

# Designing Schools for Students

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## Mathematics and Science Leadership Academy (MSLA)

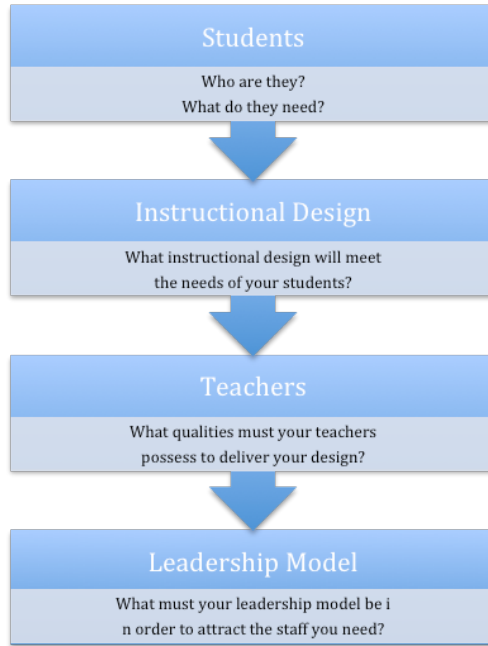
MSLA, a teacher-led school, was designed to meet the specific needs of the students it serves. Seated in southwest Denver, 70% of the students are English Language Learners, 95% are Latino and 95% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Research suggests that these students need specific structures and supports in order to support their learning. These include:

- Exposure to real-world activities to build background knowledge
- Intentional development of oral language
- Specific focus on the development of academic language

Rather than try to create a one-size-fits-all school, we chose to design a school to meet the specific needs of the students that would attend. For far too long traditional models did not address the specific challenges, nor did they capitalize on the specific strengths that were inherent in this community. As a result, there was an intentional effort to design a school around the strengths and challenges of the students.

During the design of the school it became quite apparent that some aspect of the school would have to be able to attract the most accomplished teachers, those who want to lead without leaving.

Below is a graphic representation of how students drove the design process and the pertinent questions that needed to be answered. In short, the leadership model of the school had its foundation in what would best serve students while also being able to attract the most accomplished teachers.



	Key Questions	Design Elements
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are they?</li> <li>What do they need?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>70% English Language Learners, 95% Latino and FRL</li> <li>Opportunities to apply learning in a real world context</li> <li>Opportunities to develop oral and academic language</li> <li>Opportunities identify and pursue passion areas to connect to school.</li> </ul>
Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What instructional design will meet the needs of your students?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math and Science Focus due to underrepresentation of Latinos in math and science majors and careers</li> <li>Service Learning/Passion Areas</li> <li>Everyone a learner, teacher and leader</li> </ul>
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What qualities must the teachers possess to deliver your instructional design?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly accomplished - Proven positive impact on student learning</li> <li>Ability and willingness to collaborate with colleagues</li> <li>Willingness to participate in a peer observation, feedback and evaluation process</li> <li>Leadership experience</li> </ul>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What must your leadership model be in order to attract and retain the teachers you need?</li> <li>How will teacher model for students?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Authentic leadership opportunities - everyone on a decision-making team</li> <li>Opportunities for self-directed learning and problem solving - Peer observation and evaluation</li> </ul>

## Your Turn

How will you design your teacher leadership model and structures to meet the needs of your students?

	Key Questions	Design Elements
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are they?</li> <li>What do they need?</li> </ul>	
Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What instructional design will meet the needs of your students?</li> <li>What is currently working well? How do you know? How might you redesign to do more of that?</li> <li>What is not working well? Why isn't it working? What might you do instead?</li> </ul>	
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What qualities must the teachers possess to deliver your instructional design? How might you develop those qualities in your current staff?</li> <li>Are there specific knowledge and skills that current staff members possess that it not being utilized? How might you capitalize on those strengths?</li> <li>How might you strategically utilize the talent of your staff to benefit student learning?</li> </ul>	
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What must your leadership model be in order to attract and retain the teachers you need?</li> <li>How will teachers model for students?</li> </ul>	