2012-13 School Quality Snapshot
Environmental Charter Middle
Los Angeles County Office of Education
812 West 165th Pl, Gardena, CA 90247

CST English-language Arts Results
(percent proficient and above)

CST Mathematics Results
(percent proficient and above)

CST Science Results
(percent proficient and above)

California's Academic Performance Index (API)

2013 Growth API 767
Growth from Prior to Current Year 11
Met Schoolwide Growth Target Yes
All Student Groups Met Target No
2012 Base API State Rank 3
2012 Base API Similar Schools Rank 5

API Subgroup Performance - 2013 API Growth

Met Target Growth

African American or Black --
American Indian or Alaska Native --
Asian --
Filipino --
Hispanic or Latino Yes 6
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander --
White --
Two or More Races --
English Learners No -69

2012 Base API State Rank 3
2012 Base API Similar Schools Rank 5

2012-13 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

2012-13 Subgroup Enrollment

English Learners 19%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged 87%
Students with Disabilities 8%

CHART LEGEND:

Green = Student group met target
Red = Student group did not meet target
Blue = Student group is not numerically significant
-- = Not enough students to report

2012-13 Enrollment

Average Class Size

Title I Funded: Yes
Enrollment: 323
Charter: Yes

Please visit the following Web page for more information: http://www.cde.ca.gov/snapshot/
2012-13 School Quality Snapshot
Environmental Charter Middle
Los Angeles County Office of Education
812 West 165th Pl, Gardena, CA 90247

Grades Offered: 6-8
Enrollment: 323
Charter: Yes
Title I Funded: Yes
CDS Code: 19-10199-0121772

CST History/Social Science Results
(percent proficient and above)

Percentage of 2011-12 Graduates Meeting
University of California "a-g" Requirements

2011-12 Average SAT Score

Percentage of English Learners Making
Progress in Learning English

Cohort Graduation Rate*

CAHSEE English-Language Arts
Grade 10 Passing Rate

2011-12 Suspensions and Expulsions
as a Percentage of Enrolled Students

CAHSEE Mathematics
Grade 10 Passing Rate

CHART LEGEND:

SCHOOL  DISTRICT  STATE

* Only three years of data are available
CAHSEE: CA High School Exit Examination
CST: CA Standards Test
School and/or district information will not be displayed when data are not available or when data are representing fewer than 11 students.

Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Please visit the following Web page for more information: http://www.cde.ca.gov/snapshot/

California Department of Education
Report (v2.a) Generated: January 14, 2014

Page 2
Appendix I.B - Single Plan for Student Achievement (Rev. Fall 2012)

Underlined sections are additions from fall 2012.

Plan to Improve Student Achievement in Mathematics

1. Organizational Changes

As of 2012-13 ECMS-G, in its third year, was fully enrolled and fully staffed. We have 320 students in grades 6-8, 13 full time core teachers, 4 specialty teachers, 3 highly qualified para-educators, and numerous other office and campus supervision personnel. We now have a full, rather than half time, Assistant Principal who is responsible for curriculum, instruction, and teacher evaluation. A new Team Leader position has been created in order to develop instructional leadership for staff and facilitate communication between administrators and our main units of collaboration, our interdisciplinary grade level teams. For 2013-14 Environmental Charter Schools has also hired a full time Director of Curriculum & Instruction to help administrators coach teachers in implementing our Best Practices.

We are revising our 8th grade math program in light of California’s substantial changes to its accountability system. California will no longer incentivize placing 8th graders in Algebra, but instead has joined with the nation to implement rigorous Common Core standards, which follow a non-redundant progression of concepts from K-8th grade. Students who excel at math will be identified and provided individualized learning opportunities to prepare them for accelerated programs in high school.

We have organized all core teachers into one of two departments: Math and English. The newly formed math department consists of two 6th grade and two 7th grade teachers, who teach Math/Science block classes daily, as well as our new 8th grade teachers – one who has Math 8 and Algebra I and another who teaches Physical Science, a course heavily dependent on measurement and the use of mathematical formulas. Including the 8th grade science teacher has proven valuable, as he is able to assess kids’ ability to apply skills taught in previous years to real-world situations. By integrating 8th grade science into math department meetings, the course has become an opportunity to remediate, reinforce, and in some cases enrich our students’ math understanding.

It has been difficult for the 4 teachers who teach both math and science in daily two-hour blocks to give up meeting time in science to focus on math, but this re-prioritization has helped all faculty members understand the critical nature of math remediation at our middle school. In response to teacher suggestions for greater communication, we have also budgeted to include our two after school Math Lab teachers in departmental meetings and professional development sessions as their schedules allow. Such improvements allow for a coherent, school-wide approach to improving math instruction.

Additionally, ECMS has invested in hiring experienced teachers in our math department. ECMS enjoys a mix of Teach for America interns, recently credentialed teachers, and veterans; we made the decision to invest in experience and content area knowledge in math specifically. Each teacher has a common prep period with the person who teaches the same subject, so there is ample time built in to maximize staff expertise.
Perhaps most importantly, this year we will begin our formal Practice Periods. These are one hour sections of differentiated math practice. Using our NWEA data and Standards-Based Grades, students will be divided into groups based on their needs and abilities. Each teacher will target instructional activities to students at their instructional level, allowing those with similar abilities to work together on appropriate tasks. We are particularly interested in developing students at the far low and high ends of the spectrum in ways it is difficult to accomplish in their normally heterogeneous cohorts. ST Math, Do the Math, and additional resources will be provided for each Practice Period section. These groupings will remain flexible and responsive to student growth. We will officially re-schedule students into sections after each NWEA/MAP test administration, but teachers will use their own assessment data to determine any changes that need to be made along the way.

2. Common Core Curriculum & Assessment Transition Plan

ECMS is implementing the Common Core Standards in Math and English. We believe that these standards are more aligned with our mission of teaching students to think critically and reflect on their learning. Our assistant principal has attended various trainings and webinars on the CCSS and developed a plan for teachers to engage with new or newly organized content. Our first task as a math department has been to understand the standards themselves. Teachers have analyzed them in many ways, including the development of strands over the K-8 trajectory, by grade level, and in comparison with the California content standards and CST blueprint and released test questions. We then prioritized standards based on their level of utility in future math courses and real life applications. Each grade level pair divided these key standards into our three trimester-long units and shared their thinking with the department. This led to an in-depth discussion of the appropriate scope and sequence for skills across grade levels. A new feature of the CCSS is their delineation of limits to concepts at each grade level. Understanding the rationale for this delineation initiated conversations about learning progressions and the developmental appropriateness of certain abstract concepts at each grade level.

We are also considering the transition in terms of assessment. In 2013-14 California announced that students will no longer take CSTs (except for possibly 8th grade science). Instead, students will take either English or Math on the new Smarter Balanced computer adaptive assessments. These scores will not be comparable to CST scores from previous years and we will not receive an API score. ECMS has developed. ECMS relies on the computer adaptive NWEA MAP tests three times throughout the year for formative assessment. In 2012-13 we switched entirely to the CCSS in order to provide additional objective, reliable data on our implementation of new standards. Because our students are familiar with this testing format and new content, we anticipate that ECMS will emerge from Program Improvement as a model for implementation of the Common Core standards and new Smarter Balanced assessments.

Even more important to us, however, are our own internal, teacher-created assessments known as IBMs, interdisciplinary benchmark projects. Our core curriculum integrates knowledge and skills from English, History, Math, and Science in each trimester-long unit. Interdisciplinary performance assessments allow students to demonstrate mastery of standards at a higher level than traditional tests; they must apply their learning and use cross-curricular skills and concepts in concert with one another to solve problems in real-world and historical settings. Whereas in the past teachers began with the project itself or with subjects that were easier to combine such as English and History, the new approach for this year is for teachers to take their knowledge of the
CCSS in math and use the key standards as anchors in developing their Unit Learning Goals. We are building projects around math content instead of including math standards because they fit most easily. In order to do this, we have planned professional development to increase all teachers’ understanding of math concepts.

For 2013-14 we have made two changes to assessment. First, after attending a training and conference our Director of Curriculum & Instruction has moved us towards the web-based administration of the NWEA MAP test. This means we will be better able to track our subgroups’ performance in math. Second, our revised Teacher Development & Evaluation process now incorporates date at each of three yearly goals meetings between teachers and administrators. Teachers will be guided to collect, analyze, and reflect on student performance as they select their professional development goals for the year.

3. Professional Development

ECMS offers extensive professional development for the increase in content and pedagogical knowledge related to the Best Practices upon which our teachers are evaluated. Our academic calendar provides two weeks of training for returning staff and three weeks for new teachers. In each trimester there are three days devoted entirely to IBM and unit planning, refining, and data analysis. Additionally, we have a weekly Monday morning meeting, which alternates between all staff, grade level team, and department time. There are also two days set aside for teacher field investigations and teams of teachers may request sub days to further develop curriculum.

ECMS is investing significant time and money into professional development on secondary intervention programs related to increasing student achievement in math. In 2013-14, we have invested heavily in a research-based remedial math program from Marilyn Burns, entitled “Do the Math Now.” This is a secondary intervention program which uses manipulatives and games to build conceptual understanding of multiplication, division, and fractions – skills our 6th graders have traditionally lacked. We had a full day training for all staff in using this program. As a result, teachers even outside the math department have a better understanding of the types of basic math our students struggle with. The English department has become more aware of the literacy requirements for completion of word problems. All teachers have experimented incorporating more pattern-recognition and mental arithmetic games into their courses.

In addition, we will have two half days of training on the ST Math’s secondary intervention program, described below in the Instructional Resources section. The first part of this program focuses on strengthening teachers’ own awareness of the importance of developing conceptual understanding for our students. ST Math uses visual models and requires students to persevere in independently exploring math concepts rather than relying on teachers’ algorithms. The second part of this training will focus on using the high quality data generated by this program to develop our math program school-wide and in individual classes.

While many districts have cut funding for new teacher induction, ECMS has chosen to pay for teachers to go through LACOE’s BTSA program based on our need to improve instruction in math. Teams meet more than an hour per week and are constantly engaged in coaching, observing, and reflecting on practice. At the time of the midyear check in, all teachers involved report using a wider range of instructional strategies because of the time to plan and debrief with colleagues, as well as increased use of formative data to guide instruction.
Most importantly, we have set aside funds this year for the assistant principal to facilitate three math department meetings to develop a comprehensive math plan. For 2012-13, Day 1 focused on “what” to teach. We analyzed the common core and California standards as described above, clarified key terms, and determined which concepts were best emphasized at which grades. Day 2 will focus on “how” to teach, looking at the Standards for Mathematical Practice, sample Smarter Balanced test items, model lessons from Marilyn Burns, and making sure each teacher knows which manipulatives we have available and how to use them. We will also explore potential use of blended learning models and instructional software. Day 3 will focus on “why” we teach, a session to address larger STEM concerns. We will be joined by teachers from our sister high school and by professional engineers, and learn about the types of math competencies needed for the 21st century. Even within our department some teachers are not clear about the importance of some of the mathematical concepts they are asked to cover, and this has served as the basis for our inquiry. We are fortunate to have partnerships with various members of the local aerospace industry to assist us. The entire math department days were extremely useful, so we will again have a series of three math PD days.

Building on last year’s scoping and sequencing of the Common Core State Standards, we are now ready to focus on implementation of instruction to meet these learning objectives. The agenda for 2013-14 is as follows: Day 1: Connected Math Program (a problem-based curriculum we have been struggling to implement) and ST Math; Day 2: Connected Math Program Part 2 and ST Math Part 2; Day 3: Observation of teachers at local successful public schools and debrief.

4. Instructional Resources

The most valuable instructional resource is time. Providing teachers time to collaborate builds content knowledge and collegiality that will make our changes sustainable. In addition to the professional development time described above, each math teacher has been scheduled to have a common prep period with the other teacher of the same course. This allows for joint planning, analysis of student work, the creation of common assessments, and for joint coaching and collaboration with the principals.

ECMS has two new math programs. Do the Math Now is our 6th grade remedial program. As stated on its website, “Specifically designed to address these students’ needs with the basics of numbers and operations, content is sequenced and paced to build understanding and skills. By building key concepts, students learn to reason mathematically, make connections across operations, and apply their skills to higher-level mathematics.” The program comes with detailed teachers guides to using the manipulatives regularly to build students’ fluency with basic math computations and concepts.

Thanks to the efforts of our Board of Directors, we received a grant to implement ST Math’s Secondary Intervention program from the Mind Research Institute. As its website describes, “ST Math®: Secondary Intervention featuring touch is instructional software designed as a tier 2 intervention for students at the middle or high school level who are performing below grade level. Self-paced and language-independent, the Secondary Intervention software provides instruction on math standards prerequisite to mastering middle school math and algebra. Students’ math readiness is first identified by a built-in diagnostic assessment which prescribes an individualized sequence of content for each student. Each learning objective contains pre and post-assessments for progress monitoring along the way. Teacher-guided instruction integrating ST Math software
activities in the classroom rounds out MIND’s blended learning model. In addition to accessing the software on desktop or laptop computers, teachers and students can access ST Math on supported tablets, enabling anywhere, anytime learning. With touch functionality, ST Math: Secondary Intervention further immerses students in a richly interactive, hands-on and gesture-based learning experience.” This program, popularly known as JiJi the Penguin, is currently being implemented in every math classroom as well as our afterschool Math Lab. Our laptop carts are used on a rotating schedule to ensure students with the highest needs receive the most time with the program.

Physically, our school currently has the resources our teachers have requested and feel we need. We provide a textbook for each student at each grade level. 6th grade uses Holt’s Mathematics Course 1: Numbers to Algebra, California Edition (2008). 7th grade has Connected Math 2. 8th grade recently purchased Prentice Hall High School Math Common Core: Algebra 1. Additionally, we have invested in the following manipulatives: base ten blocks, fraction blocks, Hands-On Equations, algebra tiles, counters, flash cards, spinners, and games. Teachers frequently request sample copies of other state-adopted textbooks and supplemental materials.

5. After School Math Labs

Our afterschool math labs are a key component of our math remediation. They have been significantly revamped this year. First, ECMS has taken full control of our program and cut ties with our previous aftercare providers. We now have full responsibility for hiring, training, and managing our staff. Second, after numerous conversations with teachers around data, we have determined that lab seats need to be reserved for students with the lowest skills, and that in-class remediation and tutoring will be used for those who are only a year or so behind. Third, we identified the most crucial elementary math standards, going all the way back to second grade. We have a Unit Learning Goals form which outlines the 10 skills students must master in order to be eligible to leave Math Lab A: place value and basic operations. Teachers are now in the process of developing the learning goals for Math Lab B: fractions, decimals, and percents. Math Lab standards are now in our reporting system and parents receive updates weekly on which skills their children have mastered. Our counselor, principal, and afterschool coordinator are making a concerted effort to make lab attendance records more accurate and to encourage parents to honor the parent contract clause that states they will make arrangements for students to attend labs when teachers recommend it.

We are already seeing much better attendance in our after school programs, possibly due in to our finally being permanently located in Gardena. Additionally, a new partnership with the YMCA enables students who participate in the after school program to play basketball, swim and take other classes at the YMCA. We hope to see higher attendance rates in our math lab since more students are participating in other parts of the after school program.

6. Family Math Night

In order to further increase parental involvement, and in response to some parents’ distress about not being able to help kids with their math homework, ECMS is planning a pilot Family Math Night for early spring 2014. Using money from a STEM grant, teachers will be paid stipends to present lessons in both English and Spanish on a range of key middle school math topics. Teachers
will present their lessons to one another, provide feedback and refine their lessons before presenting to parents. This model serves the dual purpose of peer-based lesson study and providing content and language instruction, which will enable parents to be more confident and be beneficial in helping our students learn math. We will elicit feedback from parents in order to make future events even more successful.
**School Goal # 1: Increase student achievement in MATH.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What data did you use to form this goal (findings from data analysis)?</th>
<th>How does this goal align to your Local Educational Agency Plan goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| STAR CST  
Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Annual Progress (NWEA MAP)  
New student mathematic assessment  
Interdisciplinary Benchmarks | Our LEA plan goal states that “all students will reach high standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics, by 2014-15” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did the analysis of the data reveal that led you to this goal?</th>
<th>Which stakeholders were involved in analyzing data and developing this goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our students arrive in middle school scoring lower than incoming sixth graders across the nation. They make progress at ECMS, but not enough progress to close the gap. The rate of proficiency among African Americans and SED students on the math CST fell from our first year to our second, but we also doubled our enrollment and our second cohort of sixth graders scored significantly lower on the NWEA in math than our first cohort.</td>
<td>Teachers, administrators, and parents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are the focus students and what is the expected growth?</th>
<th>What data will be collected to measure student achievement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Focus on math improvement for students in grades 6-8. Significant focus on students with special needs, English learners and African Americans | STAR CST  
Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Annual Progress (NWEA MAP)  
New student mathematic assessment  
Interdisciplinary Benchmarks  
Enrollment, attendance and exiting of students in math labs |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What process will you use to monitor and evaluate the data?</th>
<th>Actions to improve achievement to exit program improvement (if applicable).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our calendar sets aside one day each trimester for data analysis. Teachers and administrators will evaluate student progress on multiple measures, and then effectiveness of plan components</td>
<td>See actions below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
determined.

Administrative team meets weekly to evaluate progress towards goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Actions to Implement this Goal</th>
<th>Start/Completion Date/Personnel</th>
<th>Each Funding Source/Amount</th>
<th>Process for Evaluation of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development: Teachers will write and standards-align an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum, calibrate rubrics, identify re-teaching needs, and analyze formative and summative assessment results. Teachers will share results and identify effective teaching strategies.</td>
<td>Two weeks each summer and 12 professional development days during instructional year/Administration &amp; Teachers</td>
<td>General Fund &amp; Grant funding/$90,000</td>
<td>Classroom observations regarding strategy implementation. Unit Learning Goals for implementation of standards scope &amp; sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development: Active Learning/Pictoral Math: Ratio &amp; Proportionality, Algebraic Thinking with Manipulatives</td>
<td>8/16/12 Guiermo Mendietta</td>
<td>$1900 General Fund</td>
<td>Classroom observations regarding strategy implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development: Math Department PD Days scope &amp; sequence curriculum instructional materials college &amp; career readiness</td>
<td>11/20/12, 2/7/13, 4/18/13 Amy Frame</td>
<td>$3675 General Fund</td>
<td>Teacher surveys of PD; Unit Learning Goals for implementation of standards scope &amp; sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Learning: Math Lab (after school remediation classes)</td>
<td>Daily 4-5 pm Geneva Dowdy</td>
<td>$21,000 ASES Grant/General Fund/</td>
<td>Compare NWEA scores for Math Lab students with non Lab students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement: Family Math Night (including 2 teacher lesson review sessions)</td>
<td>4/18/12 Amy Frame Math Dept.</td>
<td>$900 General Fund/Title 1</td>
<td>Parent sign ins, exit tickets, and surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Math Camp</td>
<td>Summer 2013</td>
<td>$2000/ General Fund/Title 1</td>
<td>Student attendance, and surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research-Based Instructional Strategies: Manipulatives</td>
<td>8/12 – 6/13 Lewis Martin Amy Frame</td>
<td>$800 General Fund/Title 1</td>
<td>Classroom observations regarding strategy implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful Policies: Standards-Based Grading Using technology to facilitate teachers access to student</td>
<td>Weekly professional development/Faculty Meetings</td>
<td>$7000 General Fund/E-Rate/Title 1</td>
<td>Compare Unit Learning Goals to standards grades in Power Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Plan to Improve Student Achievement in Language Arts

1. **Organizational Changes**

   ECMS-G is now fully enrolled and **fully staffed**. We have 320 students in grades 6-8, 13 full time core teachers, 4 specialty teachers, 3 highly qualified para-educators, and numerous other office and campus supervision personnel. We now have a full rather than half time Assistant Principal available for teacher development. A new Team Leader position has been created in order to develop instructional leadership on staff and facilitate communication between administrators and our main units of collaboration, our interdisciplinary grade level teams. As of 2013-14, our Director of Curriculum & Instruction will be available to help coordinate English Language Arts & English Language Development initiatives at ECMS. Our new, experienced ELD teacher is now a full time staff member. In addition to pull out and push in work with ELLs, she is a part time Games & Movement teacher. This allows her to participate in grade level professional development and to create thematically aligned, high interest learning activities which help student meet their ELD goals.

   We have organized all core teachers into one of two **departments**: Math and English. The newly formed English department consists of two 6th grade and two 7th grade teachers who teach an English/History block class daily as well as our new 8th grade teachers – one who teaches English and another who teaches History. In response to teacher suggestions for greater communication, we have also budgeted to include our two after school Literacy Lab teachers in professional development sessions as their schedules allow. The literacy lab teachers are also entering attendance into Powerschool and core teachers are encouraging parents to track student participation on line. All ECMS literacy lab and core ELA teachers are highly qualified except for one newly hired, experienced teacher from out of state who is getting an EL authorization. ECMS’ plan is to have 100% highly qualified teachers. ECMS policy is to pay the cost for teachers’ first sitting of the EL authorization test. We also organize EL test prep sessions for ECS teachers. Teachers must have their EL authorization completed by next fall or enroll in required course credit to return to ECMS for the following fall.

   In addition to focused time for math, students will participate in a weekly English Language Arts Practice Period during which they will receive differentiated instruction in reading comprehension of informational texts, vocabulary, and written language conventions, as determined by their NWEA assessments.

2. **Common Core Curriculum & Assessment Transition Plan**
In 2012-13 ECMS switched to the Common Core Standards in Math and English. We believe that these standards are more aligned with our mission of teaching students to think critically and reflect on their learning. Our administrators have attended various trainings and webinars on the CCSS and developed a plan for teachers to engage with new or newly organized content. As math and science teachers become aware of the language demands embedded in their new standards, they have sought the expertise of their ELA colleagues. To facilitate discussion on these topics, Monday morning PD meetings include time for teachers to present successful strategies for developing academic language in all content areas.

We are also considering the transition in terms of assessment. We expect the rigor and complexity of the ELA items on the new Smarter Balanced assessments to be similar to the rigor and complexity of our IBM (benchmark) assessments. ECMS relies on the computer adaptive NWEA MAP tests three times throughout the year for formative assessment. We have switched entirely to the CCSS in order to provide additional objective, reliable data on our implementation of new standards. As of January 2014 we will be able to use NWEA to track subgroup-level data in ELA, paying particular attention to our ELLs. Because our students are familiar with this testing format and new content, we anticipate that ECMS will emerge from Program Improvement status as a model for implementation of the Common Core standards and Smarter Balanced assessments.

3. Professional Development

ECMS offers extensive professional development for the increase in content and pedagogical knowledge related to the Best Practices upon which our teachers are evaluated. Our academic calendar provides two weeks of training for returning staff and three weeks for new teachers. In each trimester there are three days devoted entirely to IBM and unit planning, refining, and data analysis. Additionally, we have a weekly Monday morning meeting, which alternates between all staff, grade level team, and department time. There are also two days set aside for teacher field investigations and teams of teachers may request sub days to further develop curriculum.

For 2013-14 ECMS is pleased to be involved in a major university partnership for professional development program for English Language Learners, Project STELLAR. “The goals of Project STELLAR include the creation and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive professional development program for pre-service and in-service teachers in academic writing in science. The partnership aims to improve educational outcomes for 4th-8th grade English Learners during “critical transition” periods by increasing the capacity of teachers and administrators to provide high quality, content-based language and literacy development while addressing the socio-emotional needs of long-term English Learners. STELLAR stands for “Science Teaching for English Learners – Leveraging Academic Rigor.” The partnership is funded by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Professional Development program and will provide intensive training in academic writing in environmental science for 100 in-service teachers, 29 teacher leaders, and 20 pre-service teachers of English Learners over the next five years.” Fully one half of ECMS’s teaching staff is involved, such that each student at each grade level is participating in a research-based English Language Development curriculum taught by teachers who are trained, observed, and coached in effective ELL strategies in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

4. Instructional Resources
The most valuable instructional resource is time. Providing teachers time to collaborate builds content knowledge and collegiality that will make our changes sustainable. In addition to the professional development time described above, each History/English teacher has been scheduled to have a common prep period with the other teacher of the same course. This allows for joint planning, analysis of student work, the creation of common assessments, and for joint coaching and collaboration with the principals.

Physically, our school currently has the resources our teachers have requested and feel we need. We provide a book for each student at each grade level. The English Department continues to research and purchase core literature texts. ECMS will begin using ITS Learning, an educational learning platform that will make it easier for teachers to share articles, handouts, media and website resources. In addition, we have class sets of Write Source, which is a writing mechanics text.

Through the Riordan Foundation grant ECMS was able to procure an additional laptop cart and IT support personnel. The College Readiness teachers have devised a technology instructional scope and sequence to address issue from basic keyboarding, internet etiquette and cyber bullying to evaluating and annotating research sources.

ECMS now has a library, thanks to donations by Ikea and other donors. It is stocked with high interest classic and contemporary books in all genres. To bolster our Practice Period, we are investing in high interests non-fiction leveled texts related to our benchmark themes. Students are using NWEA data to self-monitor Lexile levels of books to find the appropriate level of comprehensibility and challenge. We are also piloting online school library programs to improve our independent reading program.

5. After School Literacy Labs
Our afterschool literacy labs are a key component of our literacy remediation. As mentioned above, the labs have been significantly revamped this year. ECMS has taken full control of our program and cut ties with our previous aftercare providers. We have determined that lab seats need to be reserved for students with the lowest skills, and that in-class remediation and tutoring will be used for those perhaps just a year or so behind. Our counselor, principal, and afterschool coordinator are making a concerted effort to make lab attendance records more accurate and to encourage parents to honor the parent contract clause that states they will make arrangements for students to stay in labs when teachers recommend it.

We are already seeing much better attendance in our after school programs, possibly due to our finally being permanently located in Gardena. Additionally, a new partnership with the YMCA enables students who participate in the after school program to play basketball, swim and take other classes at the YMCA. We hope to see higher attendance rates in our literacy lab since more students are participating in other parts of the after school program.

6. EmpowHer Institute/Urban Scholars
Working with community partners EmpowHer and Social Justice Learning Institute, ECMS is offering two single sex classes to students. Both classes support students’ literacy development. EmpowHer encourages ECMS’ female students of color to be critical thinkers and emerging readers through diverse literature provided throughout the program. Students write in reflection journals or read passages from: Respect: A Girl's Guide to Getting Respect and Dealing When Your Lines Have Been Crossed. They are also encouraged to find literature outside of required reading, such as
newspaper or online magazine articles exploring the challenges and successes of girls/women round the world. The curriculum is comprised of domains in career development/life skills, financial literacy, and leadership development, servicing girls in low-income communities. In Urban Scholars, male students explore topics such as male identity, issues of manhood and race, as well as social condition. Students strategize specific ways to transform society and themselves in order to create a more just and human world through service learning projects and reading literature that they can relate to. Students are required to pick one book that they have taken interest in, and share with the class, giving a critique of why they liked the book. By tying the Urban Scholars curriculum to the common core standards, students make connections that are culturally and socially relevant in the classroom. One of the Urban Scholars goals is to support students by helping youth achieve a "proficient" or higher on the California State Standards Test.

In 2013-14, Urban Scholars will be offered to 7th graders during the instructional day. 7th and 8th graders will both be able to participate in Urban Scholars during the after school program. ECMS administration and Urban Scholars program leadership agree that spending some time during the school day in Urban Scholars helps students see the course as a serious academic undertaking.
## School Goal # 2: Increase student achievement in ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What data did you use to form this goal (findings from data analysis)?</th>
<th>How does this goal align to your Local Educational Agency Plan goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| STAR CST  
Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Annual Progress (NWEA MAP)  
Language & Reading  
New student writing assessment  
Interdisciplinary Benchmarks | Our LEA plan goal states that “all students will reach high standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics, by 2013-14” |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did the analysis of the data reveal that led you to this goal?</th>
<th>Which stakeholders were involved in analyzing data and developing this goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency increase on CST Language arts was mixed—African Americans made remarkable growth and their increase pulled school wide proficiency up by more than 7 percentage points. However, Latinos and socioeconomically disadvantaged students made less improvement.</td>
<td>Administrators, teachers and parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who are the focus students and what is the expected growth?</th>
<th>What data will be collected to measure student achievement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Focus on language arts improvement for students in grades 6-8. Significant focus on students with special needs, English learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. | STAR CST  
Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Annual Progress (NWEA MAP) –Reading & Language  
Interdisciplinary Benchmarks  
Enrollment, attendance and exiting of students in literacy labs |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What process will you use to monitor and evaluate the data?</th>
<th>Actions to improve achievement to exit program improvement (if applicable). See Below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our calendar sets aside one day each trimester for data analysis. Teachers and administrators will evaluate student progress on multiple measures, and then effectiveness of plan components determined.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative team meets weekly to evaluate progress towards goals.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies/Actions to Implement this Goal</strong></td>
<td><strong>Start/Completion Date/Personnel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development: Teachers will write and standards-align an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum, calibrate rubrics, identify re-teaching needs, and analyze formative and summative assessment results. Teachers will share results and identify effective teaching strategies.</td>
<td>Two weeks each summer and 12 professional development days during instructional year/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development: Alignment of instruction with content standards--</td>
<td>2 weeks each August for returning staff, 3 weeks for new teachers/Teaching staff, Administration/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended Learning: Literacy Lab (after school remediation classes)</td>
<td>Daily 4-5 pm After School Coordinator, teachers and tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After School tutoring with core teachers</td>
<td>All core teachers at least 1 hr/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Readiness class with core teachers for grades 6-8, including independent reading logs, reading</td>
<td>2 hours/week during instructional year Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement teacher use of ITS Learning software to enable students to create online “book blogs” and stimulate student interest in reading.</td>
<td>Persuasive Writing: Interdisciplinary benchmarks for grade 7 will continue to focus on persuasive writing and English department will share strategies that led to 97% proficiency on CST writing test.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plan to Improve Parent Involvement**

**1. Organizational Changes**

ECMS was chartered to primarily serve the Gardena community. We were unable to secure a site in Gardena and have operated in Inglewood since we opened. However, many of our families reside in Gardena or points south. In spring 2013 we moved to a permanent location in Gardena. We have already begun developing partnerships with local organizations: the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, Willows Wetland and the Harbor Gateway Neighborhood Association. We are also planning to renovate a second building on our new site to house a community education village, which will offer courses to benefit the neighborhood, like English as a second language, exercise and arts. We believe that locating nearby our parents will make a significant difference in the level of parent involvement.
As we grow as an organization, we also have been able to host workshops for parents on topics such as adolescent sexual development, preventing substance abuse, and supporting academic achievement. In January 2013, our full time counselor organized a high school informational night. We plan to continue to implement the strategies that have been effective in increasing parent involvement. We have also instituted systems for tracking parent participation. We use sign in sheets at all meetings and conferences, and teachers report percentage of parents participating in parent teacher conferences in a shared Google document.

In addition, we have created an incentive for 8th grade parents to attend after school workshops. Additional tickets to culmination ceremonies will be made available to parents who attend parent education events.

2. Standards-based Grading and Reporting

Since our opening ECMS has graded based on standards—discrete standards are identified and teachers assess students' proficiency on those standards. In our second year we switched to standards based reporting. We did away with course grades and began to report performance levels on each priority standard to students and parents. When we launched the new grading scheme, we held multiple workshops for parents to explain the new system. Eliminating course grades was a fairly radical move and we wanted to be sure parents understood our reasons for doing so. We also wanted parents to understand how the new system further empowered them to support their student's achievement. The system enables parents to target their support of student academic growth. Rather than helping students with "math" they can focus their assistance on specific areas of weakness, such as finding the circumference of a circle or turning in homework on time. Despite the uniqueness of our new grading system, parent support has been enormously positive. As we move forward we want to continue engaging parents in their students' grade reports, and empowering them to use it as a tool for guiding their children's study.

3. Parent Council
Our petition describes a parent council that has elected representatives from each grade level. Unfortunately, we haven’t been able to generate sufficient parent interest to hold elections and establish a working parent council. In year one our small size limited the pool of available parents and our location in Inglewood made it harder for our Gardena-based parent body to participate. In year two, we almost doubled in size and there was an increase in parent involvement, but not to a level sufficient to establish a parent council. In the current year, year three, we served all three grades, but in the spring we relocated to Gardena. Half the parents were anticipating the school moving farther away and half the parents were looking forward to the school moving closer to them. We expect a fair amount of turnover in our enrollment as a result and suspect the transition will undermine parent commitment. Furthermore, our energies in communicating with parents are focused on when we are moving, how the move might impact schedules, calendar changes and other logistical challenges. We believe that once we settle in our permanent location we’ll be able to engage a seed group of parents in establishing a robust parent council. This council will then facilitate and troubleshoot school-families communications and help with school festivals and workshops, which we believe will encourage parent involvement moving forwards.

In the fall of 2013, calls for candidates were made at enrollment meetings, first day orientation, back to school night and via the Friday Letter. Candidates were nominated and submitted candidate statements, which were shared with parents. The election has been completed and grade level representatives from all grades now comprise our Parent Council. Meetings will be monthly.

4. School Culture

We realize that some of our parents are not accustomed to participating in school. Some are struggling to make ends meet. Some have had negative experiences with schools previously. Some may not understand the powerful role they can play in their child’s educational success. For some parents there are language barriers. Many middle schoolers may not want their parents volunteering at school like they did when they were in elementary.
Communication is a constant challenge. Though we use a wide variety of strategies to keep parents informed, we know we have not achieved 100% communication. ECMS has a weekly Friday Letter, which goes home with students and is posted in the office and on the website. We send home progress reports every Friday and parents can subscribe to have them automatically emailed. We send automated phone calls home. Our enrollment meetings for new parents are several hours long and include presentations and skits on grading, communication, discipline process, Tribes, etc. Every school year begins with all parents attending for a portion of the day to meet teachers, learn about new changes and be reminded of standing practices. All documents and presentations are translated into Spanish. Our strategies to increase effective communication to parents are listed below.

To help parents overcome obstacles to involvement we have instituted changes in 2012-13 that we plan to expand upon in 2013-14. We offer babysitting and refreshments at our parent workshops. We provide parents with copies of the education and labor codes that require employers to give workers time off to attend their children’s educational events. We hold meetings in the early mornings and in the evenings.

We have also implemented changes to help parents feel more comfortable in the school environment. We have increased the number of “positive” events and now hold monthly assemblies where students are awarded appreciation certificates from teachers to which their parents are invited. Our 2012-13 parent social was well attended and our parents are invited to student festivals and presentations, such as the 6th grade Olympics and the Columbian Exchange feast. In 2013-14 we added a medieval festival, with crafts and student challenges (jousting, tug of war). In partnership with the YMCA we have started a co-ed basketball team.

Finally, we will be “scaffolding” parent involvement. Previously, we have scheduled committee meetings and asked for volunteers to attend and help plan events. Very few parents attended these meeting. Now, we have decided to have school staff plan and organize a few events and invite parents to help along the way. We hope to identify parent leadership through this collaborative model and transfer leadership responsibilities to parents as they become more
comfortable volunteering at school. Our goal is to establish a tradition of parent led events, such as a seasonal fair or monthly “dinners at school.”
### School Goal # 3: Increase Parent Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What data did you use to form this goal (findings from data analysis)?</th>
<th>How does this goal align to your Local Educational Agency Plan goals?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report on # of times parents access Powerschool to review grades</td>
<td>Our LEA plan goal states that “all students will reach high standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics, by 2013-14”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anecdotal reports from parents who are missing vital pieces of education</td>
<td>Various kinds of parent involvement are listed under specific actions to achieve our LEA plan goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at student presentations &amp; performances, workshops, conferences. Level of homework completion, percentages of progress reports signed, percentage of reading logs signed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did the analysis of the data reveal that led you to this goal?</th>
<th>Which stakeholders were involved in analyzing data and developing this goal?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent participation in conferences ranges from 69% to 100% by class. Only 25% of parents accessed their students’ grades online this year, which is an improvement, but we would like more than 50% of parents to access their students’ grades.</td>
<td>Administrators, teachers and parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Who are the focus students and what is the expected growth?</th>
<th>What data will be collected to measure student achievement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on all students’ parents and the expected growth is an increase in attendance at conferences, events, performances, and workshops and an increase of the number of students staying through the entire school day.</td>
<td>Report on # of times parents access Powerschool to review grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance at student presentations &amp; performances, workshops, conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level of homework completion, percentages of progress reports signed, percentage of reading logs signed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of students signing out early</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin team will review data each month.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies/Actions to</th>
<th>Start/Completion</th>
<th>Each Funding</th>
<th>Process for</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implement this Goal</th>
<th>Date/Personnel</th>
<th>Source/Amount</th>
<th>Evaluation of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold parent events 1-2x per trimester</td>
<td>8/2013-6/2014 Admin Team</td>
<td>No Extra Costs</td>
<td>Weekly Admin Team meeting, attendance at events, parent surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate to parents through a variety of means</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>General Fund/School paper &amp; printing costs</td>
<td>Weekly Admin Team meeting, attendance at events, parent surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Friday Letter</td>
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<td>- Email List</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Flyers in parking lot</td>
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<td>- Pace Messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer refreshments and childcare at events</td>
<td>Admin Team &amp; Staff</td>
<td>General Fund &amp; Donations/$600</td>
<td>Parent attendance at meetings &amp; # of families using childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide celebratory social opportunities for parents to be on campus:</td>
<td>8/2013 – 6/2014</td>
<td>General Fund &amp; Donations/$400</td>
<td>Weekly Admin Team meeting, attendance at events, parent surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- appreciation award assemblies</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td></td>
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<td>- student performances</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
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<td>- feasts</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Bi-monthly early dinners</td>
<td>Admin Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Monthly Coffee with the Principal</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Math Night</td>
<td>4/11/13 Math Faculty</td>
<td>General Fund, Title I/$900</td>
<td>Parent Survey &amp; attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive training in mass email software</td>
<td>2/2013 Principal</td>
<td>General Fund/No extra cost</td>
<td>Monthly at Admin team meeting evaluate Parent response to emails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Workshops</td>
<td>Admin Team</td>
<td>General Fund/No Extra Cost</td>
<td>Weekly Admin Team meeting, attendance at events, parent surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ECMS grading system &amp; Supporting</td>
<td>9/2013</td>
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<td>- 10/2013</td>
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<td>- 3/2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>student achievement</td>
<td>4/2013</td>
<td>5/2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cyber Safety</td>
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<td>Healthy Eating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substance abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen sexuality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Fair</td>
<td>Planning begins 3/2013</td>
<td>Fair is held spring 2014</td>
<td>General Fund &amp; Donations /$200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
January 10, 2014

TO: Ms. Judy Higelin, Interim Project Director III
Charter School Office
Division of Accountability, Support and Monitoring

FROM: Denise Fay, Facilities Planning Specialist
Facilities Planning Services
Facilities and Construction

SUBJECT: Inspection Report - Annual
Environmental Charter Middle School, Classrooms 1-12
812 West 165th Place
Gardena, CA 90247

Attached is an inspection report generated from a site inspection conducted on December 3, 2013, which includes the Charter School Facilities Inspection Checklist, photos, site aerial plan, and a site plan. In addition to the checklist, please note the items under the sections titled “Comments”, “Required Corrections” and “Recommendations”.

If you have any questions or need additional information, call me at (562) 940-1847.

cc: Mr. Kami Cotler, Environmental Charter Middle School
Mr. David Albright, LACOE
Dr. Alex Cherniss
Mr. Ron Brettin
Ms. Jema Estrella
Ms. Olivia Fuentes
Project File
LACOE is a premier provider of integrated, educational programs and services from birth to adulthood in a richly diverse and multicultural global environment.