A.3 Program of Instruction

Curriculum Framework

Open Doors Community School is committed to academic excellence. The framework of the curricula for the academic core content areas of math, reading, writing, social studies, and science will be the Core Knowledge Sequence, while ensuring alignment with the National Common Core Standards and Arizona State Standards. This framework supports the needs of rural, low socio-economic environment students by creating an organized plan that defines skills and knowledge that students should have from one grade to another. The comprehensive program of instruction is results-driven with codified action steps that will be continually implemented, reviewed and revised to ensure high academic achievement.

Alignment to Common Core Standards and Arizona State Standards

An active Leadership Team, along with the Curriculum Director and Principal/School Director will create a Curriculum Map based on the Core Knowledge sequence for each grade level, identifying and prioritizing core standards for use by classroom teachers to guide instruction. Classroom teacher will be trained and ODCS will become a certified Core Knowledge site. This Curriculum Map will align curriculum to the Core Standards/State Standards and students will be assessed to meet and exceed the standards. We will continually develop our program and provide an environment of academic excellence as well as tools to make healthy and positive life choices. We will continually focus on high expectations for student achievement and personal growth.

Instruction will include core subjects: Language Arts (reading, writing), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies/History, Physical Education/ Health, and the Positive Action Program.
Our Program of Instruction will emphasize the importance of the following:

- Build a curriculum based on the Core Knowledge Sequence and Common Core standards
- Use student achievement data to drive decisions about continuous school improvement, instruction, professional development, and curriculum
- Incorporate research-supported teaching and learning standards into our daily instructional practices.

Core Knowledge Sequence is a plan for coherent learning from grade-to-grade, Core Knowledge enhances shared planning among teachers, which helps to ensure quality classroom experiences for all learners. The content-rich curriculum also provides a strong foundation of knowledge for success in high school and beyond. The principles that guide the Core Knowledge Sequence are:

- Curriculum not driven by ideology, but logically by science, history, and research
- For the sake of academic excellence, greater equity, and higher literacy, elementary and middle schools need to teach a coherent, cumulative, and content-specific core curriculum
- The persistent gap in reading achievement in U.S. schools can never be reduced until the knowledge gap is reduced. And the knowledge gap will not be reduced unless broad, rich content knowledge is integrated into the many hours devoted to language arts instruction
- Every school and community is different, and each student and teacher has individual interests and strengths

- Schools teaching the Core Knowledge curriculum should still have ample time over the course of the school year to address any additional state or local requirements not reflected in the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
- An effective curriculum must be coupled with effective teaching. Teaching excellence requires a mastery of subject matter, as well as the ability to engage students, build language competency, use assessment to drive instruction, scaffold instruction to meet individual needs, and provide targeted feedback to students to further shape their learning.

Domain-based units will provide a knowledge base for students which will be built upon each year. Students will gain Language Arts skills within the context of Science and History and will integrate learned content knowledge into reading and writing. Thematic Domain based Units instruction improves student achievement by giving context to student learning and scaffolding content throughout student career. Students from rural and low socio-economic situations will benefit from tapping into prior knowledge and the added meaning from cross curricular thematic studies.

In her article, *Cross Curricular Thematic Instruction*, Mary Ellen Vogt describes how cross-curricular thematic instruction merges disciplines with integrated thematic units challenges and enables students to practically apply and evaluate new knowledge. Cross-curricular thematic unit study creates active readers and writers by engaging students in authentic literacy tasks that emerge naturally from interesting and worthwhile topics and ideas (1994).

ODCS believes that everything in life requires the integration of learning in an interdisciplinary manner. Teaching children through merged disciplines better prepares them to apply new knowledge and understandings. Integration of content with skills help students to view their learning as having personal relevance; therefore, they will put more effort into their schoolwork and achievement (Willis, 1995). Research findings indicate that good readers connect and utilize ideas and information from a variety of previous life and literacy experiences (Anderson et al, 1985).

Methods of Instruction

Within the framework of the Core Knowledge Sequence, the methods of instruction will include direct instruction using the Essential Elements of Instruction (EEI) to plan domain based unit studies. These methods of instruction fit with the Core Knowledge and enhance the mission and values of ODCS. Continual professional development opportunities will help to empower our team of educators, trained in Core Knowledge Sequence, EEI and a thematic approach.

Essential Elements of Instruction

Lesson delivery will be direct instruction using the Essential Elements of Instruction format and practices. Direct instruction is effective when delivered within the framework of EEI according to Madeline's Hunters 1994 article, *"Planning for Effective Instruction: Lesson Design" in* ***Enhancing Teaching***.

- A **learning objective** will be chosen for each lesson based on Common Core Standards at an appropriate level of difficulty as determined by a task analysis, diagnostic testing, and/or congruence with Bloom's cognitive taxonomy.
- An **anticipatory set** will begin the lesson by hooking the student's attention and accessing prior knowledge, motivating instruction by focusing the learning task. Students will be engaged by active participation and collaboration. Lesson design will begin with articulation of an instructional objective, and specifying the perceivable student behavior validating the learning outcome.
- **Instructional input** which is the component learning or skills essential to to the accomplishment of the objective , will be determined and implemented by the teacher. The means for input can be, but is not limited to: discovery, inquiry, teacher presentation, book, film, field trip, diagram, picture, real objects, and/or demonstration and modeling.
- The teacher will **check for understanding** in order to determine at what point the students posess the information and/or skill necessary to achieve the instructional objective. Some options for checking for understanding are: sampling, signaled responses, choral responses, and/or individual private response.
- Lessons will include **guided practice** to make sure that instruction has been internalized by the student and so that, if necessary, clarification or remediation can occur immediately.
- Students will be challenged by **independent practice** to apply the new skill or process with little or no teacher direction.

These chosen methods of instruction line up the values of Open Doors Community School: improved student success, teamwork, communication, merged disciplines, and community partnership. In addition to the academic program outlined above, ODCS will also implement life success programs in the classroom and afterschool program using the *Positive Action* curriculum. ODCS, in partnership with AzYP, will also 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.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment will be used in the classroom to monitor daily progress toward mastery of concepts and will drive teacher tactics for re-teaching and remediation with small group focus. Formative assessment can be recorded teacher observation, skills checklists, written assignments, or closure questions. All formative assessments will be aligned to Arizona State/Common Core Standards.

Goal setting will be employed in each classroom related to mastery and growth. The 'Big Goal' will be a focal point in the classroom and will be recited regularly to motivate ownership of academic growth. Student portfolios will include graphs prepared by students charting their own growth based on benchmark assessments. An assessment results report will be broken down by mastery level of standards for each student and each class as a whole for teacher use in re-teaching, remediation and extension. A list of priority performance objectives will be generated for each grade level, based on these results, to be used during tutoring and to formulate an action plan for re-teaching.

Summative Assessment
Summative assessment, covering correlating state /core standards and aligned to the curriculum map sequence will take the form of unit tests, unit culmination projects, written essays, speeches, etc. Priority standards will be assessed using multiple valid questions for each standard and will be taught for mastery. Additionally, benchmark assessments generated from the Acuity assessment system will provide summative data for student remediation and direct classroom instruction.

Student Mastery
Each grade level will have a list of students categorized into levels of support needed – tier 1 (meets/exceeds), tier 2 (approaches) and tier 3 (FFB). The categories and placement of students will reflect their performance on the most recent assessments. Remediation will be assigned by the teacher based on priority standards identified from assessment data. It will take the form of classroom re-teaching, computer generated assignments from the Acuity Assessment Software and enrollment in the after school tutoring and mentoring program.

ODCS will also offer afterschool enrichment opportunities in the humanities, arts, sports and special interest groups for students to develop confidence and teamwork while providing positive role models and opportunities for healthy activities. All students will have access to preventative resources and activities that will enable them to achieve their goals and experience success. As mentioned in the Performance Mangement plan, teachers will conduct monthly data meetings between grade level teachers and School Director/Principal that analyzes student progression towards standards mastery based on most recent assessment results. The School Leadership Team will continually review all student data and will provide a written action plan for revising curriculum, instruction, and student interventions when benchmark goals are not on track. In addition, the School Director/Principal will evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and make changes as necessary.

Serving Special Education Students
ODCS will provide special education services to qualifying students. Open Doors Community School will ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education, pursuant to the regulations set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

In keeping with the IDEA philosophy of servicing special education students in the Least Restrictive Environment, ODCS will provide inclusion support services to students with special needs within the regular classroom setting with IEP accommodations and modifications, as the first choice of placement. However, ODCS recognizes that students' needs vary greatly and is prepared to support those needs. For those students requiring more intensive academic support and/or remediation, an Academic Resource Class will be provided to offer resource support, one period per day. For students requiring services beyond those which are available at Open Doors Community School, alternative settings in an outside program, on a part-time or full-time basis, will be considered, based upon the individual student's needs and IEP goals and objectives. Should the IEP team determine that a child's needs are best served in an outside program, ODCS recognizes its responsibility to secure and pay for such a placement.

Students with 504 plans will be accommodated with appropriate academic and/or behavioral modifications according to their disability. Each student’s plan will identify how that student’s progress is appropriately assessed and monitored. The student’s 504 Plan will be reviewed annually with the parents, regular and special education teachers, and a school administrator. The special education staff will work collaboratively with the regular education staff to provide the encouragement, support, and academic skills and strategies to allow each child to reach his or her potential, recognizes diversity in learning styles and encourages that each child's strengths be recognized and utilized to maximize their academic and emotional growth. By laying a solid foundation of academic skills and knowledge, positive self-esteem, character development, and a sense of community responsibility, ODCS students will be ready for further preparation towards college, careers, and vocational training as they enter high school.

Identification. ODCS will provide information to its staff regarding the identification of students who may be eligible for special education services, including the areas of Emotional Disability, Specific Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, Speech/Language Impairment, Autism, and Other Health Impairment.

A group of regular and special education teachers, and a school administrator will be established to consider requests for initial evaluations from teachers and/or parents. The team will review available data, including a review of strategies implemented to assist the child in progressing in the regular curriculum. The group may recommend additional strategies or supports to be implemented, and then will reconvene to assess these results, or may make a recommendation for a full evaluation.

Initial evaluation. Upon obtaining informed written parental consent, a full individual evaluation will be conducted by a multidisciplinary team, as required by law. In addition to data collected

from the child's parent and school staff/records, the evaluation will include evaluation components by a contracted AZ Certified School Psychologist. If necessary, ODCS will engage the services of related service providers to assist in the evaluation, such as: a Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational and/or Physical Therapist, etc. The Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) will determine, based on *the results* of all data collected, whether the student meets the eligibility criteria as a student with a disability in accordance with 20 USC Sec. 1400, the IDEA and its amendments.

Re-evaluation. At least once every three years, a triennial re-evaluation will be conducted, in accordance with IDEA 2004 Sec. 614(a)(2). A review of existing data will be conducted. If additional evaluation data is determined by the MET as being necessary to determine eligibility, written parental consent will be obtained and the evaluation data collected. The additional evaluation data will then be considered by the MET in determining eligibility.

Students with current IEPs. Students who enter ODCS with a current Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be provided services, in so much as possible, consistent with the existing IEP, pending an IEP team review of records.

Procedural Safeguards Notice. ODCS will provide a copy of the procedural safeguards to the parent of a student with a disability at least once each year. In addition, a copy of the safeguards will be given to parents: 1) at the time of initial referral or parental request for evaluation; 2) upon the first occurrence of the filing of a complaint; and 3) upon request by a parent as required by IDEA 2004 (P.L. 108-466, Section 615(d).

Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP will be written for each student who qualifies for special education services, and for whom the parent has agreed to the initial placement of their child in special education. The IEP will include:

- A statement of the student's Present Levels of Performance
- Annual goals and measurable short-term instructional objectives, objective criteria, and evaluation procedures for determining whether instructional objectives are being achieved
- The specific special education and related services to be provided to the student modifications and accommodations as needed
- A description of the extent to which the student will participate in regular education programs and the extent to which the student will participate with non-disabled peers in nonacademic and extracurricular activities
- The projected dates for initiation and the anticipated duration of services and an explanation of how and when the parents will be notified of their child's progress toward the IEP goals.

English Language Learners

Teachers at ODCS will have their SEI endorsement. In the first three years, less than three students are expected to qualify for English Language Learner (ELL) services based on percentages in the surrounding area (less than 2% qualify for ELL services in Marana Unified School District). Students eligible for ELL services will have an Individual Language Learner Plan (ILLP). According to Arizona Department of Education, “Schools with 20 or fewer ELLs

within a three grade span (including Kindergarten), may provide instruction through the development of Individual Language Learner Plans (ILLPs) created for each ELL (2008).

Students will also benefit from ELL strategies incorporated in classroom instruction as teachers implement valuable methods such as inclusion, use of pictures, rich language, conversation, cultural and diverse centered information, etc. In addition, individual attention will be offered with homework and daily work. Before and after school programs will be provided through OCDS Staff promoting academic success of the English Language Learners (ELL) students to give the students the extra support they need to advance in the school culture.