools</u> provide students with procedures for self-management and conflict resolution. <p>6. <i>Active Parent and Family Participation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Parent and family participation, working in concert with LFCSA Administrators and Faculty, helps to support and sustain a viable and innovative school community.○ The expertise of parents and family members are organized in committees that include: Communication; Family Support; Fundraising; Garden; Green Team (Environment); Safety; Site; and Volunteer. <p>Partnerships:</p> <p>During the past three years, we have formed working relationships with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● UCLA Lab School● USC Film School● C.I.B.E.R. - Council for International Business Educational Research Dr. Robert Spitch, Professor, Anderson School of Business
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Please contact me if you have questions about the information included in this letter.

Sincerely,

Karin Newlin
Founding Principal
Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts

