PROPOSAL REVIEW PRACTICE

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

This public school serves students in grades 5 to 12 and their families in the community of Startown. Access for All is an inclusive school serving all students, including English Learners, students with diverse abilities and disabilities, and at-risk youths.

Mission Statement

Access for All Charter School partners with families and communities to provide powerful learning experiences that unleash students' natural ability for creativity, innovation, collaboration and social responsibility. Through integrated and project-based curricula anchored in authentic experiences of social entrepreneurship, students develop the academic and social emotional competencies to complete higher education, thrive in evolving economies, and seize opportunities to be change agents in their communities. Serving as an incubator for educational and social innovation, Access for All works to scale equity in schools and communities.

Educational Philosophy: Relentless Focus on Equity

The mission of our school is equity. We define equity as systemic social processes that advance justice in order for each individual to achieve at universally high levels. In the context of our school design, equity has four dimensions: powerful learning opportunities, college and career readiness, inclusive learning environment, and social change. Achieving equity and our educational outcomes (college readiness, economic viability, and social change) requires a school culture that advances these core educational values daily: creativity, innovation, collaboration, and social responsibility.

Educational Approach and School Design

Implementation of our vision for equity and core values requires an innovative school model that leverages research-based design elements that uniquely address the needs of diverse student populations in under-resourced communities. Access for All integrates the following five design elements: (1) Project-based Learning; (2) Community-based Learning; (3) Inclusive Learning; (4) Social Emotional Learning; and (5) Creative Learning. Curriculum will be developed in three phases:

- *Phase 1:* Project-based learning module development for grades 5 and 6 (August 15, 2019 through June 30, 2020)

- *Phase 2:* Staff orientation and on-boarding to design elements including a deep dive in to the module draft and the key practices associated with its execution (July 15 through August 31, 2020)

- *Phase 3:* Ongoing module planning for the following year (Beginning September 2020 and ongoing, 2 planning periods per month)

The curriculum will be reviewed and assessed through the Data Dashboard, Team Planning Meetings, School Leadership Team Meetings, and Board Meetings.

Project-based learning practices include:

- *Integrated Learning Experiences.* The academic and the co-academic subjects (arts and movement) are organized to support students' inquiry and learning experiences and to demonstrate cross-curricular connections and their applications. Each subject is labeled with the term integration to emphasize that the core concepts and skills being studied are directly linked to a project. The Roman numeral denotes developmental level. For example, Science at grade 5 becomes Science Integration I, grade 6- Science Integration II, grade 7- Science Integration III, and grade 8- Science Integration IV. This pattern then repeats itself at the high school level.

- *Social Entrepreneurship.* Project-based learning is anchored in authentic experiences of social entrepreneurship. We define social entrepreneurship as the development of innovative and sustainable solutions to pressing social problems. Students engage in a year-round social entrepreneur project that includes the following steps: (1) Start-up- understanding a community problem; (2) Deep Dive—conducting research for possible solutions; (3) Design and incubate—testing possible solution models; (4) Go public—sharing results with community experts; and (5) Look forward and back—reflecting on the experience and lessons learned.

- *Social Entrepreneur Mindsets.* A social entrepreneur mindset is a variation on the growth mindset learning model. A social entrepreneur mindset not only advocates that everyone has the capacity to overcome personal learning or performance challenges but adds an ethical component to growth mindsets. Through the annual social entrepreneur project, students receive coaching from teaching staff, community experts, and mentors in not only recognizing the assets within themselves to overcome challenges but sees the assets within a community to overcome systemic problems. A person with a social entrepreneur mindset is relentless in leveraging community assets to overcome a systemic problem with creative and innovative solutions. A social entrepreneur mindset ensures that students not only exercise persistence in their own learning, but also exercise persistence in civic action.

- *Expanded Learning Time.* Classes are organized into six, 60-minute blocks to provide adequate time for students to engage in focused and sustained inquiry.

- *Project teams.* Students are organized into flexible project teams (four to five members) over the course of the year so that they can experience collaboration to support their academic and social emotional development.

- *Project Learning Plans.* The Project Learning Plan is a comprehensive portfolio of student assessment data. Big Picture Learning will support the development of PLP processes and systems.

- *Community Learning Forums.* Every quarter student teams will be required to share their project work with a panel of parents, Board members, community members, and field specialists. Families and community members have the opportunity to learn about students' learning and to provide constructive feedback. Community Learning Forums culminate with end-of-year presentations and exhibitions of students' project work.

- *Students as agents of their own learning.* Student agency of their own learning would be structured through the consistent use of higher order thinking strategies, authentic student discourse, and social entrepreneur mindsets. Teachers provide consistent opportunities for students to use higher

- order thinking to pose insightful questions, synthesize critical information, hypothesize, recognize alternatives and bias, seek multiple perspectives, make judgments based upon credible evidence, and apply their understanding to new situations, problems and texts. Through authentic student discourse, students would have powerful conversations with other students around important questions/topics/problems using a variety of formats: pair/share, small group, and student led conferences.

- *Teacher as coach and facilitator.* Project-based learning requires teachers to redefine their roles. Rather than being the source of student learning, they become the facilitator of student learning. Being coach and facilitator requires the following: (1) Design and plan- teachers co-construct the project with students to ensure that each module addresses grade-level academic standards, students' interests/passions, provides student choice, and is clearly linked to college and career contexts; (2) Manage learning- Teachers work with students to organize tasks and schedules, set checkpoints, benchmarks and deadlines, find and use resources, create multiple options for demonstrating knowledge, and arrange public demonstration of learning and competencies; (3) Scaffold learning- the teacher uses Universal Design for Learning, Sheltered Content Instruction, and Reading/Writing workshop to support student mastery and demonstration of learning; (4) Assess learning- teachers are constantly conferring with individual students and project teams to assess student learning needs and they rely upon competency-based assessments in students' project learning plans to monitor their growth. Our teacher development will be done with our school support partner, who will provide trainings and professional development around the evolving teacher role, helping teachers develop tools to work with students in co-created learning experiences, and creating systems to support this work.

Supporting Diverse Learners

Special Education Inclusion. A Learning Integration Specialist (Special Education Teacher) is assigned to grade level project advisories of general and special education students to plan and co-teach with the academic team to ensure that project-based learning modules are scaffolded appropriately. Learning Specialists are not assistant teachers and they are not exclusively responsible for special education students but they work with all students. They follow a Co-teaching Protocol where each teacher is responsible for facilitating learning in the classroom, collecting data about students' strengths/challenges, and managing student behaviors and interactions. Learning Specialists share a daily 90-minute planning period with academic teachers and EL specialists to ensure that planning and facilitation of classroom learning is consistent with Universal Design for Learning principles.

EL inclusion. An ESL/EL specialist is assigned to grade level project advisories of general and ELs to work with the academic team to ensure that project-based learning modules effectively integrate Sheltered English Immersion or SIOP strategies. As previously discussed, all teachers follow a Co-teaching Protocol to ensure that each teacher is facilitating learning, collecting data about student strengths/challenges, and managing classroom behaviors and interactions. The EL specialists share a daily common planning time of 90 minutes with both the academic teachers and learning specialists. This ensures that lessons integrate appropriate SIOP strategies from the classroom protocol. Co-teachers and learning specialists can use the SIOP protocol to observe and provide feedback on a specific component or feature of the SIOP Model. This process will improve job-embedded implementation of the SIOP Model.