C.3 PERSONNEL

Create Academy believes that the most important factor in student learning is the teacher. To that end, Create will ensure that every faculty and staff member is rigorously recruited, selected, hired, supported, and developed to be the best leaders they can be in order to further the goal of increased student achievement.

Elementary and Secondary Structural Differences

Elementary Grades 1-6

At the elementary level (1-6), the ratio of students to teachers at Create Academy is relatively low in comparison to other public schools in the target location at 20:1. At those grade levels, there are purposefully larger class sizes (40 students/classroom) with two teachers in each classroom. This is intentional for three main reasons:

1. Team teaching provides an opportunity to role model the collaborative process by professionals on a daily basis.
2. Two teachers in the same classroom allows for great flexibility in teaching methodologies. There is more opportunity for individualized attention, as well as greater capacity to meet the differentiated needs of students with a second highly-qualified instructor in the room.
3. The School Directors' experience has shown that oftentimes public schools place large numbers of students in a single classroom with one teacher responsible for learning outcomes (up to 34 students in their classrooms). Smaller student-to-teacher ratios are important for the purposes of individualized attention. However, 21st century colleges and careers require students to be able to work efficiently in diverse groups to achieve a common goal. If the elementary grades only had 20 students in each classroom, they would not have the opportunity to collaborate with a diverse group of students. Increasing the number of grouping options is key to building student capacity by giving them experiences within which they learn to overcome potential conflicts and challenges to complete a project.

Kindergarten

At the Kindergarten level, it is important to recognize that students are learning how to be students in addition to gaining the content knowledge for which they will be responsible. A smaller class size (20 or half of the other elementary grades) is important to foster individual understanding. While they will learn to work in cooperative groups, kindergarteners need to also focus on learning how to be a student, and Create Academy will likely be the first opportunity to practice this for many kids within our target population. Because Create Academy is built on the foundations of collaboration at all levels, the School Directors decided to add two kindergarten classes so that the teachers could have collaborative planning time together, even though the bulk

of their teaching would be in separate classrooms.

Secondary Grades 7-12
At the secondary level, Create Academy will use a more traditional high school classroom distribution. Each classroom will have 25 students and one teacher. This provides a large enough pool of students for diverse collaborative groups while also providing a more manageable class size for each teacher. Because the courses will start to narrow and specialize in a particular academic area, it will benefit the students to have focus within smaller learning communities as preparation for the smaller college seminar environment that can be typically found on many campuses in major-specific courses.

A. Staffing Plan

Year 1
In Year 1, Create Academy will serve 200 students - 40 students each in grades K, 1, 2, 5, and 6. There will be two kindergarten classrooms with a maximum of 20 students per classroom, each with one teacher. One additional teacher will act as a full-time Special Education teacher and direct the Special Education program. There will be one classroom each for all other grades with a maximum of 40 students per classroom, each with two teachers. In addition, in this first year, Create Academy will hire two studio instructors at .5 FTE (20hrs/wk), that have a variety of experiences in visual art, design, creative writing, theatre, and dance. Non-instructional staff in year one will be limited to an Office Manager for the front office. The Director of Elementary Education and the Director of Secondary Education (School Directors) will divide all operational oversight in year one, including supervision of all hires, as described in Section B.3 of this application.

Figure C.3.1a Year One Staffing Breakdown

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL	**FTEs**	**NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL**	**FTEs**
School Directors	2	Office Manager	1
Teachers	10		
Studio Arts Teachers (2 @ .5 FTE)	1		
Spanish Teacher (1 @ .5 FTE)	.5		
Special Education Director/Teacher	1		
TOTAL	14.5	**TOTAL**	1

Figure C.3.1b Year One Grade Level Classroom Breakdown by Teachers and Students

Grade Level	Number of Classrooms	Teachers Per Classroom	Total Teachers	Students Per Classroom	Total Students
K	2	1	2	20	40
1	1	2	2	40	40
2	1	2	2	40	40
5	1	2	2	40	40
6	1	2	2	40	40
TOTAL:	**6**	**N/A**	**10**	**N/A**	**200**

Figure C.3.1c Year One School Directors Division of Responsibility

Y1	
Director of Elementary Education Curriculum: K-2 and 5-6 Instructional Evaluations: K-2 Professional Development: K-2 Personnel Financial Management Contracted Services Grants Management SAIS Legal	**Director of Secondary Education** Curriculum: Social Justice Projects Instructional Evaluations: 5-6 Professional Development: 5-6 Personnel Partnership and Community Outreach Parent and Student Communication Culture/Discipline Marketing and Enrollment Crisis Management Legal

Year 2

In Y2, Create Academy will serve 290 students - 40 students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. There will be two kindergarten classrooms with a maximum of 20 students per classroom, each with one teacher. There will be one classroom each for all other elementary grades with a maximum of 40 students per classroom, each with two teachers. In the 7th grade cohort, there will be two classes of 25 students and one teacher for each class. Four additional classroom teachers will be hired for this year, for a total of 14. In this second year, Create Academy will hire a Director of Operations that will oversee non-instructional daily operations, including oversight of the Office Manager and management of contracted service providers for back office support, legal services, food services, auditing, and technology services (as described in the document B.3.2 Contracted Services) to ensure smooth, efficient operations that are in compliance with state and federal laws. Also in Y2, an additional studio arts teacher in music

will be hired at .5 FTE, and an additional special education teacher will be hired to share the caseload with the special education director/teacher.

Figure C.3.2a Year Two Staffing Breakdown

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL	**FTEs**	**NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL**	**FTEs**
School Directors	2	Director of Operations	1
Teachers	14	Office Manager	1
Studio Arts Teachers (3 @ .5 FTE)	1.5		
Spanish Teacher (1 @ .5 FTE)	.5		
Special Education Teachers and Director/Teacher	2		
TOTAL	20	**TOTAL**	2

Figure C.3.2b Year Two Grade Level Classroom Breakdown by Teachers and Students

Grade Level	**Number of Classrooms**	**Teachers Per Classroom**	**Total Teachers**	**Students Per Classroom**	**Total Students**
K	2	1	2	20	40
1	1	2	2	40	40
2	1	2	2	40	40
3	1	2	2	40	40
5	1	2	2	40	40
6	1	2	2	40	40
7	2	1	2	25	50
TOTAL:	**9**	**N/A**	**14**	**N/A**	**290**

Figure C.3.2c Year Two School Directors Division of Responsibility

Y2	
Director of Elementary Education Curriculum: K-3 & 5-6 Instructional Evaluations: K-3 & 5 Professional Development: K-3 & 5 Personnel Financial Management Contracted Services Grants Management SAIS	**Director of Secondary Education** Curriculum: 7 & Social Justice Instructional Evaluations: 6-7 Professional Development: 6-7 Personnel Partnership and Community Outreach Parent and Student Communication Culture/Discipline Marketing and Enrollment

Legal	Crisis Management Legal

Year 3

In Y3, Create Academy will serve 360 students - 40 students each in grades K-6, and 50 students in the 7th grade cohort and 50 students in the 8th grade cohort. There will be two kindergarten classrooms with a maximum of 20 students per classroom, each with one teacher. There will be one classroom each for grades 1-6 with a maximum of 40 students per classroom, each with two teachers. In the 7th grade cohort, there will be two classrooms of 25 students each, and in the 8th grade cohort there will also be two classrooms of 25 students each. In each 7-8 (as well as all other secondary classrooms) there will be one primary teacher in each classroom. Four additional teachers will be hired for this year, for a total of 18. Also in Y3, an additional studio arts teacher in film and media arts will be hired at .5 FTE, as well as an additional special education teacher.

Figure C.3.3a Year Three Staffing Breakdown

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL	**FTEs**	**NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL**	**FTEs**
School Directors	2	Director of Operations	1
Teachers	18	Office Manager	1
Studio Arts Teachers (4 @ .5 FTE)	2		
Spanish Teacher (1 @ .5 FTE)	.5		
Special Education Teachers, including Director/Teacher	3		
TOTAL	25.5	**TOTAL**	2

Figure C.3.3b Year Three Grade Level Classroom Breakdown by Teachers and Students

Grade Level	**Number of Classrooms**	**Teachers Per Classroom**	**Total Teachers**	**Students Per Classroom**	**Total Students**
K	2	1	2	20	40
1	1	2	2	40	40
2	1	2	2	40	40
3	1	2	2	40	40
4	1	2	2	40	40
5	1	2	2	40	40

6	1	2	2	40	40
7	2	1	2	25	50
8	2	1	2	25	50
TOTAL:	**12**	**N/A**	**18**	**N/A**	**380**

Figure C.3.3c Year Three School Directors Division of Responsibility

Y3	
Director of Elementary Education Curriculum: K-6 Instructional Evaluations: K-6 Professional Development: K-6 Personnel Financial Management Contracted Services Grants Management SAIS Legal	**Director of Secondary Education** Curriculum: 7-8 & Social Justice Instructional Evaluations: 7-8 Professional Development: 7-8 Personnel Partnership and Community Outreach Parent and Student Communication Culture/Discipline Marketing and Enrollment Crisis Management Legal

Year 7

In Y7, Create Academy will serve 520 students - 40 students each in grades K-6 and 50 students each in grades 7-12. There will be an office assistant hired to support the office manager due to the size of the school population size. To prepare for supporting between 10%-15% of our students with Tier II and Tier III Response to Intervention, Create Academy will hire four special education teachers to share a caseload of approximately 52-78 students. There will also be a Director of Special Education who will lead the special education department.

Kindergarten classrooms will continue to have a maximum of 20 students per classroom, each with one teacher. Grades 1-6 will have one classroom per grade level with a maximum of 40 students per classroom, each with two teachers. One part-time Spanish teacher will see students in Grades 1-6 for 30-minute periods, four days a week.

Grades 7-12 will each have two classrooms of 25 students. Teachers at the secondary level will teach students in one arts integrated academic subject area for at least two grade level sections each day in addition to one section of acceleration. Create Academy will offer secondary teachers the ability to earn additional compensation for teaching an elective course, but we will plan to hire up to four part-time electives teachers if our current teachers choose not to teach an

elective course. These elective courses will maximize enrichment opportunities for students to study a particular subject area in-depth. We will hire two full-time foreign language teachers– one for Spanish, and one for French instruction to teach three sections of foreign language to secondary students. A part-time foreign language teacher will also be hired who is either dual-language fluent or who reflects the secondary demand for a particular language.

Figure C.3.4a Year Seven Staffing Breakdown

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL	**FTEs**	**NON-INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL**	**FTEs**
School Directors	2	Director of Operations	1
Teachers	26	Office Manager	1
Studio Arts Teachers (8 @ .5 FTE)	4	Office Assistant	1
Foreign Language Teachers (2 @ 1.0 FTE and 1 @ .5 FTE)	2.5		
Electives Teachers (3 @ .5 FTE)	1.5		
Special Education Teachers, including Director	5		
TOTAL	41	**TOTAL**	3

Figure C.3.4b Year Seven Staffing Breakdown

Grade Level	**Number of Classrooms**	**Teachers Per Classroom**	**Total Teachers**	**Students Per Classroom**	**Total Students**
K	2	1	2	20	40
1	1	2	2	40	40
2	1	2	2	40	40
3	1	2	2	40	40
4	1	2	2	40	40
5	1	2	2	40	40
6	1	2	2	40	40
7	2	1	2	25	50
8	2	1	2	25	50
9	2	1	2	25	50
10	2	1	2	25	50
11	2	1	2	25	50
12	2	1	2	25	50
TOTAL:	**20**	**N/A**	**26**	**N/A**	**580**

Figure C.3.4c Year Seven School Directors Division of Responsibility

Y7	
Director of Elementary Education Curriculum: K-6 Instructional Evaluations: K-6 Professional Development: K-6 Personnel Operational Oversight	**Director of Secondary Education** Curriculum: 7-12 & Social Justice Instructional Evaluations: 7-12 Professional Development: 7-12 Personnel Operational Oversight

B. Staff Recruitment Plan

Create Academy has developed a comprehensive recruitment plan to ensure that a wide variety of quality applicants are reached during initial and ongoing recruitment. The job listings posted by Create Academy will describe the school's mission, vision, teaching structure, and schedule. In addition, the Create Academy School Directors will actively recruit exemplary teachers from around the country in both broad and targeted approaches.

A primary goal of our recruiting efforts will be teacher diversity in gender, cultural background, training, experience, and artistic discipline. As discussed in the "Instructional Implementation" section above, we believe this diversity is a critical component of student development for a wide variety of reasons. Based on our research[1], the two strongest factors in the recruitment of a diverse instructional staff are autonomy in the classroom and a voice in school governance. Based on this, the caring and collaborative nature of our school community, the creativity inherent in teacher project development, the teams of support available to students and teachers alike, the social impact of our programs, and the formal and ongoing methods for feedback on instructional methods and effectiveness will all be strong recruiting assets for Create Academy in this regard.

Beginning in January of 2015, the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education will focus heavily on recruitment of teachers, non-instructional personnel, and support staff. Create Academy will utilize four main avenues for recruitment:

1. *Recruitment fairs and events*. The school Directors will attend various recruitment events. The majority of these events will be in the Phoenix area, although events may be scheduled while the Directors are on trips to visit schools around the country, as well. Events in the local (Arizona) area include The Great Arizona Teach-In, Career & Internship Fairs at Arizona State University, UA Education and Nonprofit Career Day at the University of Arizona, and career fairs and recruitment events at Northern Arizona

[1] Ingersoll, Richard and May Henry. Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage. Consortium for Policy Research in Education - Research Report. 2011: RR-69

University.

2. *Networking with teachers and school administrators*. The School Directors have a broad base of education connections within the Phoenix area. Create Academy will use these connections to identify and recruit high-quality teacher candidates.
3. *Advertising through various forms of media*. Create Academy will post job openings using its website, Facebook page, and Twitter accounts. Additionally, open positions will be posted on websites such as the Arizona Education Employment Board, the Arizona Charter Schools Association Job Board, LinkedIn, and in newspapers such as the Arizona Republic.
4. *Outreach to teacher training programs specializing in arts education and arts integration*. Create Academy will reach out through partners in the ASU Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and Arts Integration Solutions. By utilizing the professional networks of these partners, Create Academy can recruit directly from the best teachers in the field of arts integration. Prospects will be identified in a variety of ways: identifying teachers who lead great creative work as showcased by their students' work available on the web; examining teacher publications that align with Create Academy's mission/curriculum in scholarly/disciplinary journals; identifying teachers who contribute to social network groups and resource-sharing sites addressing arts integration and project-based learning; and reaching out to exemplar teacher training programs to identify high-potential graduates with strong interests and talent in arts integration.

C. Hiring Plan

All regular education and special education teachers at Create Academy must meet the following basic criteria: have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university, be Highly Qualified as determined by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), have experience and/or a passion in arts education or with arts integration, have a valid and current Fingerprint Clearance Card, and pass a background check. In addition, candidates must:

- Align closely with Create Academy's mission
- Believe that all students can learn and be successful in school and in society
- Possess a passion for the impact of arts on the whole student
- Be willing to work relentlessly to ensure student achievement
- Believe that education should be relevant to students' lives
- Possess a passion for and interest in incorporating elements of social justice into the curriculum
- Be willing to instruct using a combination of arts integrated and project based learning.
- Desire to grow and become better at their educational and artistic craft
- Be open to receiving feedback and able to apply feedback to improve instruction

- Enjoy and thrive in a collaborative environment
- Use data to drive instruction
- Desire to work closely with community members, families, and leaders to promote a symbiotic relationship between Create Academy and the local community

To ensure that all employees possess the desired criteria, Create Academy has developed a thorough hiring process. This process differs slightly based on position as outlined in Figure C.3.5 and as explained in the narrative that follows. The Governing Board will be responsible for hiring each of the School Director positions. The Directors will then make all other hiring decisions.

Figure C.3.5 Staff Hiring Practices

Administrative/Instructional Staff: Director of Education (Elementary and Secondary)	**Non-Instructional Staff: Director of Operations**
Note: The Governing Board has oversight of these positions, and will hire, evaluate, and hold the School Directors accountable for Create Academy's student achievement progress and sustainable operations. The Governing Board will set the hiring procedures for the School Director positions in the event of a vacancy after the Founding School Directors have been hired into their positions.	1. Résumé and cover letter 2. Response to written application questions 3. Phone interview (if non-local) 4. In-person interview and project 5. Scenarios/Case Studies 6. Invitation to interact in a casual environment (if possible) 7. Second in-person interview (as needed) 8. Reference check
Instructional Staff: Teachers	**Instructional Staff: Studio Arts Teachers**
1. Résumé and cover letter 2. Response to written application questions 3. Phone interview (if non-local) 4. In-person interview* and demonstration lesson (with feedback session) 5. Case studies 6. Invitation to interact in a casual environment (if possible) 7. Second in-person interview (as needed) 8. Reference check	1. Résumé and cover letter 2. Response to written application questions 3. Phone interview (if non-local) 4. In-person interview* and demonstration lesson (with feedback session) 5. Review of work/portfolio (as needed) 6. Case studies 7. Second in-person interview (as needed) 8. Reference check
Instructional Staff: Special Education	**Non-Instructional Staff**

Director/Teachers	
1. Résumé and cover letter 2. Response to written application questions 3. Phone interview (if non-local) 4. In-person interview* and demonstration lesson (with feedback session) 5. Scenarios/Case studies 6. Invitation to interact in a casual environment (if possible) 7. Second in-person interview (as needed) 8. Reference check	1. Résumé and cover letter 2. Response to written application questions 3. In-person interview and project 4. Scenarios 5. Invitation to interact in a casual environment (if possible) 6. Second in-person interview (as needed) 7. Reference check

Résumé and Cover Letter
For the majority of positions described above, a résumé and cover letter will serve as the first opportunity to learn about the candidate. The cover letter should include a brief background and why the candidate is interested in working at Create Academy. The résumé will provide a brief overview of each applicant's qualifications and experiences and will give a good indication of whether the candidate is qualified for the position. Reviewers will look for mission alignment, relevant experience, professionalism and written communication proficiency (including tone, language, grammar, and punctuation).

Response to Written Application Question*s*
After reviewing an applicant's cover letter and resume and gauging overall professionalism and candidate quality, the reviewer will go on to review the written application questions. If the application questions provide quality responses that show the candidate would be a good fit with Create Academy, the reviewer will contact the candidate and request an in-person interview.

In-Person Interview*
The in-person interview will provide an opportunity to begin the process of getting to know a candidate. A standard list of questions (adjusted for each position) will be used for this interview, although follow-up questions will be asked as needed to probe deeper into an applicant's thinking and skill-level. Every question is asked to determine whether the applicant would be a good fit for Create Academy.

*When possible, interviews will be conducted in batches to allow time for in-person group interviews where candidates interact with each other as they perform collaborative activities. The purpose of this group interview process is to see how candidates interact with each other while performing school-related activities. Since many of the teachers will be working in one

classroom with another teacher, getting to know their propensity for collaboration and community culture is critical for the success of Create Academy's model.

Demonstration Lesson (Teachers, Special Education Director/Teachers, and Studio Arts Teachers)

All teacher applicants will be asked to prepare and deliver a demonstration lesson. If the candidate teaches in Phoenix, the School Directors will observe the candidate in his/her classroom. If the candidate does not currently teach in Phoenix, the candidate will be asked to either videotape a lesson or to teach a lesson in-person (either with the interviewer, in a classroom on campus, or in a partner campus' classroom during start-up). The School Directors will have a coaching conversation and provide feedback to the candidate at the conclusion of the lesson. The main focus of this portion of the hiring process will be to see how the candidate responds to feedback. Create Academy seeks teachers who crave feedback and wish to grow professionally, so the candidate's response to the feedback will be critical.

Project (Director of Operations and Non-Instructional Staff)

Completing projects in timely manner is a key function of the role of the Director of Operations and Office Manager. The project will offer the opportunity to see how the candidate thinks and operates under pressure. The reviewer(s) will look for strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Review of Work/Portfolio (Studio Arts Teachers)

For studio teachers in visual art, creative writing, dance, design, film and media arts, music, and theatre, accomplishment and skills in their chosen form are important to their ability to communicate skills and understandings to their students. A review of their collected works in the form of a visual portfolio, recordings, or a reel is a critical part of their evaluation and hiring process.

Case Studies/Scenarios

Case studies will differ depending on the position for which a candidate has applied. Case studies offer the opportunity to delve more deeply into how a person thinks critically and reacts in various difficult situations. The reviewer will provide the case study to the applicant, give the applicant ten to fifteen minutes to read the case study and collect his/her thoughts and then ask the candidate to describe the steps he/she would take in the given situation.

Invitation to Interact in a Casual Environment

The interview process has been extremely formal to this point. The formal portions of the interview enable the reviewer to see how the candidate operates as a professional, thinks critically, and aligns with the criteria necessary to work at Create Academy. However, this formal perception can be very one-sided and not provide an accurate picture of who the

candidate is as an individual. Therefore, when possible, candidates will be asked to interact with the directors, teachers, and other staff members in a more casual environment. This could involve having lunch with teachers on campus, attending a staff gathering after school, or talking further with teachers during their prep time. This relaxed atmosphere will help to give the reviewers a strong grasp on the applicant as an individual and ensure that the applicant has been consistent throughout all previous hiring phases.

Second In-Person Interview
If the reviewer(s) have additional questions for the candidate after going through the previous steps, the reviewers will schedule a second in-person interview with the candidate. In some cases, the reviewers may feel they have adequate information and may not conduct the second interview.

Reference Check
After going through the previous steps, the reviewer(s) will have gained a well-rounded picture of the applicant. A background check will be performed prior to any offer of employment. Based on this information, the reviewer(s) will decide whether or not to extend an offer to the candidate. At least two references must be contacted before extending an offer to any candidate.

D. Training and Professional Development

A teacher's performance is the primary source of student achievement, and no teacher, no matter how talented or practiced, will demonstrate exemplary teaching every day that s/he is observed in an entire school year. However, the purpose of observational evaluative instruments is not punitive; the rationale always stems from the need to propel student learning and teacher performance forward. Teachers at Create Academy will be recognized for their improvement, given the support to take risks as they implement newly learned pedagogical skills, and spoken to honestly, as professionals, when their teaching falls short. This process will necessitate both School Directors and teachers to engage in intellectually demanding conversations, some of which will be uncomfortable for underperforming teachers. This consistent loop of real-time observation and immediate feedback will instill a sense of confidence in teachers, and it will increase student achievement, and is, in itself, the most important form of professional development.

Start-Up Leadership Development for School Directors
The School Directors have split the Instructional and Business/Operational school leadership responsibilities to complement their strengths and leverage their experience to best support the staff and students of Create Academy.

During the summer of 2014, the School Directors used a portion of their Arizona Charter School Program (AZCSP) grant funds to attend various professional development trainings to bolster their instructional leadership capacity. The following list highlights these training experiences:

- In June, the School Directors visited High Tech High, a charter school system in San Diego, California that is an excellent example of a project-based learning environment. While there, they learned instructional techniques and management systems from teachers and leaders currently working at High Tech High.
- In July, the Director of Elementary Education participated in the DIBELS Super Institute, where she learned about the DIBELS literacy measurement tool, including the history and intended purpose of the instrument, how to implement the instrument, and then what the instrument actually measures to be able to effectively support literacy growth in young students at Create Academy.
- Also in July, the School Directors participated in two arts integration trainings:
    - EducationCloset, an online arts integration resource, held their annual virtual conference where teacher-leaders and education consultants shared arts integration best practices.
    - The School Directors traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, where the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) held their annual 3-day intensive arts integration conference. Three highly-respected Kennedy Center teaching artists and arts integration consultants (Sean Layne, Melanie Rick, and Randy Barron) provided concrete arts integration strategies that can be used to teach multiple academic standards while fostering student collaboration and critical thinking.

Upcoming leadership capacity building professional development opportunities the School Directors have scheduled include:

- Attending workshops with Arts Integration Solutions, a nonprofit corporation based in Tucson specializing in arts integration training and support.
- The Director of Secondary Education is attending a semester-long training series on Cognitive Coaching to build skills in supporting and developing teachers.
- Participating in Arizona Department of Education's Arizona Instructional Rounds.
- Continuing our partnership with the Arizona Charter Schools Association, where the School Directors are currently participating in Phase 3 of the Charter Starter program.

In addition to specific trainings, the School Directors have spent time observing at two schools during their respective first days of school – CASA Academy and Mesa Arts Academy, two schools that serve similar populations as Create Academy's target demographics, but have very distinct procedures and school cultures. This experience has provided us with a better understanding of the school culture we want to build for Create Academy as well as ideas of how to build this culture.

Summer Staff In-Service Professional Development

During the inaugural year of Create Academy, teachers will report approximately four weeks prior to the first day of school for professional development and training to prepare teachers to provide high-quality academic instruction supported by arts integration and social justice practices using project-based learning strategies. Given our innovative program of instruction,

teachers will be best supported by participating in (and being compensated for) the additional professional development prior to the first day of classes.

Co-Teacher Classrooms

In the classrooms in which there are two teachers, the teaching partners will be trained during summer in-service and expected to have open, honest, and professional feedback sessions with each other. This serves two purposes: 1.) To role model a positive, collaborative relationship for students and 2.) To reinforce an instructional partnership in which both teachers are fully responsible and accountable for student learning. Additional trainings or coaching will happen throughout the year during feedback sessions and professional development days.

Weekly Afternoon Professional Development

Teachers will meet weekly as a staff to check in and share teaching strategies that have yielded positive results. Teachers will reflect on shared practices in two-week cycles. In the first week of teacher-led professional development, for instance, one teacher will prepare a mini-lesson and teach their colleagues how to implement a particularly effective instructional skill. Staff members will be expected to experiment with that newly learned skill—adding or subtracting elements so as to fit the teacher's content specialty or personal style—in their own classrooms in the days following the lesson. Then, in week two, teachers will reconvene for their weekly staff meeting and share out the results of their new teaching strategy. After reflecting upon their experiences, teachers will collaboratively generate several approaches for bettering their practice in the following week. Later in the meeting, a different staff member will present a prepared mini-lesson to the group and the cycle will thus repeat.

The purpose of staff-led professional development activities like these is to recognize individual teachers' successes as they happen week to week. When the school leaders recognize a teacher's innovation or expertise by asking them to teach that particular teaching strategy, it builds confidence and provides opportunities for teachers to be leaders of other adults in the school setting. When colleagues instruct peer practicing teachers, and particularly teachers who know firsthand the needs of their own student population, investment in professional development increases, and student achievement increases as well.

Monthly Data Analysis Days and Professional Development

Once a month, students will have a day off, and the entire school day will be devoted to professional development for teachers as well as student assessment data analysis. The analysis will focus on school-wide formative assessment data as well as summative assessment benchmark data when applicable. This data will be used to track student progress, and to group students for the purposes of intervention or enrichment during the acceleration time blocks. Time will also be reserved for structured and collaborative curriculum and instructional strategy planning to prepare for upcoming units.

Full-day staff professional development will most often be split into smaller sessions or workshops so that teachers have an opportunity to learn multiple approaches from different professionals. These sessions may be led by the teachers and Directors themselves or by representatives from Create Academy's network of partners, including faculty from the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts (or other units at ASU, through relationships cultivated by Herberger faculty), Arts Integration Solutions, Focus 5 (an arts integrated educational company) or other cultural or educational organizations.

Additional professional development will be partially influenced by teacher requests and partially influenced by the School Directors' determinations. Teachers will be solicited for PD requests at least one month prior to each programmed professional development day so that they have an opportunity to acknowledge their areas of need or to propose an innovative teaching strategy. The teacher choice for professional development will be based on information solicited by the administrative staff in email or survey form. After teachers give the School Directors their suggestions and requests, a decision will be made based on the number of teachers requesting that particular PD and the correlation between the requested skill and student achievement across the school.

E. Compensation

Compensation at Create Academy shall be both competitive and commensurate with experience and performance. This will be crucial for Create Academy's efforts to recruit the best talent to work at the school. Create Academy's compensation plan is described below and provides details regarding employee compensation, benefits, and required employer contributions.

Salaries

Director of Elementary Education, Director of Secondary Education

The Academic Director's salary will increase from $60,000 in Y1 to $63,654 in Y3. The school Directors will receive an additional $35,000 during the start-up phase from January 2015-July 2015. The School Directors' salaries intentionally fall below market rates during the early years of operation due to a small school size. As Create Academy expands, annual compensation increases will be adjusted, assuming appropriate school and job performance, until salary is in line with high performing charter school compensation benchmarks nationwide. The School Directors' long-term compensation plan will be designed and approved by the Governing Board. The School Directors will be non-voting, ex-officio members of the governing board and therefore will not vote on any decisions regarding their compensation.

Director of Operations
The Director of Operations will begin in Y2 with a salary of $45,000, and his/her salary will increase to $46,350 in Y3 depending on performance evaluations. As Create Academy expands, annual compensation increases will be adjusted, assuming appropriate school and job performance, until salary is in line with high performing charter school compensation benchmarks nationwide. The Director of Operations' long-term compensation plan will be designed and implemented by the School Directors.

Clerical (Office Manager)
The Administrative Assistant's salary will increase from $30,000 in Y1 to $31,827 in Y3. Long-term annual compensation will increase by up to 3% per year, depending on job performance and available funds.

Teachers
All teacher base salaries will be set at $36,000 beginning in Y1. Positively evaluated teachers retained at Create Academy through Y3 will see an increase in their salary to $38,192.40. Teacher salaries will increase 3% each year depending on teacher performance and available funds, as determined by a combination of student achievement data, student growth, observation data, and formal evaluations.

Special Education Director/Teachers
The base salary for the Special Education Director/Teacher will be set in Y1 at $40,000, increasing to $42,436 in Y3 pending positive evaluation of performance and available funds. As with regular classroom teachers, special education teacher salaries will increase 3% each year thereafter depending on teacher performance and available funds, as determined by a combination of student achievement data, student growth, observation data, and formal evaluations. As the school adds additional special education teachers, the Special Education Director/Teacher will transition to the Special Education Director and be appropriately compensated for that title.

Studio Arts/Spanish Teachers
In the first year of each studio arts and Spanish teacher's employment, his/her base salary will be set at $20,000 for half-time employment. In the first year, Create Academy will employ two studio arts teachers: one in visual arts/design/creative writing and the other in theatre/dance. In the second year, Create will hire an additional studio arts teacher in music, and in the third year, Create will hire an additional studio arts teacher in film and media arts. Create Academy will also employ a Spanish teacher to serve all grades during the first three years, as they will only be teaching 30 minutes each day for four days a week for the majority of classes. By the third year, salaries for the original studio arts teachers and Spanish teacher will increase to $21,218, pending positive evaluation of performance.

Required Employer Contributions
Create Academy will pay required employer contributions including Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment, and Worker's Compensation, which are assumed to be 10% of each employee's total salary.

Employee Insurance
Employees who are classified as at least halftime are eligible for health, dental, and vision insurance. Create Academy will cover up to $250 of the cost for insurance for each employee that works at least halftime (.5 or more FTE). Halftime is defined as working at least 30 hours per week. Holmes Murphy Insurance brokerage firm quoted Create Academy this rate, which would cover at least 100% of the insurance costs for individual employees with the ability for employees to add additional coverage for dependents. Employee insurance costs increase from $48,000 in Y1 to $84,000 in Y3.

Employee Benefits
Create Academy will offer a 403(b) retirement plan in which the school will match up to a 3% contribution of each employee's base salary. This assumes all employees elect to participate in the 3% match contribution to the retirement plan starting August 1, 2015. Employee benefits costs are budgeted to increase from $17,700 in Y1 to $32,517.31 in Y3 due to the increased number of employees and their respective salaries.

Fulltime staff will receive all paid holidays and ten personal days, to encompass personal time and sick days, per year. Days may roll over year-to-year up to a maximum of 20 cumulative personal days for fulltime staff in any given year. Halftime staff will receive all paid holidays and 5 personal days, to encompass personal time and sick days, per year. Days may roll over year-to-year up to a maximum of 10 cumulative personal days for halftime staff in any given year Employees may not "cash out" unused days, but may "donate" days to other staff.

During teacher absences, other teachers, administrators, or other qualified school employees or volunteers with fingerprint clearance cards will cover classes. Create Academy will also budget for substitute teachers when coverage within the school is not possible. This assumes that teaching staff in Y1 (15.5 FTE) will have a total of 155 days off, but likely only use 50%. The remainder is 78 days, and we assume current staff can cover half of them, leaving approximately 39 days with coverage needed. At a rate of $75/day, we have budgeted $2,925 for substitute teachers in Y1. By Y3, this amount will increase to $4725 using the same assumptions for the 25.5 FTE teaching staff.