A.2 Target Population

A.2.a Understanding of Students and Community

Target Population and Current Levels of Performance

In the Roosevelt School District, the district within which Phoenix Collegiate Academy High School will be located, data shows that there is a very dire need for an excellent school. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 74% of the population under the age of 18 is Latino or Hispanic, 14% is Black/African-American, and 7% is White/Caucasian. According to the Arizona Department of Education's Health and Nutrition reports, the Roosevelt School District is serving approximately 88% of students with free or reduced lunch. 11% are qualifying for Special Education services, and 25% are English Language Learners, according to school report cards on ADE.

The median income of this area is $43,835 compared to $54,713 in the metro phoenix area, according to the Children's Action Alliance. Also, this area has the second highest percentage of children born to mothers without a high school education and 34% are children living in poverty.

In the immediate area PCA HS will serve, the local high schools are South Mountain High School and Cesar Chavez High School. South Mountain High School has earned a C label in 2013, and Cesar Chavez a B in 2013, according to ADE School Report Cards. Both schools serve over 1,700 students, and are not meeting Annual Measurable Outcomes. Charter High Schools in the area include, AAEC South Mountain earned an "A" label and it serves 400 students, NFL YET with an "A" label and serves less than 200 students in 9-12th grade, and one alternative high school, South Pointe. (South Pointe earned a B-ALT and is serving 530 high school students. For the purposes of this application, we are not considering South Pointe as competition as we are not an alternative school model.)

AAEC South Mountain serves a 56% FRL population (Free and Reduced Lunch), NFL YET serves a 92% FRL population, South Mountain High School serves a 83% FRL population, and Cesar Chavez High School serves a 69% FRL population. PCA Middle School serves over a 95% FRL population and has done so successfully. The only school that compares is NFL YET, with 92% FRL population. (All of these figures can be found on the ADE Health and Nutrition website.)

Taking all of this into consideration, there are over 3,000 students attending C labeled schools. There are only 600 quality seats being offered (NFL YET and AAEC), and of those quality seats, only 400 are for low-income students (half of the AAEC students and all of the NFL YET students). The need for more quality seats for low-income students is great. This is an area where PCA Middle School has already proven to be successful, and where PCA HS will help to bring more quality seats to an underserved area.

A.2.b Program to Meet Needs of Target Population

Need for Academic Achievement

Students in South Phoenix continue to underachieve in the core subjects. The table below shows the AIMS percent passing in Math and Reading in 2013 (all data pulled from the ADE report cards).

	Math AIMS	Reading AIMS
NFL YET	64	77
AAEC	78	92
Cesar Chavez	55	78
South Mountain	44	71

This chart demonstrates that there are few quality seats for students in the South Mountain area. Even in the best two schools, AAEC and NFL YET, at least 30% of students are not passing math standards. And, in these two schools, only 600 students are being served, while in the two large high schools over 3,000 students are being served, and their math and reading scores are leaving behind huge groups of students. PCA High School will be located in the heart of the South Mountain High School area, and this is the area where over 50% of students are not passing math and over 25% of students are not passing Reading.

Further, graduation rates in our area are not acceptable. According to the South Mountain HS Profile (found on the Phoenix Union website), only 87% of students are graduating. For Cesar Chavez HS (2010-11 was the most recent profile available), this number is even lower, at 80%. At Phoenix Collegiate Academy, goals are based on a program of proven successful high school programs such as YES Prep, KIPP, Achievement First, and Uncommon High Schools, where 100% of students are graduating and over 95% are being accepted into 4-year universities.

Need for a Small School

The average high school in South Phoenix serves over 1,700. Studies indicate that academic achievement and safety are negatively impacted as schools increase in size.[1] "Michael Klonsky (1995), Mary Anne Raywid (1995), and others report that large school size hurts attendance and dampens enthusiasm for involvement in school activities. From the evidence above as well, larger schools in South Mountain are not performing as well as the two smaller charter high schools. Large schools have lower grade averages and standardized test scores coupled with higher dropout rates and more problems with violence, security, and drug abuse."[2] Research and practice evidence that students in our target population need a small school environment to be academically successful high school: "Small schools work. And they appear to work particularly well with disadvantaged students."[3] To foster strong academic achievement for the most at-risk students, research indicates

[1] Kappner, Augusta, S. "Small Schools Offer Real Hope For Communities Of Color." 204. www.smallerschools.org.
[2] Cox, D.N. "Big Trouble: Solving Educational Problems Means Rethinking Super-Sized Schools and Districts.", 2004. www.smallerschools.org.
[3] Augusta Kappner, *Small Schools Offer Real Hope for Communities of Color*, www.smallerschools.org.

that the ideal school size at each developmental level should not exceed 400 students.[4] PCA HS will offer a small school environment the high school. At full grade enrollment the high school will not exceed 350 students.

Further, there is evidence of small schools being effective in PCA middle school. PCA Middle School has approximately 330 students and has earned two years of an "A" label. In 2013, PCA MS did earn a "C" label, but that was due largely to implementation of the Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards Standards, though we were still assessed on the AIMS Standards. A small school environment in PCA MS has allowed us to target students for remediation, foster strong relationships with parents, and create a safe and challenging environment for all students. Compared to the Roosevelt School District (where average schools are 500+ students), they have been a C district or worse every year. Small schools matter and PCA HS is committed to this for every student served.

Need for Academically Rigorous Instruction

According to the *Beat the Odds* Study, less than 1 out of 10 Latino students will graduate from college. Since this is more than 80% of the proposed population PCA HS works with, this is alarming and a cause for action. It is clear that few students in the South Phoenix area are being exposed to high quality, academically rigorous instruction. AAEC, serving 400 students, has a dual enrollment program with South Mountain Community College, and students there are earning college credits and taking rigorous classes, but this is only a small percentage of the students in the South Mountain area. In an interview with South Mountain's counseling department, they estimate that only 20% of the graduating class is accepted to a 4-year university upon graduation. Of this 20% only half attend college in the fall. At Phoenix Collegiate Academy High School, it is a graduation requirement that they be accepted to at least one 4-year university. Further, PCA HS will employ a college counselor to ensure students matriculate and enroll in college following their high school graduation.

In February of 2014, KJZZ published a story that more Arizona students were scoring well on AP Exams. The percent of students scoring a three or better (on a five point scale) is over 14%, up from just seven percent in 2003. The number of low-income and minority students taking the AP test has also risen, but there was no reporting about the increase in this groups scores. This article says that across Arizona one quarter of high school seniors took an AP exam. In an interview with the South Mountain counseling department, this higher passing rate is not proving to be true. Most students who take the AP test (over 80% according to the Guidance Counseling Department) are scoring below a 3. While many AP classes are offered in theory, only a small percentage of students are taking these courses, and very few are passing. This is the target community of students PCA HS will be addressing. At PCA HS, students are exposed to AP classes as early as their freshman year, and by senior year, every student will be prepared to take and pass an AP class in all core subject areas. This is the only true proxy to prove our students are ready for the rigor of college,

[4] Karen Irmsher, *School Size,* ERIC Digest 113 July 1997, www.smallerschools.org.

and it is the only way to ensure our curriculum is rigorously aligned to high standards of college achievement levels.

Need for More Time

At Phoenix Collegiate Academy High School, students will enter needing more support and academic training, even if they come from PCA Middle School. With over 10% of our students having a special education designation, and the majority still only in the 40th percentile on the nationally normed Stanford 10 portion of the AIMS assessment, the work to be done to be truly college ready is significant. Therefore, PCA needs more time to ensure all students are learning at the highest levels.

At PCA HS students will attend school for eight hours a day, seven of which are instructional minutes. Students will be in six core classes for over an hour each, mimicking the kind of longer classes seen in college. Students at South Mountain High School or Cesar Chavez High School spend one hour less in school every day. This means over 180 hours of additional learning time for our high school students, or 22 and a half additional days of learning- over one month every year.

In addition to this "regular" additional school time, PCA HS will offer an additional hour of classes each day for remediation and credit recovery. These students will then be attending a nine-hour school day and receiving more than two months of extra school days. Students can further be invited to Saturday Academy and Summer Academy, thus adding at least another twenty to eighty hours of instruction in the school year.

More time has a positive impact when used effectively. The KIPP schools are famous for their increased school time that is correlated with exceptional student growth. PCA MS has seen tremendous success with an extended school day as well. PCA MS students go to school for nine hours a day and are engaged in academics for eight of these hours. Students at PCA for more than one year are outscoring their area peers by double digits on the AIMS assessment each year. More time, if used effectively, is a tool that can propel students to higher academic outcomes.

A.2.c Class Size and Teacher-Student Ratios

Class sizes at PCA HS will strive to be no larger than 25 students per class. In most cases, class sizes will be 22 students once at full capacity and optimal enrollment trends. PCA HS believes that smaller class sizes are important to our model because students will be engaging with rigorous, AP style coursework. Seminar discussions, debates, labs, and presentations will be regular requirements of class and in order for these to run effectively, class sizes must be at a moderate number.

The teacher-to-student ratio is not to exceed 1:17. In the founding year (2015-16) PCA HS will serve approximately 250 9th-12th graders with a staff of 15 teachers. This ratio is 1:12. At full capacity, with 350 students, we will have a staff of 21 teachers, and thus our ratio will be no larger than 1:17. This ratio is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, all of our students are split into advisories run by teachers. This teacher oversees between 15-17 students from Freshman to Senior

year. They are the person who makes monthly calls to parents to engage them in the learning process, they hold the quarterly report card conferences, and sees their students daily for thirty minutes to engage in conversations about character strengths and areas of growth. This connection is a bedrock to the program, and one of the main reasons students will not drop out in rates seen at area high schools. If these groups get too large, the intimacy and relationship building is strained and not as effective. Thus, the teacher-student ratios are held at 1:17.