A.3 Program of Instruction

Rigorous instruction requires teachers with content mastery, passion, and a commitment to hold students to the highest academic and behavioral standards. Experience with educating students in high-poverty environments, a track record of successful, measurable results in the classroom, a belief that every student can learn and that standards-driven lessons and assessments that are supportive of learning are key. All staff will be expected to work hard to give students discipline, boundaries, and challenges, and to work as a member of a mission-driven team that is relentless about academic results. We will support teachers through a three-week summer orientation and professional development time as part of the school's weekly and annual schedule. Teachers will use materials demonstrating success with similar populations. We will never use any one instructional approach in isolation, as we believe it is important to encourage teachers to devise the most comprehensive methods to deliver the best educational outcomes for students. Curriculum will be Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards driven, and in as many places as we can it will aligned to AP standards. Standards provide a clear and useful framework by which to measure real student progress.

A future of academic success that includes college cannot be built on a weak foundation. A strong foundation is built upon well-developed skills in literacy and mathematics, and "[t]he ability to learn something new depends on an ability to accommodate the new thing to the already known."[1] To do more advanced work, students must have skills and content "already known," and to achieve mastery students must be given rigorous instruction and mandatory supports to develop that skill and knowledge base. We build this foundation through the implementation of instructional methods which are supported by the proven practice of high performing urban charter schools. Each instructional method is described below.

A.3.a Curriculum for Core Academic Content Areas

Students at PCA HS will complete coursework in English, Science, Math, History and a Foreign Language each year. The sixth class will be an elective that addresses requirements in Arizona beyond the core content areas. All curricula will be teacher created (informed by the textbooks we choose), but aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards firstly and AP standards secondarily. All curricula is vetted by the Dean of Curriculum to ensure it is meeting state and AP standards. All curricula must include reading and writing standards, since we believe these are fundamental to all learning.

In AP courses, all syllabi and textbooks have to be approved by the College Board, so that is a further check on the rigor and quality of the academic program at PCA HS. Since our philosophy is that all students can achieve at the highest levels of rigor, and all can be college ready by the end of twelfth grade, it is imperative that we align curriculum to AP standards.

There is not one specific curriculum package that PCA HS will be aligned to. Most of the math classes are informed by Eureka Math, a subset of commoncore.org, and a free math curriculum for educators. ELA classes are informed by the resources available at EngageNY.org and

[1] E.D. Hirsch. *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them.* New York: Anchor Books, 2003. .3.

commoncore.org, but neither site has a comprehensive curriculum for high school standards, yet. Teachers will use these resources to support the development of their own Arizona College and Career Ready Standards aligned classes.

For Advanced Placement classes (World History, US History, European History, US Government, 11th grade ELA, 12th grade ELA, Biology II, Physics II/Chemistry II, Calculus, Spanish IV) the College Board requires a syllabus aligned to an approved textbook, but there is no requirement of a packaged curriculum. The textbooks we will use will be determined by the teacher's preference and the recommendation of the College Board.

The one class in which a curriculum is implemented is in the Spanish courses. The non-native speakers use "Vistas" which is a comprehensive curriculum. But, the native speaking classes are similar to all ELA classes in which they use novels throughout the year to create the cohesive structure of the class. There is not a curriculum set in this case, but the novels that are at a lexile level appropriate for the students, determined through the Arizona College and Career Ready standards.

A.3.b Methods of Instruction Key to Program of Instruction

Gradual Release of Responsibility for Learning (commonly referred to as "I-WE-YOU")

In the ninth and tenth grade, teachers will use consistent, clear modeling of academic skills by utilizing the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, referred to as the "I-WE-YOU" instructional process. In the "I" stage, the teacher models the academic skill by having students watch while he/she works through the new skill step-by-step. Teachers allow the modeling to shift to the "WE" stage, allowing the students a chance to work together through each step of similar problems. Teachers then slowly let students take more of a role in practicing the skill. When the teacher is confident that students can handle the skill on their own, the class moves to the "YOU" stage, with teachers supporting and checking for understanding as students work independently to master the skill.

In the more advanced grade levels (11th and 12th), teachers will move away from such a specific format in order to prepare students for the format of college courses. Still teachers will use the I-We-You format, but over a longer period of time for a lab (one day of lecture and modeling, two days of laboratory work, one day of student independent work to write the lab) or through a format like a seminar or debate. Teachers will ensure students always have the model for what success looks like, but scaffold more independent learning time (YOU) into instruction in higher grade levels.

Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum

Emphasizing reading across the curriculum will: (1) provide additional time to develop reading comprehension skills and produce avid readers; and (2) develop readers able to access content regardless of subject matter. This will ensure that students become familiar with a variety of texts (fiction, non-fiction, technical, newspaper and journal articles) and the way ideas are expressed in

different genres. Students will develop reading comprehension skills through practical application rather than in isolation.

Students also must be able to write with fluidity. This can only be accomplished by giving students numerous opportunities to write. Emphasize in writing across the curriculum will give students the opportunity to become fluid in a variety of writing styles that will also help to further develop student vocabulary in all subject areas.

All students in the high school will be exposed to honors and AP level curriculum in history and Spanish starting as freshman. Most of the ninth and tenth grade year of these courses are spent building reading, writing and speaking skills that complement the skills taught in English classes. In students' Junior and Senior years they will take AP English and Spanish classes, and utilize these skills. But, even in Science they will be required to read and write heavily through lab reports, analyzing scientific articles and presenting on topics in which they are interested.

Standards-Based Instruction

Our educational goals at each grade level will be clear and ambitious because we will use state and national standards as our foundation and standards-driven assessments as our benchmarks. We fully embrace Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards and will implement those with fidelity. In all areas where it is possible, we will use AP standards to ensure we are holding the most rigorous and most college-aligned bar possible for our students.

Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) Exposure

At all levels of instruction students will be placed into the most rigorous class that their learning level can support. If a student is not prepared for AP classes, they will be placed in honors. In the rare case where a student is not ready for honors level, they will be placed in a grade-level appropriate course, but with the express focus to prepare them for honors level courses in the next semester or school year. Students who are new to PCA HS (not from PCA MS) will often fall into this category for a year before they are ready for honors. We fundamentally believe, however, that all students deserve to be exposed to highly rigorous academics and that when placed in these situations they will rise to the expectation. That is why we expose all students to Honors and AP level courses before graduation.

Data-Driven

To be academically competitive, students must be able to excel above their local, state and national peers. Frequent standards-based assessments will be created to ensure students are reaching those expectations, and enabling us to effectively addresses any student deficiencies within the extended day, week, and year supports and to adjust classroom instruction and materials as needed. This data-driven instructional approach has proven an invaluable tool in the highest performing middle and high schools and is a critical component of the Phoenix Collegiate Academy High School design. Teachers are required to formatively assess once a week, in order to inform remediation needs for the next week. This data is also looked at in a data meeting once a week to ensure if trends appear they are discussed and noticed. If there are trends that information is used to inform next steps in planning for upcoming exams, or in grouping students for remediation like Saturday Academy or

Zero Hour. Lastly, data is analyzed as a school to inform curricular decisions. If it is clear from recent assessment data that students are struggling with non-fiction reading, then all teachers will be tasked with incorporating non-fiction text into classes and homework assignments. In all of these ways, data is driving the instructional approach of the school.

Constant Support - No Excuses

In addition to the instruction that teachers will deliver in their classrooms, students have multiple other opportunities for support in their learning. Students who need intense remediation or credit recovery will be enrolled in Zero Hour. This is an additional period of learning in the content area that students are struggling with. This class can last from a quarter to a full year, depending on the mastery level of the student and whether they need class credit for the course.

Students identified as struggling with significant gaps in their education will be invited to Saturday Academy. Phoenix Collegiate Academy will provide two sessions of Saturday Academy each year (one per semester) and the focus is on skills mastery. For example, students who struggle with fractions and decimals will be invited to Saturday Academy to master this skill, which in turn will make them more successful in Algebra or Geometry.

Lastly, students who are still not at proficiency levels by the end of the school year will be invited to Summer Academy. In Summer Academy students will be able to take up to four classes in intensive 4-hour-per-day sessions for two weeks at a time. In these courses, students will focus on content still needed for mastery, and missing skills. At the end of the course students will re-take the end of year exam for that course to prove they have reached the same level of mastery as their peers.

In addition to all of these formal structures, students have the opportunity daily to participate in before school and after school tutoring and lunch time office hours with teachers. Students have no excuse not to succeed given the extreme level of support always available to them.

Working with a Sense of Urgency

The school must be filled with a sense of immediacy, particularly with a school population that is challenged to remediate two or three years of skill and content acquisition within the first year. From the second students walk through the door they will start a Do Now, flow right into the lesson, and work until it is time for the next class to begin. We have four short years until college, and it is imperative that we use all time as effectively and thoroughly as possible. We will minimize distractions by saving announcements for the end of the day, walking to teachers rooms with messages instead of using a disruptive phone call, and schedule all field experiences (visits to colleges, arts experiences, science lab field work) to minimize the impact to instruction for all students. Passing periods are intentionally short (four minutes) in order to ensure that the majority of the school day is used for the most important element of school, more classroom instruction.

Seamless Path to College Success

We provide a seamless path to college success. Phoenix Collegiate Academy believes our work is not complete until every student has graduated from a university of their choice. In order to ensure this success, PCA HS will employ a college placement counselor in the High School who will be tasked with working with all students on tasks related to college entry. In ninth grade they will meet to ensure they are tracking all achievements in the ECAP program. In 10th grade they will add to this by also registering and completing the ACT PLAN test (a good indicator of college readiness). In their 11th grade year, this counselor will register students for the ACTs, PSATs, and work with them on college scholarships and summer college experiences. The 12th grade students will work with this person on college applications, financial aid forms, scholarships, SATs, ACTs, and matriculation paperwork.

Once PCA has students in college, the organization will hire an Alumni Coordinator. This person will work with students who are in college to ensure they are successfully navigating the academic challenges and opportunities of college, financing for college, and social aspects of college. This person will also be charged with supporting families, as this will be the first time for most families that a member attends college. With these two supports, we can truly say we are seamless path to college success. This practice is based on KIPP's "KIPP to College" program.

Compilation of Best Practices

All components of our instructional practice and school design are informed by the successful practices of the highest performing charter schools in the nation. Lead Founder and CEO ,Rachel Bennett Yanof, has visited and studied more than 70 of the nation's highest performing urban charter schools as part of training with Building Excellent Schools Fellowship[2] and as a member of the Excellent Schools Network. The founding team has gathered elements of school design that lead to outstanding student achievement, including curriculum, assessment, school culture, systems, facilities, and hiring practices to create a unique school that best serves the academic needs of the students of Phoenix and fully supports the goals of the Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards initiative.

Best practices include a longer school day (7:15am – 3:15pm, with an additional zero hour from 3:15-4:15) and school year (180 days of school, 20 days of Summer Academy, and 10 Saturday School half days) allowing each child an additional month of school at the minimum. Within the school day more structure is provided to maximize learning time. Minutes are saved each class by having a common blackboard configuration, including daily aims, agendas, starters, and homework.[3] Common procedures exist for using the bathroom, getting a new pencil, turning in homework, and how to ask for help on an assignment. All strategies save minutes each day, adding more learning time and less distraction for the student. Table 1 includes a sample of schools visited and best practices gleaned.

[2] Building Excellent Schools is a rigorous program that provides Fellows with training and assistance to design, plan and open high performing charter schools with a college preparatory focus. For more detail, see Attachment 1.

[3] Dr. Lorraine Monroe coined this term in her successful turnaround of the Fredrick Douglass Academy in NYC.

Table 1: Best Practice Schools

School Visited	Best Practice
Basis: Tucson and Scottsdale	Backwards Alignment with AP Curriculum
Uncommon High School: NYC	Discipline System
Nobel Street Network (Chicago)	Advisory Program
Excel Academy Charter School	Common Systems/Procedures in Classrooms
Great Hearts Academies of Arizona	Text-based Seminar Classes
Achievement First: Amistad	Longer Day and Year
KIPP Academies (Nationwide)	College Going Initiatives

Frequent Standards-Driven Assessments

Frequent assessments aligned to state and national standards are critical to student achievement. Standards-driven assessments inform school staff of individual students' academic strengths and weaknesses, with focus on each skill and component of content knowledge in each content area at each grade level. Guided analysis of assessment results allows teachers to adjust lesson planning, focus tutorials, and modify instruction in response to students' needs, and School Leaders to make larger curricular decisions as appropriate. We utilize data from state assessments, nationally-normed tests, end-of-course exams, internally developed interim assessments, tests, quizzes, and assignments to inform and modify curriculum and instruction, and provide ongoing professional development throughout the school year.

Students participate in the NWEA MAP assessment three times a year as a means to benchmark progress toward college success. NWEA MAP has done extensive research and there is a strong correlation between MAP scores and ACT scores. Further, ACT scores can be strongly correlated to college success. A student who scores in the 75th percentile on the ACT is likely to earn a B average or better in college. A student who scores in the 75th percentile on MAP is likely to score in the 75th percentile on the ACT (according to the ACT research found on their website). This assessment allows us to ensure we are on track to putting our students in college successfully.

Formative Assessment Strategies

Daily, all teachers assign an exit ticket. These can come in a variety of forms, but it is typically a written assessment of what students learned in class that day and if they achieved the objective. These are analyzed each day and the teacher can then adjust instruction or remediate in before or

after school tutoring, or in lunchtime office hours. Weekly, teachers assign a formative assessment that is based on content of that week. This is immediately analyzed the following Monday to ensure remediation is timely. Teachers also give a mid-quarter and end-of-quarter exam that are cumulative throughout the year to track mastery of content and inform remediation groups for Saturday Academy and/or Zero Hour. Each course has an end-of-semester exam that is summative of the material for that semester. Failure to pass this with a 70% or higher results in the student attending Summer Academy to learn that content or skill.

Advisory and Ethics Curriculum

Every student will be placed in an advisory as a freshman. These groups will remain together until graduation and ideally be led by the same teacher. The advisory system is designed to be a daily activity that runs for thirty minutes. The advisor leads the group of students through a series of ethical topics throughout the year. There are units on safe relationships, bullying, perseverance, and integrity. There are also skill-based units like writing a resume, reading a college transcript, interview skills, etc. These advisory classes are intentionally small and focused so that students can also use this as a forum for concerns or challenges they have in their academic and social experience at PCA. This model is based on Noble Street Schools in Chicago which has resulted in proven success in the retention of High School students, a reduction in bullying and violence, and student investment in school.

Field Experiences and College Exposure

Students at Phoenix Collegiate Academy will likely be the first in their family to attend college. According to data from PCA MS, 70% of parents and guardians have never been to a college class. Given this reality, it is imperative that our students are exposed to colleges and universities. Students in ninth grade will visit colleges in San Francisco and tenth graders will visit colleges on the East Coast. Juniors and Seniors will visit colleges of their own choosing, because they will be at critical points in the college-decision process. PCA HS will strive to always send Juniors and Seniors to ASU each year to sit in on a class and experience college first-hand.

Field experiences are also important. Many PCA students do not leave South Phoenix unless it is to go to the mall in Tempe. In college PCA HS students will meet people of different cultures, from different areas of the country and world, and be exposed to new ideas. PCA HS has an obligation to ensure students can compete and understand a variety of experiences. Thus, students will attend arts field experiences like plays and exhibits to supplement the learning in history and English, and they will do real field experiments at locations like the Audubon Center and South Mountain Park. In this way, students will have experiences to draw upon when they encounter new opportunities in college.

Results of our Instructional Methods

As a result of the instructional methods we have chosen, our students will have:

- More time on task – if students need to learn more, they need more time to learn it
- Demanding curriculum – if all students are going to college, all students must take college prep classes (AP and Honors)
- Social competency through our Advisory program
- Competitive test scores through the use of constant assessment
- Exposure to a variety of field experiences
- An opportunity to thrive academically in a small school and smaller classes
- Individualized attention through remediation plans.

A.3.c Summative Assessment Plan

Every student completes a summative exam at the end of the semester. These exams are comprehensive of the entire semester of content, similar to a final in college. Students have to pass these with a 70% or higher, or they will be required to attend Summer Academy. This is the method for internally summatively assessing student mastery.

In addition, students are tested with the NWEA MAP assessment three times throughout the year. This assessment shows PCA HS staff how students are performing on a national scale in math, reading and writing. The version of MAP PCA HS uses is aligned to Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. From this assessment staff can determine what students need the most support in these core areas and ensure they are receiving that support. Teachers are also able to ensure that every student is scoring in the percentile that will prove they are going to be successful in college.

Students who take AP courses are also given a summative assessment via the AP test in that subject area.