Educational Plan

A.5 Performance Management Plan

We envision the Early Career Academy (ECA) as a place where students enroll in a program of study that leads to a career oriented associate's degree in a technical area like software development or network systems administration. The programs of study blend traditional academic content with applied learning concepts, with a significant portion devoted to practical study in a lab environment. Student Professional Experiences and project-based learning prepare students to apply skills in a variety of career-focused positions related to their fields of study.

ECA and the EMO have established a seamless academic affairs value chain mechanism. There are three components of the value chain that enables students to succeed in their pursued career goals at ECA. First, curriculum is standardized and centrally developed. Second, curriculum is intertwined with formative and summative assessment techniques. Third, curriculum is focused on student engagement. These three components of the value chain are categorized as developed value, delivered value and received value respectively. The value chain uses a number of feedback channels, which include program advisory committees (PAC) survey feedback on the applicability of the curriculum as well as faculty feedback on standardized curriculum. In addition, student feedbacks via course and campus surveys are part of the feedback channels. The feedback channels monitor and incorporate daily as well as weekly engagement rates on a course by course basis. Faculty development via quarterly in-service meetings combined with other forms of professional development is part of the feedback channels. Faculty feedback channels are implemented using electronic tools such as curriculum work order system.

ECA framework of monitoring and documenting student proficiency in Reading includes Student Professional experience (SPE), Capstone Project, E-Portfolio and employer feedback. When students are taking the Reading or applied Reading courses listed in the program outline, regular assessments are documented by instructors. Applied Reading skills are emphasized and students develop projects and portfolios while applying learnt Reading skills.

Basis for Baseline Figures

ECA utilizes a 7-mile radius around the ECA location as the basis for establishing the need for the school in the area. This radius was selected based on the ability of students to travel to ECA and a student pool determined to be adequate in size to support full enrollment of ECA's unique high school choice. Full enrollment is 120 students in grade 11 and 120 students in grade 12.

ECA averaged the percent passing rate and the median SGP's from public, non-charter, non-alternative schools in the target area which is defined as a 7-mile radius around the ECA location.

The following high schools were used in the calculation:

- Tempe High School
- Marcos De Niza High School

- McClintock High School
- Mountain Pointe High School
- South Mountain High School
- Dobson High School
- Desert Vista High School

The average Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) for Reading among these schools is 53.6. The average AIMS Reading % Passing (2015 Cohort) was 86.

Strategy I – Provide and implement a curriculum that improves student achievement

Hire highly qualified teachers: ECA hiring practices follow the EMO framework. Potential candidates are initially screened by online assessments administered by human resources department. Upon qualifying, the applicant is invited for a chalk talk presentation. The chalk talk presentation may include students, invited by the ECA campus, as well as members of the academic staff. Following the chalk talk, two formal interviews are conducted; the feedback is compiled and recorded in the database. If the applicant meets all the qualifying criteria, the applicant is hired. Hiring competitive faculty is essential to maintaining the value of standardized curricula.

Comprehensive curriculum standards: ECA will utilize the EMO for curriculum development. The EMO has a structured and methodical process to develop standardized curriculum. The development begins by first identifying the needed program outline or courseware (syllabus, instructors guide, assessments and instructor resources for course delivery) requirements. Various stakeholders from Academic Affairs, Registration, Purchasing, Finance and executive committee members review the proposed need and provide feedback. Subject Matter Experts (SME) provide the vision and scope of the curriculum; SME's are selected faculty from within ECA and the EMO. Instructional writers implement the vision. ECA, operating within ITT Technical Institute, uses the National Curriculum Committee to provide needed subject matter expertise to guide SME's on various issues. ECA faculty can provide feedback to both Information Technology national curriculum committee and General education curriculum committee. In addition, ECA with the EMO has established significant relationships with tier one publishers for the required resources for the curriculum. ECA with the EMO will compile a matrix containing comprehensive standards, program level outcomes, and course and lesson objectives that documents adherence to AZ Common Core Standards in Reading.

Curriculum resources and formative assessments: Each courseware is developed in compliance with the established curriculum development standard, which details the required options for resources and assessment techniques. Based on the course objectives, instructional writers pick and choose the needed templates, techniques and resources to create instructional resources such as student syllabi, implementation guide, instructor guide, study guide and various other valuable instructional resources.

The courseware uses modules with distinct sections and objectives. Instructor guide has recommended activities providing the basis for formative assessments. Mastery learning techniques are emphasized and enforced with corrective activities as needed. Topical information is delivered in chunks, which is followed by a set of formative questions.

ECA operating within the operation of EMO has partnered with the industry to explore adoption of adaptive learning tools to enhance student learning outcomes. Instructional techniques hinge upon the fact that the majority of students in the class have the ability to master every topic covered. ECA instructors follow Benjamin Bloom's proposed model that the learning rates are different for different students. By employing formative questions, implementing needed correctives for reinforcement, utilizing digital resources, and other adaptive learning tools, the vision of mastery learning is achieved.

Curriculum committees: The ECA faculty will review the curriculum once every trimester and provide correction or modifications needed via the curriculum work order system. Furthermore, every state ECA representative is a participating member of the EMO's national curriculum Committees. The Executive Director of the institute will regularly review the student engagement statistics and identify any correlation with the curriculum. On a regular basis, the Executive Director and the ECA board will review the overall curriculum, recommending updates as well as revisions to the instructional operations team at EMO.

By incorporating Arizona College and career Ready Standards into the standardized curriculum helps ensure that the ECA student is adequately prepared academically. Standards are developed through effective instructional techniques as delivered value while monitoring student engagement ensures received value.

Curriculum performance benchmark: At ECA, the effectiveness of the curriculum is assessed by measures such as engagement rate, success rate, submission rate, withdrawal rate and retention rate. It is accepted that effective curriculum combined with effective delivery mechanisms promotes student engagement. ECA firmly believes that student engagement occurs when a motivated student is learning actively. Delivering instruction at a level at which a student can comprehend and to which a student can assign value keeps the student motivated. ECA curriculum recommends outside resources to the student so that student can select resources, which align with his or her internal framework of knowledge and experience, thus promoting active learning options for the student.

Curriculum effectiveness is measured by metrics that include submit, withdrawal, retention, engagement, success and pass rates. When introducing a new course or revising the curriculum, these metrics, including historical data, are generated by the analyst teams and provided to the Executive Director. The Executive Director uses the metrics as a baseline to measure adverse or successful outcomes due to curriculum or faculty and implement any needed correctives. Any curriculum specific feedback is provided to the National Curriculum Committees.

Strategy II – Develop and implement a plan for monitoring the integration of the Arizona's College and Career Ready standards into instruction

Monitoring Structure:

Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) template for an ECA will be developed. Identified students will be tracked and recorded to ensure that students meet specified academic performance or success.

Executive Director will review the CEP with board at the end of the trimester. A standard instructor evaluation form and rubric will be developed for ECA instructors, and one of the objectives will be measurable improvement of the student academic performance. If needed, benchmarks for various metrics will be revised on a yearly basis.

Each year, the Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP) will be updated based on collected student survey data. The instructor assessment rubric will be evaluated and updated yearly to achieve expected correlation to student learning.

Arizona's College and Career Ready standards are incorporated into the curriculum, assessments and instruction. During the first trimester, new ECA faculty are observed by the Executive Director three times; thereafter, once every trimester. The recorded observations are shared with the faculty immediately and action plans are formulated together.

Standard instructor observation forms are available which include entries to record the instructor's style, scope of discussed materials, lesson plan preparation, timeliness of starting and ending class, and observation of student engagement.

Every trimester, Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards will be reviewed during faculty in-service.

The Executive Director will manage the formal structure of observing, recording and providing feedback regularly; this in turn will ensure ECA instruction methodologies to be in accord with the Arizona's College and Career Ready standards.

A standard daily lesson plan template will be developed, which highlights topical content, while emphasizing the topic's importance, relative level of difficulty, relation with other covered topics, and topical formative questions as well as exercises to be used in the classroom.

The courseware uses modules with distinct sections and objectives. The Instructor guide has recommended activities providing the basis for formative assessments. Mastery learning techniques are emphasized and enforced with corrective activities as needed. Topical information is delivered in chunks, which is followed by a set of formative questions.

Assessment criteria:

ECA measures school effectiveness using various assessment categories, and presents such findings quarterly in its Campus Effectiveness Plan (CEP). The primary assessment categories in CEP are student retention, student learning outcomes, curriculum review, student enrollment, graduate placement, graduate satisfaction and employer satisfaction. For each of these categories, data is collected and analyzed so specific action plans can be crafted and implemented to achieve optimal results.

ECA instructor observation template will be developed, which may include items such as observations concerning classroom management techniques, observed student engagement, instructor delivery techniques, content depth covered, quality of formative questions discussed, lesson plan followed, and coverage of curriculum directed content. Upon completion of the lecture and observation, Executive Director will review the observation with the instructor, and highlighting strengths and challenges. A formal plan will be implemented to address any challenges observed.

The CEP matrix will be continually evaluated using the Arizona's College and Career Ready standards; the matrix will be adjusted in accordance with any changes identified in the standard.

Strategy III: Develop and implement a plan for monitoring and documenting student proficiency

Implementation framework: The ECA framework for monitoring and documenting student proficiency in Reading consists of assessment and documentation of student learning outcomes compared to the Arizona College and Career Ready standards, review of student assessment performance, and adjustment of student activities and instructional strategies based on student assessment results in order to meet student performance expectations. Performance expectations are defined as 86% of students scoring proficient on the State standardized assessment for Reading as well as a 53.6% student growth percentile. At the beginning of the academic year in July 2015, the ECA executive director and teachers will establish a written goal for achieving the mastery of Reading based on state standards and ECA performance expectations.

Diagnostic assessments: A baseline assessment will be conducted at the beginning of each Reading course using assessment tools developed by recognized vendors (e.g. Pearson etc.) that align with Arizona's College and Career Ready standards. At the end of each Reading course, each student will be assessed again using a comprehensive summative assessment to measure progress. This assessment data will be recorded and reviewed by the Executive Director and ECA board in order to inform revisions to ECA curriculum, instructional strategies, student activities, student monitoring processes, and teacher professional development planning. These revisions will be made and monitored in order to improve student mastery and performance as defined by the Arizona College and Career Ready standards.

Formative assessments: Formative assessments will be conducted on a daily basis in each Reading course in order to assess students' understanding of lesson objectives and Arizona Common Core standards for Reading. These formative assessment activities will be used by ECA teachers to identify and address lesson objectives and standards that need clarification. Additional instructional strategies, student activities, and even supplemental learning activities will be developed to address students' learning needs during bi-weekly faculty meetings. These additional learning activities will be monitored over a minimum two-week period in order to evaluate their effect on student performance.

Summative assessments and Arizona standards: At the end of each unit of study within each Reading course, students will be given a summative assessment activity that will be used to evaluate students' mastery of the Arizona Common Core standards associated with that unit. These summative assessment results will be reviewed bi-weekly during ECA faculty meetings in order to identify opportunities to improve instructional strategies, student activities, and supplemental learning activities as well as the summative assessments themselves. At the end of each Reading course, students will complete a comprehensive summative assessment in order to demonstrate students' mastery of the Arizona Common Core standards for Reading; this assessment data will also be compared to students' previous diagnostic assessment results to help identify students' growth performance against the state standards for Reading. Students' comprehensive summative assessment data will also be used to inform revisions to Reading curriculum, student monitoring and performance strategies, and teacher professional development plans in order to improve student mastery and performance as defined by the Arizona College and Career Ready standards.

Additionally, the ECA Board is evaluating ACT WorkKeys, a formal assessment tool, as a possible tool to determine the career readiness of the graduating ECA student. If implemented, ECA would use three assessments—applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information—that are the basis of the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate program.

Strategy IV: Develop and implement a professional development plan that supports effective implementation of the curriculum

Professional development plan: ECA academic affairs policy will outline expectations for faculty and professional development plans. This academic affairs policy will require faculty to submit a yearly professional development plan that must be approved by their supervisor; the plan must include in-service activities focused on developing their skills as educators as well as a variety of activities that relate directly to their professional fields. Previous experience as well as previous development activities will be used to inform the professional development plan for new teachers while existing teachers will use past student performance results, formal observation documentation, and previous experience to inform these plans. These professional development plans will be referenced during formal classroom observations in order to evaluate teachers' integration of plan activities into the learning environment to improve student performance based on the Arizona Common Core standards for Reading.

The faculty professional development plans are considered living documents, and changes can be made as required. For example, the ECA Executive Director might suggest some professional growth activities based on classroom observations, and these might include developing expertise in an area or sharing best practices with other faculty or even serving as a coach or mentor for another faculty member. Other activities could include observing master teachers or attending additional in-services to improve classroom management. This constant monitoring provides teachers with the opportunity to adjust their classroom practices while consistently growing as educators and members of their respective professional fields.

In-service training: Faculty in-services will cover a wide range of topics related to classroom management and course content delivery. Examples of these in-service topics include (but are not limited to) advising at-risk students, encouraging student participation through effective questioning, and discussing best teaching practices by discipline. During these in-services, faculty will join campus administrators and, as a professional learning community, discuss strategies for implementing in-service content. Using the discussion boards in the EMO Faculty Portal, campus administrators and faculty will have the opportunity to discuss in-service topics. Across-the-curriculum discussions will be encouraged. Delivery and teacher participation for these in-services will be the responsibility of the ECA Executive Director, and in-service activities will begin in November 2015 and recur (at a minimum) once every trimester thereafter.

In-services and follow-up discussions (via the Faculty Portal or phone) provide opportunities for faculty to be members of collaborative working groups in which educators can learn from one another's expertise and experiences in the classroom.

In addition to formal in-services, ECA teachers will participate in classroom technology training and curriculum knowledge training in order to prepare them for the classroom environment. These activities will be scheduled every trimester as needed beginning in November 2015. The ECA Executive Director will also conduct specific training regarding Arizona's state standards and high school graduation requirements for new and veteran teachers as needed beginning in August 2015.

Professional growth activities: The academic affairs policy will require faculty to complete a variety of professional growth activities in addition to the required aforementioned in-service activities. Each academic plan year, faculty must complete a minimum of three professional growth activities related specifically to the field in which they instruct. The improvement or expansion of the teacher's subject matter expertise must be the focus of these professional growth activities. For example, a reading instructor might review a scholarly article about developments in the field of teaching reading, join or renew membership in a professional organization related to reading, and attend or present at a reading workshop or conference.

A variety of professional development activities exists, and each faculty member must complete at least three different types of activities. For instance, an individual faculty member cannot review three scholarly articles within a single professional development plan year, as each review would qualify as the same professional growth activity. Faculty are required to complete these professional

growth activities, so they stay informed of developments in their respective fields and remain engaged members in their scholarly professional learning communities.

Professional development plan evaluation: The ECA Executive Director will regularly monitor faculty professional development plans throughout the plan year and adjust plans accordingly. The basis for these adjustments will be formal observations of teacher's classroom performance. During these observations, the ECA Executive Director will document integration of professional development activities within the classroom environment. New teachers will be observed a minimum of three times during their first term with the ECA. Feedback from these observations will be provided to the teachers after the observation concludes. Based on the results of these formal observations as well as student performance data (as documented in students' summative assessment results), faculty professional development plans will be revised in order to improve students' mastery and performance as defined by the Arizona College and Career Ready standards.

On an annual basis, starting in July 2016, the ECA Executive Director will review the effects of previous year professional development activities on student learning as defined by the Arizona state standards. Recommended changes to the professional development plan process will be informed by these observations.