

# **El Colegio Charter School**

**Annual Report  
2014-2015**

**October 1, 2015**

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## School Overview

### **El Colegio Charter School**

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El Colegio celebrated its 15-year anniversary in the 2014-2015 school year. El Colegio Charter School is a small public charter high school in Minneapolis that has been serving students in English and Spanish since 2000.

El Colegio Charter School is a public, tuition-free high school with an affiliated after-school program located in the vibrant and ethnically diverse Bancroft neighborhood of south Minneapolis. Rooted in the Latino experience, El Colegio builds upon the talents of bilingual, bicultural students and their families to provide the academic preparation, leadership skills, and community connections necessary to become lifelong leaders and change agents.

We do this by way of our two critical components. First, we offer a high school experience that builds on the cultural and linguistic strengths of our students as they develop a rigorous academic curriculum, including a soon-to-be-launched dual enrollment option with Minneapolis Community and Technical College. Second, we support our students, along with their families and other youth in the community, through a wide-ranging after-school enrichment program that provides academic support, leadership opportunities, and community connections.

### **AUTHORIZER**

El Colegio is authorized by Augsburg College, who has been our sponsor since El Colegio's inception in 2000. El Colegio and Augsburg entered into a new contract effective July 1, 2015 with Augsburg. This is a five year contract.

El Colegio and Augsburg continued to have a strong relationship that stressed a strong review of El Colegio which included quarterly visits, attendance at board meetings at least annually, interviews with students, staff and parents, review of academic and non-academic data and

review of financial data. While the school is disappointed that Augsburg will no longer be authorizing charter schools, we anticipate identifying a new authorizer soon and are in the process of applying for a new authorizer.

***Mission:***

Rooted in the Latino experience, El Colegio builds upon the talents of bilingual, bicultural students and their families to provide the academic rigor, leadership skills, college and career preparation, and community connections necessary to become lifelong leaders and change agents.

***Vision:***

Minneapolis will be transformed by the knowledge, skills, and leadership of Latino students and their families.

**Core Values**

El Colegio is distinct from traditional schools in its embrace of four values that permeate all aspects of its work with youth: identity, community, intellect, justice.

***Identity:*** We support our youth and their families in recognizing and embracing their own unique histories, cultures, and languages.

***Community:*** We recognize that we all live in the context of our communities; we must therefore invest in our community as a whole in order to most effectively support our youth.

***Intellect:*** Book learning and intelligence alone may help youth achieve short-term academic goals, but success in life and community change requires critical thinking and a deeper level of consciousness.

***Justice:*** We pursue our work not solely for the individual benefit of the youth and families we serve, but because we believe their role is critical in securing equity and opportunity for all members of society.

**Core Competencies**

Central to our mission and key to our educational approach are three Learning Goals that guide programming and teaching at El Colegio.

• **Effective Bilingual Communication**

Strong reading, writing and speaking instruction in Spanish and English prepares students to be active participants in their lives, and proactive critical thinkers in the global community - “*Para que sus voces sean escuchadas*” (so they have a strong voice).

- **Culture and Creative Expression**

The teaching and learning of art and Latino culture prepare students to think critically, express themselves clearly, and see current and historical events from multiple perspectives. They will have self-esteem to create and express their own identity, not only through artistic expression, but also through sharing ideas and solving problems.

- **Resourcefulness and Leadership**

Active engagement in their school and community prepares students to find information, resources, and people to help them reach their goals. They understand issues and effectively work with others to contribute to positive change in their communities anywhere in the world.

## **2. Educational Approach**

El Colegio engages students in challenging, profound learning experiences that integrate research-based teaching strategies with Latino culture and traditions. All staff, students, and families in the El Colegio community will appreciate the value of proficiency in two languages, high academic expectations, and cross-cultural understanding. We base our educational approach on the following core values:

### **Dual Language Literacy**

Academic success for students is the key purpose for our school. Dual language (Spanish/English) education is critical for students' academic success and personal growth, so first and second language instruction in both English and Spanish is a foundation of our program.

### **Co-Teaching**

A practice that El Colegio applies to the everyday learning is co-teaching. Our ESL instructor co-teaches with the biology, and the ELA instructor. The Special Education Instructor co-teaches with the Algebra Instructor. The ELA instructor works with the Reading Instructor determine units in an effort to ensure cross-curricular teaching.

### **Partnership with MCTC**

El Colegio has an agreement with Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) to develop a College in Schools program. This dual enrollment option will allow El Colegio students to receive college credit for courses taken in high school and will allow some students to attain a full associate's degree along with their high school diplomas. Research shows that students who enter college a) without the need for remediation and b) with some college coursework already completed are significantly more likely to complete their course of study. With only 53 percent of two-year and four-year college enrollees completing their degrees within three and six years respectively<sup>10</sup> (but often nonetheless carrying debt loads from student loans), this is an important boost.

## **9<sup>th</sup> Graders Graduation Trajectory**

We work hard to ensure that all 9th graders are on track for on-time high school graduation. 9th grade is a critical year that sets the stage for overall high school success and future career expectations. It sets the trajectory for the type of coursework that can be taken throughout the rest of one's high school career. El Colegio strives to ensure that each entering 9th grade student ends that year with the coursework and academic record necessary to be able to begin the College in Schools work during the junior year.

## **Arts Education**

Art education is essential to the development of a creative, fully developed mind. Therefore, the teaching of art and the integration of art across the curriculum is an important component of our program. Art is a tool, not only for increasing students' expressive and creative skills, but also to deepen learning in other areas of study.

## **Cultural Context**

Cultural traditions are part of every education. At El Colegio students explore culture and its impact on learning and life by engaging in community cultural practices, exploring their own cultures, learning about other cultures, and investigating and participating in the ongoing creation of culture in our society and world.

## **Research-based teaching methodology**

We use successful teaching and learning models and research proven methodologies as a basis for our work. Where research is lacking we will add to the body of research on effective practices for teaching and learning. We believe that collecting and analyzing data is essential to informing and improving teaching practices.

## **Individualized attention**

All students can succeed when they are treated as individuals and are allowed to bring their unique and innate gifts to the learning process. The small setting of El Colegio allows staff to interact with students in very individualized ways. Our advisory system and student to staff ratio of 8 to 1 create a structure that ensures that each student has at least one adult in the school with whom they connect. Advisors not only help students set goals and develop a plan for graduation, but also they work with students and parents to track that progress.

## **Family and Community Values**

El Colegio is located in a center for Latino culture, arts and education. In keeping with Latino values, the atmosphere of the building is welcoming, safe, respectful and inclusive. Students and families from all cultures are respected and nurtured equally.

Values around family and community also come to life in our school. We actively encourage family and community to be partners in our students' learning, as well as to participate in cultural and arts activities in our building. Students and families of different cultures experience and learn from each other through school curriculum, cultural celebrations, parent meetings

and other activities. In addition, students go into the community to improve their learning through community service, internships, and the creation of public art.

### **Q Comp**

Our Q Comp focus this past year was GLAD (Guided Language Acquisition Design) is an instructional model with clear, practical strategies promoting effective interactions between students and students and teachers and students that develop metacognitive use of high-level language and literacy. During the staff development, teachers are provided with the instructional strategies, together with the theory and research that support the model, and the curriculum model that brings these all together in the context of district and state frameworks and guidelines. This includes 21st Century Skills, Common Core State Standards, integrated with NGSS & state Social Studies Standards. The second part is a demonstration session in the classroom where the model is demonstrated with students using an integrated CCSS based unit.

Key GLAD strategies included:

Zero Signal (or something similar)

10-2 rule (for every 10 minutes the educator speaks, students should speak for 2 min)

I-Hook rationale, why)

II-Input (Modeling/Guided Oral Practice)

III-Guided Oral Practice (teacher)

IV-Reading and Writing (Students)

V-+1 (Enrichment opportunities for all)

VI-Closure (Ask students for feedback)

### **Extended Time**

In terms of providing the time needed for this preparation, discussions have started as to moving the school calendar to an extended year model. There is also a commitment to mandatory summer programming, such as including MCTC's Jump Start program which is a college readiness program that includes MCTC faculty and El Colegio faculty.

### *Intentional Recruiting Practices*

Starting this year, El Colegio will be intentional in recruiting a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class that will commit to the additional time and rigor that will be required to prepare students for the "middle college" program that will start in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. El Colegio has started to partner with middle schools to ensure that coursework in middle schools will prepare students for the rigor of the "middle college" program.

### **Increased Family Engagement**

It is critical that El Colegio invest families in the transformative power of this program. There will be courses offered for all families monthly that will aid families in identifying practices that will enable their child to be college ready.

### **Professional Learning for Faculty**

El Colegio will offer more intentional professional development in fast tracking student skill levels in their content area. Faculty will also be encouraged to pursue master's degrees in their content areas to prepare for the credentialing requirements for teaching courses in the "middle college" program.

### **Academic Targets**

In order to participate in the "middle college" coursework, students will need to meet particular academic targets in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, as established by the MOU. Students who do not need to meet these targets will not be able to participate in the "middle college" courses. However, El Colegio will ensure that ample opportunities for remediation and skill development exist so that all students enrolled will meet the target. There is no plan for exclusion at this point.

During our twelfth year, El Colegio continued to focus on quality instruction, academic achievement, and innovation. Main goals were on academic growth in reading and math as well as student engagement in the community. Our school is also dedicated to individual attention for each student, meeting each student where he or she is and helping to support the whole student. Our innovative practices are evident in the integration of arts across the curriculum, instruction in Spanish, interdisciplinary classes and the work of our students in the community.

## **2. Student Enrollment, Attendance, and Attrition**

## **2. Governance and Management**

The board of directors of El Colegio continues to develop and operate with participation by El Colegio teachers, parents and community members.

### **Management**

Norma C. Garcés served her fifth full term as Executive Director. Her responsibilities include:

- Implement the Vision and Mission of the School
- Public Relations
- Recruitment
- Funding and Development
- Board Relations
- Strategic Direction School
- Operations
- School Finance
- Staffing

The School Board conducts an annual review of the Executive Director.

### **Teacher Evaluation**

At El Colegio, we believe that it is everyone's job to learn. We further believe that all teachers and students benefit when systems are in place that encourage teachers to: do annual goal setting; reflect about teaching practice; engage in peer observations and feedback; have continual conversations about teaching and learning; participate in a comprehensive, site-based, teacher directed professional development; and have access to regular, written, formal administrative review that is consistent with and supportive of increased learning for all.

Our system of teacher evaluation is aligned to state requirements, and facilitates:

- good communication among colleagues;
- effective feedback on teaching;
- clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities

### **3. Staffing**

El Colegio focuses on hiring and retaining quality teachers. Our program and student population creates the need for educators with unique skills and abilities. We stress having teachers who are bilingual in Spanish and English, who are skilled in a number of academic areas, who are effective at working with urban learners, and who are continually striving to grow professionally.

El Colegio contracts with EdVisions Cooperative for instructional services at the school. EdVisions provides payroll, benefits, human resources services and professional development. All El Colegio staff members are members of EdVisions Cooperative.

Licensed Teaching Staff

There were several changes from the 2012-13 teaching staff to 2013-2014.

\*The column “13-14 Status” shows which staff were retained (R) and not retained (NR).

One issue that needs to be addressed is the number of teachers that require a variance. The Executive Director will communicate with staff the necessity of acquiring full licenses to teach the areas that teachers are expected to teach.

#### Licensed Teaching Staff

## 4. Finances

### SCHOOL FINANCES

Executive Director: Norma C. Garcés

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## 5. Academic Performance

**Following is El Colegio’s performance on the current contractual goals with Augsburg, our authorizer.**

<b>Academic Goal 1:</b> 30% of El Colegio 10 <sup>th</sup> graders, continuously enrolled from October 1, 2013, will meet or exceed proficiency as measured by the MCA Reading Test.
FY 2015 Percentage
Reading
Goal Met
Goal Not Met
<b>Academic Goal 2:</b> 30% of El Colegio 11 <sup>th</sup> graders, continuously enrolled from October 1, 2013, will meet or exceed proficiency as measured by the MCA Math Test.
FY 2015 Percentage
Math
Goal Met
Goal Not Met
<b>Academic Goal 3:</b> 70% of El Colegio 9 <sup>th</sup> grade students continuously enrolled from October 1, will be on grade level as measured by the NWEA MAP Reading and Math test by the spring administration or demonstrated three years academic growth from the fall NWEA

administration.
FY 2015 Percentage
Goal Met
Goal Not Met
<b>Non-Academic Goal 1:</b> Increase continuous family engagement to 75% as measured by attendance at teacher/family conferences held three times a year and in El Colegio administered surveys to families.
FY 2015 Percentage
Goal Met
Goal Not Met
<b>Non-Academic Goal 2:</b> Increase enrollment to 80 students by October 1.
FY 2015
Goal Met
Goal Not Met
<b>Non-Academic Goal 3:</b> Increase attendance from 81% (2012-2013) to 86% (2013-2014).
FY 2015 Percentage
Goal Met
Goal Not Met

## 6. Operational performance

The administrative team, led by the Executive Director and the Business Manager and supported by the Receptionist, focused on ensuring a high level performance for food and nutrition, student transportation, state reporting, finance, and facilities.

El Colegio's School Nutrition Program contracts Lancer Dining Services for breakfast and lunch. We hired Magdalena part time to serve lunch service. In addition, we continued to implement our Wellness Policy to improve practices related to student and staff wellness.

El Colegio continued to use Metro Transit for student transportation to and from school. We provide students with Student Passes.

El Colegio contracts with Clifton, Larson, Allen for month-to-month accounting needs as well as audit preparation.

The school's Executive Director takes the lead on facilities management in collaboration with the Dean of Students.

## 7. Innovative Practices and Implementation; and Future Plans

By May 2017, El Colegio will be graduating all enrolled students – each one ready for success in college or career. This means that all students are prepared in four vital areas:

- Academic: Graduating students have the academic preparation required to complete postsecondary level coursework without the need for remediation.
- Personal and social: Graduating students have the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and skills to succeed in postsecondary education and the workplace
- College and career knowledge: Graduating students have the knowledge, skills, and support to plan for and attain a postsecondary credential and pursue a career
- Intercultural: Graduating students have the ability to learn, work and communicate in a multi-cultural world.

The research on college and career readiness underscores the importance of rigorous classroom instruction and enriching wrap-around services and extended learning time that provides additional academic support, leadership opportunities, and college/career exposure. Research further emphasizes the importance of making schools welcoming to parents and families, and supporting the student within the context of his or her entire community. El Colegio does this through its two programs:

- El Colegio High School – a free public charter school that provides a rigorous academic curriculum within a Latino-centric cultural environment.
- Juventud Conectada youth program – a free after-school program that supports Latino youth in achieving their individual potential through academic support, community

development, and leadership opportunities. Participation is not limited to El Colegio High School enrolled students.

To increase the rigor and cultivate a culture of high achievement, El Colegio has identified 4 strategies that are its greatest leverage points for changing student trajectories:

- For all students, attendance is crucial for staying on track. El Colegio faculty and staff will closely monitor attendance rates and will regularly communicate with families about any absences.
- Develop and implement an effective faculty professional development program. Teachers at El Colegio are not currently provided with sufficient professional development, and the goals set in this plan may well increase the demands placed on teachers. El Colegio has begun development of a professional development program that will provide teachers the full support they need and deserve in order to meet our ambitious goals.
- Support families in being full partners in their children's education. Families generally have far more time with a student than a teacher ever will. And they are invested in a very deep way. Although many families have multiple jobs and significant commitments, most greatly desire to help their children succeed and simply need help determining how best to do that. El Colegio will ensure that the overall school environment is welcoming to families and will develop methods for more intentionally involving parents and other caregivers in student learning.

El Colegio's after-school program provides crucial extended learning time that reinforces the academic lessons of the day and provides important leadership opportunities. The program serves students that attend public and private schools from Minneapolis and other surrounding cities. It was founded around the following three goals:

- ❑ Improve graduation rates.
- ❑ Prevent gang involvement.
- ❑ Fight discrimination.

These are important components of the organization's overall goal of graduating all students college and career ready. To that end, the following three strategies are being pursued:

- Provide academic support that is closely tied to current coursework and homework. Directors of after school academic support programs frequently complain that their lack of access to teachers' lesson plans and course syllabi negatively impacts their ability to assist students with day-to-day assignments. Juventud Conectada's location within the same building as the school, together with the school's small size, makes it easier for this information to be shared and thus for after school academic support to be more meaningful and effective.
- Support program participants in their growth as social justice leaders. El Colegio cultivates leaders who will make the world a more just and equitable place. By providing leadership opportunities within the afterschool program, El Colegio creates a safe space for students to test and develop their style, and to develop the important social and

emotional skills necessary to persevere through life's many challenges – both personal and professional.

- Foster student pride in and knowledge of many cultural traditions. Significant bodies of research highlight the importance of students seeing their own cultural traditions and native languages reflected in teaching pedagogy and in educational environments. El Colegio fully embraces this practice and embeds cultural learning into all aspects of in-school and after-school learning time.

In addition, we have just developed a partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools to offer credit recovery for their students.

## 8. Professional Development Plan of Director

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

#### Major Responsibilities:

- Implement the Vision and Mission of the School
- Public Relations
- Recruitment
- Funding and Development
- Board Relations
- Strategic Direction School
- Operations
- School Finance
- Staffing

#### Professional Development Plan – 2015-2016

Goal: To increase the rigor and cultivate a culture of high achievement, Norma Garces will increase her capacity through professional development activities to implement the 4 strategies identified in the school's strategic plan that are its greatest leverage points for changing student trajectories:

Key Strategy	Desired Outcome	Professional Development Plan
Solidify partnership with Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC)	To allow El Colegio students to receive college credit for courses taken in high school and allow some students to attain a full associate's degree	Attend College Board Conference Focused on Latino Community – how to access PSEO and build relationships with partner schools. Attend the Urban Leadership Academy to

	along with their high school diplomas.	learn about various equity and Native American issues related to college readiness. Attend the National Council of La Raza to learn national opportunities for parent engagement and support.
Ensure all 9th graders are on track for on-time high school graduation.	All 9th graders understand the coursework and academic record necessary to be able to begin the College in Schools work during their junior year.	Planning to learn more about curriculum and instruction resources related to cultural competency and college readiness.
Develop and implement an effective faculty professional development program.	To provide sufficient professional development that increase the demands placed on teachers.	Planning to learn more about how to support staff that deal with students at such wide performance levels. This would include learning how to support the teachers in focusing on the needs of the student. Planning to get more training on data driven instructional practices and using data for improving teacher capacity in serving students. Planning to learn more about Youth Participatory Action Research which will support teachers in better understanding the abilities of students.
Support families in being full partners in their children's education.	Make sure that El Colegio is welcoming to families and develops methods for more intentionally	Attend the National Council of La Raza to learn national opportunities for parent engagement and

	<p>involving parents and other caregivers in student learning.</p>	support.
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