A.3 Program of Instruction

A. Curriculum Overview

Ethos Academy will utilize and develop a set of curriculum that aligns with Arizona College & Career Ready Standards ("ACCRS") as well as *Core Knowledge* ("CK"), the foundational curriculum resources selected and designated by the charter network, TeamCFA. By utilizing the curriculum resources selected to the fullest, we will provide students with an exceptionally rigorous and foundational knowledge base on which they will build upon from year to year. This exhaustive and well-rounded knowledge base, enhanced through the use of innovative technology resources, will serve students well as they rise to meet life's challenges and succeed in 21st century college and job markets.

Ethos Academy is confident that by developing and selecting high quality curriculum materials and resources, coupled with effective instructional and assessment practices – we can excel in meeting the academic needs of the students we serve. The founding team has engaged in a thorough process of evaluating community needs in alignment with the school's mission.

<u>Core Knowledge Sequence</u>
Ethos Academy will be considered a *Core Knowledge* school, meaning the basis of what is taught and learned will align with the *Core Knowledge* Sequence. According to the Core Knowledge Foundation:

> "The Core Knowledge Sequence is a detailed outline of specific content and skills to be taught in language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science and the fine arts. As the core of a school's curriculum, it is intended to provide a coherent, content specific foundation of learning, while allowing flexibility to meet local needs. The Core Knowledge Sequence is not meant to outline the whole of a school's curriculum, but rather provide a coherently organized plan for content and skills instruction, while remaining flexible enough to not exclude locally determined or other required content and skills." [1]

The flexibility of the *Core Knowledge* Sequence is valued as we work to meet the unique academic needs of the target population. Ethos Academy's charter network, TeamCFA, has successfully implemented Core Knowledge into other Arizona communities with similar demographics and has achieved great success as measured by Arizona's Accountability System.

Curriculum Alignment to Core Knowledge and the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards
Ethos Academy's School Director and Dean of Academics will work together to identify the established ACCRS for every grade level. These standards will be divided into grade, strand, and cluster to provide a clear understanding of the specific content being taught. Pacing guides and domain maps (unit plans) will be developed for each grade and subject area to provide additional detail and serve as the basis in discerning the curriculum needs of the school. Teachers will be provided with additional resources such as *Core Knowledge* Day-by-Day Planner and Workbooks. All curriculum materials are vetted using a formalized process of criteria-based, pre-qualifying questions which examine factors such as: alignment to ACCRS and

the Core Knowledge Sequence, consistency through grades, assessment materials, technology integration, record of success, publisher, and research based data measurements - as developed by the School Director and Dean of Academics. Teachers will use detailed domain maps/unit plans (in their particular grade level and subject area) to guide them in planning their lessons. They will select and incorporate ACCRS and *Core Knowledge* objectives based on the subject material being taught. By grounding curriculum in the *Core Knowledge* Sequence, the curriculum will ensure alignment to Arizona College and Career Ready Standards, as the Core Knowledge Foundation was a consultant in the development of these standards.

Language Arts – Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

Ethos Academy will utilize the *Core Knowledge Language Arts* ("CKLA") program to meet all language arts objectives. The categories in CKLA that are covered in the *Core Knowledge* Sequence include: Listening and Speaking, Reading, Writing, Language Conventions, Poetry, Fiction, Sayings and Phrases, Writing-Grammar-Usage, Speeches, Nonfiction, Drama and Foreign Phrases Commonly Used in English. This curriculum addresses every state and network qualifier, and is a proven resource in addressing the ACCRS. The supplementary curriculum for language arts will be CKLA supplemental for RTI Level 2 (5-10% of students) and Compass Learning Level 3 RTI (5% of students). Ethos Academy's Response to Intervention ("RTI") model is designed for those students who need it to receive extra support in order to help them achieve at the desired mastery level. These supplementary curricula will aid interventionists in re-teaching and re-assessing any specific standards that 5-10% of students may have trouble mastering during daily reading and math "acceleration" periods. There is an additional detailed description of Ethos Academy's RTI model in the Methods of Instruction section below.

Mathematics

Ethos Academy will engage students in Singapore Math published through *Math in Focus*. We have determined that this curriculum best prepares students for achieving math objectives per the ACCRS based on metrics at schools within the charter network and the mapping of the pacing guides. The curriculum will be used for Level 1 RTI, and it has a unique feature that includes an intervention block that can be used for the Level 2 RTI as well. Level 3 RTI will be addressed using Compass Learning. Compass learning is a computer-based educational resource that is designed to identify students' area(s) of deficiency by individual standard(s), and it creates tailored activities which are leveled for each student based on baseline measurements obtained through the quarterly benchmark assessments. These activities aid students through individualized skill-building aligned to students achievement levels for each standard. According to publishers Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt:

> *"Math in Focus* provides an authentic Singapore math curriculum—highlighting problem solving as the focus of mathematical learning. This complete program teaches concepts using a concrete–pictorial–abstract learning progression to anchor learning in real-world, hands-on experiences, supported by seamless integration of technology." [2]

This curriculum is a good fit for Ethos Academy because it supports our belief in the effectiveness of experiential learning and the impact that integrating technology in innovative ways has in engaging students throughout math instruction. *Math in Focus* was selected for Ethos Academy in part because of the following qualities that align to the Educational Philosophy and it supports the goals of the Arizona College & Career Ready Standards for

Mathematics. It relies upon research-based pedagogy focuses on classroom learning, discussion, and practice. It balances conceptual understanding, visual learning, and problem solving in the primary grades in the foundational topic areas of: *patterns & classification, numbers/number sense, money, computation of addition/subtraction/multiplication/division problems, fractions, decimals, measurement (linear, weight, capacity/volume, temperature, and time), geometry and solving equations*. Additionally, it balances conceptual understandings, visual learning, and problem solving for intermediate grades in the topic areas of: *pre-algebra, ratios, percent, proportion, probability and statistics, geometry and algebra.*

Science

Science Fusion was chosen as the curriculum program for science at all grade levels. It provides an excellent alignment to ACCRS and the Core Knowledge sequence. In addition, the incorporation of the STEM areas of technology and engineering with this curriculum best fulfill the experiential learning value emphasis embedded within the school's mission. According to publishers Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:

> "*Science Fusion* is a state-of-the-art science program designed for building inquiry, STEM, and optimized for learning in the classroom, at home, on a laptop, a tablet, or using a science textbook. The digital curriculum, virtual labs and hands-on activities, and write-in science textbook develops important critical thinking skills that prepare students for success in future science courses and in the workplace." [3]

Science Fusion was selected for Ethos Academy in part because of the following qualities that align to the Educational Philosophy: Digital lessons, write-in student editions, and hands-on labs that deliver a holistic science experience based on inquiry and application. Hands-on activities, virtual labs, leveled readers and video-based projects that reinforce and enrich important primary and intermediate concepts in the topic areas of: *plants and plant growth, animals, the human body, magnetism, seasons and weather, taking care of the earth, living things and their environments, matter (properties of), electricity, astronomy, the earth (geographical features and inside), cycles in nature, insects, simple machines, light and optics, sound, ecology, chemistry, geology, meteorology, classifying living things, cell/plant structures and processes, life cycles and reproduction, plate tectonics, oceans, energy-heat-heat transfer, atomic structure, chemical bonds and reactions, genetics, history of earth and life forms, evolution, physics, electromagnetic radiation/light, and sound waves*.

Social Studies

Pearson's *Core Knowledge History & Geography* was selected to teach key history and geography topics at every grade level and will be the curriculum resource utilized for all history and geography lessons. CK History & Geography provides a comprehensive, foundational knowledge in American and world history as well as geography. Beneficial features of this curriculum to support student learning include using age appropriate narrative style to support reading comprehension, noting and defining key vocabulary, and engaging students with high quality illustrations, maps, fine art and informational graphs.

Special Areas: P.E., Music, Fine Art, Spanish Culture/Language and Health

The leaders of Ethos Academy acknowledge the importance that special areas hold in providing the students with well-rounded and balanced learning opportunities. Ethos Academy will

provide enriching special classes on a daily rotating schedule in the areas listed above. The unique difference will be that in addition to meeting the learning objectives contained in the state's guidelines for music, art, physical education, Spanish and health - select areas of art and music will be aligned with the *Core Knowledge* Sequence. Special area teachers will design their lessons to align with the historical content/topic/subjects students are learning in their classrooms. Thus, elements from the classroom will be integrated and infused within students' specials classes and will directly influence the artifacts and outcomes developed in these classes.

Character Development

Every interaction and action that transpires on the campus of a school has an impact on individual and collective character. Ethos Academy will develop positive character traits in the daily lives of the students that will be modeled, studied, reflected upon, upheld, celebrated and continually practiced at Ethos Academy. A unique character trait will be introduced at the beginning of each month, and will be emphasized and explicitly discussed at the start of each school day. Character traits may include both performance-based traits (effort, diligence, perseverance, patience, responsibility, respect, courage, grit, self-control, curiosity) and moral-based traits (justice, generosity, honesty, compassion, fairness, integrity, optimism, gratitude). Character development at Ethos Academy will be largely and holistically developed by teachers and based on introducing and defining the character trait, and reinforced by integrating authentic examples gleaned from content being learned in core subject areas. This may include historical figures - leaders and visionaries- citing examples in which they displayed strong character. Additionally, acknowledging and celebrating peer examples of good character will be discussed, role played and celebrated regularly to encourage and reinforce character in measurable and meaningful ways.

B. Methods of Instruction

Instructional Approaches

Ethos Academy seeks to balance its instructional approach with the practice and application of complimentary instructional models, namely direct instruction, cooperative learning, and experiential learning. Both will be used in a complimentary fashion to the other, but will serve different purposes in driving student achievement and learning outcomes. These instructional methods are research-based, reliable and proven to enable students to master all the learning objectives set before them.

Direct Instruction with Bloom's Taxonomy, Best-Practices and Differentiation [4]

Direct instruction is a skills-oriented, teacher-directed approach to teaching that emphasizes small group and face-to-face instruction by teachers using carefully articulated lessons where cognitive skills are broken down into small units, sequenced deliberately and taught explicitly. Direct instruction's intellectual substance is based on building comprehension and reasoning skills to ensure successful performance in reading and math. Using direct instruction, teachers will discuss daily learning objectives, give an overview of the lesson, model the skills being developed, lead guided practice, and reinforce skills through independent practice. Teachers will embed ways in their lesson allowing for differentiated instruction for students at varying levels. This will serve to both support struggling students and to accelerate learning for students who've reached mastery levels. Teachers will emphasize the learning process through

the utilization of the categories/levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating while teaching and navigating through their lessons. Teachers will be expected to incorporate Bloom's action verbs throughout their lesson plans, as well as incorporating Webb's Depth of Knowledge to effectively increase the level of rigor needed to implement the ACCRS. Research-based, best practices and strategies such as identifying similarities and differences, summarizing and note taking, reinforcing effort and providing recognition, homework and practice, nonlinguistic representations, cooperative learning, setting objectives and providing feedback, generating and testing hypotheses, using questions/cues/advanced graphic organizers (concept and thinking maps, story organizers and webs, Venn diagrams, Frayer Model, etc.) will be incorporated into instructional practice at Ethos Academy and, when used effectively through teacher training and monitoring, will have a positive impact on student achievement.

Cooperative Learning: Kagan Structures (Groups) [5]

Students will have multiple opportunities each day to learn and practice 21st century skills to support the mission of Ethos Academy to "prepare and empower students to succeed in college and 21st century" through well-structured and planned cooperative learning experiences. When working together in pairs or small groups, students can develop skills in the following areas: critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation/creativity using technology, teamwork, communication, leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution and more. The Kagan Structures support the cooperative learning model and are an extensive "tool kit" of instructional strategies which are designed to increase classroom engagement and encourage cooperative learning. There are 200 "structures" that are simple, step-by-step instructional strategies that have been designed to "engage and develop specific types of thinking…social skills…different intelligences, align instruction with principles derived from brain science, and to foster mastery of different types of academic content."

Experiential Learning Opportunities

As detailed in the Educational Philosophy, Ethos Academy intends to provide well-planned and purposeful extensions to traditional classroom instruction through experiential learning opportunities. Teachers will be expected to include at least one hands-on, student-directed experiential learning activity within every unique unit of study; empowering students to use new knowledge and concepts learned in their classroom and practically apply them to task-oriented activities (e.g. conducting experiments, building projects, performing jobs, collecting data, engaging community members). Teachers will receive training on how to implement experiential learning into their units and will work together during their Professional Learning Community (PLC) team meetings to plan their activities. Ethos Academy will develop a calendar so teachers can develop plans in advance for grade level experiential learning activities throughout the year. Experiential learning activities will be monitored and observed by the School Director and the Dean of Academics, to ensure high-quality enrichment is being offered.

Response to Intervention ("RTI")

Ethos Academy anticipates 10-18% of their students will require special education services. The Dean of Academics will work with all PLC's to create a process of interventions that are systematic, timely and directed. Identified students requiring services will be granted additional time, during "acceleration" periods as implemented and monitored by our Special Education Director, to support them in reaching their essential learning outcomes. The RTI

model that Ethos Academy will use is designed to meet the needs of students who demonstrate learning below the level of proficiency (80%) as measured after the retesting of the individual standards.

Ethos Academy's RTI model has three (3) Tiers:

- Tier 1 (85-90% of students): Core Instruction; differentiated with classroom level interventions.
- Tier II (5-10% of students): Targeted Intervention; skills-based, small group (3-6 students) instruction; students one or less year behind grade level; 8-10 week duration; data-driven based on diagnostic assessments with bi-weekly monitoring.
- Tier III (5% of students): Intensive Intervention; intensive skill-based; small group (2-3 students) or 1:1; students two or more years behind grade level; full academic year; weekly assessment monitoring.

Meeting the Needs of Special Education

We believe that a mainstream classroom inclusion model for SPED students is optimal whenever possible; however homeroom teachers will collaborate closely with contracted Special Education teachers and other service providers to ensure the students' needs are being met. All staff will receive training to ensure compliance related to Special Education state and federal laws.

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)

Ethos Academy will serve all English Language Learners in order to maintain compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 15, Chapter 7, Article 3.1. ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, §§ 15-751 through 15-757: Structured English Immersion (SEI) classroom teachers at Ethos Academy will utilize Arizona's English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards to guide English Language Development (ELD) instruction. These standards provide foundational linguistic and grammatical knowledge in language acquisition for English Language Learners (ELLs), whose proficiency levels are identified based on AZELLA scores. In SEI designated classrooms, ELD instruction will take place for four (4) hours daily using the ELP Standards. ELL students will be grouped in these classes according to grade and/or proficiency level band. SEI class size for pre-emergent and emergent shall not exceed 23 students; basic and intermediate shall not exceed 25. All SEI classroom teachers will receive training to successfully implement the SEI model, including Discrete Skills Inventory training and Discrete Skills Inventory Teaching Methods Training.

Alignment to Educational Philosophy

Ethos Academy's instructional approaches and models are designed specifically to address the unique needs of the target population, in an effort to bolster student achievement. We will do this by offering the following: strategic academic programming, rigorous curriculum resources, research-based best practice instructional methodologies, data-driven decision making processes, authentic experiential learning opportunities, strong support services/systems, and a culture and community emphasis. Ethos Academy believes that by serving this community with excellence, we will raise the bar collectively among the surrounding schools.

C. Formative and Summative Assessment Plan [6]

Ethos Academy will use a Comprehensive Assessment Approach ("CAA") which is a model that includes teachers in the data-driven decision making process to meet the educational needs of all their students in order to continuously drive excellence in teaching and learning.
In addition to the assessments, there are two components to support the CAA:

Continuous Improvement System ("CIS")
CIS is an effective tool and will be used as a primary resource in monitoring students and their mastery of concepts. This system easily identifies alignment to ACCRS and will be utilized to monitor student achievement within specific classes. Teachers will compare their CIS to their Gradebook to ensure the integrity of grades and students mastery level of concepts. This process is mandatory for all teachers and will be updated as assessments are complete for each objective.

Student Action Plans ("SAP")
Teachers, students and parents will utilize Student Action Plans (SAP) which will monitor a student's achievement level of all concepts within every unit of all the core subjects. The intent is for a student to obtain a simple overview of their mastery of concepts and strands. This self-evaluation process increases awareness and inspires students to take personal ownership of their individual success of the learned concepts. Parents will have access to their student's SAP, digitally through Schoolmaster or in printed report form, to equip them to monitor their child's progress.

Use of Balanced Assessments
One of the core values from the Educational Philosophy is data-driven decisions. In an on-going effort to drive student achievement, we will closely analyze data at every turn to determine if students are learning. Four principles guide the data-driven decisions: 1) Rigorous interim assessments that provide meaningful data, 2) Examining assessment results to determine causes of strengths and weakness, 3) Taking action to teach what students most need to learn and, 4) Creating an environment where data-driven instruction can thrive. Opportunities for data collection and analysis will happen daily, weekly and monthly at multiple levels.

Formative Assessments
The results gathered from the Galileo pre-test, given to students at the beginning of the year, will help teachers effectively plan instruction at the beginning of the year.

Checks for Understanding
Students will be formatively assessed each day by their teachers who will check for understanding, or gather and respond to data collected through questioning and observation techniques. Teachers will incorporate minute-by-minute (thumbs up, thumbs down, hand signals, whiteboards) and end of lesson (exit ticket, take a stand, small group sampling) checks for understanding in their daily lessons and their instruction will be evaluated in part based on their proficiency in this area, through regular observation and monitoring by the Dean of Academics.

End of Unit Formative Assessments

All teachers will provide assessments at the end of each unit that establish proficiency levels. The assessments will be aligned to ACCRS and student learning objectives established by the School Director and the Dean of Academics.

Quarterly Assessments
Students will take three Galileo Assessments at the beginning, middle and end of the year. Students will take a Galileo post test toward year end as a measure of performance to determine growth and overall proficiency. This assessment cycle will be the initial basis (along with previous year's standardized test) for the RTI leveling of students. In addition, Ethos Academy will participate in two benchmark assessments using NWEA assessments at the end of the first and third quarters.

Standardized Assessments
Ethos Academy's students will take all state required summative assessments to measure student achievement and teacher effectiveness as directly related to the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. The school will also use the results from Galileo and NWEA pre and post-tests as part of the teacher evaluation process as well. The standardized assessments will take place at the end of the third quarter or beginning of the fourth quarter.

D. Alignment of Program of Instruction and Performance Management Plan

Ethos Academy's Performance Management Plan discusses specific strategies that detail the action steps, resources and accountability required to ensure success of the Program of Instruction.

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[1] *Core Knowledge Sequence.* ©2010 Core Knowledge Foundation.

[2] Retrieved from Math in Focus. (January 2014). http://www.hmhco.com/shop/education-curriculum/math/math-in-focus-singapore-math

[3] Retrieved from Science Fusion. (January 2014). http://www.hmhco.com/shop/education-curriculum/science/elementary-science/sciencefusion

[4] Tough, Paul. *How Children Succeed.* Mariner Books. ©2013

[5] Retrieved from Kagan Structures. (December 2013). http://www.kaganonline.com/about_us.php

[6] Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Driven By Data.* ©2010. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.