A. EDUCATION PLAN

A.1. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

A.1.a. Educational Philosophy

Seneca Preparatory Academy's Mission Statement.

We believe that every child can learn, and with The Right Educational (RE) System can go to college and succeed; and ultimately can become successful in life and positively contribute to society.

The mission of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) is to develop and run a high-quality elementary school using The Right Educational (RE) System; and thus provide students with high school, college and career readiness.

We believe that with The Right Educational (RE) System college education is made accessible to all, and especially to the traditionally underserved minority and poor populations that have always had limited access to adequate education.

By being in service in underserved areas, Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) strives to increase scholastic achievement and close the achievement gap in those areas; and bring a message of hope and encouragement to those who live in these areas.

Seneca Preparatory Academy's Educational Philosophy

The overall objective of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) is to provide the underserved target area students with the type of high quality scientifically based elementary school program that is traditionally not available in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. The implementation of this high-quality program will lead to an increase in scholastic achievement and ultimately to a decrease in the achievement gap in the target area. As a result, SPA will provide its students with high school, college and career readiness at the elementary school level.

The Right Educational (RE) System, SPA's educational program, is based on the belief that every child can learn if put in an environment conductive to learning. The RE System is designed to increase scholastic achievement in general, and specifically to decrease the achievement gap in socio-economically disadvantaged communities. To achieve this goal, The RE System will rely on the successful development and implementation of the School's RTI-Early Intervention Reading & Math Program and its associated programs. This latter program is the centerpiece of Seneca Preparatory Academy's Performance Management Plan (PMP) whose objective is to develop and implement the School's RTI-Early Intervention Reading & Math Program 18 to 24 months after school start.

Note: RTI stands for Response to Intervention.

A.1.b. Concepts Fundamental to the Program of Instruction

Educational Programs Fundamental to the Program of Instruction - Educational Programs Successful in Closing the Achievement Gap in Underserved Communities

The Right Educational (RE) System is modeled after the following four groups of educational programs that have successfully bridge the achievement gap in high minority and/or low-income areas in the US or used successfully abroad in underdeveloped countries:

- The French primary and secondary education system;
- The educational systems used by Carl C. Icahn Charter School, NY and the rest of a small group of innovative charter schools -- such as KIPP Academy, TX; Roxbury Preparatory Charter School, MA; and Cesar Chavez Academy-Pueblo, CO -- recognized by the US Department of Education for successfully closing the achievement gap in several low-income and/or high minority areas in the US (US Dept of Education, 2004 & 2007);
- The educational approaches advocated by (1) the Arizona Charter Schools Association through its Quality Standards and its landmark study *Success Measured* (Gau & Gemelli, 2008); (2) the Arizona State University Morrison Institute for Public Policy's publication *The Six Keys to Successful Latino Schools* (Waits et al., 2006); and (3) the Arizona Department of Education's *Seven Correlates of Effective Schools* (ADE, 2009); and by
- Harvard University's Charter School Coherence Model (Merseth et al, 2009).

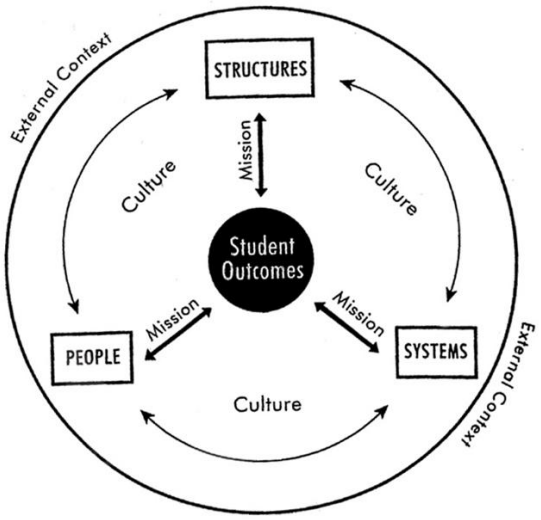

Exhibit1. Harvard University Charter School Coherence Model

Concepts Fundamental to the Program of Instruction - Common Characteristics of Educational Programs Successful at Closing the Achievement Gap in Underserved Communities

An evaluation of the above four groups of highly successful educational programs identifies the common characteristics shared by these schools that define their success in underserved communities. Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will embody these common characteristics defined as following:

1. A Strong, Dynamic Leadership.

At Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA), this characteristic is exemplified by the presence of an energetic and dynamic champion, Dr. Abougou, who will be working with a group of highly committed teachers, eager to implement the school educational program.

2. A Safety and Orderly Environment.

This success characteristic will be demonstrated by SPA strong beliefs in safety, security, self-respect, and respect for others.

3. A Climate of High Expectation for Success.

Hard work, longer school days, perseverance, and accountability for all will be the law of the land at Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA).

4. Continuous Improvement and Scientifically-Driven Decisions and Processes.

Instruction at Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will be provided through technologically- and data-driven decisions and processes; and student progress will be continuously assessed and monitored.

5. A Positive Home-School Relationship.

SPA will work hard and diligently to gain support from parents, teachers, major stake holders and the community.

6. A Clear and Focused Culture.

Seneca Preparatory Academy culture is defined by a fundamental belief in service; by children's innate ability to learn; by high expectations, transparency, teamwork, and a never-give-up attitude.

The School culture will play a critical role in the success of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) because SPA culture is the magical cement that will hold the other five common characteristics of successful schools together. As shown in Exhibit 1 of the Harvard University Charter School Coherence Model (Merseth et al, 2009), the school culture will provide the coherence and coordination needed between the school mission; and its people, structures and systems, to

ensure the successful implementation of the RE System that will result into positive student outcomes.

Characteristics of the Education Program

The Right Educational (RE) Program is best described by the School brand message:

"Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) is a Unique K-6 Tuition-Free Public School, with Full-Day Kindergarten.

SPA is a High-Quality College-Preparatory International School that focuses on the Basics, uses Common Core State Standards and a RTI-Early Intervention Reading & Math Program to provide a Body of Shared Knowledge, Linguistic and International Awareness that prepare Students for High School, College and Career Readiness at the Elementary School Level.

Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) targets underserved communities but uses Evidence and Research-Based Instructional Methods and Processes known for increasing Scholastic Achievement or for decreasing the Achievement Gaps, to prepare all students for a Lifelong Learning Experience and Success in the 21st Century."

Note: RTI stands for Response to Intervention.

A.1.c. Rational for Educational Approach

Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) has two main reasons for developing and using The Right Educational (RE) System as the School educational program. First, The RE System was inspired from the personal life experience of a few members of this project. Second, The RE System will use scientifically-based educational programs and processes known for increasing academic achievement in schools in general; and in some cases, for decreasing the achievement gap in schools located in socio-economically disadvantaged communities in the US and abroad.

An overview of the following three topics provides an expanded view on SPA rational for developing and using The Right Educational (RE) System:

(1) A Review of the Origin of The Right Educational (RE) System;

(2) A Brief Review of the Use of Early Intervention Literacy Programs in Closing the Achievement Gap in Underserved Communities in the US; and

(3) A Summary of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) Program of Instruction.

Review of the Origin of The Right Educational (RE) System

The idea of starting a high-quality scientifically-based college preparatory elementary school in a disadvantaged area comes from three observations that Dr. Jean-Claude Abougou made some time ago that led him to believe that every child can learn if placed under conditions that are conductive to learning.

The first observation was made when Dr. Abougou was attending the University of Arizona. Jean-Claude and a group of French-speaking students realized that even with the linguistic challenge of being English language learners (ELLs) from poor developing countries, students who graduated from French primary and secondary schools entered American universities ahead by at least one year in university general knowledge. Jean-Claude and his friends attributed their scholastic success to their experience with the very rigorous basic French elementary and secondary school systems.

The second observation was made a couple of years ago when Dr. Abougou asked a group of four teachers from a southern Arizona school district to explain why African American students usually seem to perform poorly when compared to their Caucasian counterparts. To his amazement, without hesitation and in unison the four teachers said that it was a question of expectation; that is, no one expects these students to succeed and they comply by performing poorly in school. Dr. Abougou then wondered what would happen if someone had expected the Black students to do well in school. The answer was clear: they would indeed do very well.

The third observation came from a report made in "60 minutes" on February 24, 2008 on the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela known informally as "El Sistema" or the System. For the last 32 years, the System has rescued more than 250,000 children from the poorest barrios of Venezuela and trained them to play in orchestras around the world. It has produced star musicians such as Gustavo Dudamel who at 27 became the youngest conductor and Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Gothenburg Symphony in Sweden.

The Venezuelan musical System shows that learning to play classical music is not the exclusive dominion of the rich and powerful, that a destitute street kid from Caracas, Venezuela, "under the right conditions"; "under the right system" can learn to play classical music well enough to be become the Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Now, can this kid also succeed in school? Can the Venezuelan musical success be duplicated in the area of elementary and secondary education? The answer is yes but only "under the right conditions", under what Dr Abougou calls "The Right Educational (RE) System" or "The RE System".

The Right Educational (RE) System is a unique practical approach to education. Its curriculum and instructional methodology were originally inspired from the French educational system since The RE System uses direct instruction, a rigorous challenging basic curriculum and high accountability for school stakeholders. However, The RE System is also very different from the French system since it (The RE System) believes in children's innate ability to learn regardless

of their economic, social or ethnic background. The RE System provides the favorable physical, mental and scholastic framework that helps students succeed academically.

Brief Review of the Use of Early Intervention Literacy Programs in Closing the Achievement Gap in Underserved Communities in the US.

The Early Intervention Literacy Program Will Help Close the Achievement Gap

Seneca Preparatory Academy (SCA) will use an education-centered early intervention reading and math program to bridge the achievement gap in its underserved elementary school-age students.

The Perry Preschool and Abecedarian early education longitudinal studies have shown that with education-centered early intervention programs, poor children affected by the achievement gap (defined as the lack of school readiness) can start school more prepared to learn. In the specific case of the Perry Preschool Program, the positive effects of early intervention were sustained more than 30 years after the program ended (Schweinhart, 2003).

The RTI-Early Intervention Literacy Program Will Help Close the Achievement Gap

Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will develop and use an RTI-based high-quality early intervention reading and math literacy program to meet the IDEA 2004 federal law that requires children to receive a scientific, research-based intervention (such as response to intervention, RTI) prior to referral to special education.

In addition, RTI use is recommended in Arizona; ARS 15-704 legislation requires that K-3 schools use screenings and diagnostic assessments, scientifically-based reading curricula, and provide intensive instruction for third graders not meeting standards.

A recently published meta-analysis by Hughes and Dexter (2012) of sixteen rigorously designed high-quality RTI studies shows that in general RTI improves academic achievement and overall student performance. In addition, this study shows that there is emerging evidence suggesting that a tiered early intervention approach can improve the academic performance of at-risk students. These authors also identify the following factors as being necessary for the successful implementation of RTI programs:

- Extensive, ongoing professional development program.
- Administrative support at the system and building level.
- Teacher buy-in and willingness to adjust their traditional instructional roles.
- Involvement of all school personnel; and
- Adequate meeting time for coordination.

Summary of Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) Program of Instruction

Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will use a scientifically-based program of instruction with tools and processes with a proven record of success in the traditional and/or in the underserved

diverse classroom. SPA will use the following instructional tools and processes to increase scholastic achievement and decrease the achievement gap in the target community:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- SRA Reading Mastery Signature Edition
- Singapore Math
- Core Knowledge Sequence Language Arts
- Understanding by Design
- Direct Instruction
- Small Class Size
- Differentiated Instruction and a 3-Tiered RTI Instructional Delivery System
- Cooperative Learning
- Comprehensive Assessment and Monitoring System

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