



## WestEd's Tipping Point School Turnaround Center

### A long-term engagement with Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles California

WestEd initiated a pilot of the Tipping Point turnaround model in 2007 at Manual Arts High School (MAHS), a large, year-round secondary school in south Los Angeles.

#### **School Profile:**

| <b>Manual Arts High School (LAUSD)<br/>2007-08</b> |       |
|--|-------|
| Enrollment   | 3,600 |
| Latino students                                    | 82%   |
| African-American students                          | 17%   |
| English Learners                                   | 36%   |
| Academic Performance Index                         | 1     |
| Program Improvement Status                         | 5++++ |
| Proficient or Advanced ELA                         | 13%   |
| Proficient or Advanced Math                        | 2%    |
| Graduation rate 5 yrs                              | 40%   |

In May 2008, teachers at MAHS voted to join the iDesign Division of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which has provided significant autonomy to a small number of low-performing schools in the district. Schools voting to join iDesign are partnered with district-approved network providers and are held accountable for improved student outcomes. MLA Partner Schools (MLA) was designated by LAUSD as the network provider for Manual Arts High School through a five-year performance contract with the Board of Trustees. Management of Manual Arts High School was transferred to MLA with WestEd serving as a major partner for MLA.

Approximately eight full-time staff members from WestEd and MLA have been working onsite at Manual Arts for the past year and a half. Additionally, MLA provides management and operational support with additional staff members. The list below describes some of the key initiatives of our partnership.

## Chronology of the turnaround effort at Manual Arts

In September 2008, we established a **transition team** consisting of teachers, parents, students, administrators, and community representatives. The team adopted the term, “**ONEManual**,” to represent the unified, school-wide effort toward a new beginning for the school. The transition team formed five subcommittees that met several times each month and developed numerous proposals for change. These subcommittees focused on these areas: 1) useful data, 2) school governance, 3) student engagement, 4) holistic support for families, and 5) professional development. Two ONEManual newsletters were published describing the work of the transition team (see attached).

In October 2008, we conducted an in-depth **assessment of teaching and learning conditions** through focus groups and an online staff survey. Areas of focus included: availability and use of time for collaboration, facilities and resources, teacher empowerment, leaderships, professional relationships, professional development, district office support, support for beginning teachers, support for special education teachers, and educational technology. Data from this assessment was used by the transition team to develop proposals for change. Assessment will be conducted twice each year to monitor efforts to improve teaching and learning conditions.

From November 2008 to June 2009, “**ONEManual Café**” was conducted each month for **parents** to learn about and offer input on initiatives under consideration for the school.

All faculty in each small learning community (SLC) are participating in an on-going effort facilitated by WestEd to **strengthen 28 research-based vital signs** related to: Vision, Personalization, Homeroom/advisory, Leadership and Accountability, Parents and Community, and SLC Identity. The first step was for faculty to assess the degree of implementation in their own SLC for each of the 28 vital signs. Faculty used this assessment to prioritize the vital signs they would focus on first. Action plans are now being written to strengthen high-priority vital signs. After actions plans are implemented, assessments will be conducted annually to measure progress.

To strengthen the school’s nine small learning communities we conducted a **study of teacher-student relationships** at Manual Arts. The study revealed the number of “good” relationships each student had with teachers at the school. We found that 10% of the students school-wide have no close, caring relationships with any teacher. A number of recommendations for practice were made to strengthen teacher-student relationships, and relationship building is now a high priority for all of the school’s small learning communities. Relationship data will be collected annually to measure the impact of changed practices.

We have provided workshops for the transition team and the School Site Council on **strategic budgeting** tied to the school’s mission.

A **professional development program** for teachers and staff was developed and implemented by a sub-committee of the school’s transition team. Teachers now participate regularly in professional development that is provided, in part, by colleagues who have applied to serve as professional development facilitators.

From February to June 2009, a national search was conducted for **an experienced and effective school principal**. The search and screening process (which included representatives from all stakeholder groups) was successfully completed in July with the hiring of an excellent candidate. We constructed a recruitment webpage that includes a videotape of teachers describing the unique leadership opportunity the position offers. See <http://transitions.mahs.org/recruitment>.

From November 2008 to July 2009, **a student uniform policy** is developed to promote unity among the student body and greater safety on campus. The uniforms were designed by students, parents, and teachers. Financial assistance for uniforms provided for qualified families.

Since January 2009, we have helped the school's academic departments develop and conduct **periodic assessments** that are tied to the state's academic standards. Beginning in August 2009 WestEd has facilitating the development of a **comprehensive strategic plan to strengthen practices and policies on student assessment, curriculum, instruction, and professional development**. This plan will be incorporated into the school's Single Plan for Student Achievement which, with the help of MLA, will be re-written in the spring of 2010.

All students at Manual Arts participate daily in a 20-minute homeroom/student advisory class. We have developed a **homeroom/student advisory guide** for teachers that will be implemented school-wide in October 2009.

We are constructing a comprehensive, user-friendly **resource directory** to keep parents and the greater community informed about onsite and community resources.

### **Preliminary indicators of student progress**

Many of the activities described above have been conducted to "set the stage" for improved student outcomes. For instance, data collected on teaching and learning conditions, student-teacher relationships, Small Learning Community vital signs have provided critical baseline information against which progress can be measured over time. Efforts to improve school climate, trust, collaboration, and accountability have been successful but we did not expect these critical changes would have an immediate impact on student outcomes.

But even after 15 months as network providers for an autonomous high school, we can point to early signs of improvement for students. Matriculation and attendance rates have risen; the percentage of students taking the California Standards Test rose dramatically this year; after our new principal arrived and initiated new policies to support students, suspensions were cut in half over a similar period one year earlier; in August we learned that the school's Academic Performance Index rose by 22 points in 2008-09.

A more detailed analysis of student outcomes at Manual Arts will be made public soon.

# ONE MANUAL

## Newsletter

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1 Fall 2008

**Transitions Team Website Launched**

Visit the new website containing vital information about the transition team.

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**Survey and Focus Group Findings**

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**WASC Accreditation**

The WASC committee will be visiting Manual Arts in February to see how the school has responded to recommendations.

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**MyData Program to be Used in Magnet School**

Web-based MyData tool being used to increase accessibility of data for teachers and administrators.

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**SLC Developments**

Lead teachers have been working to develop strategies to strengthen Manual's Small Learning Communities.

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**Visual Representation of Transition Team Orientation**

A visual record of the Transition Team Orientation held on September 20, 2008.

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## Transition Team Off and Running

On September 20, 2008, members of the Manual Arts Transition Team participated in an orientation. Teachers, administrators, staff, parents, students, along with representatives from MLA Partner Schools and WestEd began to chart a course for change.

The team agreed that its role would be to study critical issues, set a course for change, and advise existing school governance bodies. After a discussion of meeting schedules, decision-making procedures, and other logistical issues, the team examined data collected from the online teachers survey and the focus groups conducted with teachers, staff, and administration and began to identify the immediate challenges it would attempt to meet. The following five subcommittees were formed and team members began to address the issues:

- Professional development for all
- Integrated support for families, school/ community partnerships
- Transparent, useful data
- School governance, collaboration and trust
- Student engagement

Subcommittees will meet twice each month. The entire transition team will meet once each month, and will respond to proposals from the subcommittees.



### Upcoming Transition Team Dates

November 6, 2008: 3:30-5:30 p.m. in Room 231

December 4, 2008: 3:30-5:30 p.m. in Room 231

January 8, 2009: 3:30-5:30 p.m. in Room 231

February 5, 2009: 3:30-5:30 p.m. in Room 231

All meetings are open to the public.



# Updates from MLA / WestEd

## Transition Team Website Launched

A new website, located at <http://transitions.mahs.org>, contains vital, up-to-date information about the transition team, including a calendar of events, agendas and minutes, suggestion boxes, announcements, links to related websites, and threaded discussion groups. All members of the Manual

## Findings from the Online Survey and Focus Groups Available Online

Over the summer, teachers, staff, and administrators participated in focus groups sharing their perspectives on the strengths and challenges we face at Manual Arts. Teachers also participated in an in-depth online survey. The transition team is using this data to guide their work.

## WASC Accreditation

Members of WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges—the school accreditation body) will be conducting a “re-visit” at Manual on February 12, 2009, and will be looking to see how the school has responded to its recommendations. Dr. Nichols has been coordinating the preparations being made for the WASC visit. We are

## Lead Teachers Work to Strengthen Manual's Small Learning Communities

Over the past several weeks, SLC lead teachers have begun to set priorities and develop strategies to strengthen Manual’s Small Learning Communities. As one of its top priorities, a group, assisted by Octavio Estrella, has begun to develop a new resource guide for

## MyData Pilot Program Launched

The Magnet School at Manual Arts is participating in the pilot of the MyData adoption this school year. The pilot lasts about nine months and is taking place at approximately 35 other LAUSD schools. MyData is a web-based tool that will increase the accessibility of data for teachers and administrators.



Arts community are encouraged to visit the site and to offer comments and suggestions to members of the transition team. Be sure to visit the webpage for each of the five subcommittees.



A summary of findings is available on the transition team website in the documents folder.



optimistic that WASC will be impressed with what they see.



Homerooms. The guide, which will include successful practices from Manual Arts, will be tested and evaluated beginning in December.



The tool provides formative data on students to help drive decision-making on the part of teachers. This is an exciting pilot because currently teachers have limited access to data. This tool will provide teachers with the necessary information to continue to work collaboratively, learn from their colleagues, and create time and space for data-based conversations about student learning. MLA Partner Schools and WestEd will be working closely with the Magnet teachers to successfully participate in the pilot to eventually expand the tool to all teachers at Manual Arts.

## ONEManual Café

On October 9, Manual Arts High School had its first ONEManual Café hosted by MLA Partner Schools and WestEd. Parents had an opportunity to meet the network partners, learn about the exciting changes taking place, and ask questions about what iDesign means for Manual Arts.

For the next meeting date, please see the “Upcoming Events” section on page 3.

*“iDesign offers a unique opportunity for those who truly want to voice their ideas in a forum that will be heard by proactive ears. As long as communication, openness, and effectiveness are maintained faithfully, the possibilities are limitless.”*

*-Christina Choug,  
Math Teacher*

## Teacher Innovation Grants

MLA Partner Schools’ Teacher Innovation Grants (TIG) program will provide direct funding to teachers at Manual Arts High School. This year there is \$100,000 available to Manual Arts teachers through the TIG program, which is intended to promote the intellectual, innovative and entrepreneurial capacity of teachers.

A and C Track deadlines have passed, but please see the “Upcoming Events” section on page 3 for future deadlines.

*“The transition team has gotten off to a good start. The meetings have been productive and will point us in a direction that will benefit the entire Manual Arts family. The change will be positive.”*

*-Phyllis Williams,  
UTLA Chapter Chair*

# Upcoming Events

**November 10: School Decision Making (SDM) meeting, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**

**November 11: Veterans Day, No School**

**November 12 & 19: Teacher Innovation Grants, 3:00 p.m.**

B Track orientations for the TIGs will be held on November 12 and 19 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 175. All interested teachers must attend at least one of the orientations.

**November 13: PTSA Meeting, 5:00 p.m.**

**November 15: CEAC Meeting, 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

**November 19: ONEManual Café, 4:30-6:00 p.m.**

All parents, staff, and students are welcome to attend the next ONEManual Café to be held on November 19, 2008, from 4:30-6:00 p.m. in the Teachers' Cafeteria. In addition to the Network Partners, there will be a college rep in attendance to discuss college applications and financial aid. Coffee and food will be served.



**November 21: Fall College Day**

**November 24: School Site Council Meeting, 3:30-5:00 p.m.**

**November 27-28: Thanksgiving Holiday, No School**

**December 6: ELAC Meeting**

## A Message from Your Network Partners

We have an extraordinary opportunity before us. For the past year we have fought for autonomy and for the opportunity to transform Manual Arts into a school where all teachers and their students can be successful.



Many were understandably wary about becoming an iDesign school and about the turnaround strategy presented by MLA and WestEd. After all, how many school improvement initiatives have burst onto the scene only to disappear as quickly as they arrived? Why should we expect this

one to be any different? How can we be sure things won't become more dysfunctional? Even if life in Local District 7 was challenging, some surmised, at least we knew what to expect. I appreciate that many were skeptical, even resistant (and still may be), to the promise of a successful, sustainable turnaround.

But what gives me hope about Manual's future is that many who were wary of the iDesign Schools Division and our turnaround strategy have been gracious, friendly, and eager to join others in moving forward together. The formation of a critical mass of support, a necessary condition for reaching a tipping point, is becoming a reality.

Finally, I want to share one thought on the notion of autonomy—one of the goals teachers and parents fought to obtain. In my view, autonomy is just one among numerous conditions needed to transform Manual into an extraordinary school. Autonomy will only make a difference if we seize the opportunity quickly and thoughtfully, if we trust and work together with one another, if we embrace and strengthen what's working at Manual, and if we have the courage to change what is not. We have just begun the journey, but if our first steps are any indication of what's to come, the future looks very bright from my vantage point.

*-Ken Futernick*

MLA, along with our school-site partner WestEd, has pledged its commitment to the Manual Arts High School community over the next five years to execute a model that will give teachers and parents a greater voice in improving the academic achievement for all

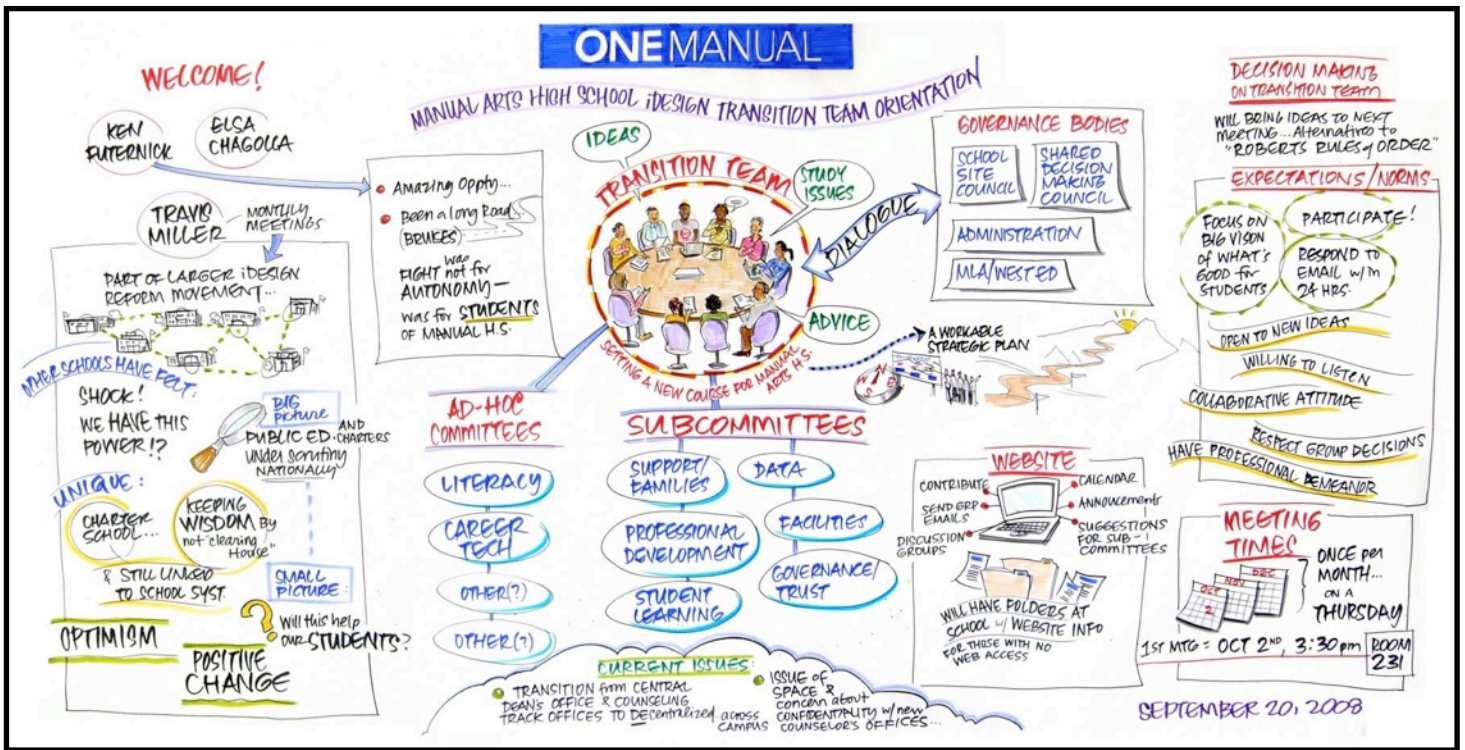
students. MLA and WestEd will work with every school stakeholder, district leader, and the Board of Education to improve school outcomes in key areas that impact student learning, such as instruction, safety, facilities, professional development, parent engagement, and much more.

*-Mike McGalliard*

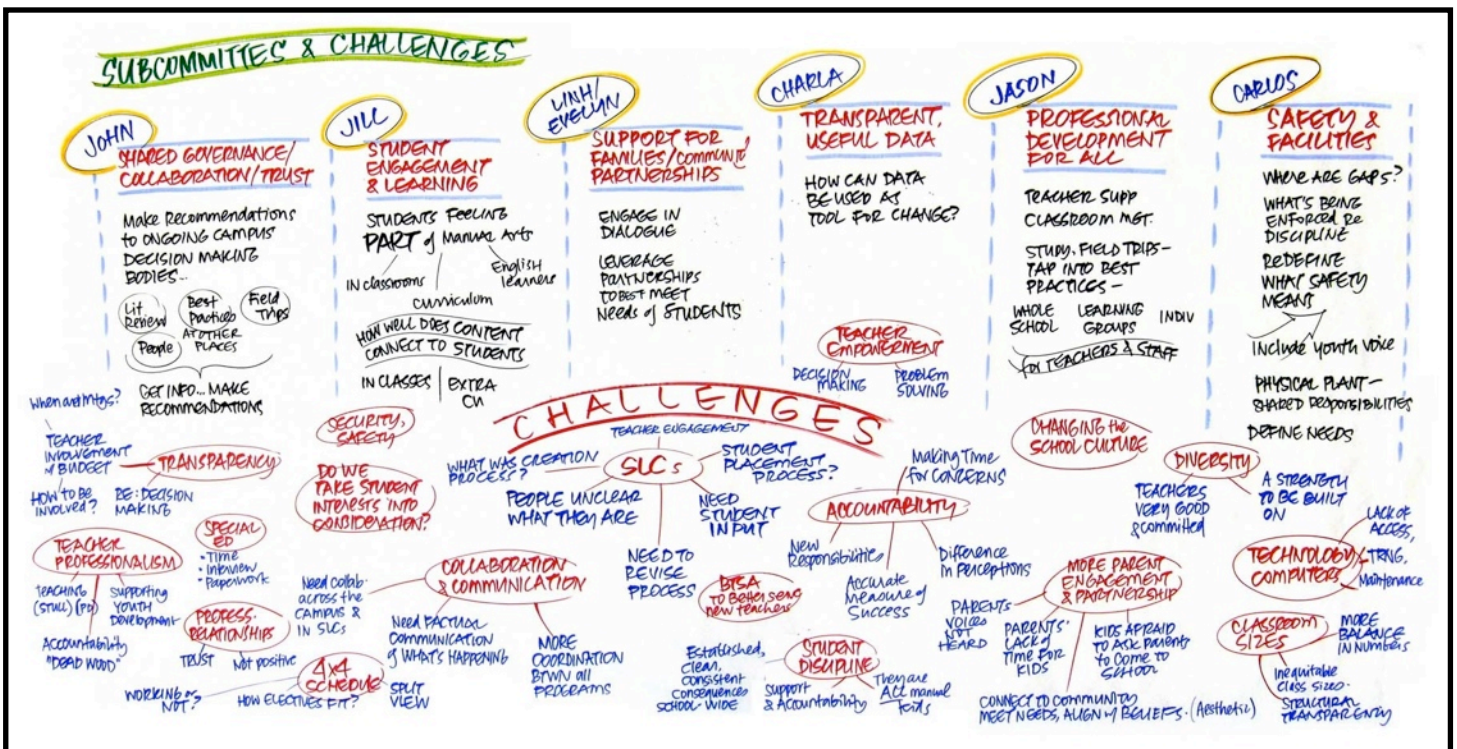
## Network Partner Contact Information

**Mike McGalliard, President**  
MLA Partner Schools  
1035 S. Grand Ave., 2nd Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90015  
(213) 745-4928  
mmcgalliard@mlapartnerschools.org  
www.mlapartnerschools.org

**Ken Futernick, Director**  
WestEd, Tipping Point Assistance Center  
(916) 747-2332  
kfuternick@wested.org  
www.wested.org/tippingpoint



A graphic summary of the work done at the transition team orientation on September 20, 2008.



Initial work of the transition team subcommittees and some of the challenges that surfaced in the online survey and focus groups.

# ONE MANUAL

## Newsletter

A Quarterly Newsletter

Special Spotlight Edition

Volume 1, Issue 2 Spring 2009

### Debate Team Brings Home the Gold

*Speech and Debate team brings home the Championship Trophy at the first ever USC Neighborhood Debate League Championship*  
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### JROTC Racks Up Honors at All-City Drill Competition

*MAHS Battalion wins top honors and makes history*  
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### Student Researchers Participate in UCLA's Council of Youth Research

*Students present their findings in a roundtable policy discussion on the theme of Civic Agency*  
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### MAHS Band Marches to Victory

*Music department is expanding their roster and winning competitions*  
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### Academic Decathlon Wins Record Number of Medals

*AcaDeca Team celebrates the completion of a successful season*  
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### ISTA Students to Compete in Robotics Competition

*ISTA students continue to excel under the training of Mr. John Santos*  
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## Transition Team Undertaking Large-Scale Projects

Since its inception on September 20, 2008, the Manual Arts Transition Team has been meeting regularly to tackle some of the biggest issues on campus. Serving as an advisory committee to existing school governance bodies, the Transition Team has taken a leadership role in areas ranging from Safety, to Integrated Holistic Support for Students and Parents, Professional Development, Student Engagement, and Governance.

The Transition Team has worked diligently over the past five months setting the stage for improved student outcomes. This is a list of some of the key initiatives that are in the works. Several more will be undertaken before the end of the school year.

- A new student "advisory" and teacher's guide. As a replacement to the current "homeroom," this important effort is in development under the guidance of Mr. Octavio Estrella and the SLC leads. The guide will be brought soon to the transition team for input and approval.
- Uniforms for students. Supported by the transition team, parents, and school site council. Additional efforts underway to obtain buy-in from students.
- New leadership, local governance. National search for a permanent principal underway. Existing governing and advisory bodies under review. Recommendations forthcoming from governance sub-committee.
- RMS catalogue. A Resource Management System directory in development that will keep parents and the greater community informed about onsite and community resources.
- A safe school environment. Focus groups on school safety and student discipline have been conducted. Local administration and school police developing new procedures and practices.
- After school programs. A new ad-hoc sub-committee formed in February to evaluate programs and implement a plan.
- A trusting, collaborative professional environment. The transition team is operating under rules of engagement that promote dialogue and consensus. SLCs are considering a new set of norms to guide professional conduct. Informal monthly social events will occur soon for staff. Monthly Teacher's Lounge hosted by MLA.
- Empowered, informed, engaged student body. New student alliance approved by transition team is being formed. Will participate in research, seek support from student body, and assist with implementation of new initiatives.
- Structured, coherent professional development tied to student outcomes and teacher needs. A teacher survey by professional development sub-committee has identified teachers' needs. Catalogue of PD options under development.

### Upcoming Transition Team Dates

**April 9, 2009 @ 3:30-5:30**  
Faculty Cafeteria

**May 7, 2009 @ 3:30-5:30**  
Faculty Cafeteria

**All meetings are open to the public.**



# Spotlight on Manual Arts

## MAHS Cross Country Teams Go Undefeated...Again

The Manual Arts Cross Country team returned to competition during the 2007-2008 school year with four complete teams: Boys Varsity, Boys Junior Varsity, Girls Varsity and Girls Junior Varsity. All 26 team members completed the regular season with undefeated records in the Coliseum League. Every Senior runner graduated and enrolled in college last fall. Our top senior boys runner, Kevin Garcia, is now the #2 runner on the Santa Monica College cross



country team. Team captains were Victor Rojas and Dayana Montejo. Nearly all runners continued training after the season ended and ran the 2008 LA Marathon.

This year, nearly all students who didn't graduate last year returned to the team and the team rosters expanded to 31 runners. Both Girls Varsity and Girls JV were again undefeated in the regular season. The boys teams had only one loss, to Locke High School, which the boys JV lost by less than one second. This year's team captains were Romeo Garcia and Elizabeth Cruz. Team members are again continuing to train in preparation for the upcoming LA Marathon.

## Science Club to Tackle Human Rights Issues

The Science Club is working on a yearlong project that focuses on Human Rights violations. Students employ a variety of disciplines such as science, history, math, art, dance, drama, poetry, song writing, storytelling, computer skills, and fashion to share knowledge about the many issues past and present that have affected minority populations all around the world.

They are organizing an Earth Day Celebration for March 8 which seeks to educate students and the public about the many issues currently affecting our planet and how the individual can minimize their carbon footprint. Lastly, they are planning a trip to Utah to study the geology, ecology, petroglyphs and history of its National Parks.

## English Teacher Published in California English

10th grade English teacher Thomas Roddy Jr. was published for the sixth time in the February issue of *California English*, the professional journal of the CA Association of Teachers of English. His essay entitled "How to Be a Positive Deviant" can be found online at [www.cateweb.org/california\\_english/ce\\_2008\\_february.htm](http://www.cateweb.org/california_english/ce_2008_february.htm)

## MAHS Student Researchers Present on Theme of Civic Agency

On February 6, 2009, a group of students participating in UCLA's Council of Youth Research presented their policy findings to a group of civic and community leaders in a roundtable discussion followed by Public Service Announcements created by the students. The students came from Manual Arts, Locke, Cleveland, Wilson, and Roosevelt high schools and conducted extensive research



on the theme of civic agency.

Each group of students formulated different methodologies to gather research and had the opportunity to share their findings with several top civic, education, and policy leaders. Manual Arts students, led by Social Studies teachers Katie Rainge-Briggs and Tony Terry, conducted interviews and surveys to determine teachers' teaching methods and how often they discussed pressing social and community issues in their classrooms.

Youth Researchers included: Aaron Armstrong, Gabriela Dominguez, Richard McClain, Maurice McCoy, and Rebecca Torres.

## Drama Department Gearing Up for More Productions

Drama Club competed in CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Long Beach and CA State Thespians. Students in Advanced Acting performed 2 plays in 2 months including "The Colored Museum" by George C. Wolfe and "Women of Manhattan" by John Patrick Shanley.

The Drama Club presented "Zoot Suit" by Luis Valdez in May 2008. Senior students in SPAA began a big brother/big sister service learning project and helped 9th graders transition to high school.

This year Manual Arts Intermediate Acting Class, offered to all tracks, will be performing *Hair*, the tribal love rock musical, on June 4, 5, and 6. We have begun an intensive rehearsal process with over 35 students, 8 faculty members and 4 classes, sponsored by the Woodcraft Rangers.

## Speech and Debate Team Brings Home Championship Trophy

The Manual Arts Speech and Debate team continued their momentum and brought home two trophies in one weekend. During the first ever USC Neighborhood Debate League Championship, debaters competed against top teams from Foshay, Bravo, and Crenshaw high schools. After three preliminary rounds of debate, juniors Ali Kayes and Terry Gray advanced to the final round and defeated Bravo High for the championship trophy. Manual Arts also won three of the Top Eight Speaker Awards, with 2nd place going to Senior Rosemary Sandoval.

The team also participated in the WBFL Speech State Qualifying Tournament at El Camino College, with senior Daniel Anderson taking home the third place trophy in Dramatic Interpretation, and first-year Vanessa Holden making it to the final round in Original Prose and Poetry. Daniel will be Manual's first ever competitor for his event in the State Tournament April 25-27 at Culver City High. Manual Arts has now emerged as a frontrunner vying for the L.A. Urban Debate League City Championship to be held April 17-18.

## Toiler ROTC Battalion Takes Top Honors at All-City Competition

On December 13, 2008, 56 cadets from Manual Arts JROTC competed against 17 JROTC programs in the annual All-City Drill Competition held at Monroe High School.

This school year six members competed in the All-City Staff Competition against 60 cadets from around LAUSD. All six placed in the top 20 with 4 cadets



placing 2nd, 3rd, 7th, and 10th. Cadet Lt. Lizeth Avila is ranked second highest out of 3800 cadets and Cadet Major Andy Alvarado is ranked third out of 3800 cadets in LAUSD. The following are the standings:

- Company Drill with 44 cadets placed 2nd
- Platoon Drill with 25 cadets placed 1st
- Armed Drill with 10 cadets placed 2nd
- Unarmed Drill with 10 cadets placed 3rd
- Color Guard Drill placed 2nd

This is the best finish in Manual Arts history and the first time an inner-city school has received the top honors at the All-City Drill Competition.

## Academic Decathlon Team

The Academic Decathlon team has once again completed a successful season, bringing home a record number of medals and points for Manual Arts. Although their team roster was not as large as other schools in the area, the dedication to the team displayed by all members brought great results to this year's team.

The first phase of the competition was January 31 and the testing phase took place February 7. Despite the fact that they were short one team member, the AcaDeca team brought home several Gold Medals, including two in the Speech component where participants give a scripted speech, then are asked to give an improvised speech on a topic chosen by the panel with 30 seconds to prepare notes. "I felt nervous to say my speech in front of people that I knew, but I didn't care what the strangers thought," says gold medal Speech winner Edith "Bipsy" Alonso.

Coached by Mr. Ollie Channel since 1991, he described some of the struggles that the team has had to go through throughout the years. With no permanent housing, they meet in the attic of the Academy of Finance building and stay until 5:00 p.m. every day after school. They discussed lack of institutional and financial support, along with the stigma of coming from a large inner-city school. "We sometimes feel as though we have to prove

ourselves more, but we're stronger because of all that we have to overcome. When we get to the competition it's like, 'Yes, we're here and we're coming after you,'" explained team Captain Laura "Pixie" Santamaria.

The team discussed the goals for next year, which include qualifying for the State Competition (which they just missed by a couple of points this year), and developing friendships they have formed through their experience in the Decathlon. As Santamaria puts it, "It takes tremendous focus and sacrifice to be a part of this team, but we achieved something great and the skills we're learning are preparing us for life after Manual."

### 2008-2009 Academic Decathlon Team Roster:

Laura Santamaria, Jeannette Magana, Oscar Carvente, Gloria Ortiz, Edith Alonso, Bladimir Aguirre, Bryan Fiallos, Jose Calvillo, Erica Bravo

## World-Caliber ISTA Students Continue to Excel in National Competitions

Led by Manual Arts teacher John Santos, ISTA students have continued their momentum and have had success in some of the most competitive robotics and engineering competitions.



In the 2008 robotics competition, Manual Arts placed first out of all LAUSD schools in the Los Angeles Regional. This year, twenty Manual Arts students will compete in the FIRST Robotics competition in late March in Long Beach. In the

National Engineering Design Competition, which includes a test designed for college juniors, the Manual Arts team of eight students have finished in first place in Division 7 (which includes schools from as far south as the Mexican border to as far north as San Luis Obispo) for the past three years.

The success has not come at an easy cost; both the students and faculty facilitators have put in long hours, including nights and weekends, into preparing for these competitions. But as Mr. Santos says, "It's not the competition itself that makes this a great experience, it's everything leading up to the competition."

A native of Los Angeles, Mr. Santos has been at Manual Arts for 13 years teaching Graphic Communications. He is the founder of the Imaging Sciences & Technology Academy (ISTA) at Manual Arts and, over the last six years, students who have matriculated from ISTA to a four-year institution have an 87% retention rate. He is nationally recognized for his "Viva Technology" program which caters to K-12 students in urban and rural communities interested in science, technology, engineering & math. He is also Manual Arts' MESA coordinator, a program that has been

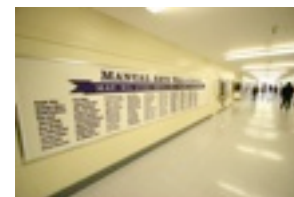
recognized as the "Most Active Technology Program" in Southern California for two consecutive years.

In November '09, 10-12 ISTA and MESA Students working with CSULA engineering students will be attending the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) Conference in Washington, D.C. for three days, including a one-day workshop on Engineering Process at the CIA Headquarters in the Pentagon.

## Music Department Enjoys the Sweet Sound of Success

The Manual Arts Music Department has made great strides in creating a comprehensive music program. Several groups have demonstrated success through participation in music festivals and competitions. Earlier accomplishments were with the Concert Band, which is now a class where students also study classical literature. The concert band has consistently been rated Excellent and Superior at LAUSD band and orchestra festivals.

The newly created Jazz Combo earned first place at the Santa Barbara High School Jazz Festival, second place at the Westlake Jazz Festival, and Superior ratings at the LAUSD Jazz



Festival. With the success of the Jazz Combo, the newly created Jazz Ensemble class meets every day after school. Last spring the Ensemble received first place in the Novice Division at the Santa Barbara Jazz Festival.

The success of these groups has created a buzz around campus and more students are joining the Marching Band and Color Guard. With fifty musicians and twenty color guards, MAHS boasted a total of 70 students on the field this season. The Marching Band took first place at the Granada Highlander competition and represented Manual Arts very well in other competitions.

The MAHS Concert Band is getting ready to enter a solo/small ensemble competition and the LAUSD Band and Orchestra Festival, in which the newly formed Brass Quartet will also compete. Both the Jazz and Concert Bands will enter five festivals.

Trained in classical performance, Music Dept. Chair and band leader David Zavala has been playing the trombone since age 10. Although he has traveled the world performing with different bands, teaching never strayed far from his mind. "I always knew that I wanted to teach, but I wanted to teach from experience, not give students second-hand info," he says. Despite the numerous awards and performances scheduled, the focus is certain: "the most important thing in our music program is education, not entertainment."

# Upcoming Events

**March 12: MAHS Blood Drive**

**March 17-18: CAHSEE, A-Track**

**March 21: CEAC Meeting from 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

**March 23-26: CST Testing, C Track**

**March 26: ONEManual Café**

In honor of the legacy of Cesar Chavez, all parents, staff, and students are welcome to attend the next ONEManual Café to be held on March 26, 2009, from 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the Teachers' Cafeteria. Food and refreshments will be provided.

**March 27: Cesar Chavez Assembly from 11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

**March 31: Cesar Chavez Day**

**April 2: Parent Conference Night (A Track) and Open House Night (C Track)**

**April 3: College and Career Fair, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**April 4: ELAC Meeting**



**April 9: Parent Center Meeting from 2:00-3:00 p.m.**

**April 18: CEAC Meeting from 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

**April 24: Senior Picnic at Six Flags Magic Mountain**

**April 29: Last Day for C Track Students**

**April 30: B Track classes begin**

**May 12-13-CAHSEE Testing, A and B Tracks**

## A Message from Your Network Partners

In 15 years of service to Manual, I had never seen the campus more united and on the verge of a dramatic turnaround than one year ago, when the push for autonomy was in full swing. I know that for many of you who fought so hard to get into iDesign, it's difficult to keep your hopes up right now. It's true: a lot of our new freedoms are now being threatened. An increase in budgetary autonomy is threatened by \$400 million in district cuts. The opportunity to choose our own principal is threatened by the possibility of administrator bumping. And the right to develop our own curriculum and assessments, plan our own PD and create our own instructional vision is threatened by a massive reduction in force.

Entry into iDesign came with a lot of promises. MLA and West Ed are committed to realizing those promises, even in the face of these threats. We expect to roll out a new budget model for the school this summer. We expect to retain Manual's right to choose its principal. And we are fighting to preserve school-site jobs so we can continue the momentum we have gained toward transformation.

The greater Manual community has been hard at work and this newsletter identifies a number of reasons we should remain optimistic. As we move into Manual's 100th year, there is much to celebrate, much to anticipate. Your Network Providers are privileged to stand alongside you in the good, challenging work ahead.

-Mike McGalliard



### Network Partner Contact Information

**Mike McGalliard, President**  
 MLA Partner Schools  
 1035 S. Grand Ave. 2nd Floor  
 Los Angeles, CA 90015  
 (213) 745-4928  
 mmcgalliard@mlapartnerschools.org

**Ken Futernick, Director**  
 WestEd, Tipping Point  
 Assistance Center  
 (916) 747-2332  
 kfuternick@wested.org  
 www.wested.org/tippingpoint

When I first came to Manual Arts nearly two years ago I spoke with people about key elements of a Tipping Point approach to school redesign. One of these elements is the emphasis on a school's assets rather than its deficits. Too often outsiders (and even insiders, at times) assume that people in low-performing school are not doing anything right—that everything must be changed for the school to improve.

I have a different view—that the successful transformation of a school starts by recognizing its strengths and assets. At Manual Arts there are countless examples of programs that are working, a few of which are described in this newsletter. You will read about an undefeated cross county team; an ROTC program earning top honors in the district; and several award-winning robotics projects. Of course, there are numerous other success stories that too often go unnoticed—a student who once hated to write produces an essay that captivates her classmates; students and faculty collaborating for months on powerful dramatic productions; Manual graduates who return to the school as teachers.

Yes, we face enormous challenges and much work lies ahead to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed. But this ONEManual newsletter serves as a well-deserved celebration of what is working here—a reminder of what's good about Manual Arts. Each story is a testament to the extraordinary things students can achieve when thoughtful people come together and dedicate themselves to excellence. I hope it inspires all of us to join in and to imagine new and better ways to serve students. I am confident this will happen because, after all, Excellence Loves Company.

-Dr. Ken Futernick

