

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health Leadership High School (HLHS) is committed to providing the best education to the students who need it the most. We will serve poor students and from low socioeconomic families that are between 14 and 24 years of age. Our design is built around the needs of students and the school will operate from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm because roughly 1/3 of students will have dropped out of high school and the remaining 2/3 of students will be in grades 9-12. The school anticipates that most of the students will be under-credited and off track to graduation and we expect that 80% of all students enrolled will fit this profile. Graduation rates in areas of Albuquerque range from roughly 47% to 65% and we expect performance levels of incoming students to reflect the performance levels and demographics:

1. 20% competency in Math
2. 30% competency in Reading
3. 50% ELL
4. 20% special education
5. 90% Latino and roughly 50% who have Spanish as their home language
6. 90% Free/reduced lunch

This demographic of young people need a relevant highly personalized approach to learning. Many studies have documented the need for relevancy and purpose in their learning for at-risk students and the school is committed to making school directly related to their future ambitions to work in the health care sector. HLHS will be based on the ACE Leadership High School model in Albuquerque, New Mexico and part of an emerging network committed to serve the youth in the community that have been lost or left behind in the traditional school system. If these schools provide the best education to the students that need us the most, there will be an immense impact on the community. These students who would ordinarily drop out of our high schools will be reengaged in their education and marketable within the workforce. This school will be located in a community where young people of color are most prevalent in order to capitalize on the assets that these students bring to a sector where they are under-represented.

There is a growing demand for health related career focused education in high school. We know this because of the increase in health care related high school career academies. Also, Nursing and Medical Assistant programs are the third and fifth most popular degrees offered in community college and four year institutions in the United States. Finally, there will be an even greater demand for health care workers in New Mexico over the next few years and beyond. According to the New Mexico Health Policy Commission, thirty-two of 33 counties in New Mexico are federally designated as Health Professions Shortage Areas, Medically Underserved Areas or Populations according to the federal government. The current nursing shortage in New Mexico is roughly 1,000, but it is expected to be 2,800 by 2015.

We expect that these young people will choose HLHS because of the direct connection to the workforce development plans of the fast growing health industry in New Mexico. Our partnerships with employers represent a fantastic opportunity to change their future by putting them on a course to become leaders in the industry. The founders have reached out to all segments of the South Valley and Southwest Mesa; the reception has been enthusiastic. Health care employers in Albuquerque have mirrored the community's embrace. They have worked with us to create a blueprint for the curriculum that will guarantee that a diploma from the school will have currency in the marketplace.

This is the time to re-engineer career preparation in high school. The health sector is changing at an unprecedented rate and we face an unknown future. However, we know that in an era of scarce resources, a well-educated and skilled workforce is our best chance to shape a healthy future for our communities. Regardless of the job any of our graduates hold, they will need a broad understanding of the determinants of healthy communities, families and individuals. They must also understand the systems that can improve the services that support the health of our citizens and that have the capacity to actually serve their clients well. Finally, they will have a diploma with currency in the workplace and be prepared for a career in the sector directly after graduation and/or continue to college after they graduate.

The Model of Health Leadership High School —Three Pillars of Effective School Design

The skills, knowledge and attributes of a graduate from our school are cultivated through a design that includes three inter-dependent functions that are based on the ACE Leadership High School model. Each plays a role in ensuring that students are cared for and fully engaged in their learning.

360 Degree Support—This pillar is responsible developing school culture. Specifically, it leads mental and physical health, fitness, and nutrition programs at the school. This is a leadership role that collaborates with the Community Engagement Center (CEC) to engage families and create partnerships with community-based service providers who can support our students and families (immigration services, mentorship programs, etc.) Finally, this pillar ensures that Positive Youth Development practices are present in order to build a culture that is has high academic expectations and is intellectually and emotionally safe for students.

Curriculum and Assessment—This pillar is responsible for “Learning by Doing, Every Day in Every Class.” We believe that engaging project-based learning is the pathway to student higher levels of student performance. Also, we are committed to a “Mastery” based system where students demonstrate their learning through a variety of rigorous performance assessments as opposed to traditional “grading” which is concerned with coverage and seat time. Teacher development and industry partnerships are the central to a responsive and adaptable curriculum that keeps the school on the cutting edge of teaching and learning.

Community Engagement—This pillar is responsible for creating relationships with external partners that are reciprocal in nature. This person shares an office with community based organization (Sawmill Advisory Council at ACE Leadership) and together they leverage partnerships that are attentive to community and school needs. Service, mentorships, and off-site programs are under this person’s purview. Finally, this person is responsible for understanding community assets and connecting our faculty to partners that can further our mutual interests.

Finally, we are confident that the educational model is sound based on the research in the field and the performance of ACE Leadership High School:

1. Estimate overall math proficiency increased from 20% to 80% (400% increase) from Fall 2010 to Fall 2011
2. Estimated overall reading proficiency increased from 30% to 67% (100% increase) from Fall 2010 to Fall 2011
3. Analysis of raw scores of student growth (1/11-5/11):

- 50% of cohort improved faster than growth predicted by the NWEA MAPs test for Math
 - 65% of cohort improved faster than growth predicted by the NWEA MAPs Test for Reading
4. 86% retention rate in the first year of students who were present on the 40th day and on the last day of school.
 5. 100% of students present on the last day matriculated to the next grade.