



SANKOFA Magnet Program Equity & Targeted Student Achievement

Purpose

The purpose of the SANKOFA Magnet Program is to accelerate the learning and academic achievement of African American students. It will provide students with culturally responsive and brain-based instruction, as well as other supports that are designed to improve learning, engagement, school climate, and child wellbeing.

Program History

The first year of the SBCUSD SANKOFA program was 2005-2006. It was originally designed to create excellence for African American (AA) students and was provided at Rio Vista Elementary, and King Middle School. The word SANKOFA itself is Akan (Ghana, West Africa) and translates as "Reach back to your past for knowledge and wisdom." It was based on several shared cultural, relational, brain-based, and pedagogical principles. These included the principles of Ma'at and Kwanzaa; the daily use of cultural affirmations, chants, and poems; decorating one's class with Black cultural symbols and artifacts; teachers as othermothers/otherfathers; caring relationships; student voice; high academic expectations (e.g., rigorous projects and tasks, GATE and AVID strategies—no busy work); regular descriptive feedback; creative and highly engaging instruction; and strong parent engagement and positive communication, among other program elements.

SANKOFA was created at a time when the AA student population at Rio Vista, King, and on San Bernardino's West Side, was much larger. It was based on the theory that creating safe counterspaces, where Black students are not the minority, could have positive effects if done right. In such classrooms students are free to question, challenge, and critique issues of social justice, racism, and oppression. This did not replace, but was often an entre to the main course of standards-based instruction. Many former SANKOFA students who have since gone on to college have remarked that their SANKOFA teachers were simply the best teachers they have ever had, at any level. They have also pointed out that not continuing the program in high school was one likely reason why many of their SANKOFA classmates did not go to college.

Magnet Program

To ensure continuity of services SANKOFA magnets will be offered at one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. The elementary magnet will provide seven trained SANKOFA teachers in grades K-6 (see Figure 1). The middle school magnet will provide four trained SANKOFA teachers in grades 7-8. These teachers will have multiple subject credentials and can teach either a math/science or a history/ELA combination. The high school magnet will provide one SANKOFA counselor (similar to the EL counselor) and one SANKOFA AVID teacher. Busing will be provided at each SANKOFA magnet site. SANKOFA teachers and the counselor will receive an annual stipend of \$1,000.00 for materials, curricula, student engagement events, etc.



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Figure 1. SANKOFA Faculty and Program Costs

	Faculty	Costs
Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten teacher • First grade teacher • Second grade teacher • Third grade teacher • Fourth grade teacher • Fifth grade teacher • Sixth grade teacher (if applicable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00
Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seventh grade math and science teacher • Seventh grade ELA and history teacher • Eighth grade math and science teacher • Eighth grade ELA and history teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00 • \$127,046.00
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SANKOFA counselor • SANKOFA AVID teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$127,046.00—Title 1 • \$127,046.00—Title 1
Busing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 buses—1 per school site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$233,289.00
Stipends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 faculty stipends of \$1,000.00 each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13,000.00—Title 1
Sub Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13* subs for PD coverage X 4 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$9,000.00—Title 1
Total		\$1,906,887
Total to ETSA if Title 1 covers some costs		\$1,630,795

**Note.* Sub coverage may be for 12 faculty members if the counselor does not require a sub.

Teacher Dispositions and Skills

Those interested in teaching in the SANKOFA magnet should have a demonstrated record of high performance with African American students. They should have a thorough knowledge of culturally responsive teaching research and practice, as well as brain-based pedagogy. Figure 2 lists the dispositions and practices that ideal teacher candidates should have a mastery of, particularly with African American students. These practices may be evidenced through teacher’s self-assessments, observations, and interview data.

Student Participation

The SANKOFA magnet will have student selection criteria that is similar to the AVID program. Students should be “in the academic middle,” as described by AVID. They should have average test scores, good attendance, a history of good citizenship, and be first generation college students in their immediate families. SANKOFA should not be treated as a remedial program. Though SANKOFA is a culturally responsive program designed to advance equity and excellence for African American students, no students will be turned away because of race, class, gender, sex, religion, etc.

Figure 2. SANKOFA Teacher Dispositions and Instructional Practices

Dispositions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Caring Relationships • Warm Demander (Strict and Warm) • Sociocultural Awareness
Instructional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Expectations • Data-Driven Instruction/Formative Assessment • Clarity: Use of Rubrics, Exemplars, Learning Intentions, etc. • Task-Related Feedback • Routines and Rituals

Teacher Professional Development

All SANKOFA faculty will receive three days of professional development prior to the start of the year, and ongoing training support. Trainings will address (a) culturally responsive/brain-based teaching, (b) mindfulness and wellness, (c) trauma-informed practices, (d) African/African American history, and (e) gap-closing dispositions and instructional practices. These trainings are designed to ensure that students are supported with:

- Positive, caring relationships with their teachers.
- The sense that they are safe, cared for, and that they belong.
- *Warm demander* pedagogy, or high expectations and high levels of support.
- Sociocultural awareness and guided discussions that support instruction.
- Culturally responsive texts that affirm and highlight African Americans.
- Real world connections between what they are learning and the community.
- A familial class environment that includes affirmations, chants, and call and response.
- Rigorous, challenging classwork and projects—not *busy work*.
- Standards-based instruction.

Site Support of the Magnet

Sites that adopt the SANKOFA Magnet will be asked to support the program in several ways. First, they will be asked to help recruit parents and students via phone calls, home visits, social media, and other forms of communication. Next, there will be regular classroom visits from ETSA staff to support SANKOFA teachers and help plan instruction. SANKOFA teachers will be asked to collaborate once a month as a site team, and twice a year as a District vertical team (with elementary, middle, and high school SANKOFA faculty). Lastly, site leaders will be asked to have a monthly data chat with ETSA and the SANKOFA staff.