A.2 Target Population

The Need

Open Doors Community School will focus on a low-income student target population in rural Marana, Arizona. Our geographic area will also include Picture Rocks and Avra Valley. The target population boundary for the school will be a 15-mile radius from the proposed school location at 13644 N. Sandario Rd, Marana (just off the Marana Rd. Exit on Interstate 10). Open Doors Community School may also recruit students from Red Rock in Pinal County, which is about 10 miles north of Marana. Marana has 12 elementary schools and five (5) of those schools are in the rural area. The Town of Marana has no K-8 charter schools. The only two (2) charter schools operating in the town limits are both for grades 9-12.

The following elementary schools are located in the Marana Unified School District. Roadrunner Elementary, Picture Rocks Intermediate, Estes Elementary, and Desert Winds Elementary are all Title I schools. The measure of academic progress (MAP) for reading and math for the Marana Unified School District is 49.

School	2010 report card status	Free and Reduced lunch %	# of students enrolled
Road Runner Elementary *	Performing Plus	75.16	534
Picture Rocks Intermediate*	Performing	61.76	391
Estes Elementary*	Highly Performing	47.84	695
Desert Winds Elementary*	Performing Plus	65.17	461
Red Rock K-8 School	Performing Plus	51.52	122

Community Information

These communities are characterized by rural demographics and geography. The demographic breakdown of the three communities is included in the table below, which includes ethnic breakdowns, income, education, and unemployment rates.

Demographics

	Marana	Avra Valley	Picture Rocks	Arizona
Total Population	34,191	6,044	9,764	6,683,129
% youth ages 14 & under	23%	26%	25%	23%
Female	51.1%	48.8%	49.4%	50.1%
Male	49.9%	51.2%	50.6%	49.9%
White	81.8%	84.0%	89.6%	75.7%
American Indian	2.1%	1.7%	1.4%	4.7%
African American	2.9%	1.8%	0.6%	3.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.6%	0.4%	0.5%	1.9%
Other	10.6%	12.1%	7.9%	14.6%
Hispanic	19.6%	20.7%	13.8%	25.6%
Median Household Income	$40,867	$36,469	$52,685	$44,261
Population below 100%	5.4%	11.2%	7.6%	13.9%

Federal Poverty Line				
Percent of children in families, ages 5 to 17 in poverty in Marana School District	12.4%	12.4%	12.4%	N/A
No High School Diploma	10%	24.6%	15.9%	11.2%
Unemployed	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	8.5%

Source: Arizona Department of Health Services, 2009 and U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, Dec. 2010

Marana is located in Pima County in Southern Arizona. Marana is a growing community in a vast rural area covering approximately 500 square miles. Marana's population has over doubled in growth nearly every ten years since 1990. It has grown more than Pima county and state averages.

Marana Population

	1990	**2000**	**2010**
Marana	2,187	13,556	34,961
Pima County	666,957	843,746	980,263
Arizona	3,665,228	5,130,632	6,392,017

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security and US Census Bureau

Demographic Information and Needs of Target Population

The Marana Unified School District had an average daily attendance (ADA) of 12,388 in 2010. Open Doors Community Schools expects to see the same kind of demographics as the Marana Unified School District.

	Marana Unified	**State**
Enrollment of Racial/Ethnic Groups		
White (%)	66.4	43.6
Black (%)	3.3	5.6
Hispanic (%)	26.0	42.1
Asian/Pacific Islander (%)	2.4	2.9
American Indian (%)	1.9	5.5
Enrollment of Students with Special Needs		
Free and Reduced lunch	37.41	51
English Language Learners (%)	1.7	8.3
Students with disabilities (%)	15	11.6
Enrollment Distribution by Grade		
Kindergarten	3.6	7.6
Grade 1	7.2	7.8
Grade 2	7.4	7.7
Grade 3	7.5	7.7
Grade 4	7.7	7.7
Grade 5	7.8	7.7

	Marana Unified	State
Grade 6	7.6	7.6
Grade 7	8.0	7.6
Grade 8	7.5	7.6

Furthermore, students in Pima County where Marana is located, report higher risk factors such as anti-social behavior, academic failure and low school attachment than the state average.

Arizona Youth Survey 2010

	Pima County	State of Arizona
Academic failure	53.2	45.5
Early initiation of anti social behavior	47.2	37.6
Low school attachment	42.2	41.0

Source: Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, 2010

In conclusion, Marana is a high population growth area with no elementary charter schools. Most of the schools in Marana lack quality and do not score above High Performing. Marana has high poverty rates, and students from high poverty backgrounds and others will benefit from the Community Schools Model that Open Doors Community School will offer.

Proposed Benefits for Target Population

Open Doors Community School will benefit the rural, low income students in Marana through an integrated approach. It will focus on academics, life preparation skills, and support services opportunities which lead to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Open Doors Community School will provide foundational learning experiences based on the Community Schools model and the Core Knowledge Sequence. Each of these approaches is research based to support the academic needs of low income youth. Many of the low income, rural youth have learning gaps that have not been addressed in other institutions. The Core Knowledge Sequence has been shown to reduce those gaps and provide a broad base of knowledge and the rich vocabulary needed for reading achievement and academic success (The Core Knowledge Foundation, 2011).

Students and families that choose Open Doors Community School will benefit from a rigorous academic curriculum. Within the Core Knowledge Sequence, cross curricular thematic units and cooperative learning will help students practice pro-social behavior from a young age. When students are given more opportunities to participate meaningfully in important activities at school, they are less likely to engage in drug use and other problem behaviors.

Integration of Evidence-Based Prevention Programs

In addition to the Core Knowledge Sequence, ODCS will offer other prevention programs like the risk and protective factor model developed by Hawkins and Catalano. Using the *Positive Action* Curriculum will help increase academic and life success. The risk and protective factor model of prevention is a proven way of reducing substance abuse and its related consequences. This model is based on the simple premise that to prevent a problem from happening, we need to

identify the factors that increase the risk of that problem developing and then find ways to reduce the risks (Arizona Youth Survey, 2010).

Developments in prevention science have shown that there are characteristics of individuals, their families and their environment that affect the likelihood of negative outcomes including substance abuse, delinquency, violence, and school dropout. Other characteristics serve to protect or provide a buffer to moderate the influence of the negative characteristics. These characteristics are identified as risk factors and protective factors. (Arthur, Hawkins, et al., 1994, Hawkins, Catalano, Miller, 1992).

ODCS, in partnership with AzYP, will offer evidence based programs such as Strengthening Families, Botvin's LifeSkills, Healthy Relationship Education, and community development to help reduce risk factors and increase protective factors. During the 2009-2010 school year, AzYP delivered the Teens Educating and Mentoring (TEAM) Project with goals to decrease antisocial behavior and decrease alcohol, tobacco and other drug use. The project found that 34% reported less fighting, 33% reported less bullying and 44% reported more caring/cooperative behaviors at the follow up of the program.

Class Size and Teacher-Student Ratios

Open Doors Community School will maintain class sizes between 18-25 students. This small class size is necessary for students to have meaningful interactions with their teachers and peers. The teacher to student ratio will be no more than 1:25.

A Unique Educational Choice for Rural Marana

Students in rural, low-income Marana deserve access to excelling schools. Students in rural Marana do not have the same access to excelling schools as students in suburban Marana. A sample of the school report cards in rural Marana including Desert Winds Elementary, Picture Rocks Elementary and Marana Middle School shows that the schools are only performing whereas suburban schools such as Rattlesnake Ridge, Coyote Trail and Twin Peaks are excelling. While the Marana School District overall meets state standards, there is a disparity between the schools in rural and suburban Marana (Arizona Department of Education, School Report Cards, 2008).

Open Doors Community School clearly offers a new educational choice that will meet the needs of students and families in rural Marana. Our academic and Community School model program offers components and services that are not readily available to rural, underserved students and their families in the large school environment of Marana Unified School District. Our school provides a small-school, community resource center that helps students overcome barriers to learning and offers programs to strengthen the family system of support. Our program offers a unique interaction of academic success programs and prevention programs designed to build protective factors that reduce risky behaviors among our students.