A.2 Target Population

While admission will be open to all residents of the Tucson area, the Western Institute is seeking a school facility within a central, lower-income area to facilitate transportation to school by students that rely on public transportation. Preliminary research suggests a possible location at 200 Yavapai, a block east of Amphitheater High School and Stone Avenue, where a major City bus route makes a direct connection with downtown Tucson, and is well connected via major bus routes within a 10-mile radius. Because there is no high school in Tucson that offers the Western Institute's unique program, supportive learning community, technology-rich environment, and focus on real-world interaction, it will also draw youth and parents from throughout the 10-mile area. Higher income youth and families in the surrounding neighborhoods will also have more access to cars for transportation to school. The target area is ethnically diverse, with a population that is 37% Hispanic, 4-5% African-American, and 41-54% White within the 10-mile radius. This will, hopefully, foster a diverse, multicultural and multiracial student body.

The potential Yavapai site would locate the Western Institute within a few blocks of Amphitheatre Middle School, with 752 students, the largest feeder school in the immediate area. Students at the Western Institute, if located nearby, could plan considerable outreach, possibly including tutoring and academic support, to Amphi M.S. and, to a lesser extent, other middle schools within the 5-mile radius (see table below). At Amphi H.S., two-thirds of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and at Amphi Middle School, approximately 83% qualify (2008 school report cards). Within a 1-mile radius of both schools, 39% of families earn less than $25,000/year; 27% are below the poverty level; and about half of the employed population is in blue collar or service jobs. The immediate neighborhood, largely within the zip code 85705, is characterized by high density, low-income apartments, a relatively high crime rate, and the highest incidence of domestic violence in Tucson. Within the 10-mile radius, 20% of families earn less than $25,000/year.

Clearly, there are youth within this area in central Tucson that could greatly change their life prospects given a supportive, small school environment with "college-going" expectations and culture. ***The Western Institute will have classes with no more than 25 students, and a teacher-student ratio of approximately 17/1.*** Considerable research has shown that providing a more personalized, small school environment, coupled with academic rigor and real-world connections, can boost student achievement and aspirations (hightechhigh.org).

The Western Institute is anticipating that at least a third of entering students may be below grade level and are likely to have diverse learning styles and needs. *(Note the table on the next page that presents standardized test data on various schools in the area.)* Based on comparison schools, we also anticipate that approximately 10% of students will qualify for special education. *Based on comparison schools in Tucson with a college preparatory focus (e.g. Academy of Tucson, Amerischools, Basis, City High, Presidio, and Sky Islands with 0 ELL, and Sonoran Science with 1%), it is unlikely that the Western Institute will attract students classified as English Language Learners.*

Note the present level of achievement on AIMS and Terra Nova tests for both current high school students in the area, and 8th graders from middle schools from which the Western Institute's student body will be drawn:

HIGH SCHOOLS within 5 miles of 85705– Grade 10 Test Scores (greatschools.org)

School name	AIMS Reading	AIMS Math	F/R Lunch		ELL	# Students
Academy of Math and Science	65%	65%		HP	8%	248
Amphitheater High School	66%	56%	62%	P	15%	1,430
Flowing Wells High School	75%	74%	49%	HP	5%	1,424
Desert Rose Academy	47%	33%		P		281
Luz Academy of Tucson	76%	61%	82%	P+	15%	106
Pima Partnership School The	45%	26%	78%	U		128
City High School	79%	59%	42%	P	0%	114
Tucson Magnet High School	77%	67%	42%	P+	7%	2,934
Presidio High School	89%	92%	60%	HP	0%	184
Howenstine High School	50%	44%	53%	P	5%	266
Catalina High Magnet School	57%	52%	60%	P	16%	1,373
Sonoran Science Academy	95%	100%	17%	Ex	1%	667

MIDDLE SCHOOLS within 5 miles of 85705 - Grade 8 Test Scores (greatschools.org)

School name	# Students	AIMS Reading	AIMS Math	TNova Reading	TNova Math		F/R Lunch	ELL
Academy of Math and Science	248	66%	69%	63	60	HP		
Amphitheater Middle School	752	51%	49%			P	85%	11%
Pima Partnership Academy	70	26%	13%	29	25	Under		
Wildcat School	134	57%	61%	39	52	P+	85%	0%
Flowing Wells Junior H.S.	662	62%	66%	51	57	P+	63%	6%
Satori Charter School	155	100%	75%	87	65	Ex		
Paulo Freire Freedom School	64	76%	60%	69	64	HP		
Maxwell Middle School	481	41%	35%	33	28	F	82%	19%
Roskruge Bilingual M.S.	193	53%	42%	45	41	P	66%	9%
Safford Engineering/Tech M.S.	488	51%	46%	38	P+	78%	11%	
Mansfeld Middle School	731	63%	66%	55	56	P+		
La Cima Middle School	665	62%	52%	47	50	P+	72%	11%
Sonoran Science Academy	667	90%	85%	79	78	Ex		
Doolen Middle School	732	52%	46%	44	39	P	69%	9%

In summary, the applicant has deliberately sought out a location where there is a sufficient local population of high-school age students who have convenient access to the school, and where there is a lack of opportunity to attend an affordable, high-performing school that offers a college-prep curriculum with a youth leadership emphasis. Rather than competing directly with relatively high-performing schools that exist nearby, such as Presidio and City High School downtown, the Western Institute seeks to fill a gap in available educational opportunities for students, provide choices for parents, and collaborate rather than compete directly with other excellent charter high schools.

Community engagement

If locating at the Yavapai site, the Western Institute will be located within Tucson's Ward 3, the area of Tucson with the fewest areas of green space or public meeting venues. Over time, the school will likely grow into a community learning center embedded in its neighborhood and actively collaborating with residents, local businesses, agencies and institutions, including other nearby schools.

To determine what the local students and residents want from such a school, the Institute for Transformative Education has begun an ongoing series of facilitated community conversations. Ward 3's chief of staff, Tamara Prine, and more than a dozen neighborhood leaders have expressed interest in helping start the school. The following groups exemplify the diversity of opportunity in this general area that would be available to students.

- **Gateway Business Alliance**: Socially and environmentally responsible businesses acting as a catalyst for economic development in the Oracle Area Revitalization Project, which covers about a third of the target area.
- **Green Retrofit Co-Op:** A service-learning cooperative whose members work on each other's homes to make them energy and resource efficient and more affordable for residents aging in place.
- **PRO Neighborhoods**: Community organizers who offer coaching and networking opportunities for grassroots groups and community leaders as well as grant funding and technical assistance with action projects.
- **Revive the '05:** Revitalization project supporting children and families in the 85705 Zip Code, which essentially overlaps all of the target area.
- **Sonoran Kitchen Gardens**: Permaculturist/educators whose goal is to make sure every school has a garden linked into the local food economy.
- **Watershed Management Group:** NPO based in the target area works with local communities to identify and prioritize resource needs, foster individual and community investment, and develop practical solutions.