



## **Grant Request**

**Submitted to the [REDACTED] Foundation  
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### **INFORMATION SUMMARY**

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#### **History, Mission and Activities:**

Building on its roots in managing the Los Angeles Educational Alliance for Reform Now schools and the Los Angeles Annenberg Metropolitan Project, the Alliance for College Ready Public Schools (the Alliance) was created to provide students in some of the most underserved communities in Los Angeles a choice for a better education and a better future.

The mission of the Alliance, a nonprofit charter management organization, is to open and operate a network of excellent small high-performing 9-12 and 6-8 public schools in historically underachieving, low income, overcrowded communities in Los Angeles that will significantly outperform other public schools in preparing students to enter and succeed in college.

With the early support of partners like The [REDACTED] Foundation, the Alliance has opened six public charter high schools and one middle school in just three years. Our first school, only in its third year of operation, already ranks among the top ten high schools in LAUSD. Students at each of our schools have shown marked improvement in all areas of instruction, and scored significantly higher than neighboring schools on the API and California Content Standards Tests (see enclosed progress report).

The early success of our initial schools has strengthened our resolve to build a network of 20 high performance schools in the neediest areas of Los Angeles in the next five years. These schools will serve more than 10,000 students, giving them a quality learning environment and the building blocks for a successful future.

In accordance with this goal, the Alliance is planning to open two new charter high schools and one new charter middle school in the fall of 2007. Like all Alliance schools, each of these new schools will provide a consistent, high quality educational environment and experience that prepares every student to enter college. This is being accomplished through consistent implementation of the following core values of the Alliance: small personalized schools and classrooms; high expectations for all students; increased instructional time; highly qualified principals and teachers; and parents as partners.

In addition to opening new schools, the Alliance will continue to offer vital services to its current schools in order to ensure the continued growth and success of the faculty, staff and, most importantly, the students.

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY FOR WHICH GRANT IS REQUESTED**

### **Problem statement/justification for need:**

In urban areas like Los Angeles, families seeking high-performing schools for their children consistently face a serious lack of choices. This is especially true in East and South Los Angeles, where Latino and African-American families living in the greatest poverty reside. The majority of public schools in these and other areas of Los Angeles are severely overcrowded. In fact, an estimated 65,000 students currently do not have a dedicated classroom seat. Despite LAUSD's plans to build approximately 150 schools by 2012, the space problem is expected to persist in crisis proportions. Even those students who do have a dedicated seat face significant problems such as placement in oversized classrooms that do not offer individual attention.

Further challenging these families is the depth of low student achievement in Los Angeles. Consider, for example, the following facts:

- On the 2006 California Content Standards Test (CST), 30% of LAUSD students were at proficient or advanced levels in English Language Arts compared to 42% Statewide. Only 12% of LAUSD students were proficient or advanced in Algebra I compared to 23% Statewide. In Geometry, 10% of LAUSD students were proficient or advanced compared to 26% Statewide.
- A significant gap persists among racial ethnic groups in all subject areas of the CST. In English language arts, 28% of African American and Hispanic students were at proficient levels compared to 60% of White students. In mathematics, 27% of African American and Hispanic students were at proficient levels compared to 46% of White students.
- 62% percent of LAUSD grade 10 students tested on the 2006 California High School Exit Exam passed mathematics and 67% passed English Language Arts compared to 75% and 78% Statewide.
- While the accuracy of the dropout rate in LAUSD continues to be debated, most data sources, including a March 2005 study by Harvard researchers, put the LAUSD drop out rate at around 50% in comparison to 13% Statewide. The same study reports that only 39% of Hispanics and only 47% of African American LAUSD students graduate in four years.

To meet the need of the Los Angeles region, the optimum solution requires both rapid capacity building to create additional student seats and highly effective learning environments that will generate large sustained performance gains for students. Charter school management organizations like the Alliance hold tremendous promise for adding not only much-needed classrooms for area students, but also a strong focus on quality and individualized instruction.

### **Description of activity for which grant funds are being sought, including goals and objectives of proposed activity:**

The Alliance is working to create a network of 20 high-performing schools over the next five years. These schools will provide 10,000 students with a dedicated classroom seat and the quality education they deserve. In order to stay on track to meet this goal, the Alliance is planning to open three new schools – two high schools and one middle school - in the fall of 2007.

The Alliance’s corporate office drives the complicated and costly process of launching each school, which requires a minimum of one year of preparation to: identify the school location; develop and obtain approval of the charter petition; develop the annual school budget (with principal); engage and generate support from the community; recruit, hire and train principal and staff; recruit students; and set up the school site (construction, remodeling, purchase of equipment and supplies, set up of classrooms, etc.).

The corporate office is structured to not only establish these new schools, but also to provide ongoing support for each existing school so that they can perform as efficiently and effectively as possible. Ongoing services provided by the corporate office staff include, but are not limited to: office services such as accounting, payroll, human resources and billing; development of state and LAUSD fiscal reports; fundraising and grant development; technology support including training, implementation and guidance on acquisition of hardware and instructional software; PowerSchool student information system and data management; interim assessments through Edusoft and Student Performance Data Analysis; financial support; ongoing parent community outreach and parent involvement supervision and promotion; curriculum guidance; and liaison with LAUSD on compliance with reporting requirements, program and financial audits and any other general inquiries received from the LAUSD.

Our goal is to provide these services while keeping the organization as lean and light on administrative costs as possible. While we remain committed to this goal, increasing both the number of schools and the performance of existing schools will require the Alliance corporate office to increase its capacity. By growing the staff and increasing the efficiency of systems and tools put in place to support our schools, the Alliance will be better positioned to grow not only the number of schools and students served, but also the effectiveness with which we are reaching those students.

**Plans for administration and operation of proposed activity, and timeline for carrying out the proposed activity:**

While many of the activities conducted by the Alliance’s corporate office on behalf of our schools occur on a daily and ongoing basis, we have included some specific milestones that have been set for the current calendar year. Please know that this is just a sample of the many things your ongoing support would help us to accomplish.

<b>2007 Development and Implementation Milestones</b>	<b>Projected Timeline</b>
<p><b>School Development and Scale Up</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and submit three new charter petitions for LAUSD charter office and Board in target school communities.</li> <li>2. Secure and develop facility for each new school and generate support and funding for the facility.</li> <li>3. Provide start-up loan to support initial opening costs for each school.</li> <li>4. Recruit and train highly qualified principals for new schools.</li> <li>5. Recruit and train highly qualified teachers for new schools and additional grade levels for current schools through multiple recruitment strategies.</li> <li>6. Recruit students from neighboring schools which are both underperforming and overcrowded.</li> </ol>	<p>Nov 15, 2006</p> <p>August 2007</p> <p>July 1, 2007</p> <p>April 30, 2007</p> <p>June 30, 2007</p> <p>May 30, 2007</p>

2007 Development and Implementation Milestones	Projected Timeline
<p><b>Build Corporate Capacity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scale up staff expertise to provide efficient, high quality services to schools.</li> <li>2. Redesign corporate organization to establish high performance, non-hierarchical team of leaders.</li> <li>3. Recruit and hire highly qualified individuals to serve as: Chief Financial Officer, Chief Academic Officer, Director of New Facilities Project Management, Director of New School Development, Director of Assessment &amp; Data Analysis, Director of Special Education and Compliance, Director of College Counseling, Academic Coaches (3), Controller, and Essential Support Staff</li> <li>4. Upgrade financial system.</li> </ol>	<p>June 30, 2007</p> <p>January 30, 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p>
<p><b>Accelerate Math and English Language Arts Performance in all Alliance Schools</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve teacher quality through New Teacher Project teacher recruitment and selection.</li> <li>2. Train math teachers and implement Carnegie Math</li> <li>3. Recruit and assign Academic Coaches in English language arts and math.</li> <li>4. Recruit math and English language arts tutors through partnerships with CSULA, Loyola, UCLA and USC.</li> <li>5. Reduce class size to 15:1 for supplemental classes in Algebra and Geometry for students performing far below basic proficiency</li> </ol>	<p>Launch Fall 2006</p> <p>May 2007</p> <p>August 2007</p> <p>June 2007</p> <p>April 2007</p> <p>September 2007</p>
<p><b>Parent/Community Engagement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement and expand parent/community involvement plans and partnerships at each school.</li> <li>2. Establish a family literacy program for middle schools beginning with Richard Merkin Middle School.</li> </ol>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2007</p>
<p><b>Build Teacher Capacity and Quality</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop performance-based compensation for teachers based on schoolwide, team and individual performance implementation and student growth results.</li> <li>2. Design and implement strategy for sharing teacher best instructional practices between and among Alliance schools and other local Charter Organizations and schools.</li> <li>3. Improve quality of teacher recruitment and selection through New Teacher Project and earlier selection and placement.</li> <li>4. Provide intensive pre-service professional development workshop for all new and continuing Alliance school staff.</li> </ol>	<p>Initiate Development February 30, 2007 January 30, 2007</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>August 2007</p>

**Plans for evaluating the impact or success of the proposed activity:**

The Alliance monitors, documents, evaluates and publishes implementation results and student outcome results for each of its schools. Areas covered in annual progress reports (see enclosed sample) include but are not limited to:

- Academic Performance Index (API) scores and annual growth targets

- Proficiency levels in all areas of the California Content Standards Test
- Daily attendance rates
- Student enrollment, continuation and graduation rates
- Hiring and retaining of highly qualified teachers that meet NCLB criteria

The Alliance also contracts with a third party evaluator to document and evaluate the implementation of the Alliance school model and results. Ongoing evaluation will serve to document best practices achieved, provide data for continuous improvement and, most importantly, inform parents, the community and our donors on the degree to which the Alliance is achieving its stated goals for individual students. The results of the first third party evaluation will be available June 30, 2007

**Itemized project budget:**

The current operating budget for the Alliance is enclosed.

**Specified amount requested from the [REDACTED] Foundation:**

The Alliance would like to respectfully request a \$100,000 grant for general operating support from the [REDACTED] Foundation. This generous donation would be instrumental in enabling the Alliance to best serve its existing schools as well as the three new schools set to open in August 2007. It would also provide an incentive for other donors to invest in the vital services provided to our schools by the Alliance corporate office.

**Funds on hand or pledged (if any) and other potential sources of funding:**

To develop, launch and operate the three new schools set to open in August 2007, and to support the continued growth and success of the seven current schools operated by the Alliance will require \$1,127,128 for corporate services and operations in fiscal year 06-07 and \$1,774,146 in fiscal year 07-08.

To date, we have received \$990,177 in donations and pledges to support corporate services and operations in 06-07, leaving an additional \$137,128 to be raised. These donations and pledges include: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and various matching and in-honor gifts totaling over \$110,000. We have not yet received donations or pledges toward the \$1,774,146 in operating support required for the 07-08 fiscal year.

Proposal development is currently underway for new, continued and/or expanded funding for operating costs from the following: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In addition, we are working with leadership at the [REDACTED] Foundation and the [REDACTED] Foundation to secure multi-year, multi-million dollar commitments that would support operating costs in addition to school operation and construction/facilities costs. Both of these donors have made an initial \$1 million investment in the Alliance and have expressed interest in the possibility of continuing and expanding their support.

**Supplemental Information:**

- Board of Directors List with Affiliations
- Schedule of Board and Standing Committee Meetings

- Audited Financial Statement for period ending June 30, 2006.
- Current Operating Budget
- IRS Form 990 for period ending June 30, 2005. *(Please note: the Alliance has submitted an extension to file the 990 for the period ending June 30, 2006.. A copy of the 990 will be sent as soon as it has been completed and filed.)*
- IRS 501(c)3 Notification Letter
- Senior Management Team Bios
- Other – Alliance Educational Model, Brochure, October 2006 Progress Report, Summer 2006 Newsletter