

iDesign Schools



OVERVIEW

In July 2007, the iDesign Schools Division was created by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education to support the transformation of LAUSD schools by cultivating school innovation proposals and community partnerships in an effort to increase high quality educational options for communities across Los Angeles. The underlying theory of change is that decentralization of authority and responsibility closer to school sites, coupled with increased accountability, will improve conditions necessary for excellence in teaching and learning. Schools are empowered by having site autonomy in governance, budget, curriculum, staffing, and professional development.

The division oversees the authorization of 3 types of schools: *network partner schools*, *expanded school-based management model (ESBMM)*; and more recently *pilot schools*. Each of these models incorporates varying levels of autonomy in exchange for increased accountability. In network partner schools, non-profit civic and academic institutions, called Network Partners, enter into a formal collaborative relationship with the schools to facilitate school reform and to manage the daily operational functions at the sites. They are held accountable to the Board of Education through a 5-year renewable contract. Network Partners can also provide instructional leadership, technical assistance and support, as well as additional resources to improve school programs and instruction. ESBMM schools, similar to Pilot schools, operate through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between UTLA and LAUSD. These schools remain part of the District network of schools and maintain support services from their Local Districts. All iDesign school teachers, administrators, and staff remain LAUSD employees and existing collective bargaining agreements remain in place, except those provisions that have been expressly waived in the MOU with UTLA. As of October 2009, iDesign Schools became part of the Innovation and Charter Schools Division.

GOALS

- Increase and support decision-making authority of network partner, ESBMM, and pilot schools by providing autonomy and flexibility over curriculum, instructional strategies, professional development, school budget, and calendar.
- Benchmark and replicate effective practices and accountability measures District-wide.
- Hold Network Partners and schools accountable for results in student achievement, safety, and parent satisfaction.
- Oversee operational support and provide streamlined services to iDesign schools.
- Cultivate working relationships with Local Districts and delineate areas of responsibilities for iDesign schools
- Strengthen community and parent ownership by increasing participation in critical decisions impacting their schools.
- Revive public schools as a lively and competitive option for providing quality and equitable educational opportunities for all children regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or cultural background.
- Develop opportunities for schools to foster innovations in their instructional programs and implementation strategies.

To find out more about the school models and how to become a Network Partner, please call the iDesign Office at 213-241-5104.