A.2 TARGET POPULATION

This section will describe FES' anticipated student population and explain how FES' proposed program of instruction will address the needs of students and the community Focus High intends to serve by improving pupil achievement and educational choice. It will identify current levels of academic performance within the target community and explain how implementation of FES' program of instruction will meet the needs of the target population and improve pupil achievement. It will also address anticipated class size and student to teacher ratios with research supported rationale. This section will align with FES' mission statement and the program of instruction described in A.3.

MISSION

Focus Education Service's mission is to provide motivated students the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and develop life skills in a technology-rich, career-focused, and safe learning environment taught by caring and knowledgeable educators.

TARGET POPULATION

Identifying the Target Population

Focus High School's target demographic will be 9-12 grade students residing within a 5 mile radius[1] of Phoenix's Central High School. The target population will include students seeking: flexible schedules, small class sizes, technology-rich instructional methods, and access to STEM-related CTE courses designed to prepare students for college, vocational training, and/or STEM-related careers—particularly in the field of information technology. Based on geographic and demographic data, the target population will likely include a range of students who come from low socio-economic status, are at-risk for high school dropout, are English language learners, possess academic skills that are below grade level, and students in need of developing college and career skills.

The following sections will give a general overview as well as a more detailed description of Focus' target demographic including how Focus intends to identify and better serve students within the target community.

General Demography

The following table shows the representative 9-12th grade population for all counties in AZ.

County	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Apache	1037	794	774	715	3320
AZ DOC	181	220	27	16	444
Cochise	1540	1468	1373	1324	5705

[1] This location is identified by some or all of the following geographic descriptions (some of which overlap): the Phoenix Alhambra and Phoenix Central Neighborhoods, legislative district #24, and zip codes 85012-85016.

Coconino	1525	1471	1362	1417	5775
Gila	624	596	538	560	2318
Graham	508	475	464	400	1847
Greenlee	144	129	127	144	544
La Paz	169	185	153	161	668
Maricopa	**52573**	**51450**	**49359**	**54282**	**207664**
Mohave	1943	1761	1720	1746	7170
Navajo	1566	1416	1431	1418	5831
Pima	11701	11421	10753	12243	46118
Pinal	3560	3304	3099	3266	13229
Santa Cruz	900	766	710	762	3138
Yavapai	1960	2015	1916	1947	7838
Yuma	3046	2878	2781	2904	11609
Arizona	82977	80349	76587	83317	323218

Table A.2.1: 2013 Grades 9-12 Enrollment Figures - All AZ Counties[2]

The table above shows that in 2013, all Arizona high schools combined to service 323,218 students in grades 9-12. 64% resided within our general target market county of Maricopa. While the majority of these students (87%) attended public high schools, the total number of students attending charter schools has steadily increased by 5% year over year throughout the past decade.[3] This indicates a sustainable market and growing opportunity to find and assist students within our general target population as they continue to pursue more focalized and/or alternative educational opportunities, particularly in STEM fields.

The chart below shows a proportional breakdown of students attending public charter schools (13%) vs. public district schools (73%).

Type	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Charter School	7,433	8,264	9,741	15,784	41,222
School District - Accommodation	252	139	199	337	927
School District - High School	25,417	24,265	22,714	21,769	94,165
School District - Unified	48,861	47,140	44,976	43,805	184,782
All of Arizona	81,972	79,818	77,641	81,707	321,096

Table A.2.2: AZ Demographics – Charter vs Public[4]

[2] http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/arizona-enrollment-figures/
[3] http://goldwaterinstitute.org/sites/default/files/GI-Policy%20Report258-final_1.pdf
[4] http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/20121114arizona-charter-school-enrollment-rise.html?nclick_check=1

The target site location for Focus High School's initial site will be on or near Central Avenue between Camelback Rd and Indian School Rd in Phoenix, AZ. This is located in the Phoenix Union High School District and strategically placed within 5 miles of 13 large high schools and 9 smaller charter schools. These schools serve a combined total of 22,492 high school aged students. The following map shows the schools operating within a 5 mile radius of the proposed target site location.

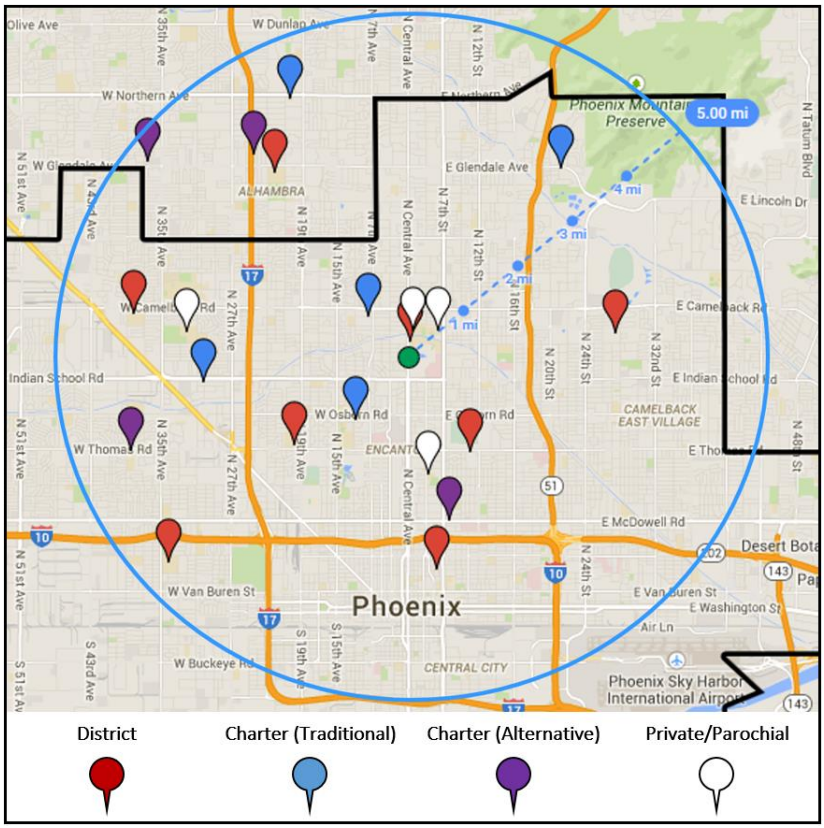

Image A.2.1: Target Site Location (green dot) and High Schools located with a 5 mile radius

The rationale for selecting this site location is that it serves a dense concentration of our target student population and also because demographic data suggests that students and the surrounding community would greatly benefit from Focus High's offerings. The following sections will provide a community analysis for Focus High's target population.

Target Population Demographic Analysis of Community

The target site location of Central Avenue between Camelback Rd and Indian School Rd is located in zip code 85012 and intends to serve students primarily residing within a 5 mile radius of this site location. An estimated 17,000-18,000 high school aged students reside within a 5 mile radius of the target site location.

The chart below shows city data of the estimated number of prospective high-school aged students (grades 9-12) living within a 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 mile radius of our proposed site location. These figures show a large and sustainable population from which to draw a student body.

Radius Around Target Site	Total Area (Square Miles)	Estimated Homes/Apartments	Population Estimate	**Target Population (age 14-18) (5.4% of total population)[5]**
1 mile	3.1	3028.7	12995	701
2 miles	12.6	12310	52819	2848
3 miles	28.3	27649	118634	6396
4 miles	50.3	49143	210858	11368
5 miles	78.5	76695	329072	17741

Table A.2.4: Target Population Residing Near Target Site[6]

The following chart shows the demography of the area surrounding the target site and compares it to Phoenix as well as the rest of Arizona.

	Target Site[7]	All Phoenix	All Arizona
Race[8]			
Hispanic	41%	45%	30%
White	45%	41%	57%
African American	6%	7%	5%
Native American	3%	2%	5%
Asian	2%	3%	3%
Other	2%	3%	3%
Median Income	$40,736	$46,601	$51,923
% Living below poverty rate	35%	25%	18%
Median Age	32.9	31.9	32.2
Family			
Household Size	2.9	2.9	2.65
% of single parent households[9]	53%	39%	36%
Educational Attainment			
Less than high school diploma	41%	19%	14%
High school diploma or equivalency	9%	24%	25%
Some college or associate's degree	24%	31%	34%
Bachelor's degree or higher	24%	28%	27%
Rent vs. Own			
Own	49%	63%	64%
Rent	51%	37%	36%

[5] Uses population data for Phoenix. Source: http://www.city-data.com
[6] http://www.city-data.com/city/Phoenix-Arizona.html; http://www.city-data.com/city/Phoenix-Arizona.html
[7] Demographic data for 5 mile radius surrounding target site location derived from a variety of sources including: Legislative district 24, Alhambra Neighborhood and Zip codes 85012, 85013, 85014, 85015 as found in City-data.com
[8] http://www.city-data.com/city/Phoenix-Arizona.html
[9] http://www.arizonahealthmatters.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=NS-Indicator&file=map&iid=16709693

Table A.2.5: Target Site Surrounding Demographic Data

The data shows that that a disproportionately high number of students in the target community are Hispanic (41%) compared to the rest of Arizona (30%). Additionally, 47.4% designate Spanish as their primary home language.[10] This suggests an increased number of bilingual and English Language Learners (ELL). The median household income is $40,736 per year, which is $932 less per month than the state median income of $51,932. 35% of the target population also lives below the poverty line which is twice the state average. This suggests an increased number of at-risk and financially challenged students. Children residing in the target site community are also much more likely to be raised in single-parent households compared to the AZ average (53% vs 36%). Families are also 23% more likely to rent a home or apartment rather than own compared to the state average. Statistically, renters are more likely to move with greater frequency than homeowners. The data also shows a disproportionately low number of high school graduates residing within the community compared to the rest of Arizona (14% vs 41%). All of these factors combine to show a community in dire need of intervention. Focus believes our unique educational offerings combined with our instructional methods, educational philosophy, and community involvement further described below can greatly benefit the targeted community.

Poverty and Free and Reduced Lunch

Using the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch as an indicator of poverty, the data from each K-8 school district within a 5 mile radius of the target site location reflects a high rate of poverty among the neighborhood's children. The combined weighted average of students receiving free or reduces lunch is 76%; well over the state average of 48.5%.

District[11]	Students Served	% of Free and Reduced Lunch
Osborn	2,924	79%
Madison	6,223	44%
Alhambra	13,928	76%
Creighton	6,515	90%
Phoenix	7,459	88%
Weighted Average	**37,049**	**76% *(48.5% = state average)***

Table A.2.6: Free and Reduced Lunch Percentages

[10] Retrieved from: Retrieved from http://www.phxhs.k12.az.us/Page/106
[11] http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/arizona-enrollment-figures/

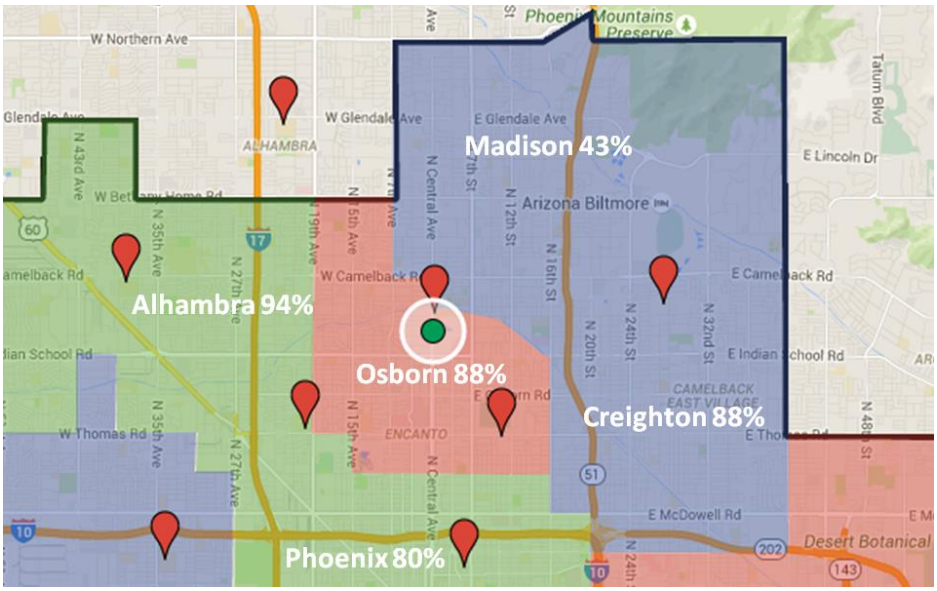

Image A.2.2: Neighboring Elementary Districts

Crime and Drug Abuse

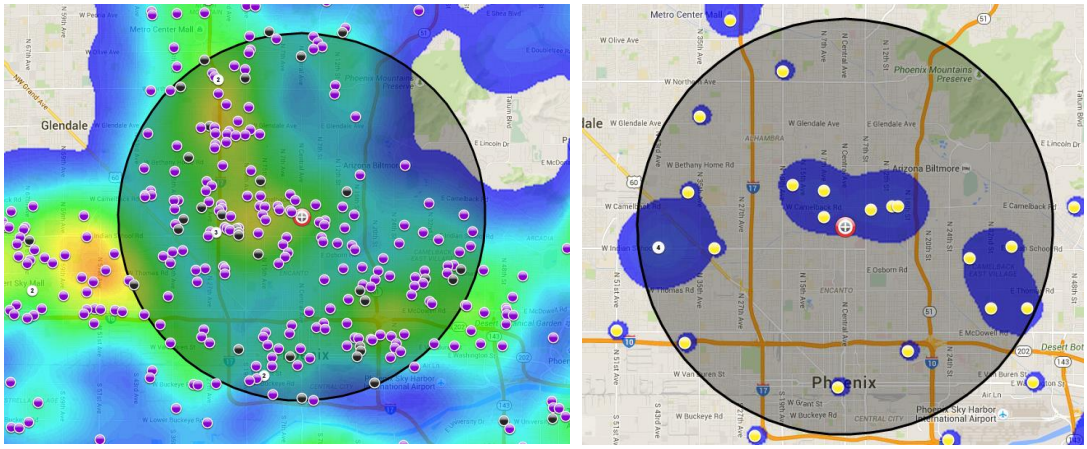

Image A.2.3: Crime and Drug Heat Maps[12]

The target community shows an increased risk of crime and drug abuse. The heat map (above left) shows reported homicides (black dots) and sexual assaults (purple dots) for 2014. This shows an overrepresentation of violent crime in the area surrounding the target site location compared to the rest of AZ. The heat map (above right) shows drug/narcotics violations in 2014. This is also shows an increased concentration of drug abuse immediately surrounding the target site location. The prevalence of violent crime and drug use correlates with lower income neighborhoods and communities with higher unemployment. These conditions are often symptoms of poor education, limited community involvement, and/or limited career and vocational opportunities. Focus believes our educational offerings can help improve these conditions within the community.

Special Education and English Language Learners

[12] http://www.raidsonline.com/

English Language Learners (ELL) in the area makeup 14% of all students, well above the 8.9% rate for all students residing within the Phoenix Unified School District, and more than double the state average of 5.9%. Data released by the U.S. Department of Education showed that only 25% of English Language Learners graduated high school within 4 years.[13] Between 2008 and 2012, the ELL student graduation rate for the Phoenix Union High School District fell from 51 percent to 22 percent.[14] The prevalence of English Language Learners and the corollary increased risk of dropout are serious challenges facing this target community.

District[15]	Students Served	% of English Language Learners
Osborn	2,924	15%
Madison	6,223	4%
Alhambra	13,928	12%
Creighton	6,515	27%
Phoenix	7,459	15%
Weighted Average	**37,049**	**14% (5.9% = state avg)**

Table A.2.7: English Language Learners

Special Education (SPED)

The Special Education data below suggests that at 11%, the percentage of students requiring special education services is on par with the state average of 11.4%.

District	Students Served	% of Special Education Students
Osborn	2,924	17%
Madison	6,223	8%
Alhambra	13,928	11%
Creighton	6,515	10%
Phoenix	7,459	11%
Weighted Average	**37,049**	**11% (11.4% = state avg)**

Table A.2.8: Special Education

Academic Achievement

The following will examine academic achievement results for students attending a high school within the target demographic. The map below shows high schools operating within a 5 mile radius of FES' target site location. Red markers represent district schools, blue markers represent traditional

[13] http://www2.ed.gov/documents/press-releases/state-2010-11-graduation-rate-data.pdf
[14] http://www.fronterasdesk.org/content/numbers-behind-english-instruction-arizona
[15] http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/arizona-enrollment-figures/

charter schools, purple markers represent alternative charter schools, and white markers represent private/parochial schools. The following charts will show the academic performance for these schools.

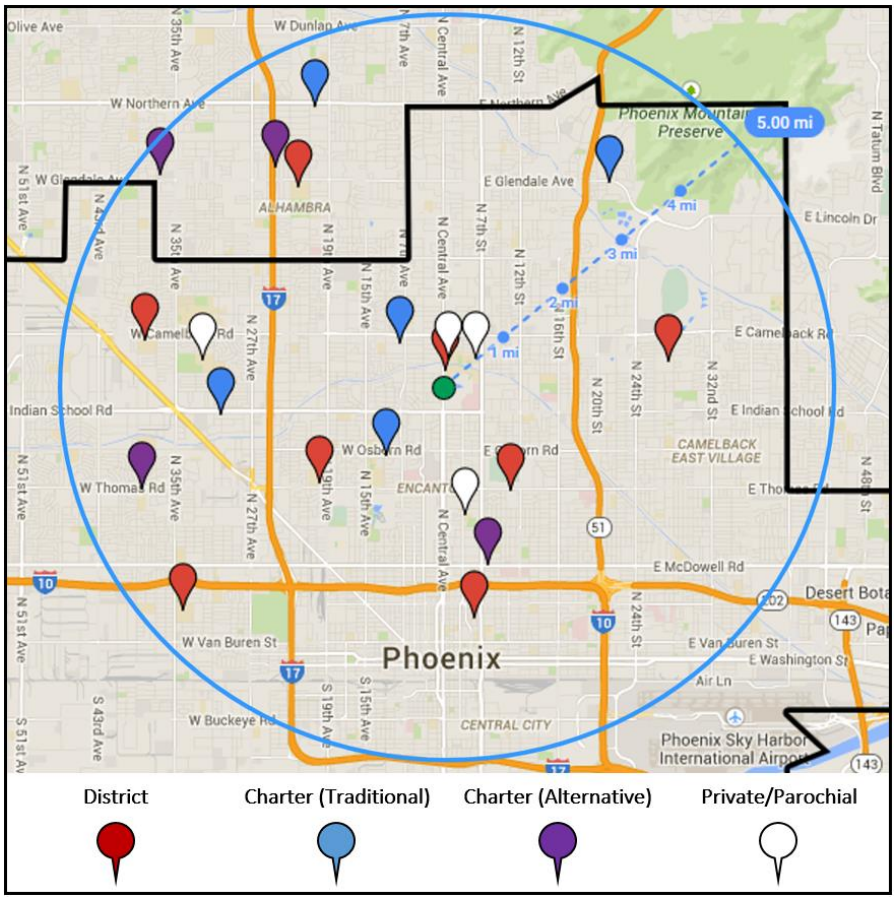

Image A.2.4: High Schools located with a 5 mile radius of proposed site location

The table below shows the schools represented in the map above. The table shows each school's distance from FES' proposed site location, the type of school (District, Traditional Charter, Alternative Charter, or Private/Parochial), and the total student enrollment broken down by grade level. The enrollment totals are used to calculate weighted test scores and graduation rates for all schools serving our target population.

School Name	Distance	Type[16]	9	10	11	12	Total
Central High School	0.20	D	627	657	482	495	2261
North High School	1.60	D	741	647	657	566	2611
Metro Tech High School	2.00	D	536	395	400	378	1709

[16] Type: D = District; CT = Charter Traditional; CA = Charter Alternative; PP = Private/Parochial

Camelback High School	2.94	D	634	530	437	409	2010
Bio Science High	3.00	D	100	75	66	62	303
Washington High School	3.19	D	467	446	431	370	1714
Alhambra High School	3.95	D	736	703	677	610	2726
Carl Hayden High School	4.45	D	552	562	492	459	2065
Arcadia High School	5.32	D	456	457	410	414	1737
Phx College Prep Academy	1.51	CT	54	11	18	20	103
Westwind Prep Academy	3.88	CT	36	37	33	40	146
Girls Leadership Academy	0.68	CT	35	38	28	40	141
Pan-American Charter School	2.90	CT	36	30	17	13	96
Great Hearts - Veritas Prep	2.77	CT	92	97	62	52	303
Summit High (Kaizen School)	2.56	CA	*	27	30	43	125
Cornerstone Charter School	3.45	CA	17	35	58	115	225
Maya High (Kaizen School)	4.51	CA	21	61	88	222	392
West Phoenix High School	4.23	CA	31	61	96	248	436
St Mary's High School	1.77	PP	137	113	134	117	500
Bourgade Catholic High	3.20	PP	104	121	86	91	402
Brophy College Prep	0.33	PP	343	325	321	301	1322
Xavier College Prep	0.55	PP	315	283	266	301	1165
TOTALS			**6070**	**5711**	**5289**	**5366**	**22492**

Table A.2.9: 9-12 Grade Students Attending a High School within 5 Miles of Target Location[17]

The following charts show academic achievement rates for students in our target population (Private and parochial schools have been omitted).

District Schools	Grade 2014	Math 2014	Reading 2014	Writing 2014	Science 2014	Graduation Rate
Central High School	C	39	71	54	18	70
North High School	C	42	73	60	45	76
Camelback High School	C	69	44	53	30	77
Metro Tech High School	B	59	86	79	32	90
Alhambra High School	C	32	68	61	14	71
Carl Hayden High School	B	54	76	52	19	68

[17] http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation/arizona-enrollment-figures/

Bio Science High	A	94	95	95	90	100
WEIGHTED AVERAGE[18]	**C**	48.6	70.0	60.2	27.6	**75.3**

Table A.2.10: Target Population 2014 School Letter Grade, AIMS Percent Passing, and Graduation Rate: District[19]

Traditional Charter Schools	Grade 2014	Math 2014	Reading 2014	Writing 2014	Science 2014	Graduation Rate
Phx College Prep Academy	B	62	93	77	<5	74
Westwind Prep Academy	C	62	79	56	32	69
Girls Leadership Academy	C	53	91	85	35	47
Pan-American Charter	B	95	91	53	54	75
Great Hearts - Veritas Prep	A	95	95	79	83	94
WEIGHTED AVERAGE[20]	**C**	70.5	88.8	69.3	38.8	**68.9**

Table A.2.11: Target Population 2014 School Letter Grade, AIMS Percent Passing, and Graduation Rate: Charter[21]

Alternative Charter Schools	Grade 2014	Math 2014	Reading 2014	Writing 2014	Science 2014	Graduation Rate
Summit High (Kaizen School)	D	9	42	22	<5	22
Cornerstone Charter School	C	16	69	33	10	84
Maya High (Kaizen School)	C	16	50	30	<5	15
West Phoenix High School	C	15	55	26	6	25
WEIGHTED AVERAGE[22]	**C**	14.9	54.6	28.2	6.3	**32.6**

Table A.2.12: Target Population 2014 School Letter Grade, AIMS Percent Passing, and Graduation Rate: Charter[23]

These charts show a need and an opportunity to improve graduation rates and academic performance within the proposed target population, particular in the fields of Math and Science. In 2014, only 48.6% of students attending a district high school achieved a passing rate on the Math portion of the AIMS exam. Only 27.6% of district students achieved a passing score on the Science portion. FES believes

[18] Weighted averages are calculated using total enrollment figures shown in Table A.2.3
[19] Data retrieved from https://azreportcards.com/Assessments/AIMS and https://azreportcards.com/AcademicIndicators/Indicators
[20] Weighted averages are calculated using total enrollment figures shown in Table A.2.3
[21] Data retrieved from https://azreportcards.com/Assessments/AIMS and https://azreportcards.com/AcademicIndicators/Indicators
[22] Weighted averages are calculated using total enrollment figures shown in Table A.2.3
[23] Data retrieved from https://azreportcards.com/Assessments/AIMS and https://azreportcards.com/AcademicIndicators/Indicators

that our STEM-centric educational philosophy and our technology-rich blended learning environment will greatly benefit this target population—particularly in the fields of Math and Science.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR TARGET POPULATION

Focus Education Services (FES) proposes to provide a quality secondary education to students in the target community. The school model, grounded in research and best practices, aims to address the educational and community challenges of the Central Phoenix neighborhood. Detailed further in section A.3, key aspects of the school model have proven successful in similar neighborhoods nationwide and in Arizona.[24] Rationale, supported by research and experiential data, that supports how Focus High's program will meet the needs of the Phoenix Central neighborhood, including improving pupil achievement, is detailed below.

Need for Academic Excellence

The academic statistics cited above; namely low student achievement outcomes across literacy and the STEM fields, as well as low graduation rates certainly demonstrate the need for an excellent academic program that leads to increased pupil achievement.

Focus High proposes to do just that. Through extensive research, school observation, and experience working with similar populations, the founding team has identified the following best practices that will increase the pupil achievement in the Phoenix Central neighborhood.

Data-Driven Instruction Tailored to Student Needs

The instructional program of Focus High will include curriculum developed by the National Academy of Science designed to adapt and respond to students' individual needs and learning preferences. Acellus, a hybrid instructional platform, assesses student ability and performance through a Deficiency Diagnostics® program that then adapts instruction to better suit students' individual needs. This instructional method will help to better serve our target population by meeting the diverse needs and diverse skills of our student body.

Previous schools in similar urban, low-income communities have experienced phenomenal increases in pupil achievement through the usage of Acellus. For instance, Florence Township School District in New Jersey boosted graduation rates from 75% in 2011 to 90% in 2014 after implementing the Acellus Courseware.[25] Jane Macon School in Brunswick, GA experienced an immediate 6% AYP increase for two consecutive years after implementing the Acellus Courseware and achieved a 99% pass rate on the EOCT exam for Algebra.[26]

Continuously Proactive Professional Growth

[24] Multiple ideas and instructional strategies used to meet the needs of our target population and improve student achievement are adapted from Western School of Science and Technology, a Phoenix based Charter School.
[25] https://www.science.edu/Acellus/feedback/feedback-admin.php/
[26] Ibid.

Focus High believes that the teacher in the classroom or behind the computer monitor is one of the most important factors that influence student achievement. For this reason, Focus High will aim not only to recruit excellent teaching staff, but also commit to continuously develop, train, and grow its existing staff. Professional growth will take place within the context of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs have a clear research basis as a best practice.

Leading researchers (including Fullan, Schmoker, and Marzano) advocate for the implementation of PLCs as effective structures for academic programs, as do leading educational organizations (including the CCSSO and NEA). The National Teaching Standards and Standards for Professional Learning also incorporate PLCs into their standards.[27]

PLCs will be responsible for co-observation and debrief cycles, action research, and professional development sessions. PLCs will be supported and guided by school leadership in these tasks. These systems will continuously improve Focus High's teachers, leading to continuous improvements in pupil achievement. In addition, continuous coaching, feedback, and instructional adjustment will be central to the instructional program of Focus High. This will also continuously improve the effectiveness of Focus High's educators.

Instructional Best Practices

The academic program of Focus High depends on effective teachers utilizing proven instructional best practices, including objective-driven instruction, cooperative learning structures, high-yield instructional strategies, Socratic seminars, and differentiation strategies.

Scholarship by noted education researchers, including Carol Ann Tomlinson,[28] Spencer Kagan,[29] and Robert Marzano[30] has indicated that such instructional best practices can lead to significant increases in student learning, including among underprivileged student populations, such as those in the Central Phoenix neighborhood.[31]

Problem-Based Learning

Science and enrichment courses will implement problem-based learning. Problem-based learning incorporates students solving real-world "problems" in their studies. Problem-based learning is used in several Arizona STEM-model schools and has been shown to increase student motivation, which in turn has been proven to lead to improved pupil achievement.

Need for Individualized Education and Support

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[27] Laczko-Kerr, I. (2012). Creating systems to support student learning. Retrieved from http://www.anymeeting.com/WebConference-beta/RecordingDefault.aspx?c_psrid=EB58D789884A.
[28] Tomlinson, C. A., et al. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classrooms: a review of literature. Journal for the Education of the Gifted. Vol. 27, Number 2/3.
[29] Kagan, S. (2008, Summer). Kagan structures simply put. Retrieved from http://www.kaganonline.com/free_articles/dr_spencer_kagan/ASK38.php.
[30] Marzano, R., D. Pickering, and J. Pollock. (2004). Classroom instruction that works. Pearson: New York.
[31] De Gallow. What is problem-based learning? Retrieved from http://www.pbl.uci.edu/whatispbl.html.

The target community of Focus High, as demonstrated by the statistics above, includes students with varied learning needs – including underachieving students, special education students, and English Language Learners. The academic program of Focus High will address the individual education needs of all of these students.

Hybrid Learning[32]

Hybrid learning, also called blended learning, is the combination of traditional in-classroom and online learning that leverages technology to control some element of the time, place, path, or place of student learning. Hybrid learning allows teachers to completely individualize student learning paths while continuously monitoring student performance. Focus High will implement hybrid learning as a key cornerstone of its academic program.

Other charter schools in similar demographics that utilize hybrid learning, including Carpe Diem in Yuma, Arizona, Rocketship in San Jose, California, and KIPP Empower Academy in Los Angeles, California, have become some of the top schools in the country utilizing this model.

Specifically, Focus High will use the Canvas Online Learning Management System (LMS) as a cornerstone of its individualized approach to student learning. Canvas has been proven to significantly streamline instruction and increase student achievement and efficiency across a variety of demographics.

Over 1,200 school districts and colleges have adopted Canvas LMS as a way to better meet staff and student needs. Canvas currently serves over 162,000 users on the Utah Education Network which includes some of the nation's top performing school districts. Dr. Brian Botts, Principal of Edison Collegiate High School, a top-rated school located in Punta Gorda, FL, attributes much of his school's success to the Canvas LMS. "We live, eat and breathe Canvas. We are 100 percent sold—it's very integrated into everything we do here."[33] Other schools improving instruction and student performance through Canvas include: Bethel, Edmonds, Ferndale, Franklin Pierce, Highline, Renton, Snohomish and Vancouver in Washington, as well as 77 school districts in Dallas, TX and 200 districts in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC.[34]

Special Education

According to the statistics above, approximately 10% of Focus High students will be receiving special education services. To accommodate their needs, Focus High will contract with certified special educators and train all students in best practices regarding the education of students receiving special education services.

In addition, the Response to Intervention (RTI) model – a crucial component of the academic program – will facilitate easy identification of students needing special education services.

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[32] National Charter School Resource Center. (2012, September 12). Blended learning in charter schools. Retrieved from http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars.
[33] http://www.canvaslms.com/case-studies/Case_Study_Edison_Collegiate_HS.pdf
[34] http://www.canvaslms.com/news/press-releases/canvas-builds-k12-momentum-2015

English Language Learners

Similarly, Focus High anticipates a high number of English Language Learners (ELLs) based on demographic data presented above. To accommodate the academic needs of these learners, Focus High will ensure that relevant staff are SEI certified and receive continuous training on how to best serve the needs of ELLs.

Need for College and Career Preparation

The adult educational outcomes in the Phoenix, Central neighborhood suggest a need for a college and career preparatory educational program. It is widely noted that a college degree is key to both increased long-term career prospects and lifetime earning potential. Focus High proposes a college and career-preparatory educational program to address this community need and help connect students with opportunities for advancement in the new, global, technological economy.

Focus High believes that all students can and should apply, matriculate, and graduate from college or a vocational program. To that end, Focus High will provide Advanced Placement (AP) courses as a cornerstone of its curriculum. AP courses can in many cases lead to college credit. In addition, Focus High will offer courses and instruction to prepare students to pass CLEP exams that also award college credit. Focus will also offer CTE elective courses that prepare students to earn industry-relevant IT certifications. These offerings will assist students within our target demographic to make college and career goals more accessible.

STEM Focus

As mentioned previously in section A.1, the global, national, and Arizona economies are all moving towards a greater focus on STEM jobs. Focus High will focus on the STEM fields by providing innovative coursework as well as collaborate with STEM professionals when creating curriculum. This focus on STEM education, particularly in technology, will better prepare Focus High students for college and career opportunities in the STEM fields.

Community Involvement and Community Partnerships

Focus will reach out to and call upon the local community to reach organizational, academic, and career goals. We will invite community leaders and STEM field professionals to visit the campus during homeroom and elective periods to discuss real life application of technology and computer science principles taught and learned in class. We will organize quarterly field trips for students to visit successful organizations operating in STEM fields. The primary purpose of these field trips will be to connect principles and concepts discussed in class to real-world applications and to also help students prepare and plan for future career opportunities. Additionally, all students will provide 12 hours of community service per year to encourage empathy, civic awareness, and social responsibility.

In short, Focus Education will benefit our proposed target population by improving academic achievement on state standardized exams, increasing high school graduation rates, increasing pupil college and career readiness, improving community involvement, and preparing students for life beyond

high school. FES' vision, mission, and educational philosophy will help accomplish these objectives by creating a learning environment that closely resembles what students are likely to experience after graduation. Our small campus size, flexible curriculum, and semi-autonomous learning environment will serve to better prepare students to transition to college and/or to the work force immediately following graduation.

CLASS SIZE

Focus Education Services will provide an estimated student-teacher ratio of 17:1 in year 1.[35] Thereafter, Focus will maintain class sizes of approximately 17-23 students per full time equivalent (FTE) teacher. These estimates exclude special education interventionists which would further reduce the ratio.

Smaller class sizes will allow FES to provide a more individualized approach to education and increased feedback and interactivity between students and teachers. Studies show that increased individual attention has led to improved pupil achievement. An urban New York City public high school study from 2005 showed that students in smaller classes with greater teacher interaction had significantly lower drop-out rates, higher grades, and received better results on their college entrance exams. After four years in a small class, the graduation rate for free-lunch students more than doubled, and their likelihood of graduating equaled those who were not economically disadvantaged.[36]

[35] Estimate based on total anticipated enrollment divided by Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers. Excludes contracted SPED instructors. "Most schools, districts, and states count all "instructional staff" as teachers when calculating student-teacher ratios and full-time equivalencies." Student Teacher Ratio (2014). The Glossary of Education Reform. Retrieved from: http://edglossary.org/student-teacher-ratio/

[36] Class Size Matters. (2012). Class size matters. Retrieved from http://www.classsizematters.org/