A.3 Program of Instruction

The Rising School's Program of Instruction is designed to meet the needs of students in its target population by preparing them to succeed in college and 21st century careers. Students in the targeted community of central Tucson come disproportionately from low-income, Hispanic families, and are likely to be below grade level. Consequently, The Rising School will assess all students and then employ targeted intervention that focuses on reading, writing, and math. The Program of Instruction is designed to increase students' academic achievement, college acceptance and graduation rates, life opportunities, and civic and economic contributions through a rigorous education in grades 6-9 (with extension to 6-12 by year four).

The program of instruction includes:

- Assessment and intervention to remediate students below grade level or identified as ELL
- A rigorous curriculum based on the College and Career Readiness Standards (Common Core Standards + 2010 Arizona Additions), other Arizona state standards, Advanced Placement, leading prep schools, and colleges and universities
- A rigorous high school curriculum, where all core courses are taught at the Honors or AP level
- An emphasis on college readiness throughout the curriculum
- Real-world application that prepares students to apply their education by using 21st century skills, such as thinking critically and solving real-world problems
- Research-based, content-specific, best practices implemented by teachers who are experts in content and instruction
- Frequent assessments to inform data-driven decisions that provide differentiated support to maximize academic achievement

Curriculum Framework for Academic Core Content Areas

Mathematics

The Rising School's program of instruction includes a required math course each year. Additionally, students in grades 6-11 assessed in the bottom quartile in math achievement will take an additional math course: Math Foundations (grades 6-8) or Math Essentials 1-3 (grades 9-11). These are intervention courses designed to remediate math deficiencies. All of the school's math courses are aligned to the Arizona's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) or to the AP standards.

In 6th grade, the math curriculum focuses on four areas: 1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; 2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; 3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and 4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

In 7th grade, the math curriculum focuses on four critical areas: 1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; 2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; 3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and 4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

In 8th grade, math curriculum focuses on three areas: 1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; 2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; 3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and

figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

In high school, The Rising School's math curriculum covers six major conceptual categories: number and quantity, algebra, functions, modeling, geometry, statistics, and probability. Students must pass four credits of math. Students will be grouped by skill based on assessment. In 9th grade, students will take either Honors Algebra 1/Geometry 1 or Honors Algebra 2/Geometry 2. In 10th grade, students will take either Honors Algebra 2/Geometry 2 or Honors Pre-Calculus. In 11th grade, students will take one of the following math courses: Honors Pre-Calculus, Honors Calculus, or AP Calculus AB. In 12th grade, students will take one of the following math courses: Honors Calculus or AP Calculus BC or AP Statistics

English Language Arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) program focuses on reading and writing. In grades 6-9, all students take two ELA courses each year. In grades 10-12, all students take one ELA course each year. In grades 6-11, students in the bottom quartile in reading will take an additional ELA course: English Foundations (for grades 6-8) or English Essentials 1-3 (for grades 9-11). These are intervention courses designed to remediate ELA deficiencies, including ELL students.

English Language Arts: Reading

Reading is emphasized throughout the ELA curriculum, starting in middle school. Each year in grades 6-8, students take a Humanities course, which is focused on reading texts, both literary (stories, drama, and poetry) and informational (nonfiction). In this manner, the Humanities curriculum integrates the study of English and social studies. Each Humanities course is aligned to the appropriate grade level in Arizona's College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) in reading, with the course's informational texts aligned with state standards for social studies in grades 6-8. In alignment with CCRS, 50% to 70% of assigned texts will be informational nonfiction. Students will critically analyze literature and expository text, determining the author's meaning and purpose while judging the effectiveness of literary and rhetorical devices. Students will tackle works of exceptional thought and craft from many genres, cultures, and eras. Through broad and deep reading of steadily increasing sophistication, students will acquire many skills, including: literary and cultural knowledge, references, and images; the ability to evaluate intricate arguments; and the capacity to comprehend complex texts.

In high school (grades 9-12), the focus on reading continues in ELA courses. In 9th grade, all students take Honors World Literature. In conjunction with Honors/AP World History, this course teaches students about major social, religious, philosophical, and cultural issues and themes. In 10th grade, students take Honors or AP English Language, both of which are aligned to AP English Language standards. In conjunction with Honors/AP U.S. History, this course requires students to read American prose, both fiction and nonfiction, written in a variety of rhetorical contexts. In 11th grade, students take Honors or AP English Literature, both of which are aligned to AP English Literature. This course engages students in careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature from the British canon, surveying major literary periods and exploring connections between literature, culture, and historical events. In 12th grade, all students take Honors Senior English. This course is modeled after college English courses, requiring reading, analysis, writing, and discussion. Each year, the instructor, with input from students, will determine the topic or theme of the course; examples include: Shakespeare's dramas, themes in Victorian literature, the 19th-century American novel, contemporary American literature, gender in literature, women writers, African-American literature, Mexican-American literature in English, colonial and postcolonial literature, and film theory.

Reading across the Curriculum

The Rising School emphasizes reading across the curriculum because the skill is necessary to building knowledge in all subjects. The vast majority of reading in college and the workforce is sophisticated nonfiction requiring specific skills. For example, in social studies, students must analyze, evaluate, and

differentiate primary and secondary sources. In science, students must understand challenging texts with complex diagrams and data. Thus, students must learn to read complex informational texts with independence and confidence. Reading for college and career readiness requires many skills, including:

- understanding the conventions of each discipline, e.g., the kinds of evidence used in history and science
- understanding discipline-specific words, phrases, concepts, and theories
- attention to precise details
- capacity to evaluate intricate arguments, synthesize complex information, and follow detailed descriptions of events and concepts

English Language Arts: Writing

Writing is emphasized throughout the English Language Arts curriculum, starting in middle school. Each year in grades 6-8, students will take English Composition, which focuses on expression through writing (primarily) and other media, such as oral and video. English Composition courses are aligned to the appropriate grade level in the CCRS in writing, and students will learn and apply various strategies to become increasingly proficient writers and communicators. Along with writing, other modes of expression will be learned and developed in English Composition courses (and in other ELA courses, too). Aural and verbal skills will be developed during structured discussions about subject matter. In discussions, students will learn how to contribute appropriately, compare and contrast, and analyze and synthesize ideas using strong evidence. They will also learn to listen attentively to build on others' ideas while expressing their own ideas clearly and persuasively. In alignment with 21st century skills, students will incorporate the use of technologies to express their ideas.

In high school, the emphasis on writing and other forms of expression continues. In 9th grade, students take Honors World Literature. In conjunction with World History, this course uses world literature to teach students about major social, religious, philosophical, and cultural issues and themes. Writing assignments will focus on the critical analysis of literature and will include expository, analytical, argumentative, and creative essays. In 10th grade, all students take Honors or AP English Language, both of which are aligned to the AP English Language and Composition standards. In conjunction with Honors/AP U.S. History, this course examines American prose and provides students with plentiful opportunities to write about a variety of subjects and demonstrate an awareness of audience and purpose. In 11th grade, all students take Honors or AP English Literature, both of which are aligned to the AP English Literature standards. In this class, students will read texts primarily from the British canon, and writing assignments will focus on the critical analysis of literature and will include expository, analytical, argumentative, and creative essays. In 12th grade, all students take Honors Senior English. This course is modeled after college English courses, requiring reading, analysis, writing, and discussion. Each year, the instructor, with input from students, will determine the topic or theme of the course. A key requirement of this course is completion by every student of a substantial, high-quality paper or project.

Writing across the Curriculum

The Rising School emphasizes writing across the curriculum because students must be able to express themselves in every subject area. Courses help students to progressively master the writing skills required for college and career readiness, including the abilities to:

- assert and defend claims
- show what they know about a subject
- convey what they have experienced, imagined, thought, or felt
- take task, purpose, and audience into consideration
- choose words, information, structures, and formats deliberately
- combine elements of different kinds of writing to produce complex and nuanced writing
- use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating
- become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately

- report findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner
- produce high-quality first-draft text under a tight deadline
- revisit and revise a piece of writing over multiple drafts

Social Studies

The Rising Schools social-studies program is aligned with Arizona or AP standards. Throughout the social studies curriculum, students will build academic vocabulary and critical thinking skills. They will develop proficiency in constructing and interpreting charts, graphs, and timelines, as well as comprehending and summarizing passages and longer texts from primary and secondary sources. Students will progress in writing skill, learning to construct strong arguments.

In the middle school, social studies content is incorporated into the Humanities courses. Social-studies content in these courses focuses on World History and Geography in 6th grade, U.S. History in 7th grade, and Civics, Government, and Economics in 8th grade.

In high school, students must take a minimum of four credits of social studies. In 9th grade, students take Honors or AP World History, which are both aligned to AP World History standards. This course is integrated with the 9th grade Honors World Literature course. In 10th grade, students take Honors or AP U.S. History, which are both aligned to AP U.S. History standards. This course is integrated with the 10th grade Honors/AP English Language courses, which focuses on American prose. In 11th grade, students take one semester of Honors U.S. or AP U.S. Government and one semester of Honors or AP Economics. In 12th grade, students take an AP course in social science; possible offerings include: Art History, European History, Comparative Government, Human Geography, and Psychology.

Science

The Rising School's science program is aligned with state or AP standards. The science program is designed to help students learn scientific content and skills through inquiry-based learning, developing background knowledge and skills, and a deep understanding of physical science. Students will use inquiry based learning to discover the rules and principles that guide physical science and then gain a deeper understanding by internalizing how these principles are manifested in Life, Earth, and Health Science. Each grade level in grades 6-8 covers 3-5 physical science principles and contains at least one unit for Earth, Life, and Health Science. All grade level objectives are developed in a manner that spirals the content. Students will be exposed to concepts multiple times and each grade level will build off the foundation of the previous grade.

In high school, students will take four years of science. In 9th grade, students take Honors or AP Biology, which are both aligned to AP Biology standards. In 10th grade, students take Honors or AP Chemistry, which are both aligned to AP Biology standards. In 11th grade, students take Honors or AP Physics, which are both aligned to AP Physics B standards. In 12th grade, students take an AP course in science; possible options include: Computer Science A, Environmental Science, Human Geography, or Physics C.

Methods of Instruction

Great teaching is the heart of The Rising School. At our school, teaching will be a demanding job, requiring expert content knowledge, effective instructional implementation, personal approachability, organization ability, and collaboration skills. To achieve success, teachers will receive support from colleagues, instructional leaders, and support staff. The school will promote a culture that promotes teamwork, which is one of four foundational elements necessary for students to grow academically (ACSA, 2008). Teachers will not remain in their classrooms all day, isolated from their peers. Rather, they will gather in a climate that promotes getting the job done together in weekly Professional Learning Communities (DuFour et al., 2010) and other settings.

The Rising School's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be small groups (5-10) of teachers who work together at least once per week. PLCs will not be typical faculty meetings, where

teachers listen to a monologue from the principal about procedural and policy issues. Instead, the foci of PLCs are for teachers to learn from and with each other about professional issues generally and student-based issues specifically. Each PLC will be facilitated by an Instructional Leader who has been trained in coaching and protocols for effective PLCs. The teachers will receive professional development on working in these groups. In PLCs, teachers will research, bring in, and discuss effective curriculum, instructional, assessment methods. Teachers will also closely analyze student work together, allowing them to help each other and to gain a common professional eye. Together, PLC members will develop common assessments, grade student work, and evaluate the effectiveness of assessments. Teachers will receive 1.5 hours of learning in Professional Learning Committees and will get two weeks of professional development before the school year starts and four days after the year ends. Dr. Rising and other master teachers will serve as faculty coaches.

Faculty members will embrace the notion that teaching at The Rising School requires:

- Closely collaborating with students and colleagues in a small, friendly community
- Working in teaching teams, supporting colleagues, and being supported
- Serving primarily as a "coach" or "mentor" to facilitate students' learning-by-doing
- Teaching students as they work in groups
- Discovering and using outside resources—including online materials, local experts, and local places of learning (museums, universities, etc.)—to support students' learning
- Focusing on teaching 21st century skills
- Connecting academic content to students' social and emotional issues
- Developing as a teacher by improving professional knowledge and instructional skills

With help from colleagues, instructional leaders, and other sources, teachers will be required to create a series of detailed instructional structures for their courses. These structures comprise three levels. First, all teachers will create a syllabus for each course. The syllabus presents an overview of the course, giving a timeline of instruction and major assessments. It also explicitly aligns state or AP standards to each instructional element. The syllabus is due by the start of the school year and will be evaluated by the principal and an Instructional leader. Second, teachers will create unit plans, which show the standards, topics, and major activities of each daily lesson plan. Unit plans are due a month before the unit commences, at the start of each month. The principal will collect and evaluate unit plans. Third, teachers will create daily lesson plans, detailed plans that identify all of the daily lesson's standards, topics, activities, and assessments. For constructing daily lesson plans, the school will use Hunter's Essential Elements of Instruction (EEI) (Hunter, 2004). The elements of an EEI lesson plan include a lesson title, materials, course curriculum standards, an anticipatory set, performance objectives, instructional input, checks for understanding, guided practice, closure, and extended practice (homework). These structures tightly align curriculum with instruction.

With these structures in place, teachers in their classrooms will be trained in and use instructional methods that have been proven effective by research. All teachers will use the nine instructional strategies shown to be have the highest correlation with student success: identifying similarities and differences; summarizing and note-taking; reinforcing effort and providing recognition; homework and practice; nonlinguistic representations; cooperative learning; setting objectives and providing feedback; generating and testing hypotheses; and cues, questions, and advance organizers (Marzano, 2001). Teachers also will use proven instructional techniques associated with Uncommon Schools (Lemov, 2010), such as: no opt out, right is right, stretch it, format matters, circulate, cold call, wait time, everybody writes, 100 percent, strong voice, do it again, positive framing, and joy factor. Through professional development and practice, our teachers will deeply understand and consistently employ these proven pedagogical methods.

The faculty will also share common instructional philosophies for presenting and assessing content and skills. Bloom's Taxonomy Revised (Anderson et al., 2001) will be a foundational element of instruction. Bloom's Revised is a classification of six orders of cognition organized by level of

complexity: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Bloom's will be a common reference point for teachers when they devise instruction and, equally important, for students when they reflect on learning. For teachers, Bloom's will provide an effective strategy to analyze a performance objective and then to scaffold and adjust instruction to lead students to mastery of rigorous material. Teachers will use Bloom's to develop rigorous assessments, objectives, key points, checks for understanding, strategic questions, and differentiate.

Additionally, teachers will use differentiated instruction tailored to the needs of individual learners. Each teacher will use creative strategies appropriate to their own diverse learners. Teachers will be trained to use Garner's Multiple Intelligences (2011), which alerts teachers and students to the fact that intelligence is multifaceted, consisting of linguistic, logical, musical, kinesthetic, spatial, naturalist, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligence. Using differentiated instruction, teachers will provide students with multiple ways to acquire knowledge and skills by considering their prior knowledge, readiness level, interests, and preferred learning modes to develop lessons and supplemental materials. Teachers will differentiate the lesson content, the process in which it is presented, the product or assessment, and/or the general learning environment. Through differentiation, each student's individual needs will be met, maximizing his/her potential for growth and success.

An important part of The Rising School's instruction is adult-world immersion for its students, one of the six design principles for high school design recommended by the New Urban High School project (Riordan et al., 1999). Through art centers, local newspapers, museums, and other community-based organizations, students can develop or become involved in projects that benefit the community while enhancing their academic learning. Especially important are internships. In the fourth quarter of 12th grade, all students will complete a two-month Senior Internship. Internships will provide authentic settings where students learn problem-solving and other higher-order thinking skills. Internship also will allow students to explore their career interests and observe how adults put together careers.

The principal, along with instructional leaders and others, will ensure that teachers are effectively implementing the school's curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The principal will make sure that teachers receive training and professional development in the methods outlines above. The principal and other instructional leaders will also ensure that teachers are adhering to the school's principals and policies through conversations with teachers, observations of teaching, examination of curriculum materials and assessments, and analysis of data on student learning, especially assessment data.

A teacher's instructional quality will be determined through rigorous, fair evaluation. The goals of the school's teacher evaluation are to:

- enhance and improve student learning
- use the evaluation process and achievement data to drive professional development to enhance teaching, leadership, and student performance
- increase data-informed decision making for students and teacher and principal evaluations fostering school cultures where student learning and progress is a continual part of redefining goals for all
- use the evaluation process and data to improve teacher and principal performance; incorporate multiple measurements of achievement
- communicate clearly defined expectations; reflect fairness, flexibility and a research-based approach
- create a culture where data drives instructional decisions

Formative and Summative Assessment Plan

The Rising School will be focused on all of its students' academic growth, which requires effective assessment of that growth. Feedback from standards-aligned assessments will help both teacher and student make adjustments in the focus of instruction (teacher) or learning (student). Research shows positive correlations between student progress and the quality and amount of feedback, assessments, and

student tracking of their own progress (Marzano, 2009). The school will focus on using the following methods frequently: constructive feedback, clear learning goals aligned to standards, assessments aligned to standards, and student tracking of their progress. The wide range of targets and skills that can be addressed in classroom assessment requires the use of a variety of assessment formats, including pen-and-paper tests, oral reports, interviews, performance tasks, checklists, investigative reports, and portfolios. In the development and use of assessment tools, teachers will consider these criteria: purpose and impact, validity and fairness, reliability; significance, and efficiency (Marzano, 2009).

The Rising School assessment will begin with the Common Core Standards + Arizona 2010 additions and, also, AP standards. Students will be assessed on each relevant standard. To demonstrate mastery of a standard, students must score 80% or higher on the assessment of that standard. To pass a course, students must demonstrate mastery of 60% of standards or higher.

At The Rising School, assessment will be divided into three stages: diagnostic baseline assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. All of these assessments will be aligned to the Common Core Standards + Arizona 2010 additions and aligned state standardized assessments (AIMS currently but PARCC or other assessment in the future). The diagnostic baseline assessment establishes the "starting point" of the student's knowledge and skill level. All students will take a baseline assessment at the start of the year in both math and reading to diagnose their current level of knowledge and skill. Students scoring in the bottom quartile in their grade in math or reading will be placed in an intervention course, Math Foundations/Essentials or English Foundations/Essentials. During the year, teachers will use baseline assessments frequently in class instruction. In addition to academic assessment, The Rising School will comply with all laws and regulations to assess students to determine which ones need special-education or English Language Learners services.

The purpose of a formative assessment is producing data that is then fed back into the system (of teaching and learning) to improve that system. Thus, formative assessment is assessment for learning during the learning process. Teachers will use many formative assessments. Teacher will create unit plans with daily objectives to indicate what students need to master each day to be on track to demonstrate mastery on the summative unit assessment at the end of the month and cumulative summative assessment at the end of the year. Through daily exit tickets and checks for understanding throughout the lesson, the teacher will be able to identify students who are not on track. Teachers will adjust instructional plans to ensure students do demonstrate mastery on the unit assessment. This will minimize the number of students who need to attend tutoring and allow that time to provide more targeted remediation for those students who do need it. (Marzano, 2009).

Summative assessment informs both the student and the teacher about the level of conceptual understanding and performance capabilities that the student has achieved. At the end of each monthly unit, teachers will gauge student progress by giving students a summative assessment on the material in that unit that is aligned to the cumulative summative assessment at the end of the year. Students failing to meet the goals will receive targeted remediation.

The Rising School's instructional leadership, led by the principal, will oversee analysis of assessment data. The school will follow the model suggested by Bambrick-Santoyo (2009). The school will create a culture focused on using multiple, formative interim assessments to facilitate all students reaching year-end mastery on state and national standards-aligned assessments. Formative interim assessments will be aligned to these state, national, and college-readiness standards through software and teacher-generated questions. The process will begin will professional development in assessment for all teachers. Standards-aligned interim assessments will be created prior to teaching, and will serve as a road map for curriculum and instruction. Thus, a teacher's instructional sequence will be aligned with the clearly defined goals. Standards-aligned interim assessments will occur for every student every six weeks. Interim and other assessments will be cumulative, continuously reassessing previously taught material.

After each interim assessment, the principal will have a data dialogue with each teacher. The principal and the teacher will analyze and discuss student-assessment date, which will contain disaggregate data into the following levels: question, standard (all questions measuring the same standard), individual student, and whole class. After the data dialogue between teacher and principal, the

teacher will develop and commit to an action plan, using an Action Plan template provided in Bambrick-Santoyo (2010, p. 73), which will begin with the re-teaching standards that were not mastered by students, as demonstrated by the interim assessment.

Throughout the formative and assessment process, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will provide help and advice to teachers about assessment, grading, and re-teaching. In PLCs, teachers will research, bring in, and discuss effective curriculum, instructional, assessment methods. Teachers will also closely analyze student work together, allowing them to help each other and to gain a common professional eye. Together, PLC members will develop common assessments, grade student work, and evaluate the effectiveness of assessments.

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