A.4 School Calendar and Weekly Schedule

CASA Academy exists to create empowered citizens of integrity ready for success in college, life, and society by providing a transformative education using authentic approaches that prepare students to overcome challenges, think critically, excel in academics, and become role models for their community. In order to achieve its mission, CASA Academy is dedicated to providing the most efficient and effective school calendar and daily schedule possible for its students. CASA Academy will increase instructional hours in both the school day and the school year. This will better allow CASA Academy to provide rigorous instruction for students that correlates with high academic achievement.

A. Compliance with Required Number of School Days per Year

With 200 days of school, CASA Academy has 20 more days of school than are required by state statute (A.R.S. § 15-341.01). The annual school calendar includes the following characteristics, designed to implement a focus on achievement:

- An increased school-year calendar with 200 days of instruction
- Nine full days and eight half days of teacher in-service professional development
- Quarterly Academic Parent Teacher Team nights
- Two yearly home visits for each new student enrolled and one yearly home visit for each re-enrolled student

B. Compliance with Required Hours/Minutes of Instruction

CASA Academy's school calendar and weekly schedule exceed the minimum requirements of number of school days per year and hours of instruction per week. CASA Academy has 7.25 hours of instructional time per day for the core academic subjects, as opposed to state regulations which require only 4.5 hours of instruction per day for the core academic subjects.[1] Additionally, CASA Academy, due to the fact that it has a 200 day calendar, has 1.7 times more hours of instruction per year than state requirements. See figure A.4.1 for more information.

Figure A.4.1. Hours of Instruction Per Year

Grade Level	State Requirement	CASA Academy
K	405 (Half-day K)	1405 (full day-K)
1	810	1405
2	810	1405
3	810	1405

C. Daily Instructional Minutes

CASA Academy has allowed for a significant increase in the intensity and rigor of its instruction by lengthening daily instructional times allotted for reading and math. Figure A.4.2 shows the recommended daily and weekly instructional minutes recommended by the State of Arizona compared to the daily and weekly instructional minutes provided at CASA Academy. As evidenced in this figure, CASA Academy's weekly developmental reading and language arts instruction is 1.7 times greater than that of the state's recommendation, and its math instructional time is double the state's recommendation. These extended instructional minutes coupled with rigorous, data-driven instruction help to ensure all CASA Academy students are on the path to success in college, life, and society.

[1] Core academic subjects are developmental reading and language arts, math, social studies, and science.

Figure A.4.2. Instructional Minutes Comparison

	Daily Minutes		Weekly Minutes	
Subject	State of Arizona Recommendation[2]	CASA Academy	State of Arizona Recommendation[3]	CASA Academy
Developmental Reading and Language Arts	150	255	750	1275
Math	60	120	300	600
Social Studies	30	30	150	150
Science	30	30	150	150
Total	270	435	1350	2175

D. Rationale for Weekly and Yearly Schedule

CASA Academy has created a highly intensive schedule targeted to meet and exceed the necessary number of instructional hours as determined by the state average while also holding extremely high expectations for students. This calendar was designed specifically to meet the needs of CASA Academy's students, most of whom will enter the school significantly below grade level. CASA Academy's school day is five hours longer than the state requirement for kindergarten (all kindergarten students will attend a full-day program) and 1.5 hours longer than the state requirement for first, second, and third graders as demonstrated in figures A.4.4-A.4.7. The school year is 20 days longer than the state's required 180, making for a total of 200 days as described in figure A.4.9.

Studies have shown that an increase in instructional hours, both to the school day and to the school year, increase student academic gains. A study conducted by the Charter Schools Evaluation Project in New York, which studied over 60 charter schools there, found that "a longer school year is associated with positive achievement effects" and that "schools with years that are 10 days longer are associated with average student achievement that is 0.2 standard deviations greater."[4] However, CASA Academy's decision to lengthen the time inside classrooms is just as much a deliberate move to eliminate long periods of time in which students are outside the classroom. As the New York Times writes, "No matter how effective other school reforms are, our traditional 180-day school calendar creates an incredibly inefficient system of learning. We cannot afford to spend nearly 10 months of every year devoting enormous amounts of intellect, energy and money to promoting student learning and achievement, and then walk away from that investment every summer."[5] According to a report released by the RAND Corporation, "the average summer learning loss… disproportionately affects low-income students: they lose two months of reading skills, while their higher-income peers… make slight gains."[6] Additionally, a Johns Hopkins study found that "two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income ninth graders could be explained by summer learning loss during the elementary school years."[7] A long summer break also affects the needs of English Language Learners. In 2012, the University of Arizona's Center for English as a Second Language found that if "students that are spending a long time away from a language, they are going to lose some of it," and that, "the brain is very good at prioritizing something used regularly; if it's not being used, those resources would be diverted to other things."[8]

[2] Arizona Department of Education
[3] Ibid
[4] "New York City Charter Schools." *Education Next*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Jan. 2013.
[5] Smink, Jeff. "This Is Your Brain on Summer." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 28 July 2011. Web. 06 Apr. 2013.
[6] Ibid
[7] Ibid
[8] "ELL Students Fall Behind After Summer of Limited English." *NPR* N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Apr. 2013.

Daily Class Schedules and Rationale

Daily class schedules for each grade level at CASA Academy are specifically designed to meet the needs of the students in our target population by providing ample time to teach core academic content as well as provide differentiation for students based on their current needs. Research indicates that the biggest predictor of reading proficiency is the sheer number of minutes a student spends reading on a daily basis.[9] The Daily 5, reading comprehension integrating science and social studies, writing workshop, and reading acceleration will ensure that students are actively participating in authentic reading and writing in a supported, structured way for 255 minutes every day, greatly increasing student reading and writing proficiency. Time dedicated to math centers, math review, mental math, problem of the day, math fluency, and math acceleration will ensure students are remembering and applying yearlong standards and skills on a daily basis, while math content lessons will introduce new content. Additionally, to fulfill its mission, CASA Academy must provide time every day for students to learn about and develop the character traits necessary to persevere throughout their education, provided during Morning Meeting and Community Circle. Please see figures A.4.4-A.4.8 for more information regarding CASA Academy's daily schedule.

Figure A.4.4: Sample Kindergarten Daily Schedule

Kindergarten Schedule	
7:15	Breakfast
7:30	Morning Meeting
7:55	Math Review, Mental Math, Problem of the Day, Math Fluency
8:25	Math Content Lesson
9:10	Daily 5 (Four Blocks- 2 CAFÉ Lessons, 1 Vocabulary Lesson, 1 Phonics Lesson)
11:10	Recess
11:20	Lunch
11:40	Reading Comprehension Lesson integrating Science and Social Studies
12:40	Writing Workshop
1:25	Math Acceleration and Centers
2:00	Recess
2:10	Specials[10]
2:40	Finish Math Acceleration and Centers
2:50	Reading Acceleration
3:20	Community Circle
3:35	Dismissal

[9] Scientific Learning Corporation. (2008). *Adding ten minutes of reading time dramatically changes levels of text exposure*. Retrieved from http://www.scilearn.com/alldocs/rsrch/30388RAExtra10min.pdf

[10] Specials for all grade levels will include physical education, art, music, and health in correspondence with Arizona state requirements.

Figure A.4.5: Sample First Grade Daily Schedule

First Grade Schedule	
7:15	Breakfast
7:30	Morning Meeting
7:55	Math Review, Mental Math, Problem of the Day, Math Fluency
8:25	Math Content Lesson
9:10	Math Acceleration and Centers
9:55	Reading Comprehension Lesson integrating Science and Social Studies
10:55	Writing Workshop
11:40	Recess
11:50	Lunch
12:10	Daily 5 (Four Blocks- 2 CAFÉ Lessons, 1 Vocabulary Lesson, 1 Phonics Lesson)
2:10	Reading Acceleration
2:40	Recess
2:50	Specials
3:20	Community Circle
3:35	Dismissal

Figure A.4.6: Sample Second Grade Daily Schedule

Second Grade Schedule	
7:15	Breakfast
7:30	Morning Meeting
7:55	Math Review, Mental Math, Problem of the Day, Math Fluency
8:25	Math Content Lesson
9:10	Math Acceleration and Centers
9:55	Writing Workshop
10:40	Recess
10:50	Lunch
11:10	Daily 5 (Four Blocks- 2 CAFÉ Lessons, 1 Vocabulary Lesson, 1 Phonics Lesson)
1:10	Specials
1:40	Recess
1:50	Reading Comprehension Lesson integrating Science and Social Studies
2:50	Reading Acceleration
3:20	Community Circle
3:35	Dismissal

Figure A.4.7: Sample Third Grade Daily Schedule

Third Grade Schedule	
7:15	Breakfast
7:30	Morning Meeting
7:55	Math Review, Mental Math, Problem of the Day, Math Fluency
8:25	Math Content Lesson
9:10	Math Acceleration and Centers
9:55	Daily 5 (Four Blocks- 2 CAFÉ Lessons, 2 Vocabulary Lessons)
11:55	Writing Workshop
12:10	Recess
12:20	Lunch
12:40	Writing Workshop (continued)
1:10	Specials
1:40	Recess
1:50	Reading Comprehension Lesson integrating Science and Social Studies
2:50	Reading Acceleration
3:20	Community Circle
3:35	Dismissal

Figure A.4.8: Y1 Sample Early Release Schedule

Sample Early Release Schedule	
7:15	Breakfast
7:30	Morning Meeting
7:55	Math Content Lesson
8:40	Reading Comprehension Lesson integrating Science and/or Social Studies
9:40	Daily 5 and/or Reading Centers (Two blocks; topics chosen based on student needs)
10:45	Writing Workshop
11:30	Lunch
11:50	Community Circle
12:00	Dismissal

E. Professional Development

CASA Academy's professional development model is created to provide individualized support to teachers based on teacher and student needs. This model includes initial teacher professional development and training, data meetings, early release days for professional development, and weekly observations and individualized teacher support. These components, described below, are consistent with Strategy IV of the Performance Management Plan.

Summer Professional Development (nine days)

Initial summer professional development is the ideal time to begin building the caring and collaborative culture that will define the working environment at CASA Academy during the school year. In addition

to culture building, teachers will learn about instruction at CASA Academy and how instructional practices are connected to CASA Academy's mission. Teachers will gain an understanding of the Arizona Common Core Standards for reading, writing, and math and the Arizona State Standards for science and social studies. Teachers will also learn how to use CASA Academy's pacing guides to create units and aligned assessments. In relation to reading and writing, teachers will prepare to execute the Daily 5 and CAFÉ frameworks, guided reading, vocabulary instruction, phonics instruction, and comprehension instruction integrating science and social studies. Meanwhile, in math, teachers will learn about CASA Academy's balanced math program, and the instructional framework utilized for math instruction at CASA Academy.

Data Meetings with the Academic Director (every two to four weeks)

During data meetings, grade level teams and the Academic Director will analyze data and make modifications to instruction to increase student learning. Teachers will use data to group students into intervention and enrichment groups for the Acceleration block. In these meetings, additional areas for teacher support will be identified so that meaningful professional development can be provided to teachers to promote an increase in student achievement.

Early Release Days for Professional Development (eight per year)

Ongoing professional development will be provided to teachers throughout the course of the academic school year during early release professional development days. The focus of these professional development days is to increase student achievement, and topics will be determined based on teacher need and student data.

Weekly Observations and Individualized Professional Development (minimum of one hour per teacher, weekly)

At CASA Academy, we are committed to teacher growth and believe there is no one-size-fits-all approach to professional development. To ensure teachers grow professionally, both the Academic Director and the Director of Students and Operations will observe and coach teachers on a weekly basis to improve instruction and ensure proper implementation of the chosen curriculum at CASA Academy. During observations and coaching conversations, the Directors will target one area for growth based on individual teachers' needs. This area for growth will be the focus of future observations and will be changed once the teacher has demonstrated mastery of the targeted area for growth. To support teacher growth, ongoing professional development for teachers will differ based on individual teacher needs and may include whole-staff professional development, individual coaching, co-teaching, and/or observations of other teachers.

Figure A.4.9: Annual Calendar

2014-2015 Academic Calendar

Jul-14						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Aug-14						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sep-14						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Oct-14						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Nov-14						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Dec-14						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Jan-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Feb-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Mar-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
5	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Apr-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Jun-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Jul-15						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Summer PD
First Day of School
APTT Night
No School
Grading Period Ends
Early Release/ Teacher PD
Reading Assessments Administered
Assessment Window
Home Visits
Last Day of School

CASA Academy 2014-15 Important Dates

July 2014
July 21- July 31: Summer Professional Development
July 30: Home Visits

August 2014
August 1: Teacher Professional Development
August 1: Meet the Teacher Night
August 4: First Day of School
August 5-15: Reading Assessments Administered
August 18: 1st Quarter APTT Night
August 27: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development

September 2014
September 1: Labor Day; No School
September 17: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development
September 29-30: Benchmark Testing

October 2014
October 1: Benchmark Testing
October 8: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development
October 13-17: Fall Break; No School
October 24: 1st Quarter Ends; Grading Period Ends
October 27: 2nd Quarter APTT Night

November 2014
November 11: Veteran's Day; No School
November 24-28: Thanksgiving Break; No School

December 2014
December 17: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development
December 22-31: Winter Break; No School

January 2015
January 1-2: Winter Break; No School
January 16: Second Quarter Ends; Grading Period Ends
January 19: Martin Luther King Day; No School
January 20-22: Benchmark Testing
January 26: 3rd Quarter APTT Night
January 28: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development

February 2015
February 2-6: Reading Assessments Administered
February 16: President's Day; No School
February 18: Early Release/Home Visits
February 25: Early Release/Home Visits

March 2015
March 9-20: Spring Break; No School

April 2015
April 10: Third Quarter Ends; Grading Period Ends
April 13: Fourth Quarter APTT Night
*April 14-16: Benchmark Testing/State Standardized Tests Administered
April 22: Early Release/Teacher Professional Development

May 2015
May 20: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development
May 25-29: Summer Break I; No School

June 2015
June 1-5: Summer Break I; No School
June 22-24: End of Year Summative Assessments Administered
June 29-30: Reading Assessments Administered

July 2015
July 1-2: Reading Assessments Administered
July 1: Early Release/ Teacher Professional Development
July 3- Fourth of July Federal Holiday; No School
July 10: Last Day of School
July 13-31: Summer Break II (Teachers resume work on July 27)
July 27-31: Summer PD

*may change to align with Arizona State mandated testing schedule which has not yet been released