A.2 Target Population

The Rising School will serve the urban community of central Tucson. The school will be located within a three-mile radius centered at the intersection of Grant Road and Campbell Avenue. The borders of this area are River Road (north), Swan Road (east), Broadway Boulevard (south), and I-10 (west). This area includes the 85705, 85716, and 85719 zip codes, plus the western portions of 85711 and 85712.

An analysis of this community's student population, the schools responsible for educating these children, and state trends reveals the following:

- the students in this community are among those in greatest need of a quality public education
- few students in this community receive an adequate education to compete academically with other children in the United States
- local communities and the state of Arizona suffer as a result of schools failing to provide students with the education that they deserve

Demographics

The Rising School's targeted community has demographic profile that, when compared to the rest of the United States, is marked by low median income and high concentration of Hispanics. As the table below shows, the community's five zip codes averaged together ranked in 2010 in the 10th percentile (bottom 10%) of U.S. zip codes in median income and in the 90th percentile (top 10%) in Hispanic concentration (www.ZipWho.com):

Zip Code	Median Income	Income Percentile	Hispanic	Hispanic Percentile	White	Black	Asian/Pacific/ Indian/Other
85705	$23,047	4	32.6%	94	56.9%	2.7%	7.8%
85711	$30,909	22	29.4%	93	60.2%	4.3%	6.5%
85712	$27,699	12	18.9%	89	70.8%	3.9%	6.4%
85716	$27,943	13	20.1%	89	70.3%	3.1%	6.5%
85719	$23,324	4	19.2%	89	67.6%	3.0%	10.2%

Crime Rates

There are high crime rates in each of the five zip codes that comprise the targeted community of The Rising School. As the table below demonstrates, each of the five zip codes has higher than average crimes rates in *every category*—murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, larceny, and motor-vehicle theft—than the rates both for the United States and for Arizona. In terms of total crime, each zip code in the targeted community has from 208% to 324% as much total crime as the U.S. average (www.clrsearch.com):

2010 Crime Indexes	U.S.	Arizona	85705	85711	85712	85716	85719
Total Crime	*100*	*143*	*208*	*278*	*324*	*282*	*266*
Murder	100	144	160	194	162	185	159
Rape	100	98	153	193	219	229	208
Robbery	100	102	149	182	200	191	177
Assault	100	112	191	267	350	221	224
Burglary	100	139	173	221	263	256	210
Larceny	100	127	211	315	437	318	300
Motor Vehicle Theft	100	220	296	414	506	440	420

The Educational Needs of the Target Population

The Rising School's targeted community has a high concentration of lower-income and Hispanic students. Moreover, many students fall into both categories, as the poverty rate for Hispanic children in Arizona was 32.7% in 2010.

State and national statistics reveal students from these two demographic groups are among those in greatest need of a quality education. By the time they reach fourth grade, children living in low-income communities are typically two to three grades behind their higher-income peers. Just half of students in low-income communities will graduate high school by age 18. Those who do graduate will perform, on average, at an eighth-grade level. Overall, only 1 in 10 students growing up in poverty will graduate from college (www.teachforamerica.org). In Arizona, only 53% of Hispanics age 25 or older have completed high school, and only 8% have completed college (Morrison Institute, 2001).

The adults in the Rising School's targeted community have an educational attainment below the U.S. average. In each of the five zip codes in the targeted area, the portion of the adult population in 2010 without a college degree of any kind is over one-half, with some zip codes having over 4/5ths of their population lacking a college degree (www.freedemographicsdata.com):

Zip Code	No HS degree	HS degree	Associate's	Bachelor's	Graduate
85705	26.5%	54.8%	5.5%	8.9%	4.3%
85711	16.4%	52.5%	6.3%	15.6%	9.2%
85712	13.8%	49.3%	7.2%	18.0%	11.7%
85716	11.2%	46.5%	5.9%	20.3%	16.1%
85719	11.5%	41.8%	5.5%	21.7%	19.5%

Performance of Other Schools in Meeting Student and Community Needs

The Rising School's targeted community contains 18 public and charter schools that serve students in grades 6-12 and that received an A-F Accountability letter grades from the state of Arizona in 2011. (According to the Arizona Charter Schools Association's website, there are other schools in the targeted area, but none of these schools received an A-F Accountability letter grade in 2011; www.azcharters.org, www.azed.gov) A majority of the community's students live

within the Tucson Unified School District (TUSD), although Amphitheater and Flowing Wells districts also have schools in the area. TUSD serves over 60,000 students, making it the largest school district in Pima County and the second-largest in Arizona.

Unfortunately for the targeted community, TUSD is a struggling district, earning a C rating in 2011. Although TUSD does have some highly rated schools, none of them is in the targeted community: the district's "lowest achieving schools [are] in central section," according to TUSD's *Strategic Plan 2011-2012* (2011, p. 13). As TUSD's superintendent, Dr. John Pedicone, admitted in a February 20, 2011, article in the *Arizona Daily Star*, "Tucson Unified School District has long suffered from a community perception that the organization is broken and that leadership is in denial about the serious problems that exist. Examples of mismanagement have been evident, the quality of education has been a shared community concern and, it is fair to say, the average citizen views the district as an embarrassment." TUSD's struggles have negatively impacted the education of the children within the targeted community.

As noted, the targeted community contains 18 public and charter schools that serve grades 6-12 and that received an A-F Accountability letter grades from the state of Arizona in 2011. These include 10 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 3 combined middle and high school. Of the 13 schools reporting free-and-reduced lunch data, the median was 63%

Below is a table listing these 18 schools along with each school's charter or district status, number of students, growth points, composite point, total points, A-F letter grade, and percentage of students qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch (www.azed.gov; www.azcharters.org):

School	District	Students	Growth	Composite	Points	Letter	F&RL
Academy of Math and Science	Charter	*319	55	86	141	A	53
AmeriSchools Academy	Charter	*195	58	73	131	B	NA
Amphitheater High School	Amphi	1280	47	52	99	D	70
Amphitheater Middle School	Amphi	687	49	61	110	C	87
BASIS Tucson	Charter	651	65	100	165	A	NA
Catalina High Magnet School	TUSD	1356	48	44	92	D	67
City High School	Charter	189	59	62	121	B	39
Desert Springs Academy	Charter	*134	58	85	143	A	NA
Doolen Middle School	TUSD	714	44	58	102	C	67
Flowing Wells High School	FW	1760	64	80	144	A	54
Flowing Wells Junior High School	FW	814	67	74	141	A	66
La Cima Middle School	Amphi	585	45	67	112	C	71
Mansfeld Middle School	TUSD	677	41	56	97	D	63
Paulo Freire Freedom School	Charter	73	73	83	156	A	NA
Presidio School	Charter	*368	47	91	138	B	61
Satori Charter School	Charter	*164	45	78	123	B	23
Tucson High Magnet School	TUSD	2996	52	63	115	C	46
Wildcat School	Charter	97	40	37	77	D	NA

* Number includes students in grades K-5 (not served by The Rising School)

As this table shows, the community's schools are uneven in quality. They vary widely in growth points (40 to 73, with a median of 49), composite points (37 to 100, with a median of 67), total A-F points (77 to 165, with a median of 121). The schools also vary widely in A-F rating: six schools earned an A grade, four earned a B, four earned a C, and four earned a D. Thus, 44% of the community's schools—including six of the eight most populous schools—are rated as a C or D. In addition, each of the four A-rated charter schools is full, with a lottery for incoming students, and BASIS Tucson, the highest rated school in the community, is moving its 8th-12th campus out of the central Tucson community into the northeastern foothills area, six miles away. Moreover, the two A-rated public schools (Flowing Wells' Junior High and High School) are situated in the westernmost section of the targeted community.

How The Rising School Will Meet Student and Community Needs

As the above discussion revealed, the community targeted by The Rising School's is marked by low income levels, high concentration of Hispanics, high crime rates, low educational attainment, struggling large public schools, and limited access to A-rated schools.

The Rising School's educational philosophy (see A.1) and program of instruction (see A.3) will meet the needs of the target population by improving pupil achievement. Key elements of The Rising School's methods for helping its target population include:

- A superior education
- A welcoming atmosphere
- Personal attention for all students
- Extra help for students who need (including students with special needs)
- A safe and orderly learning environment
- Family and community involvement
- Class sizes capped at 28 students and targeted at 25 students or less

A Superior Education

The best way a school can help students from low-income and Hispanic backgrounds is by providing a superior education that will enable them to succeed in college and professional careers. To ensure this, The Rising School will focus on creating a high-quality college-prep school that is one of the best academic schools in Arizona.

The Rising School's curriculum, instruction, and assessments will be aligned to Arizona's current College and Career Readiness Standards (Common Core Standards + 2010 Arizona Additions; www.azed.gov) and CCRS-aligned assessments, such as the state standardized assessment exams. Courses will also incorporate college-readiness content and skills aligned to AP, ACT, SAT, and other assessments. Since many of our initial students will be entering behind grade level, The Rising School will focus on academic intervention based on a Personal Learning Plan for each student. For example, students assessed in the bottom quartile based on CCRS-aligned formative assessments in math, reading, and writing will be required to take, in addition to all of the core courses, an intervention course in math, reading, or writing. The school will have employ other intervention strategies—including a study skills course, plentiful tutoring, and elements of the Response to Intervention program—as the school focuses on academic progress for every student.

The school's principal, an experienced educator, will be the instructional leaders and will be responsible for hiring, supervising, and evaluating teachers. Teachers' expertise in content and instruction will be demonstrated through advanced degrees in their teaching subject,

previous effective classroom experience, and observation/evaluations by the principal, faculty peers, and students. The principal's evaluation of teachers will rely heavily (50%) on their students' academic growth as demonstrated by classroom-level data, in alignment with the Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness. The principal and teachers will work together in a weekly Professional Learning Community, professional-development opportunities, and planning periods to create curriculum, refine instruction, and analyze assessment and other data. The goal will be courses that are rigorous, challenging, engaging, and relevant.

Using these proven methods, The Rising School will achieve higher than average scores in both academic proficiency and academic growth beginning in year one, earning at least a B rating on the A-F School Accountability Letter Grade System. The school's Accountability score will increase each year, and will be an A ranking by year four and will remain an A thereafter. As we develop a reputation as one of the best schools in Tucson, we expect to draw more and more students from middle-class families seeking a first-class education. From day one, the school will meet the needs of high-achieving students by offering enrichment opportunities in all courses and electives, and will offer many AP courses.

The Rising School's educational philosophy and program of instruction are based on research and experience and are described in detail in, respectively, A.1, "Educational Philosophy" and A.3, "Program of Instruction."

Personal Attention for All Students

The Rising School will serve the personal education needs of its students. The Rising School will be a caring community. It will be a small school with class size targeted at 25 or fewer students. To help personalize the program, each student will be appointed an Advisor, a faculty or staff person who monitors the student's academic and personal development and serves as the contact person for the student's family. The student will have the same Advisor as long as the student is at the school (up to seven years). Every week, the student will meet with his or her Advisor in an Advisory group along with 10-15 other students. The Advisor—in conjunction with administrators, teachers, the student, and his/her parents—will help the student develop his or her Personal Learning Plan (PLP), which will ensure that the student has a program he or she is comfortable with and is on track to graduate.

For more on how The Rising School will provide personal attention to all students, see A.1, "Educational Philosophy."

Extra Help for Students Who Need It

Market research shows that students from lower-income and Hispanic backgrounds are often behind grade level academically and require extra help. The Rising School will foster a culture where all students needing help will seek assistance from appropriate sources. Teachers and tutors will be available for students during study time before and after school. Tutoring will also be available during study-skills periods (three hours per week), which are mandatory for every student. Additionally, The Rising School will identify, through review of students' assessments and discussion by our teachers, students who are performing poorly or who are at risk of performing poorly. The school will target for intervention the bottom quartile of students identified as having poor math, reading, or writing skills. In addition, The Rising School will provide extra help to students identified with special needs. Based on market research, 10-15% of students will be identified as having special needs.

For more on how the school will provide extra help for students who need it, see A.1, "Educational Philosophy."

A Safe and Orderly Learning Environment

Research shows that lower-income children often live in situations that are disorderly, neglectful, and even dangerous. Consequently, these students need safety, structure, and discipline in their lives in order to thrive. Moreover, an effective learning environment requires safety and order. The Rising School will supply safety and order.

To encourage a positive culture and climate, the school will employ the methods of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS) program, developed by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education (www.pbis.org). PBIS is a decision-making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

PBIS emphasizes four integrated elements: data for decision making, measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by data, practices with evidence that these outcomes are achievable, and systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices.

These four elements of PBIS are guided by six important principles: develop a continuum of scientifically based behavior and academic interventions and supports; use data to make decisions and solve problems; arrange the environment to prevent the development and occurrence of problem behavior; teach and encourage positive social skills and behaviors; implement evidence-based behavioral practices with fidelity and accountability; and screen universally and monitor student performance & progress continuously.

PBIS schools organize their evidence-based behavioral practices and systems into an integrated collection or continuum in which students experience supports based on their behavioral responsiveness to intervention. A three-tiered prevention logic requires that all students receive supports at the universal or primary tier. If the behavior of some students is not responsive, more intensive behavioral supports are provided, in the form of a group contingency (selected or secondary tier) or a highly individualized plan (intensive or tertiary tier).

According to the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education (www.pbis.org), schools that implement PBIS with integrity and durability have teaching and learning environments that:

- Are less reactive, aversive, dangerous, and exclusionary, and
- Are more engaging, responsive, preventive, and productive
- Address classroom management and disciplinary issues (e.g., attendance, tardies, antisocial behavior),
- Improve supports for students whose behaviors require more specialized assistance (e.g., emotional and behavioral disorders, mental health), and
- Most importantly, maximize academic engagement and achievement for all students.

A Welcoming Atmosphere

Community members who are poor, have minimal education, speak English as a second language, and come from immigrant backgrounds are sometimes suspicious of government institutions, including schools—often with good reason. To allay these worries, The Rising School will provide a welcoming atmosphere to these parents and students. The school will

embrace an ethic of customer service, viewing parents, students, and community members as a valuable clientele. To ensure clear communication, the school secretary will be fluent in English and Spanish, and bilingual skills will be a preferred qualification for other clerical workers and staff members.

The school will provide a welcoming atmosphere in other ways, too. Administrators will have an open-door policy. Administrators and teachers will make home visits. Finally, the school will encourage family and community involvement.

Family and Community Involvement

The Rising School will encourage family and community involvement in several ways. The school will solicit input about its program's design and structure. In addition, parents or guardians will serve as essential members of the student's Personal Learning Plan (PLP) team. In creating a PLP, families will meet with the student, teachers, administrators, and other team members several times during the year to develop and revise the PLP. Families also will participate actively in the assessment of their children's portfolios and exhibitions.

Additionally, The Rising School will implement a structure for systematic family and community participation in the school based on the recommendations of the National Network of Partnership Schools (Epstein et al., 2008). The school will focus on six main types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The first type of involvement, parenting, assists families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students at each grade level. It also assists schools in understanding families. Second is communicating with families about school programs and school progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications. Third is volunteering, which improves recruitment, training, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school and in other locations to support students and school programs. Fourth is learning at home, which involves families with their children in learning at home, including homework, other curriculum-related activities, and individual course and program decisions. Fifth is decision making, which includes families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through committees, action teams, and other parent organizations. Finally, the sixth type of involvement is collaborating with the community, which coordinates community resources and services to students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups. It also includes providing services to the community.

Class Size and Teacher-Student Ratio

According to a report by the Brookings Institute, the research on the effects of small class size on student achievement is mixed. "But it appears that very large class-size reductions, on the order of magnitude of 7-10 fewer students per class, can have significant long-term effects on student achievement and other meaningful outcomes. These effects seem to be largest when introduced in the earliest grades, and for students from less advantaged family backgrounds" (Whitehurst and Chingos, 2011). The "A" rated schools in the target area have class sizes of 25-28. Consequently, The Rising School will cap its class sizes at 28 students and will strive to have classes of 25 students or less. The Rising School's teacher-student ratio will be:1-20 (5.0 FTE teachers-100 students) in year one; 1-19.4 (9.0 FTE teachers-175 students) in year two; and 1-18.7 (15.0 FTE teachers-280 students) in year three.

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