A. EDUCATION PLAN

A.2.TARGET POPULATION

A.2.1. Community Description

As shown in Exhibit 1, Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) targets a 22.53 square mile low-income inner-city area that is centrally located in Tucson and delimited by 22nd Street (north), Alvernon Road (east), Valencia Road (south) and I-19 (west). This area is a conglomeration of blue color neighborhoods dispersed among light industrial parks, and bordered in the south by the industrial zone near Tucson International Airport. The 2008 population of the target area is estimated to be 94,344. Approximately 9,007 and 16,530 children aged 0 to 4 (kindergarten group) and 5 to 14 (primary school group) respectively live in the area (Table 1).

The median age of the population is 28.4 years, and 82.3% is of Hispanic origin. The remaining 17.7% of the population is mainly of Caucasian origin with small proportions of African American (3.6%) and Native American (3.9%); and the estimated median household income is $30,367 (Table 1). The target community is served mainly by Sunnyside Unified School District (SUSD) and by Tucson Unified School District (TUSD); and there are very few stand alone elementary charter schools in the area, and only two small low-achieving charter high schools.

A.2.2. Target Population

SPA will target the K-6 age group within the 16,530 elementary school-aged students who live in the target area (Table 1). In this group, 8,870 elementary school students (Table 2) and 3,896 middle school students (Table 3) attend school in the target community; and their total number is 12,766 (8,870 + 3,896). Consequently, about 3,814 elementary school-aged students (16,530 - 12,766 = 3,814) are not attending school in their home-community; that is, SPA target area.

The calculated median percentage of minority students within the target area is 93% with 87% being of Hispanic descent. We have also calculated that 90% of the target area students qualify for free or reduced-lunch programs; and 30% are English Language Learners (Table 1, 2, 3).

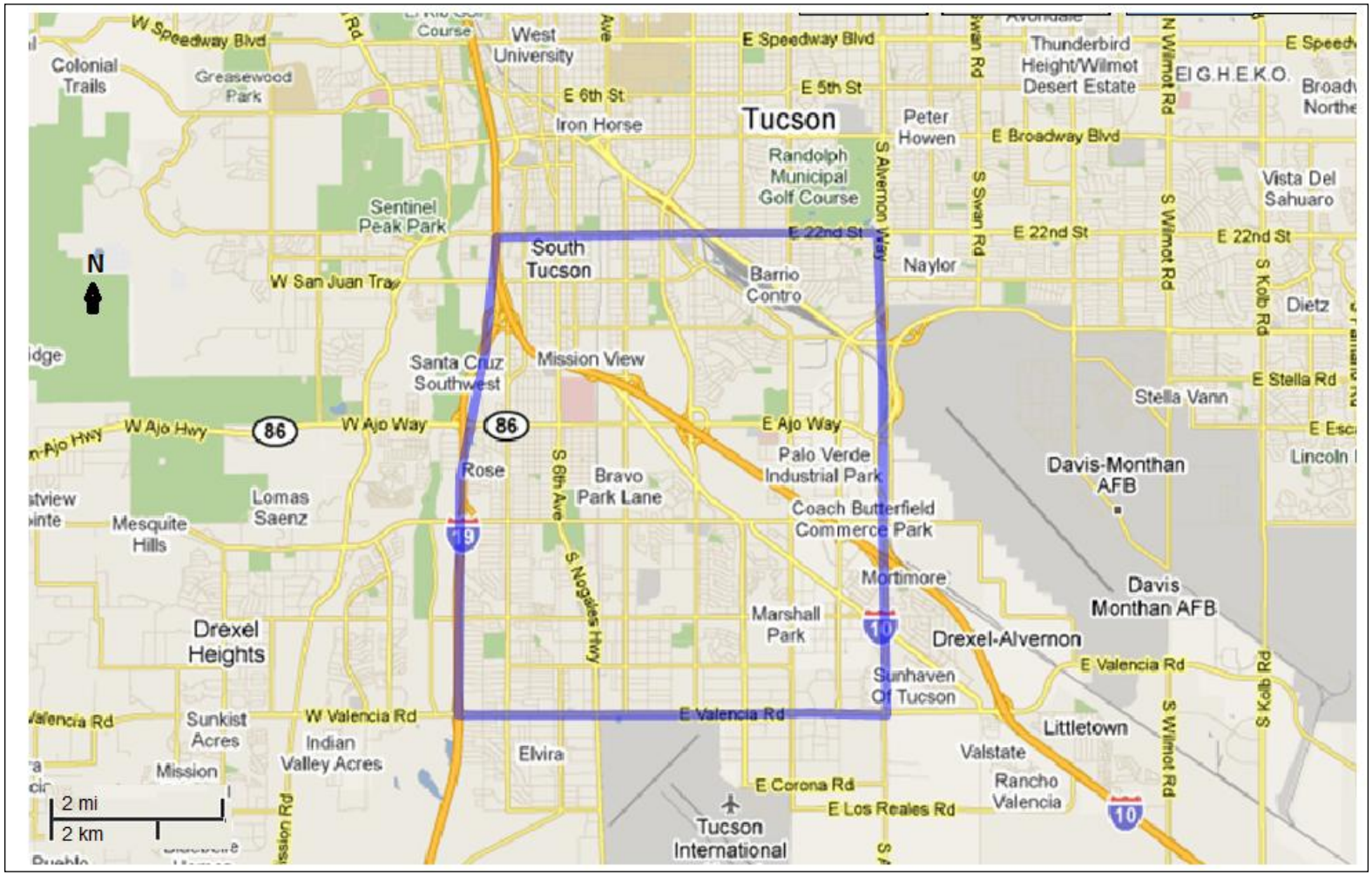

Exhibit 1. Seneca Preparatory Academy Target Area

TARGET AREA DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		
Population		
Estimâtes Population (2008)	94,344	
Censés Population (2000)	84,404	
Projected Population (2013)	100,184	
Forecast Population (2018)	108,920	
Historical Annual Growth 2000 to 2008	9,940	1.7%
Projected Annual Growth 2008 to 2013	5,840	1.2%
Est. Population Density (2008)	4,186	psm (people/square mile)
Trade Area Size	22.53	sq mi
Households		
Estimated Households (2008)	28,212	
Census Households (2000)	25,493	
Projected Households (2013)	29,716	
Household with Children (2008)	13,141	46.6%
Median Household Income		
Est. Median Household Income (2008)	$30,367	
Projected. Median Household Income (2013)	$33,437	
Owner Occupied Median Home Value	$63,989	
Race & Ethnicity		
White (2008)	39,092	41.4%
Black or African American (2008)	3,427	3.6%
Am. Indian & Alaska Native (2008)	3,713	3.9%
Hispanic or Latino Population (2008)	77,645	82.3%
Age		
Age 0 to 4 yrs (2008)	9,007	9.5%
Age 5 to 9 yrs (2008)	8,663	9.2%
Age 10 to 14 yrs (2008)	7,867	8.3%
Median Age (2008)	28.4 yrs	
Educational Attainment		
Adult Population (25 Yrs +)(2008)	53,218	
Not High School Graduate (2008)	18,429	34.6%
High School Graduate (2008)	17,000	31.9%
Some College (2008)	9,222	17.3%

Source: Picor Real Estate Company, Tucson, Arizona. May 2009.

Table 1. Target Area Demographic Profile.

TARGET AREA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS													
School Name	GS Rank	No. of Students	FRLP (%)	ELLs (%)	Ethnicity			3rd Grade AIMS (2009)			5th Grade AIMS (2009)		
					Hispanic (%)	White (%)	Others (%)	Read (%)	Write (%)	Math (%)	Read (%)	Write (%)	Math (%)
Borton Magnet S.	5	334	49	19	46	43	7 (B)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Carrillo Magnet S.	6	309	67	12	74	11	11 (B)	62	77	65	81	93	77
Cavet Elem S.	3	461	97	42	86	4	7 (B)	49	62	51	70	81	64
Drachman Magnet	3	347	72	15	71	16	7 (NA)	59	70	31	40	86	40
Drexel Elem S.	5	593	97	52	94	2	2 (O)	67	86	72	71	82	53
Esperanza Elem S.	6	710	85	32	85	6	4 (NA)	70	82	72	73	88	80
Holladay S.	5	248	52	13	41	44	12 (B)	71	76	69	66	69	53
Hollinger Elem	6	315	97	44	94	2	4 (NA)	78	90	73	69	86	64
Liberty Elem S.	6	717	90	21	92	2	5 (NA)	70	86	76	75	82	81
Los Amigos Elem.	4	794	95	56	93	4	3 (O)	50	66	64	60	82	69
Lynn Urquides	3	907	91	44	88	6	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mission Manor Elem	4	663	91	39	94	2	3 (NA)	51	78	62	56	70	63
Mission View Elem	4	318	96	38	88	--	9 (NA)	75	82	85	64	67	56
Ocotillo Elem	3	563	92	37	86	7	6 (NA)	45	76	55	48	58	54
Ochoa Elem	4	250	96	31	92	-	6 (NA)	57	72	52	39	71	34
Pueblo Gardens*	6	210	97	25	77	4	7 (B)	70	95	80	69	86	61
Rivera Elem	3	576	90	33	92	3	5 (O)	49	69	52	59	79	51
Southside Com. Sc*	3	126	99	48	88	7	4(B)	37	85	44	82	79	65
Van Buskirk Elem	5	429	95	34	94	-	6 (O)	63	77	56	68	90	74
TOTAL # STUDENTS	--	**8,870**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
MEDIAN	4	**429**	**92**	**34**	**88**	**5**	**6**	**62**	**77**	**64**	**68**	**82**	**63**
STATE AVG	--	--	**51**	**14**	**41**	**45**	**6**	**72**	**79**	**72**	**73**	**79**	**72**

Sources: Arizona Department of Education's website: http://www.ade.state.az.us/; and Greatschools' website: www.greatschools.com. May 29, 2010.

Table 2. Target Area Elementary School Information.

1. For AIMS test: percentage of students who meet state standards. 2. Ethnicity: B = Black; NA = Native American; A = Asian; O = Others. 3. GS Rank: Greatschools Rank. Perfect rank = 10, worst rank = 1. 4. * the student population is split equally between elementary and middle school. 4. FRLP = Free/Reduced Lunch Program.

TARGET AREA MIDDLE SCHOOLS													
School Name	GS Rank	No. of Students	FRLP (%)	ELLs (%)	Ethnicity			6th Grade AIMS (2009)			7th Grade AIMS (2009)		
					Hispanic (%)	White (%)	Others (%)	Read (%)	Write (%)	Math (%)	Read (%)	Write (%)	Math (%)
Apollo Middle School	3	860	86	24	95	1	4	45	86	44	54	88	53
Pueblo Gardens M. S.*	6	209	97	25	77	4	10 (B)	50	86	53	61	86	61
Sierra Middle School	3	1,035	82	19	91	3	4 (O)	47	79	55	61	75	55
STAR Academic Ctr.	2	253	72	1	81	10	6 (NA)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Utterback M.S.	4	815	66	8	57	27	3 (A)	51	81	44	68	80	56
Wildcat School	2	134	85	0	77	16	6 (NA)	33	58	42	53	55	43
Southside Community S*	3	126	99	48	88	7	4 (B)	51	71	51	33	78	37
Wakefield M.S	2	464	95	30	93	2	4 (NA)	45	83	41	46	75	50
TOTAL # STUDENTS	--	**3,896**	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
MEDIAN	**3**	**359**	**86**	**22**	**85**	**6**	**4**	**47**	**81**	**44**	**54**	**78**	**53**
STATE AVG	--	--	**51**	**14**	**41**	**45**	**6**	**71**	**86**	**68**	**73**	**83**	**73**

Sources: Arizona Department of Education's website: http://www.ade.state.az.us/; and Greatschools' website: www.greatschools.com. May 29, 2010.

Table 3. Target Area Middle School Information.

1. For AIMS test, the values reported correspond to the percentage of students who meet the state standards.
2. Ethnicity: B = Black; NA = Native American; A = Asian; O = Others.
3. GS Rank: Greatschools Rank. Perfect rank (greatest parent satisfaction) = 10, worst rank = 1.
4. Terms: FRLP = Free/Reduced Lunch Program; ELLs = English Language Learners
5. * the student population is split equally between elementary and middle school.

SAMPLE OF EIGHT HIGH PERFORMANCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN TUCSON													
					Ethnicity			3rd Grade AIMS (2009)			5th Grade AIMS (2009)		
School Name	**GS Rank**	**No. of Students**	**FRLP (%)**	**ELLs (%)**	**Hispanic (%)**	**White (%)**	**Others (%)**	**Read (%)**	**Write (%)**	**Math (%)**	**Read (%)**	**Write (%)**	**Math (%)**
Agua Caliente Elem Sch	10	361	11	1	13	81	3 (B)	91	89	89	93	93	95
Gale Elem School	10	370	17	2	20	70	7 (A)	100	100	95	91	100	93
Manzanita Elem School	10	484	2	3	12	74	12 (A)	94	96	91	95	96	90
Mesquite Elem School	10	402	16	3	27	62	5 (B)	94	91	97	94	94	94
Richard B. Wilson Elem	10	1,274	9	2	16	75	6 (A)	85	97	93	91	94	92
Sonoran Sci Acad - TUS	10	667	17	1	16	75	5 (A)	96	94	100	95	96	90
Tanque Verde Elem Sch	10	428	4	6	13	67	16 (A)	96	97	98	94	99	91
Ventana Vista Elem Sch	10	428	4	6	13	67	16 (A)	96	98	97	94	99	91
TOTAL # STUDENTS	**---**	**4,414**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**	**---**
MEDIAN	**10**	**428**	**10**	**3**	**15**	**72**	**7**	**95**	**97**	**96**	**94**	**96**	**94**
STATE AVERAGE	**---**	**---**	**51**	**14**	**41**	**45**	**6**	**72**	**79**	**72**	**73**	**79**	**72**

Sources: Arizona Department of Education's website: http://www.ade.state.az.us/; and Greatschools' website: www.greatschools.com. May 29, 2010.

Table 4. Data from Tucson Elementary School with a Perfect 10 in Greatschools Ranking.

1. For AIMS test, the values reported correspond to the percentage of students who meet the state standards.
2. Ethnicity: B = Black; NA = Native American; A = Asian;
3. GS Rank: Greatschools Rank. Perfect rank (greatest parent satisfaction) = 10, worst rank = 1.
4. Terms: FRLP = Free/Reduced Lunch Program. ELLs = English Language Learners.
5. * the student population is split equally between elementary and middle school.

BURTON'S AND CONLEY'S CORROLATES OF ACHIEVEMENT			
Correlates of Achievement (Factors that Affect Academic Performance)	**Gaps between Minority and Majority Student Populations**	**Gaps between Low and High Income Family Students**	**The Right Educational (RE) System Activities and Other Seneca Preparatory Academy's Interventions Used to Close the Achievement Gap**
SCHOOL FACTORS			
Rigor of Curriculum	Yes	Not Available	Core Knowledge & Singapore Math, components of The RE System.
Teacher Preparation	Yes	Yes	Differentiated Professional Education Program, a component The RE System.
Teacher Experience	Yes	Yes	Efficient hiring process, a key requirement of The RE System.
Teacher Absence and Turnover	Yes	Yes	Efficient hiring process, a key requirement of The RE System.
Class size	Yes	No	Small classes of ≤ 25 students, a key requirement of The RE System.
Availability of Instructional Technology	Yes	Yes	Differentiated Teacher Training Program, a component The RE System
Fear and Safety at School	Yes	Yes	Providing a safe school environment, a key requirement of The RE System
THE HOME-SCHOOL CONNECTION FACTORS			
Parent Participation	Yes	Yes	Parent participation, a key requirement of The RE System.
BEFORE AND BEYOND SCHOOL FACTORS			
Frequent Changing of Schools	Yes	Yes	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Low Birth Weight	Yes	Not Available	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Environmental Damage	Yes	Yes	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Hunger and Nutrition	Yes	Yes	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Taling and Reading to Young Children	Yes	Yes	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Excessive Television Watching	Yes	Yes	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Parent-Pupil Ratio	Yes	Yes	Not applicable to Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA)
Summer Achievement Gain	Yes	Yes	SPA intent to run a Summer School Program

Table 5. Gaps in Correlates of Achievement and Seneca Preparatory Academy's Interventions.

Source: Burton & Conley, 2009; Burton, 2003.

A. EDUCATION PLAN

A.2.TARGET POPULATION

A.2.3. Benefits of Seneca Preparatory Academy to the Target Community.

The target community will benefit from Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) because the School will focus on the basics, will use research and Common Core State Standards-based instruction coupled with data and RTI-driven decisions and processes to produce a high-quality K-6 college-preparatory international program that will increase scholastic achievement and decrease the achievement gap in the underserved target community. As a result, Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will prepare students for success in college, career and life in the global economy of the 21st century, as stipulated in Seneca Preparatory Academy Foundation mission statement.

In short, SPA will gift the target community with the type of high-quality educational program that is traditionally not available in low-income and/or high minority areas. Consequently, Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will fill the community unmet need for high-quality college preparatory elementary school programs.

The following SPA brand message further justifies why and how the target community will benefit from the School:

"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 Small Class Size, and --- Common Core State Standards, Singapore Math and Core Knowledge Curricula, Direct and Differentiated Instructions, Cooperative Learning, Understanding by Design, a RTI-Early Intervention Reading & Math Program, and a Comprehensive Assessment and Monitoring System --- 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 prepares all students for a Lifelong Learning Experience and Success in the 21st Century."

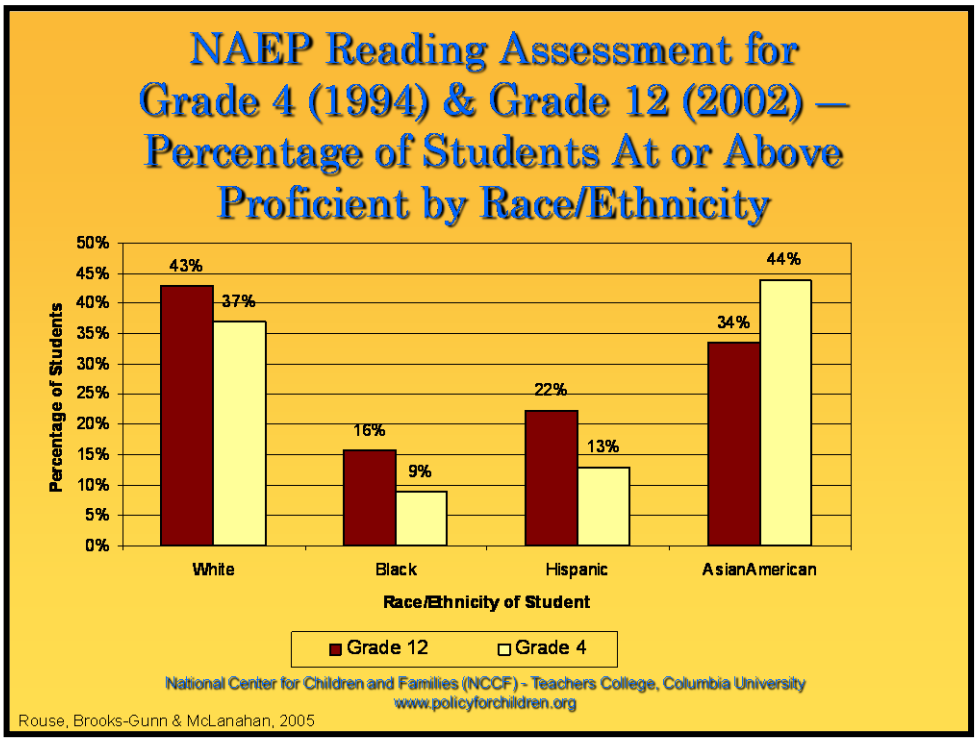

Exhibit 2. Achievement Gap By Race, Grade 4 and 12.

Source: Brooks-Gunn, J. (2009). *Programs and Policies to Reduce School Readiness Gaps.* National Center for Children's & Families. Teachers College, Columbia University

A.2.4. Definition of Achievement Gap

In the US, the "achievement gap" in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. This term is usually used to describe the disturbing performance gaps between many African American and Hispanic students, at the lower end of the performance scale, and their non-Hispanic white peers. A similar academic disparity exists between students from low-income and well-off families.

For instance in Exhibit 2, the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows that 9% and 13% respectively of Black and Hispanic fourth graders from the 1994 cohort had achieved proficiency in reading versus 37% of their white classmates. As twelfth graders 8 years later, the Black and Hispanic students' reading skills had improved with 16% and 22% respectively achieving reading proficiency. However, a substantial gap remains when compared to the 43% of their white twelve grader classmates who had achieved reading proficiency (Brooks-Gunn, 2009).

Similarly the same study shows that while 39 percent of white eighth graders scored proficient or above on the math portion of the NAEP, only 9 and 13 percent of their Black and Hispanic counterparts respectively passed the math test (Great City Schools, 2010).

Clearly, as stated by Great City Schools (2010), "the education system has failed to educate minority and white students to the same standard".

A.2.5. Factors Affecting the Achievement Gap

Research by Burton and Conley has identified 16 factors or "correlates to achievement" that affect primary and secondary school performance in the US; and the authors have pooled these factors into three major groups: the School Factors, the Home and School Connection Factor, and the Before and Beyond School Factors. They have found these correlates of achievement to be distributed unevenly across various racial/ethnic groups and across different income layers in the US population. This unequal distribution creates gaps in correlates of achievement between minority and majority student populations on the one hand, and students from low and high income families on the other hand. According to Burton and Conley, the gaps in correlates of achievement between various segments of the population ultimately result in the achievement gap in education in the US (Burton, 2003; Burton & Coley, 2009).

Research has shown that correlates to achievement within the School Factor Group are directly associated with and can be modified by schools (Table 5). For instance, research evidence shows that students' academic performance is closely related to the "Rigor of the Curriculum", and that a gap in this correlate of achievement exists between African American or Hispanic student high school graduates, and their Caucasian classmates. For instance the 2005 data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that Black and Hispanic high school graduates were less likely than their White classmates to have completed calculus or advanced science courses (Burton & Conley, 2009).

In addition to Rigor of Curriculum, Burton and Conley's studies have identified the following six factors as correlates of achievement directly associated with schools (Table 5):

1. Teacher preparation

2. Teacher experience
3. Teacher absence and turnover
4. Class size
5. Availability of instructional technology
6. Fear and safety at school

Parent participation is the only correlate of achievement associated with Burton's and Conley's Home-School Connection Factors (Table 5). At SPA this correlate will be handled through school policy since parent participation will be an essential requirement for student enrollment.

To close the achievement gap in underserved communities, Burton and Conley recommend that schools close the gaps that exist in the 16 correlates to achievement between children from poor and well-to-do families on the one hand, and between Black or Latino and Caucasian children on the other hand (Burton, 2003; Burton & Coley, 2009). At the school level, this goal can be reached by eradicating the gaps that exist in teacher preparation, teacher experience, teacher absence and turnover, class size, availability of instructional technology, fear and safety at school and parent participation. As shown in Table 5, Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will use The Right Educational (RE) System to close the school-related correlates to achievement. In this process, Seneca Preparatory Academy's RTI-Early Intervention Reading and Math Program will play a key role because, as will be shown in latter sections, early intervention literacy programs have proven to be critical in closing the achievement gap in the US.

A.2.6. Achievement Gap in Target Community

Seneca Preparatory Academy's target population lives in a 22.53 square mile high-minority and high-poverty inner city area centrally located in Tucson, Arizona. Over 90% of the target area population of 94,344 people is minority. The median household income is $30,367 and over 86% of local elementary school children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs (Table 1, 2 and 3). The scholastic achievement gap in Seneca Preparatory Academy's target community is demonstrated in three different ways:

First, the achievement gap is expressed through parents' discontent with local elementary schools, as shown by their low rating of these schools on Greatschools rating Scale. While Table 4 shows a perfect median Greatschools score of 10 for the sample of eight high performance elementary schools, this score is reduced to 4 for the target area elementary schools in Table 2. A Greatschools ranking of 10 is the best possible rank that a school can achieve, and it expresses high scholastic achievement and the highest level of parental satisfaction with a school. Rank 1 is the worst ranking.

Second, the achievement gap is also expressed by the migration of local students to schools outside their designated area; and it is postulated that this migration is caused by parental dissatisfaction with the current elementary school system. Using the data in Table 1, 2 and 3, we have calculated that approximately 3,814 primary school-aged students are not attending their respective schools in the target area. It is speculated that these students are attending better schools outside the target area as encouraged by the No Child Left Behind legislation (Kahlenberg, 2006).

Finally, the achievement gap in SPA's target community is evidenced by target students' low scholastic achievement when the 2009 AIMS test results of local third and fifth graders are compared to those of students from the group of eight high performance Tucson elementary schools with a perfect score of 10 in Greatschools rating system. The median percentages of target area third graders who passed the 2009 AIMS reading, writing and math are respectively 72%, 79% and 72% versus 95%, 97% and 96% for the group of students from the sample of eight high performance elementary schools. For fifth graders, the median percentages of target area students who passed the 2009 AIMS reading, writing and math are respectively 68%, 82% and 63% versus 94%, 96% and 94% for students from the high performance elementary schools. Overall, except for the fifth grade writing test, fewer students from Seneca Preparatory Academy's target area passed the 2009 AIMS tests than the state median percentages (Table 2 and 3).

A further analysis of the data in Table 2, 3 and 4 show that the gap in scholastic performance between Seneca Preparatory Academy's target students and students from the sample of high performance schools is due mainly to economic, linguistic and racial disparities.

For instance, Table 4 shows that the group of eight high performance elementary schools is more affluent than elementary schools from the target community and from Arizona. Only 10% of the students from the eight high performance schools qualify for free or reduced-price lunch programs versus 90% for target area students, and 51% for most students in Arizona.

In addition, the high performance schools have a smaller number of minority students (median: 22% vs. 93%) and a much higher number of Caucasian students (median: 72% vs. 5%) when compared to SPA's target area elementary schools and to most schools in Arizona. Finally, there is a great disparity in the number of English language learners (ELLs) that attend schools in the high performance schools (median: 3%), vs. in SPA's target area schools (median: 30%), and vs. schools in Arizona (median: 14%).

In conclusion, since the target community is located in a high-minority and high-poverty inner city area where students are underperforming academically; it is adequate to assume that these students are affected by the achievement gap that is characteristic of these types of communities. This achievement gap is known to originate from gaps in Burton and Conley's 16 correlates of achievement; and to bridge this gap SPA will use The Right Educational (RE) System, a high-quality educational program that will close Burton's and Conley's eight correlates of achievement that can be modulated at the school level. The School's RTI-Early Intervention Reading and Math Program, a major component of The Right Educational (RE) System, will play a key role in closing the achievement gap within the target community

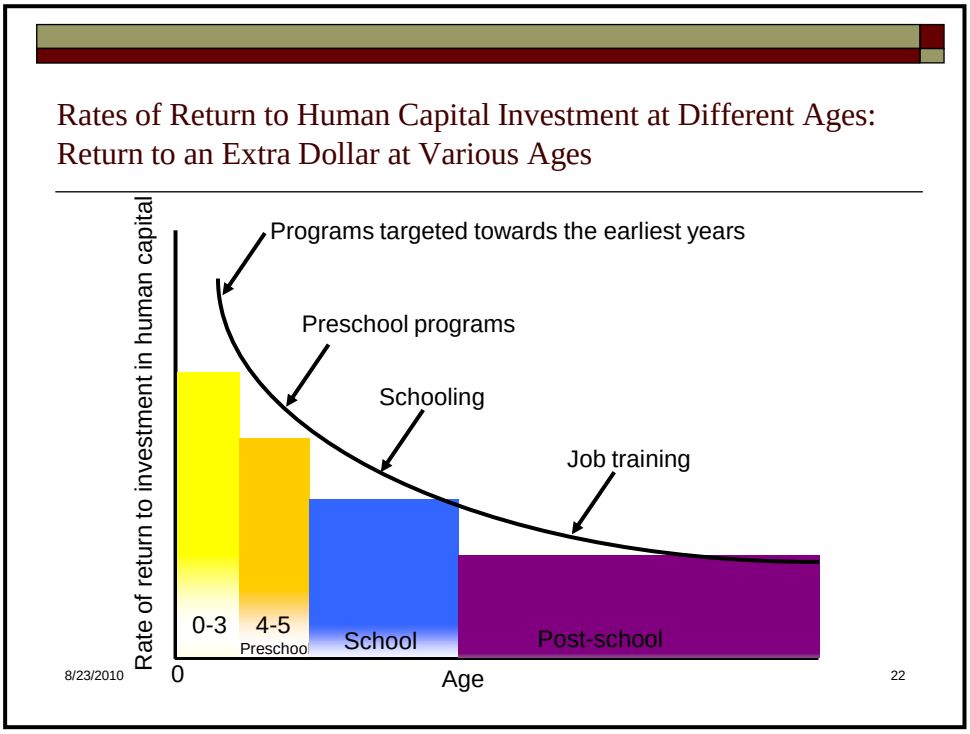

Exhibit 3. Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children is Good Economics and Good Public Policy.

Source: Heckman, J. (2007). *Investing in Disadvantaged Young Children Is Good Economics and Good Policy.* Presentation at Culture, Investments, and Human Development. New York University, October 5, 2007. July 2010 from http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/scmsAdmin/uploads/000/878/Heckman Presentation.ppt

A.2.7. Closing the Achievement – Role of Early Intervention Literacy Programs.

Several studies in the US have linked the lack of school readiness in disadvantaged students to the achievement gap that separates these students to their more affluent counterparts. School readiness is the combination of a child's academic skills (e.g., vocabulary size, complexity of spoken language, basic counting, general knowledge); and a child's social and emotional skills (e.g., following directions, working in a group, impulse control). These studies also suggest that school readiness is an indicator of later life success, and poor children are less likely than their more privileged peers to start school ready to learn (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005). In addition, as shown in Exhibit 2, young children who start school with a disadvantage are unlikely to catch up to their classmates.

However, The Perry Preschool and Abecedarian early education models support the argument that education-centered early intervention programs can combat the negative effect of growing up in poverty in the US. These two longitudinal studies also demonstrate that with early education interventions, poor children can start school more prepared to learn, and thus experience greater academic and cognitive gains from education. 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 economical benefits of the Perry Preschool Program were studied by James Hickman, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago and the 2000 Nobel Price recipient. In 2007, using some of the economic data summarized in Exhibit 3, Dr. Hickman concluded that "investing in disadvantaged young children is good economics and good policy." The long-term benefits of investing in early education for Perry Preschool and other disadvantaged children has been translated into a $17 return for every dollar invested (Clothier & Poppe, 2010; Morrissey & Warner, 2007)

In conclusion, to successfully bridge the academic gap within the target population, Seneca Preparatory Academy's educational program (The RE System) will use the RTI-Early Intervention Reading and Math Program.

A.2.8. Closing the Achievement – Role of the RTI-Early Intervention Reading and Math Program.

Response to Intervention (RTI) – History & Definition

In 2004, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) was reauthorized and signed into a law that requires children to receive a scientific, research-based intervention (such as RTI) prior to referral to special education. This law is the result of congressional concern that children from particular racial or ethnic background were being over-identified as having disabilities or over-represented in particular education settings (Dorn, 2008).

IDEA 2004 was echoed in Arizona with the adoption of ARS 15-704 legislation that requires K-3 schools to use screening and diagnostic assessments. In addition, K-3 schools must adopt a scientifically-based reading curriculum, and provide intensive instruction for 3rd graders not meeting standards.

The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD) defines Response to Intervention (RTI) as "an assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring student progress and making decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data (Johnson et al., 2006)".

Response to Intervention (RTI) ─ Rational

Seneca Preparatory Academy (SPA) will use RTI in its early intervention literacy program since:

1. It is our belief that RTI plays an essential role in closing the achievement gap and should be incorporated in the Performance Management Programs of schools involved with underserved communities.
2. RTI leads to the early identification of students with learning difficulties and/or specific learning disabilities; thus it provides an opportunity for early intervention before the identified students fall academically behind their peers;
3. RTI intervention leads to a decrease in the number of students referred for special education since placement is based on ability to learn;
4. RTI intervention reduces the over-identification of minority and disadvantaged students with having specific learning disabilities;
5. RTI integrates general and specific education expertise, document effectiveness of instruction for all students, and align student needs with effective instruction;
6. RTI leads to the development of a continuous, powerful professional development program; thus to the formation of a highly trained intervention team.

REFERENCES FOR A.2

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