

# ***Sistema Tulsa: Transforming Lives, Renewing Communities***



The *El Sistema* network and *Sistema*-inspired programs around the world have earned significant acclaim from educators and social policy makers. *El Sistema* was founded by Jose Antonio Abreu and developed as a result of Venezuela's National System of Youth Orchestras and Choirs. It is specifically designed to provide a means for children to experience an "affluence of the spirit" by immersing them in intensive, challenging, and high-quality musical ensemble environments. This is done by cultivating an **aspirational culture** that enables children and their families to persevere and generate an optimistic and joyful outlook of life. The program is based on cooperative educational practices that emphasize trust, empathy, discipline, perseverance; and a curriculum that uses small-scale success to fuel the accomplishment of future, more complex challenges. As innovative and committed educators, *Sistema* teachers serve

as *social pedagogues* that support their students' overall cognitive, social, and creative development. The success of this program (started in 1975, now present in all continents, 58 countries, and over 300 separate programs) within high-poverty communities is well documented. Literally hundreds of thousands of young people have been empowered by this program and movement to embrace beauty, find hope, and achieve success in life.

## **The movement reaches Tulsa**

Sistema Tulsa is a visionary community-wide project of social change through music. Inspired by the philosophy and values of *El Sistema* in Venezuela, the program aspires to grow and support children and youth musical ensembles that exemplify and nurture the pursuit of excellence. Steered by the vision of Boston Avenue United Methodist Church and supported by the Oklahoma United Methodist Foundation, the Tulsa Public Schools system, and the generous financial support of caring sponsors, the program is slated to begin in September of 2015 with the establishment of a flagship site on the premises of BAUMC, a National Historic Landmark.

## **Our mission**

*Sistema Tulsa* provides accessible, ensemble-based music programs that enrich the lives of local youth. Through an intensive pursuit of musical excellence, children develop transformative skills that contribute to their success in life.



## Sistema Tulsa Core Values

**To BELONG** – All individuals have dignity and should be respected and celebrated. *Sistema Tulsa* will warmly welcome all people regardless of race, gender, religion, social status, or financial means.

**To AFFIRM** – Research demonstrates that learners are strongly motivated through encouragement and inspiration. Teaching is most effective when grounded in affirmation, joy, and consistently successful learning experiences that are nurtured within a supportive community.

**To CHALLENGE** – All children can grow and accomplish challenging goals. Every community can improve. All teachers can become more effective. There is no limit to what dedicated people can achieve when they work together.

**To GROW with an AFFLUENCE OF SPIRIT** – Experiencing beauty in the pursuit of musical excellence can create an “affluence of spirit.” This brand of affluence has been shown to powerfully enable children to overcome all types of adversity.

**To EXIST, YET STILL BECOMING** – Living and learning well is a process, not a destination. Thus, learning objectives will be measured in terms of progress. Excellent production should be viewed as the logical outcome of an effective process.

# Educational ecosystems for Tulsa, Oklahoma

## The Challenge

According to the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities 2011 report:

- Less than 15% of US schools produce over 50% of our high school drop outs
- Students from these struggling schools are 50% less likely to have quality arts programs
- About 3.9 million elementary students in the US have no access to quality arts programs

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University (2011):

- The unemployment rate for high school dropouts is 16%
- While each high school graduate on average generates a net lifetime contribution to the US economy of \$247,000, each high school dropout is a net cost to the country. Not only does this problem create a significant 'drag' on the economy, it also denies the country the potential benefits that these people could have provided.
- Of US citizens who have not completed high school: 68% of African Americans are unemployed, 53.9% of Caucasians are unemployed, 46.9% of Hispanics are unemployed
- Young women who have not completed high school are 9 times more likely to become pregnant than girls who complete school

Sobering statistics from the Central Feeder System of Tulsa Public Schools:

<u>School</u>	<u>Free lunch %</u>	<u>Math*</u>	<u>Reading*</u>	<u>Grad. rate</u>	<u>ACT average</u>
Acad. Central Elem.	91.7	39	43		
Burroughs Elem.	98.2	34	31		
Chouteau Elem.	87.35	61	47		
Emerson Elem.	96	54	50		
Mark Twain Elem.	95.3	62	41		
Central MH	96	12	27		
Central HS	86.24	34	61	61%	16.5

\*This score represents the percentage of students demonstrating work at or above a 'satisfactory' level.

Although not all students from low performing schools are identical, research has identified **systematic factors that impede their learning** and hamper their ability to succeed in school:

- Health** – People living in poverty are less likely to eat nutritious food, exercise, get proper diagnoses, receive prompt medical attention, and be prescribed appropriate medications. Important studies by neuroscientists demonstrate that intellectual capability is linked to health and poor health negatively effects a student's ability to show attention, apply reason, learn new material, and memorize data [Gary & Thompson, 2004; Menyuk, 1980; Sargent et al., 1995; Gottlieb, Beiser, & O'Connor, 1995; Taki, et al., 2010; Basch, 2011].

- B. **Chronic Stress and Cognition** – Children from lower socioeconomic conditions consistently perform below those from middle and upper-class backgrounds on tests of intelligence and academic achievement [Bradley & Corwyn, 2002]. These children consistently show cognitive deficiencies such as short attention, high levels of distractibility, difficulty monitoring their work, and difficulty generating new solutions to challenging problems [Alloway, Gathercole, Kirkwood & Elliott, 2009]. In large part, these deficiencies are influenced by home and community environments that feature what scientists describe as *chronic stress* or *distress*. These conditions have been shown to cause weakened immune systems, and diminished brain development, social development and academic success [Blair & Raver, 2012; Evans, Kim, Ting, Teshler & Shannis, 2007; Liston, McEwen & Casey, 2009; Evans, 2003]. G. W. Evans has also demonstrated that chronic stress can boost impulsivity in children [Evans, 2003].
- C. **Vocabulary** – Children who grow up in low socioeconomic conditions often have a smaller vocabulary than other children. This simple factor dramatically increases their risk for academic failure. On average, these children hear only *13 million* words by age 4, while middle-class children hear *26 million* words and upper-income families hear *46 million* words by age 4 [Walker, Greenwood, Hart & Carta, 1994; Hart & Risley, 1995]. Research has demonstrated that toddlers from middle and upper-class families on average use more words in talking to their parents than low-socioeconomic parents use when talking to their children [Bracey, 2006].
- D. **Diminished Hope and Reduced Effort** – Research indicates that people living in poverty view the future as containing more negative events than positive [Robb, Simon, & Wardle, 2009]. In general, youth in these circumstances express a sense of helplessness and low expectations for their future [Odeen et al., 2012]. If students believe that they are not ‘smart enough’ and that failure is likely, they will not dedicate the effort necessary to succeed in school. Some researchers have made a link between this lack of hope in lower-income children and actual symptoms of depression [Butterworth, Olesen & Leach, 2012]. Too often, teachers and administrators in low performing schools reinforce low expectations for student effort and engagement [Irvin, Meece, Byen, Farmer & Hutchins, 2011; Finn & Rock, 1997].
- E. **Relationships and Isolation** – When a child’s early experiences at home are chaotic, their developing brain becomes insecure and stressed. Research shows that children who live in poverty receive twice as many reprimands as positive reinforcement. In comparison, we learn that middle-class children typically receive a 3:1 ratio of positive to negative feedback [Risley & Hart, 2006]. The probability of dropping out and failing at school increases as a function of the length of time children are exposed to relational adversity [Spilt, Hughes, Wu & Kwok, 2012]. It is easy to understand how disruptive home relationships can cause mistrust in students and an increase in classroom misbehavior. Students enter school expecting that the adults will not be dependable. They have not acquired the social skills to cooperate with their peers and adults and are more likely to act impulsively, use inappropriate language, and exhibit disrespectful behavior.

# Sistema and the Quest for Human Development

## Research Findings

Twenty five years of active research into music's effect on human learning, brain science, social development, and related matters have produced a robust amount of data. There is now wide consensus among research scientists on the following:

- Music engages more areas of the brain than any other known domain including: auditory, emotion, short and long-term memory, learning, attention, motor control, pattern perception, time perception, language, and imagery among others. No longer do scientists consider music as only a 'right brain' phenomenon.
- Music is universal in all human cultures through the known history of our species. For example, archeologists have uncovered musical instruments made out of animal bones that are over 35,000 years old.
- Behavioral and neurological research indicates that studying and performing music boosts IQ, human cognition, brain development, and language development [Patel, 2006].

We have referenced relevant studies that address each of the challenge factors described in the previous section. This wealth of data fortifies our desire to create a vibrant *Sistema* nucleo in Tulsa. We believe that this program holds tremendous promise to support the renewal of underperforming schools.

## A. Health

Although a comprehensive attempt to meet the health needs of our target population is beyond our means, each program day will begin by serving the children a nutritious 'substantial snack.' In addition, children and families will be instructed and encouraged in numerous ways by program leaders to develop good health habits.

Virtually all *Sistema* programs around the globe that occur outside of school offer students a meal or substantial snack and encourage **good health habits** as a part of instruction.

[Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; Brennan, 2013; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZnotes, 2012: Composing Better Lives, Miami Music Project, 2012; The People's Music School Youth Orchestras-El Sistema Chicago, 2013; Sistema New Brunswick, 2012]

Harmony Liverpool, England, [Burns and Bewick, 2012] has also tracked the health of their students collecting data from numerous local general practice surgeries, walk-in clinics and local emergency departments. They report that their families have a marked increase in their use of medical treatment and the health of their students.

Performing music stimulates numerous health systems in a positive manner: increased molecular energy, strengthened heart functioning, higher levels of oxygenation, boosted metabolism, reduced pain and stress, reduced fatigue, and enhanced emotional expression [Jenson, 2008].

## B. Chronic Stress and Cognition

Numerous studies show a high percentage of *Sistema* programs report that their students demonstrate “significant and steady” improvement with their student’s ***academic development***.

[Esqueda Torres, 2004; Uy, 2010; Galarce, et al., 2012; Cline, 2012; Chang, 2007; Cristanell, 2012; Campe & Kaufman, 2013; Smithhurst, 2011; Burns & Bewick, 2011; GEN, 2011; Wilson, McKegg, et al., 2012; Egana de Sol, 2008; Matijasevic, et al., 2008; Austin Soundwaves, 2011; Colorado Sistema, 2013; Sonoma Valley, 2013; Miami Music Project, 2012; Boston Conservatory Lab Charter School, 2012; Harmony Stockton, 2012; OrchKids, 2013; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012-13; B Sharp Fort Worth, 2012; San Diego Community Opus Project, 2013; The People’s Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; KidZNotes, 2012-13]

A few programs have developed an evaluation tool to measure any changes in their student’s ability to improve concentration and mental focus. They both report significant improvement after a year of study [Cristanell, 2012; Union Temporal, 2010].

The large majority of US programs use “A’s and B’s” as their goal for classroom achievement - however, one nucleo in Miami reports that 85% of their students earned placement on the honor roll [Composing Better Lives, Miami, Miami Music Project, 2012].

The Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles is currently collecting “rich longitudinal data relating to the impact of intensive, high quality music training on cognitive abilities.” Researchers report that the initial data from this study is quite promising [HOLA: Heart of Los Angeles, 2012; Spangler, 2012; University of Southern California, 2012].

According to the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities 2011 report:

- Students that participate in excellent arts programs are 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement
- These children average higher scores on ACT and SAT tests [The College Board, Profile of College Bound Senior National Report, 2006]
- They also demonstrate higher competency in math, reading, and cognitive development in general. This disparity is especially magnified for students in poverty-challenged schools.
- These students demonstrate a 56% improvement in spatial-temporal IQ tests

Students graduating with undergraduate degrees in music enjoy the highest rate of acceptance into medical schools in the US at 66% (biochemistry is 2<sup>nd</sup> at 44%) [Wood, 1994].

Virtually every student winner of the Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science, and Technology plays at least one musical instrument [Midland Chemist, 2005].

Music study and attending live concerts has a direct positive correlation to improved performance in math and reading. This was demonstrated for both elementary and high school students in this study [Hallem, 2009].

Research indicates that early study of music may also improve cognitive functions into adulthood, even after the subject stops playing a musical instrument [American Psychological Association, 2011].

Children who study music demonstrated improved brain development in comparison with those who did not [Hyde, et al., 2009; Frontiers of Psychology, 2011; Green, et al., 2012; Hamilton, 2012].

This study indicates how the extended study of a musical instrument during childhood may boost a person's IQ [Schellenberg, 2006].

These studies show improved math competence for students who also study a musical instrument [Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga, 1999; Helmrich, 2010; Moreno, et al., 2011; Piro, Ortiz, 2009].

This study indicates how music may help people manage and persevere through highly stressful environments [Osborne, 2012].

## C. Vocabulary

A few *Sistema* studies have focused on the influence of music study and performance on the development of short-term memory. In these studies, nucleo participants were compared to other students of identical age and cultural background. In every case, the *Sistema* students outperformed the other non-music students. This cognitive skill plays a critical role in language acquisition and development.

[Roden, et al., 2013; Roden, Kreutz & Bongard, 2012; Stupar, 2012]

## D. Diminished Hope and Reduced Effort

“Ensemble rehearsals require inhibitory control to build discipline and empathy, working memory to hold and manipulate musical instructions over a period of time, and mental flexibility to adjust changing demands, priorities, and perspectives” [Hernandez-Estrada, 2012]. Many *Sistema* studies document significant growth in student ***discipline*** and ***mental flexibility*** - to persevere through learning challenges and solve problems without giving up when complexity increases.

[Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; El Sistema Colorado, 2013; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZNotes, 2012; Miami Music Project, 2013; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012; People's Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; Harmony Stockton, 2013; Minnesota ACME, 2013; Potter, 2013; San Diego Community Opus Project, 2011-13; Ey, 2010; Galarce, et al., 2012; GEN, 2011; Kenny & Moore, 2011; Brenes, Villalobos, et al., 2012; Cuellar, 2010; Matijasevic, et al., 2008; Savoie, 2012; Torres, 2001, 2002; Lopez & Berrios, 2007; Cuesta, 2008; Cristanell, 2012; Majno, 2013]

Perhaps the most significant goal that all *Sistema* nucleos foster is ***enhanced self-esteem*** and ***confidence*** for each student. Many studies and program evaluation tools report success with this goal.

[Berns & Bewick, 2012; Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; El Sistema Colorado, 2013; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZnotes, 2012; Miami Music Project, 2013; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012; People's Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; Wald, 2011; Lewis, et al., 2011; Harmony Lambeth, 2009-11; Torres, 2004; Ey, 2010; Galarce, et al., 2012; Case, 2013; Duckworth, 2013; Harmony Stockton, 2013; Orchestrating Diversity, 2013; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012-13; Silk, et al., 2008; Smith, 2013; GEN,

2011; Kenny & Moore, 2011; Cuellar, 2010; Matijasevic, et al., 2008; Savoie, 2012; Hollinger, 2006; Israel, 2012; Torres, 2001, 2002; Lopez & Berrios, 2007; Rincon Prat, 2013; Schurgin, 2012; Brennan, 2013; Potter, 2013; Chang, 2007; Stupar, 2012]

As learners grow in confidence, they develop *hope for the future* and *enhanced aspirations*. Many studies record significant student growth in *Sistema* nucleos regarding this important concern.

[Wald, 2011; Lewis, et al., 2011; Harmony Lambeth, 2009-11; Smithurst, 2011; Burns & Berwick, 2012; GEN, 2011; Kenny & Moore, 2011; Cuellar, 2010; Matijasevic, et al., 2008; Savoie, 2012; Torres, 2001, 2002; Lewis, et al., 2011; Uy, 2010; Cuesta, 2008; Case, 2013; Conservatory Lab Charter School, 2012; Duckworth, 2013; Harmony Stockton, 2013; Orchestrating Diversity, 2013; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012-13; Silk, et al., 2008; Smith, 2013; The People's Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; El Sistema Colorado, 2013; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZnotes, 2012; Galarce, et al., 2012; Potter, 2012; San Diego Community Opus Project, 2011-13; HOLA, 2012; Villalba, 2010]

Another important goal for many nucleos is improved school *attendance* and stronger levels of *engagement* with school in general. Many also report success in this important area as well.

[Harmony Stockton, 2013; Minnesota ACME, 2013; Potter, 2013; San Diego Community Opus Project, 2011-13; Miami Music Project, 2013; Schurgin, 2012; Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZNotes, 2012; Brennan, 2013; Miami Music Project, 2012; Orchestrating Diversity, 2013; Potter, 2013; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012-13; People's Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; Union Temporal SEL S.A., 2010; Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; El Sistema Colorado, 2013; B Sharp Fort Worth, 2010-13; Potter, 2013; San Diego Community Opus Project, 2011-13; Boston Conservatory Lab Charter School, 2012; YOURS Program, 2013; Berns & Bewick, 2012]

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities 2011 report:

- Students that participate in high-quality music programs, on average, express higher levels of confidence expressing themselves verbally and in writing

Music study and performance is an effective means to build self-control and self-regulation [Wickelgren, 2012].

Through involvement in the arts, students were found to view themselves as competent, creative and productive [Heath, 2011].

"Establishing programs that are accessible, non-selective, non-elitist, criteria for admission, free of charge will create opportunities." Research data show that many artistically talented students may be poorly served by traditional instruction and testing methods. In some schools poor grades or other academic deficiencies disqualify students from being involved in other growth-promoting activities [Oreck, Baum & McCartney, 2012].



## E. Relationships and Isolation

From the inception of the *Sistema* movement in 1975, leaders have placed as their top priority the establishment of safe, family-oriented environments in which all members are valued and respected. In order for an orchestra to function effectively, each member must watch, listen, and react with skill. In essence, student musicians must learn to trust each other and become a close-knit team. The following studies document the many successes that *Sistema* programs have enjoyed creating ***family learning environments***.

[Uy, 2010, 2012; GEN, 2011; Brenes Villalobos, et al., 2012; Lopez & Berrios, 2007; Castaneda-Castaneda, 2009; Chang, 2007; Stupav, 2012; Majno, 2013; Slevin & Slevin, 2013; Lewis, et al., 2011; Kenny & Moore, 2011; Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; Bergerson & Motto, 2013; Brennan, 2013; Case, 2013; Miami Music Project, 2012; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZnotes, 2012; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012-13; Schurgin, 2012; Silk, et al., 2008; Smith, 2013; People's Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; B Sharp Fort Worth, 2010-13; El Sistema Colorado, 2013; San Diego Youth Symphony Community Opus Project, 2011-13; Galace, et al., 2012; Camp & Kaufman, 2013; Savoie, 2012; Sistema New Brunswick, 2012; Bozetto, 2012; Hallam, Rogers & Creech, 2010; Wilson & McKegg, et al., 2012; Rossie, 2011; Smithurst, 2011; Lewis, et al., 2011]

In order for a program to bring about social change, it is vitally important for each program to develop close ties with community partners. *Sistema* leaders place a high priority on building ownership of the program from within its community. In this regard, families are called on to play a critical role. As students and parent/guardians experience 'family' within the nucleo, they are encouraged to widen the circle and affirm the importance of strengthening their community. In essence, the good feelings and solidarity of the group spills out into the wider community. As the orchestra plays beautifully in public, everyone develops pride in this achievement and growing hope for the community as a whole. Each of the following studies document the critical role that ***strengthening community*** can play to create positive social change.

[Uy, 2010, 2012; Brenes Villalobos, et al., 2012; Lopez & Berrios, 2007; Potter, 2013; Fernandez-Calvo, n.d.; Lewis, et al., 2011; Kenny & Moore, 2011; Austin Soundwaves, 2011-12; Brennan, 2013; Miami Music Project, 2012; Kalamazoo Kids, 2013; KidZnotes, 2012; Renaissance Arts Academy, 2012-13; People's Music School Youth Orchestra, 2013; YOLA and YOURS; Sistema New Brunswick, 2012; Wilson & McKegg, et al., 2012; Smithurst, 2011; Lewis, et al., 2011; Matijasevic, et al., 2008; Hollinger, 2006; Flenaugh, 2012; Burns & Berwick, 2012; Orchestrating Diversity, 2013; Potter, 2013; Villalba, 2010]

Studies also describe how certain students, as a result of their participation in a nucleo, have learned to make wise choices with their free time, ***avoid criminal behavior*** and the influence of violent influences in their community [Savoie, 2012; Glace, et al., 2012; Burns & Berwick, 2012; Cuesta, et al., 2007; Guevera, 2006; Sanjuan, 2007; Ceretti & Cornelli, 2013; Tunstall, 2012].

# **The Charter**

## **Sistema Tulsa Program Organization and Design**

### ***I. Supporting Organizations***

#### **a) Boston Avenue United Methodist Church**

The Boston Avenue United Methodist Church is an 8,000 member congregation founded in 1893 serving the Tulsa community. Led by the Rev. David Wiggs, BAUMC is home to multiple ministries serving people of all ages and the community-at-large.

#### **b) Tulsa Public Schools (primary partner)**

The Tulsa Public Schools is an independent school district serving the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. As the second largest district in Oklahoma, Tulsa Public Schools is home to approximately 7,000 staff across 88 campuses—serving nearly 41,000 students. It is governed by an elected school board.

### ***II. Programmatic Scope***

#### **a) Sistema Tulsa**

In concert with Tulsa Public Schools and numerous community partners, Sistema Tulsa will be hosted and lead by Boston Avenue United Methodist Church. Its primary objective will be to provide access to exceptional instrumental education in order to promote youth development by providing underserved Tulsa students with mentoring and growth opportunities through music. Through this intensive experience, we will contribute to the positive social development of children, their families, and communities. Sistema Tulsa begins operations on September 8, 2015 with a flagship site hosted at BAUMC's *Jubilee Center*. Instruction will follow the official TPS calendar. As a learning organization, Sistema Tulsa will seek to draw from and connect to the experiences of existing community arts and social programs to help enrich the scope of the city's youth development initiatives.

#### **b) Sistema Tulsa @ BAUMC (Flagship Nucleo)**

Like El Sistema in Venezuela, Sistema Tulsa and its musical ensembles will act as agents of social change –connecting children and their families to a musical experience which has the potential to transform the community, create opportunities for achievement across social strata, and instill a sense of self-worth into its participants. The flagship nucleo of Sistema Tulsa is being developed through a collaboration between the Boston Avenue United Methodist Church and the Tulsa Public Schools system. *Sistema Tulsa* will pledge to provide



the facilities, transportation, faculty/staff, musical instruments, and all other program material (food, equipment, instructional material, etc). Program families will pledge to fully support the goals and aspirations of the program through regular attendance and active engagement in the daily work of the program. A *covenant agreement* will be

signed by all parties that outline every participant's role and responsibilities. Participating students come from designated elementary schools within a 5-mile radius of the site.

During its first year of implementation, Sistema Tulsa will engage 80 beginner students in the fourth and fifth grades with 10 hours of intensive after school ensemble-based music instruction. The planned curriculum delivered by a faculty of experienced and in-training music educators and teaching artists includes: strings, wind, and brass percussion instruction, vocal exploration, rhythm, movement, and solfège. Groups will be divided among two large **strings** and **wind/brass/percussion** divisions. Two large ensembles will be formed (string orchestra and wind band) in addition to a full Symphony Orchestra that rehearses weekly. Instruction is typically delivered in group format with variation among instrumental technique classes, musicianship, sectionals, and *full orchestra* rehearsals. In addition to orchestral music, Sistema Tulsa students will benefit from the help of dedicated BAUMC adult volunteers who can provide daily tutoring/mentoring, homework assistance, leadership training and service learning projects. An effort will be made to develop opportunities for BAUMC youth and other local musicians currently engaged in other instrumental and choral programs to interact as performers and mentors with Sistema Tulsa (ex. side-by-side orchestral performances, joint choral/orchestral concerts, etc). While serving in the program, BAUMC Youth will be able to accredit hours in the *President's Volunteer Service Award* program.

### ***III. Collaborative Philosophy***

Sistema Tulsa ascribes to a set of values that promote productive and healthy collaborations among planning, development, and implementation participants. These values are described below:

- All participants will work collaboratively—sharing ideas, personnel, and resources for the continued success of the program.
- The participants will communicate freely and conduct the business of the program with openness and fairness.
- The participants will work actively to build a trusting environment for the program. They recognize that the full potential of Sistema Tulsa can be reached through trusting in the abilities of each other.

#### ***IV. Program Philosophy***

The program is shaped by the philosophy of El Sistema (Booth, Sistema Fellows, et al.)

El Sistema is **a set of inspiring ideals** which inform an intensive youth music program that seeks to effect social change through the ambitious pursuit of musical excellence. El Sistema focuses primarily on children with the fewest resources and greatest need. Our core values embrace the idea that every human being has the right to a life of dignity and contribution, filled with beauty. Every child can learn to experience and express music and art deeply, can receive its many benefits, and can make different critical life choices as a result of this learning. Overcoming poverty and adversity is best done by strengthening the spirit, creating, as Dr. Abreu puts it, “an affluence of the spirit,” and investing that affluence as a valued asset in a community endeavor to create excellence and beauty in music. Effective education is based on love, approval, joy, and consistently successful experiences within a high-functioning, aspiring, nurturing community. Every child has limitless possibilities and the ability to strive for excellence. Learning organizations never arrive but are always becoming—striving to include: more students, deeper impact, greater musical excellence, better teaching, and improved systems and tools. Thus, flexibility, experimentation, risk-taking, and collegial exchange are inherent aspects of every program.

#### ***V. The National and International Movement***

Sistema Tulsa will become part of a thriving global movement of social change through music. It will seek to become an active member/participant of national networking initiatives led by the New England Conservatory of Music, *Sistema Fellows Resource Center*, the US Alliance of El Sistema-inspired programs (known as *El Sistema USA*), and other related community arts education platforms. The program will also provide relevant updates to the International Relations Office of FundaMusical Simon Bolivar (the El Sistema Foundation) in Venezuela.

## **VI. Program Structure and Desired Outcomes**

### **a) Program Structure**

Although the programmatic design will continue to evolve as the program matures, the following basic structure can be agreed upon for the near future:

<b><i>Number of Students</i></b>	~80
<b><i>Hours of instruction</i></b>	Approx. 10 per week
<b><i>Number of Orchestras</i></b>	1 Full Symphonic, with 2 additional large ensembles (orchestra and band)
<b><i>Group Lessons</i></b>	2-4 lessons per week
<b><i>Music Language</i></b>	2-4 classes per week
<b><i>Academic Mentoring</i></b>	3-5 hours per week (optional)
<b><i>Number of Semesters</i></b>	2 (Fall and Spring) + Special summer activities (national children's orchestra tours, workshops, by audition TBD)
<b><i>Size of Each Orchestra</i></b>	~80
<b><i>Juries</i></b>	End of Year Evaluation
<b><i>Recitals</i></b>	Throughout Fall and Spring Semesters
<b><i>Orchestra Concerts</i></b>	2-3 per Year

Descriptions of basic programmatic elements are provided below:

1. **Program Director:** A Program Director is employed by and approved by the BAUMC administrative board and reports to the BAUMC Director of Music Ministries and Senior Pastor concurrently. The Program Director works in full partnership with BAUMC Staff, Advisory Committee, Tulsa Public Schools leadership, and other supporting entities.
2. **Site Coordinator:** A site coordinator is employed by BAUMC and reports to the Program Director of Sistema Tulsa. The Site Coordinator works in an administrative

capacity to support the vision and organization of the program. (It is recommended that this position begin in March of 2015.)

3. **Advisory Committee:** The Sistema Tulsa Advisory Committee is a non-governing body of caring and expert individuals connected to BAUMC and community-at-large endeavors appointed by the BAUMC Senior Pastor to serve in relationship building, advocacy, fundraising, and other mentoring capacities to the program. They fully uphold and embrace the values of BAUMC and El Sistema. The committee is composed of one large group and designated small group task forces to help carry out specific work of the program as needed.
4. **Teachers:** Teachers are employed by BAUMC as independent contractors and will be selected through an application and audition process using an agreed-upon position description. The Teachers report to and work collaboratively with the Program Director. Recognizing the time-sensitive nature of having teachers in place, a talent pool of pre-approved teachers will be created, including the completion of required background checks. Teachers will meet weekly for planning meetings and will also be provided membership into an innovative professional development *Teacher's Academy*; and assessed annually using a rubric design created by the program.
5. **Students:** Enrollment in the Sistema Tulsa will be conducted annually, in February through the program's annual enrollment system. Fourth and Fifth grade students will be recommended by school Principals/Teachers and recruited from designated Tulsa Public Schools. For the inaugural year, designated schools include Burroughs and Emerson Elementary schools.
6. **Private Lessons:** Private lessons are not a required part of the program, but opportunities will become available for advancing students.
7. **Performances:** All public performances will be administered by Sistema Tulsa. Performance opportunities will be developed and/or approved taking into account the context and benefit to enrolled students.
8. **Parents:** Parents will be engaged and supported throughout the program's activities.
9. **Community:** The program connects to the community by opening up programmatic activities and sharing large-scale performances on special occasions.

## **b) Desired Outcomes**

Planned program accomplishments include formal and informal outcomes for student participants, participants' parents, and the community-at-large. Sistema Tulsa will work in collaboration with church leaders, school administrators, advisors, and other invited experts to identify and measure **broad points of impact**. The program envisions being able to produce concrete results in the improvement of social, cognitive, and aesthetic domains. A social researcher will be engaged to design a plan that positions the idea of building a *culture of aspiration* as a key programmatic element of the program. We will seek to define equity through mindsets (Scripp 2014) so that participants become motivated and empowered to succeed. We will research and consider recording (in consultation with and approval of TPS and families) academic grades, attendance, as well as tracking

improvements in a variety of capacities and contexts. Regular and systematic evaluation will be essential for our success as an organization. An effective environment of student assessment will also enhance individual and group development. In addition, key program partners (parents/guardians and program staff) will have regular opportunities to evaluate and offer ideas for improvement through self-assessment systems of program quality and delivery evaluation. We also hope to **share our findings and experiences** with community partners, *Sistema USA*, *Sistema Global*, and any other research partners who can also help us enhance the effectiveness of our work. Many of the *Sistema* programs around the globe actively share best practices. This network represents an invaluable body of knowledge and pedagogical wisdom.

## ***VI. Miscellaneous***

1. **Branding:** A logo and website ([sistematulsa.org](http://sistematulsa.org)) will be created to support the program's vision. An independent contractor and/or in-house support personnel will collaborate on designs that complement the image and traditions of BAUMC. Social media will be employed to share successes and stories. In addition, children will wear official Sistema Tulsa gear (t-shirts, medallions, etc.) in all public performances.
2. **Handbooks:** Families and Teachers will be given a handbook which stipulates their commitment and responsibilities to the program, ethics, and community standards.
3. **Communications:** A communication strategy will be created and implemented in coordination with the BAUMC Director of Communications, Sistema Tulsa staff, and supporting consulting firms when available. We will seek to garner support from local editors and writers to chronicle the story of our planning, build-up, and launch. All while advancing the message of El Sistema and BAUMC's larger organizational objectives.
4. **Finances:** The program's bookkeeping records shall reside in the office of the BAUMC Business Director. The Program Director and the Director of Music Ministries will work collaboratively to achieve transparency and efficiency.
5. **Donations:** Financial and in-kind donations from individuals and foundations and other public and/or private sources will be accepted to benefit the program. The monies received specifically for Sistema Tulsa remain in a dedicated account.
6. **Research:** Any research specifically for the use of Sistema Tulsa will be designed, managed, and financed by BAUMC. Research projects will be designed and administered to respect the privacy and interests of the students and their families.
7. **Documentation:** The program will seek to document milestones and successes through professional photography; and invite testimonials, experiential blogs, etc. for use in telling the story of the program.
8. **Expansion:** Expansion and enhancement of Sistema Tulsa will be discussed and agreed upon among interested parties before any significant changes are implemented. Enhancement includes intensifying the class schedule, adding rehearsal time, employing guest teachers and/or support services, and upgrading the instruments. If the expansion and/or enhancement have significant financial implications, the changes will be reviewed and approved by the BAUMC leadership.

9. **Instruments:** Instruments that are purchased for the Sistema Tulsa by BAUMC will be tracked, monitored, and accounted for each semester and are to be used solely by students of Sistema Tulsa and remain the property of BAUMC at all times.
10. **Mediation:** In matters pertaining to the overall organization and business of the program final authority resides in the office of the BAUCM Senior Pastor. The Program Director has executive authority with regards to program staff and previously approved resources.

## **Description of Roles & Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities for developing the flagship site of Sistema Tulsa are described below in terms of program management, programmatic responsibilities, staffing, instruments, and physical space, including support and volunteer staff.

### **I. Program Management**

- BAUMC is primarily responsible for site management/coordination, program operations, and program implementation. It is also primarily responsible for program design, professional development and evaluation. BAUMC Staff and the Sistema Tulsa Advisory Committee serve as conduits to a variety of stakeholders including but not limited to the Tulsa Public Schools, sponsoring foundations, and the community-at-large. The Program Director is tasked with facilitating these efforts for maximum organizational benefit.

### **II. Programmatic Responsibilities**

- Primary Administrative Responsibilities:
  1. Management of teachers schedules and payroll
  2. Management of relationships with Principals and other school officials
  3. Coordination of parent inquires and needs
  4. Enrollment and support of students (in collaboration with TPS Principals/Teachers)
  5. Coordination of student transportation (in collaboration with TPS Operations)
  6. Collection and interpretation of program data (in collaboration with social researcher)
  7. Purchase and maintenance of instrument inventory (instrument donations may be solicited).
  8. Maintenance of appropriate types and amounts of insurance
  9. Coordination of custodial and security personnel
  10. Coordination of Kitchen and support staff
  11. Coordination of Volunteers and other human resources
  12. Identification of financial resources to support Sistema Tulsa program responsibilities
  13. Promoting of the program through communication with parents, families and schools; as well as media outlets (internal and external).



14. Identifying and planning networking and collaborative opportunities with related artistic and youth development organizations
  15. Supply of adequate instructional space:
    - 5-7 rooms/classrooms, Monday-Friday, 2:30 PM – 6:30 PM; and other rooms, as requested and available for special concerts or events.
    - Provide storage space for instruments, music stands and music supplies
- Primary Educational Responsibilities:
    1. Developing and implementing professional development
    2. Developing curriculum and pedagogy
    3. Developing annual programmatic and academic schedule
    4. Monitoring teaching artist annual reviews
    5. Selecting instruments
    6. Developing and implementing parent workshops
    7. Expanding the program
    8. Planning and producing concerts and special events
    9. Conducting relevant programmatic and outcomes evaluations
    10. Developing new programmatic content (pilot programs)
    11. Scheduling of weekly group classes, recitals, juries, orchestra rehearsals

