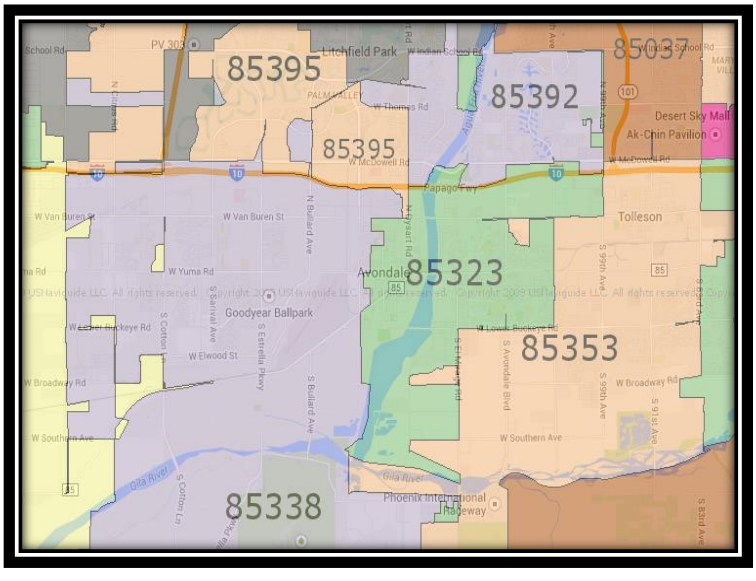
A.2 Target Population

A. Description of the Community

Target Community

Highland Prep will provide a STEM College Preparatory experience for high school students in high school grades 9 – 12 who live in the city of Goodyear, AZ as well as neighboring communities in several different zip codes in the area (85323, 85353, 85392, 85395, 85338). Highland Prep will be located in the North Central area of 85338 near the cross streets of Litchfield Road and Buckeye Road. Highland Prep's interest in these zip codes is consistent with our interest in serving high need populations (as defined through poverty and minority indexes) where effective schools are in demand.



Economic Profile

Highland Prep's targeted community is a student population characterized by a 22.8% poverty level as compared to state and national levels, respectively 18.6% and 14.5%. In addition, 66.1% of the population 16 years and older are in the labor force. In terms of education levels, only 39.7% of parents hold an associate's degree or higher as compared to state and nation averages of 47.6% and 49.0% respectively. The income per capita is $17,772 which is below the state average of $25,358 and the national average of $28,155. The median household income in the Highland Prep community is $47,433, below the national average of $53.046. This community is also characterized by schools where students qualify for free and reduced lunch (Title I) at an average rate of 62.16% (proximityone.com, 2014) compared to the state average of 55% (http://www.azed.gov/health-nutrition). Highland Prep will service these areas by providing bus transportation.

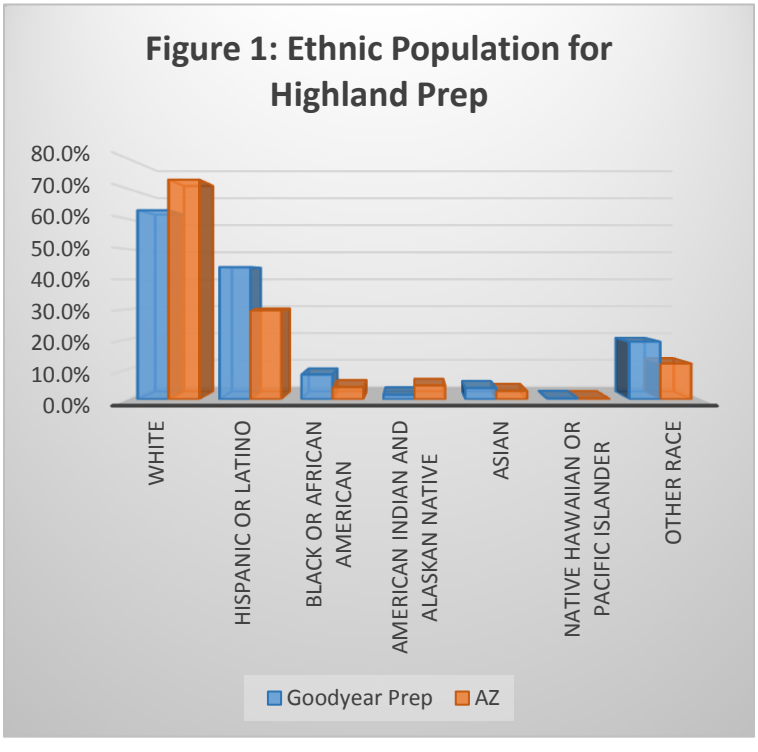
Table 1: Economic Profile

ECONOMIC PROFILE								
Zip code	Population	Age Group 15-19	Title-I	Poverty Level	Labor Force	Income Per Capita	Median Household Income	Associates Degree or Higher
85323	39,507	3,302	71.10%	22.8%	66.9%	$14,744	$ 42,922.00	35.9%
85338	41,115	3,399	59.50%	16.7%	71.9%	$18,162	$ 50,552.00	52.0%
85353	31,011	2,798	68.98%	15.0%	69.7%	$14,116	$ 43,886.00	33.6%
85392	34,022	3,191	61.12%	10.7%	75.6%	$17,768	$ 45,155.00	53.4%
85395	21,434	1,017	50.10%	4.7%	46.5%	$24,074	$ 54,651.00	23.5%
Highland Prep	167,089	13,707	62.16%	22.8%	66.1%	$17,772	$ 47,433.20	39.7%
Arizona	6.3 mil	461,582	47.9%	18.6%	60.3%	$25,358	$ 49,774.00	47.6%

National	308.7 mil	22.04 mil	44.6%	14.5%	63.8%	$28,155	$ 53,046.00	49.0%

Ethnic Population

There is a higher concentration of minority subpopulations in Highland Prep's targeted community at 77% as compared with the statewide average of 43.2% (factfinder.census.gov). For specific ethnic demographics, see Figure 2. Highland Prep anticipates approximately 13% of our students will qualify for ELL services and an 11% special education population. HP will use components of our Program of instruction to address the needs of our ELL and special education population. HP will provide services through either Structured English Immersion (SEI) or an Individual Language Learner Plan (ILLP), depending on the number of students who qualify; we require all teachers to be SEI endorsed, and preferably have experience executing the SEI model. HP will ensure that services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are made through ACT, and the College Board for PSAT, SAT, and AP tests. HP will contract with special education specialists and service providers as needed. As well, HP will train classroom teachers on 45-day screenings, accommodations and modifications, and will be required to read and sign an acknowledgement that they have read each child's IEP prior to the start of each quarter for each student with a disability whom they teach.



Analysis of Public Schools in Proposed Territory

High Schools: Minority students are more than 14 times more likely to drop out of high school within Highland Prep's proposed territory (http://www.azed.gov/research-evaluation). This supports the ethnic demographics shown in Figure 2, in which dropouts are more likely to affect minorities (77%) as well as economically disadvantaged students as Highland Prep's proposed community population having a 62.16% free/reduced and 22.8% poverty level (Table 1). A comparison of eight high schools in the area shows that only one school received an excellent rating of "A", five received an above average rating of "B", and two received an above average rating of "B-ALT" according to 2014 information from the Arizona Department of Education.

Table 2: High School Dropout Rates

High School Drop-Out Rates, Graduation Rates, and A-F Ratings within HP'S Proposed Territory					
High School	Students Enrolled	Dropout Rate	Minority Dropout Rate	Graduation Rate	A-F Rating
Agua Fria	1,639	3.1%	15.11%	80%	B
Desert Edge	1,554	1.45%	14.03%	77%	B
Estrella High School	397	7.0%	14.47	34%	B ALT
E-Institute	57	29.66%	71.1%	30%	B ALT
La Joya Community	1,796	2.71%	8.37%	77%	B
Millennium	2,134	1.2%	15.38%	85%	A
Tolleson Union	1,756	2.95%	16.72%	78%	B
Westview	2.604	2.05%	7.8%	84%	B
Highland Prep Proposed Territory Totals and Averages	9,336	6.27%	20.37%	68.13%	

Further analysis of these high schools reveal low AIMS pass rates for most of the schools in all subject areas –math, reading, writing, and science. Furthermore, the analysis found low AIMS pass rates in schools reported with "A-B" ratings. Specifically, of these eight high schools:

- 7 of the 8 schools had 60% or fewer of its students pass AIMS Math
- 7 of the 8 schools had 60% or fewer of its students pass AIMS Science
- 4 of the 8 schools had 60% or fewer of its students pass AIMS Writing
- 2 of the 8 schools had 60% or fewer of its students pass AIMS Reading

High School AIMS Pass Rates and SGP's within HP's Proposed Territory						
High School	Math Pass Rate	Math SGP	Reading Pass Rate	Reading SGP	Writing Pass Rate	Science Pass Rate
Agua Fria	59%	65	79%	49	63%	45%
Desert Edge	51%	55	84%	48	68%	38%
E-Institute Avondale	21%	N/A	54%	N/A	48%	11%
Estrella High School	14%	34	52%	46	31%	<5.0%
La Joya	39%	33	79%	43	57%	32%
Millennium	61%	48	88%	53	79%	51%
Tolleson Union	39%	46	76%	41	60%	30%
Westview	50%	37	81%	47	68%	39%
HP's Proposed Territory Averages	42%	45	74%	47	59%	35%

Table 3: High School AIMS Pass Rates

Middle Schools: There is a multitude of middle schools in Highland Prep's targeted community. Of the 18 middle school comparisons in the area surrounding Highland Prep, only four schools have an excellent rating of "A", six schools received an above average rating of "B", and the remaining seven schools received a an average rating of "C".

Although no school rating was below average, most schools AIMS pass rates were significantly below the state average with an overall pass rate of 49% in math, 69% in reading, 38% in writing, and 49% in science. The analysis of the middle and elementary school data strongly suggest the majority of eighth grade students will be leaving these schools to attend local high schools (including Highland Prep), with significant academic deficits and gaps in learning.

Table 4: Middle School Data

Middle School AIMS Pass Rates Within Highland Prep's Proposed Territory						
School Name	**Students Enrolled**	**A-F Rating**	**Math Pass Rate**	**Reading Pass Rate**	**Writing Pass Rate**	**Science Pass Rate**
Verrado Middle School	986	A	77%	91%	73%	81%
Western Sky Middle School	881	A	75%	88%	72%	81%
Wigwam Creek Middle School	879	A	73%	85%	63%	76%
Westar Elementary School (STEM Magnet)	596	A	69%	89%	64%	72%
L. Thomas Heck Middle School	735	B	69%	83%	56%	81%
Estrella Mountain Elementary School	557	B	73%	88%	67%	72%
Copper Trails School	916	B	60%	87%	62%	63%
Desert Thunder School	636	B	56%	78%	53%	63%
Michael Anderson School	823	B	55%	32%	68%	44%
Wildflower School	452	B	54%	71%	46%	53%
Freedom Elementary (STEM Magnet)	849	C	50%	76%	43%	55%
Liberty Elementary School	583	C	52%	71%	28%	56%
Rainbow Valley Elementary School	667	C	60%	71%	46%	59%
Avondale Middle School	432	C	41%	61%	23%	47%
Centerra Mirage STEM Academy	655	C	53%	74%	49%	49%
Desert Star School	685	C	49%	72%	43%	51%
Elíseo C. Félix School	500	C	40%	56%	34%	26%
Highland Prep Territorial Totals and Averages	**4,371**		**49%**	**69%**	**38%**	**49%**
Arizona Averages			**64%**	**86%**	**75%**	**39%**

B. Meeting the Needs of the School Community In Support of Academic Achievement

Highland Prep has conducted a thorough investigation of the geographic area and the target population. From this, we will target students who are disadvantaged and at-risk of failure due to academic, social or economic factor, who need extra support and structure to be successful in an academic setting. Highland Prep will use the following components of our Program of Instruction to address the needs of its student population, while ensuring that our students experience rigorous academic and social skills instruction, leading to enhanced success in school, in life, and within the community.

Highland Prep's Mission Statement

Highland Prep is a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) college-preparatory high school. Highland Prep features a rigorous academic program with an emphasis on 21st century preparation defined by critical thinking and inquiry learning. Highland Prep believes in tying course content to interrelated themes to increases relevance and application in the interest of preparing students to succeed in the future global arena.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)

A recent National Center for Educations Statistics report indicates that there is an urgent need for STEM college preparation in Arizona, given that only 23.3% of Arizona students who enter and graduate STEM programs in college are minority. Similarly, in Arizona just 8.9% of Arizona college graduates enter STEM programs (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2011). In Highland Prep's target population areas, there are no comprehensive high school STEM programs which underscores the need for a high quality STEM college preparatory high school program (See A.1, 3, 3.2, & A.5).

In a recent Trend, the International Mathematics and Science study (TIMSS) showed American eighth graders and high school students ranked 9th and 17th, on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) respectively. Former Intel chief executive officer and chair of the Arizona Ready Education Council agrees, stating that "it's not that students here are getting worse. It's that students in other nations are getting better" (Creno, 2012). The small percentage of American students entering STEM fields, and the broadening gap between their math and science performance compared to their international competitors makes clear that there is a dire need for high quality STEM programs. Highland Prep will provide its students with a STEM program reflective of these changing needs.

Advanced Placement (AP) Curriculum

Highland Prep believes that the best way to ensure that their students acquire critical thinking skills is through exposure to a rigorous curriculum. The school's rigorous curriculum will include honors and AP classes since students who participate in the AP curriculum have increased high school graduation and college completion rates (College Board, 2007) over those who do not. In a 2007 College Board study, students were compared who graduated from high school from 1998 to 2002, and enrolled at public colleges and universities in Texas. A clear benefit was found for students who participated in the AP curriculum over their peers with respect to higher GPAs, credits earned and graduation performance (College Board, 2007).

In the same study it was found that students who take AP courses in high school were found to be more likely to graduate from college within four years and have higher grade point averages in college than similar students who weren't exposed to such classes (College Board, 2007). Highland Prep believes that their target population will benefit from exposure to research-based coursework that supports increased high school success, increases graduation rates, enhances college readiness, and college completion rates (See A.2, A.3, A.3.2 & A.5).

Moreover, since Highland Prep's overall target community has a high dropout rate of 10.0%, (azed.gov, 2013) the benefits of AP course exposure are especially significant since students who take even a single AP class have a 40% greater likelihood of graduating from high school (College Board, 2007). Even if a student was found to have failed an AP class, he or she was found to have a 25% greater likelihood of finishing a college degree due to the exposure to college-level rigor. Highland Prep is committed to repeating its

administrative team's previous success in exposing a maximum number of its students to the AP curriculum. In support of this goal, the school will offer a rigorous pre-AP program for English and Math through Spring Board's Pre-AP curriculum materials. As indicated in the Program of Study, a 2009 four-year College Board study, using longitudinal evaluation, investigated the impact of Spring Board on the academic achievement of Florida students. Among the results, researchers found that Florida high schools that used Spring Board were found to have a 109% and 52% gain in the number of black and Hispanic students, respectively, taking AP coursework. Whereas, students from Florida high schools not using Spring Board had a 37% gain each for black and Hispanic students taking AP coursework (Elefonte, H., College Board & Jun Li, Fordham University, 2010). Given the results of this study, Highland Prep believes that Spring Board is a good fit for their target student population since anticipated minority populations will be high at 77%, (see Figure 2) for specific ethnicity rates.

Student Intake, Data-driven Decision-Making and Personalized Education Plans

All new Highland Prep students will participate in a student/administrator/parent interview to determine goals and needs relative to placement in the school's academic program. Prior to the interview students will be assigned a diagnostic assessment for Reading and Math (ACT Aspire) to help the administrative team establish a baseline from which to schedule classes, prescribe remediation, targeted intervention, identify enrichment opportunities, and to measure future (longitudinal) growth (See A.1, A.3, A.3.2, & A.5). Where applicable, students may be placed in remedial classes and or, assigned to the *Future Freshmen Academy*, various workshops, tutoring with teachers, or online tutoring. Student test data and transcript analysis also assist in determining enrichment opportunities, which may include honors and advanced placement (AP) classes (See A1, A.2, A.3.2, & A. 5). The new information coupled with previous school data ensures that the intake process serves as a baseline from which to measure future growth. Again, through this process, students will be assigned classes based on their academic history, graduation needs, as well as student and parent feedback. The interview process initiates the start of a Personalized Education Plan (PEP). Each student has unique characteristics, strengths and areas in need of remediation and enrichment. Each student's data will be tracked on datasheets that are updated by a specific grade level tracker (Holcomb, 2004). For example, freshmen will be tracked by one faculty member (grade level advisor) whose responsibility is to ensure that all freshmen are kept on track with their freshmen goals, which are articulated in their four-year graduation plan, which is a part of their PEP. Similarly, all sophomores will be tracked by a grade level advisor, as will upper classmen (See A.1, A.3, & A.5).

Highland Prep's teachers will post student's weekly grades on an online portal linked to the school's website. Parents will be trained on how to use the online portal Blackboard Engage (Edline) and will be provided usernames and will have passwords. The school's administrative team and grade level advisors will monitor the weekly grades in order to schedule prescriptive remedial interventions (See A.1, A.4, A.3, & A.5). Teachers will report students who are missing assignments or doing poorly on tests to administration, via email and that school's administrative team will meet with each student individually to ensure that a plan for remediation is understood and carried out. When academic challenges arise, it will be standard practice for students to stay after school with a particular teacher that day and in some cases over a period of days until the missing work is completed or weak skill sets are remediated (See A.4). These one-on-one meetings are tracked and a disposition is shared with the referring teacher and parents (Johnson, 2002). In the school administrative team's previous school, the assignment completion rate steadily improved after the aforementioned practice was initiated during the second quarter of the 2008-2009 school year. As a result, the failure rate at the school was reduced by 10% over the following two years. The practice also assists grade level advisors in keeping their students on track with their PEPs (See A.1, A.3, & A.5), which includes their year-long class schedule, as well as protecting each student's G.P.A. and progress towards graduation. The school's administrative team has found Personalized Education Plans helpful in building

efficacy with parents and students by demystifying the learning process and giving parents a reason to support the school with their child's progress (McEwan, 2003).

Future Freshmen Academy

According to Richard Selznick, author of the Shut-down Learner, students often enter school optimistically. They look forward to meeting their teacher and learning new things. However, this optimism fades quickly and many learners just "shut down." Rather than progressing at a normal pace, they find that acquiring core skills becomes an enormous chore – a laborious process. Selznick (2009) contends that "shut down learners" exist in all sectors of society and are most often characterized by their difficulty in completing certain tasks. At the high school level these "shut down learners" have tremendous gaps in skills. At Highland Prep's previous school in the first year of operation 94% of freshmen required a pre-algebra class and 89% required a reading comprehension class. Rather than taking high school level courses, the majority of freshmen spent the first quarter of the 2006-2007 school year mastering elementary and middle school skills. It has yet to be determined if this will be a similar scenario at Highland Prep; however if it is, the school will be ready to address student needs through the *Future Freshmen Academy*. Traditionally, students who enter high school are presumed to be ready for high school math and English, however, this is frequently not the case and many encounter academic difficulty resulting in failure and even drop-out. Greater attention must be paid to supporting the transition from middle to high school in order to close the gap and bring about academic equity. The school's Future Freshman Academy will be designed to meet this need. The Academy will specifically target freshmen who enroll at the school with significant gaps in both pre-algebra and reading comprehension. Again, at the administrative team's previous school during the summer of 2007 61% of newly enrolled freshmen attended the Freshmen Academy. The 2008 Freshmen Academy was attended by 66% of newly enrolled freshmen and the 2009 Freshmen Academy was attended by 72% of newly enrolled freshmen. After implementation of the Future Freshmen Academy the previous school's pass rates for freshmen English classes went up 4% in 2007-2008 and 5% in 2008-2009. Similarly, freshmen algebra pass rates rose by 10% in 2007-2008 and 11% in 2008-2009. Highland Prep's administrative team believes that these increases were due, at least in part, to the success of the school's Freshmen Academy and use of data in scheduling students. The school will offer Future Freshmen Academy in the summer just prior to the start of the 2016-17 school year in the interest of bridging deficiencies in high school readiness skills for students entering the high school as freshmen (See A.1, A3, A.4 & A.5).

Formative Instructional and Assessment Practices

Through extensive research, and previous successful application of formative instruction and assessment practices, Highland Prep's administrative team have once again, chosen formative assessment to combat silent failure, illuminate frame-by-frame re-teaching opportunities, and to better assess which individual students need help during and after each class period. The school's administrative team is aware of the enormous potential the educational innovation has to inspire students and teachers to engage in true meta-cognition, which is where real teaching and learning begins (Popham, 2009).

As mentioned in the Education Philosophy section Highland Prep will utilize formative instruction and assessment as its primary instructional vehicle since it has a proven track record for generating significant growth with all students, and particularly with those who struggle or are behind (Black & Wiliam, 1998b, Popham, 2008). Formative assessment instructional practices will serve as the cornerstone of the school's instructional program. Formative assessment instruction is highly appropriate for the school's targeted student population since the bulk of studies indicate that "improved formative assessment helps low achievers even more than other students – and so reduces the range of achievement while raising the achievement overall" (Black & Wiliam, 1998b, p. 141). The school's administrative team will ensure that its learning community learns and uses formative assessment instructional practices with maximum fidelity to

generate powerful growth for its learners as demonstrated in the Education Philosophy section, and sections A.1, A.3, A.3.2, A.4, & A.5).

Middle School Outreach

According to the *Nation's Report Card* or the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 2010, Arizona's eighth graders were four points behind the national average in reading, and five points lower than the national average in math. Arizona's minority students (Black, Hispanic, and Native American) had scores ranging from 21 to 30 points less than the national average for 8th graders, respectively. Highland Prep's target population with 17 points behind the state average in reading and 15 points behind the state average in math, (azed.gov, 2013), (see Table 4), underscores the need to bridge the gap between middle and high school (See A.1).

Highland Prep will provide tutoring programs in local area middle schools in the Avondale Elementary District and Liberty School District. The school will work with local districts and schools to create a seamless pre-K through 12th grade education experience for students who choose to enter Highland Prep as their high school of choice. With this goal in mind, the school will work to reduce any gaps between students leaving the 8th grade and entering high school (A.1 & A.4).

Highland Prep's *Middle School Tutoring Program* will also target local middle school students from the same zip codes stated in the Target Community section located on page 1; again, with the intention of supporting a seamless transition to high school through the remediation of weak skill-sets. The school's National Honor's Society students will spend time with 8th grade middle school students twice per week and help those students with remediation in pre-algebra and reading comprehension skills as part of their volunteer service commitment. HP's dean of academics will perform a baseline assessment on students selected by the middle school who might benefit from the tutoring. The assessment will be correlated with data from the middle school to support personalized tutoring based on the skills targeted for improvement (Johnson, 2002). Highland Prep's administrative team has experienced success with a similar tutoring program at one of their previous schools where four local area school districts participated.

Family Involvement and Community Partnerships

Highland Prep will foster a culture of character development and academic excellence that will require the education team, parents, students, and community members to work together to create solutions for current and future problems. Together, this learning community will work as a team to create maximal opportunities for each student's affective and cognitive development. The school's culture will be based on transparency about what it takes to move each student forward towards his/ her potential and the day-to-day actions of the stakeholder community will reflect this commitment (See A.1, A.4, & A.5).

Many of the west valley schools previously indicated by zip code, have low parent and community involvement. In recognition of this potential limitation to student success, Highland Prep will strengthen the relationship between our school and the parents by involving parents in the education of their children. We will host frequent parent-teacher conferences, open houses, extra-curricular activities, and parent academies that will train parents how to support their children with the school's academic program (See C.2). The school's education team will ensure that parents are constantly aware of their child's progress through weekly grades, advance posting of learning objectives and remedial and enrichment opportunities. Together, Highland Prep's learning community will maintain an active dialogue that will support mutual goals of:

i. 98% attendance rate
ii. 100% graduation rate
iii. 100% enrollment in post-secondary education
iv. Meet Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives in all areas and subgroups
v. Receiving an "A" or the equivalent from the ADE school report card
vi. Students with disabilities will have transition plans for post-graduation
vii. All students will have a comprehensive personalized education plan (PEP) that supports their individual needs and goals.

Highland Prep recognizes that each student has different learning needs, that students with disabilities and those who require ELA services require quality and timely support. In deference of these individual needs, the school will offer before and after school tutoring, targeted remediation, one-on-one teacher tutoring and instruction that accommodates differentiated instruction through a formative assessment instructional system that creates an actionable personalized education plan (PEP) for each and every student in the school. We believe that with the right instructional supports, each and every student can and will learn. Further, that equity is defined not as treating everyone the same but rather "by ensuring that all students arrive to the same destination irrespective of the condition upon which they arrived."

Highland Prep has identified several relationships and partnerships that it will pursue in order to create a learning community that supports and benefits from the surrounding community. We will work with k-8 schools in the area to provide tutoring, freshmen academies and transition services to support a seamless transition to high school. There are several community support agencies that we will endeavor to develop close relationships with to the benefit of our learners. We will work with the Southwest Valley Goodyear YMCA, Kids at Hope organization, the Tri-City West Thornwood Brand of the Boys and Girls Club, the Southwest Family Advocacy Center, and other outside agencies that wish to become educational partners with our school. In recognition of our future high Title I population; we will ensure that our students receive access to dental, nursing, free or discounted medicals, and other social services that support our students and their families (See C.2).

Greenfield has plans to partner with several community organizations and continues to enlist community partners who acknowledge quality education is critical to long-term individual and community success. Our school will provide an opportunity in the community for students to reach their academic potential by offering a curriculum based on higher-level mastery programs.

Highland Prep will establish partnerships with the local Community College to provide the ability for our students to enroll in concurrent classes while they attend high school. Additional organizations that the school will identify and collaborate with include childcare centers, after school centers, libraries, housing complexes, and low-income work sectors. Partners may provide:

- Facilities for hosting outreach events, meetings, and focus groups
- Assist in recruiting families to participate in meetings and focus groups
- Provide referrals to Highland Prep open houses for clients and member families
- Act as a referral partner for Highland Prep families and students in need

Highland Prep will enlist partnerships with community organizations that offer programs and services that provide to our students' unique needs. These partners closely collaborate with government and social service agencies to support and assist schools in meeting the needs of low-income families and at-risk students by providing additional external services and opportunities to the families in the form of scholarships, youth/teen support programs, leadership opportunities, and community service activities. These partnerships will provide an opportunity to strengthen the relationship with and increase the

number of low income and at-risk students our school will serve. Additionally, allowing our school the opportunity to provide referral information and additional supports to families by building a network of collaboration. Highland Prep will provide the following resources for at-risk populations:

- Multilingual support to refugee and minority groups
- School-developed, comprehensive ESL program, which targets students that utilize
- English as a second language
- Trained teachers able to work with multicultural populations

Highland Prep will develop further strategic partnerships mutually beneficial to community organizations as well as the school. The school will collaborate with these organizations to leverage resources to reach and support more students and the community at-large (See C.2).

The Governing Board of Highland Prep will be responsible for involving parents and other members of the community in the planning, program design, and implementation of the school. The school's administrative team believes that when parents, families, and community members are part of the planning and implementation phase building trust and confidence in the school's mission reduces or eliminates barriers. During the planning phase, a parent advisory committee will be established to assist in parent involvement activities, fundraising communication with neighbors, and other appropriate activities. The school will establish effective lines of communication with parents and community members using several methods:

- Parent advisory committee meetings
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Open house meeting at start of the year
- Ability to schedule formal and informal meeting with key stakeholders
- Start of the year volunteer opportunity parent survey
- End of year academic program parent surveys
- Annual evaluation of content and effectiveness of parental involvement policy (to identify and address barriers to parents)

The purpose is to involve the parents in a strong and meaningful partnership with the school. Highland Prep is committed to helping parents understand the state academic content standards and state assessments as well as provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve academic achievement. After enrollment, Parent-Teacher Meetings and Open Houses will continue to foster the relationship between the parents and the school, giving parents the opportunity to speak directly to teachers and monitor their children's progress. Furthermore, these strategies will allow parents and the community to provide input to the school. Highland Prep will establish the capacity for parental involvement using several methods.

- school website that includes info about the school
- monthly newsletter for staff and parents with ideas and tips on parental involvement, behavior management, or possible activities to do at home to support education
- parenting training sessions on such topics as: communication skills, homework completion tips, study skill strategies, or developmental stages of children
- instructing parents and/or facility staff on how to monitor a child's progress and work with school to improve academic achievement

Highland Prep's Governing Board members and the leadership team will look for opportunities to encourage parental involvement as frequently as possible.

Data and Training for All Stakeholders

Teachers will receive both class wide standards-based reports that disaggregate data by performance objective as well as individual student performance reports (See A.5). Planning and instruction will be monitored and adjusted based on this ongoing data. Students and parents will receive individual data in core academic areas in the form of reports that outline the skills and concepts that exceed the standard, meet the standard, and approach the standard or fall far below the standard. Students will use this data to guide their individual program of study, their tutoring and support and their overall progress in the program. Additionally, the school will host parent academies and workshops where parents will be trained on how to support their children with remediation based in current data reports. Thus, students and parents will be included in the overall assessment system to increase efficacy with the overall learning community. Further, data obtained through beginning of course (BOC), and end of course (EOC) will be used to provide feedback to teachers in areas that should be strengthened or reinforced in their curriculum.

C. School Size, Class Size and Student-Teacher Ratio

Highland Prep has an enrollment goal of 150 students in its first year, 250 in its second year, and 350 in year three. It is anticipated that the school will reach its peak enrollment of 450 students in year four (See C.1, C.2, & C.3). Highland Prep believes that small schools will provide a more effective and personalized level of service for their students. UCLA professor, William G. Ouchi, agrees that "[s]mall schools of about five hundred students each are not only desirable for large school districts, they are a necessity. Many studies have emphasized the strong sense of community that can develop in a small school, compared to the anonymity that is typical of large schools. It's literally possible for the principal to know every student by name in a school of three hundred or four hundred students, and it's almost always the case that teachers know all the students in their grade level. Being known as a person, as an individual, is very comforting and also very demanding to students; they know that they are cared for" (2009 p. 268). The school's administrative team will know each and every one of their students by name.

Highland Prep's commitment to establishing a small school; where students receive personalized instruction, only makes sense if class size is commensurate. The school will feature a small student to teacher ratio of 23:1 over the aggregate in year 1, 24:1 in year two, and 23:1 in year 3, with a maximum class size of 25 students (See B.1 & C.3). The student to teacher ratio is markedly smaller than most high school districts throughout the Phoenix Metropolitan area. Highland Prep's rationale for its class size was influenced by experience with previous schools that were successful, and William Ouchi's research study of eight urban school districts with 442 schools, that resulted in his book *The Secret of TSL: The Revolutionary Discovery That Raises School Performance*. In TSL (Total Student Load) Ouchi discovered that the fewer students a teacher has to teach, the better the opportunity to develop stronger and more personal relationships. TSL refers to the number of papers a teacher must grade and the number of students he or she must get to know each term. When the TSL is reduced, student performance improves, often substantially (Ouchi, 2010). The Highland Prep education team will know their students, and provide high quality, individualized attention and support. The school's small student to teacher ratio is necessary to support instructional planning in order to ensure that:

1. The school's AZCCRS curriculum identifies target areas for each individual student.
2. Students are proficient or highly proficient on the azMERIT achievement test.
2. Day-to-day instruction is differentiated and responsive to a diverse array of learning needs and styles.
3. Students who need intensive remediation will receive before and after school tutoring, as well as online tutoring opportunities.
4. Students who need enrichment opportunities will be able to participate in additional activities that include but are not limited to; digital storytelling, robotics, honors, AP, and college classes through the school's dual college enrollment program with the Maricopa County Community College District.
5. Students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) progress steadily towards post-secondary preparedness and placement.
6. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are made through the College Board for PSAT, SAT, ACT and AP tests.
7. Students receiving English Language Learner (ELL) services progress steadily through reclassification, towards fluency, and post-secondary preparedness and placement.
8. Student 4-year ECAP plans are integrated into comprehensive personalized Education Plans (PEPs), and reflected in instructional planning to ensure that goals and planning are authentic and relevant.

Although these eight priorities are but a few of the many responsibilities that Highland Prep's education team will have, it seems readily apparent that small class size will better ensure maximum attention.

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