A.3 PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION

To promote academic achievement, the program of instruction at Southwest Leadership Academy emphasizes a rigorous curriculum with extensive instructional support and consideration for the needs of the whole child.

Curriculum and Assessment

Curriculum Mapping and the Common Core Standards
Southwest Leadership Academy will utilize Arizona's Common Core Standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics recently adopted by the Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona Academic Standards in Science, Social Studies and Physical Education, including Arizona's Common Core Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects. SLA will implement a thorough assessment program to plan curriculum and instruction. Guided by the work of Heidi Hayes Jacobs, Teachers and Administrators will then design curriculum maps using the state standards and assessment information (i.e., assessment blueprints/PARCC test frameworks, testing dates).

Content Area Teachers will embed applicable ELA standards within their content area curriculum maps. The curriculum maps will have the following components: Dates (of instruction), Essential Questions, Content, Skills, Evidence, and Assignments. Available instructional materials will include new content area textbooks and Teacher materials from Pearson. Through the curriculum mapping process, Teachers are given the opportunities to analyze their curricula, become the curriculum experts they need to be, and make informed decisions regarding scope and sequence. The maps then become tools for implementing school-wide instructional initiatives and improvements and for identifying cross-curricular connections.

Comprehensive Assessment of Student Learning
Upon enrollment, students will take assessments in math and language arts. These assessments are part of the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), a computer-based norm-referenced assessment program designed by Northwest Evaluation Association that is aligned with state standards and has a record of reliability and validity. This assessment data will provide immediate information about student learning and supply baseline data for student performance. Students will take the MAP assessments three times during the school year: at the beginning of the year, mid-year, and at the end of the school year. Teachers will also create quarterly pre- and post assessments, unit pre-tests and summative assessments for classroom use. During instruction, Teachers will design and use formative assessment methods, and these assessment methods will be documented in their lesson plans. In conjunction with MAP performance data, and later with AIMS and Stanford 10 performance data, Teachers and Administrators will revise curriculum maps on a reoccurring basis throughout the year using data from both formal and informal assessment measures.

Socio-Emotional Skills Curriculum
Working within the PYD philosophy, as part of its mission to help students develop the necessary skills for success in life and community, Advisement instructors will teach Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and facilitate service learning projects for students. ART is an evidence-based program that teaches adolescents social skills, moral reasoning and anger management skills. ART objectives will be based on the socio-emotional development needs of

the students, the risk levels assessed during the first two weeks of school, and identified problems students bring from the community into the school setting. Activities involve modeling the skills for students, having them role play the skills, and then providing performance feedback. The Counselor will lead and oversee the implementation of ART to ensure quality instructional delivery. Advisement classes will be taught by Advisement instructors, including Teachers, Behavioral Mentors, and select Administrators to reduce the overall ratio to 14 to 1.

*Service Learning.*In addition to ART, during Advisement students will plan and participate in service learning projects as a class or in groups. Many of these projects will be completed after school, and SLA will encourage staff and community members to perform projects on school grounds (e.g., painting a mural on school property, knitting sweaters and hats for the needy, etc.). Students will learn how to reach out to community organizations, fulfill a vital need, lead peers in completing a project and work as a member of a team. These projects will serve as preparation for the senior year community project when students plan and complete a community service project independently, recruiting volunteers from SLA's student body and the community.

Social-Emotional Skills Assessment

Upon enrollment, students' socio-emotional skills and high-risk behaviors will be assessed with the Positive Achievement Change Tool(PACT) assessment. The PACT measures each student's risk factors for engaging in delinquent behavior (including attitudes and behaviors, alcohol and drug use, aggression and use of free-time) and each student's protective factors, those aspects of their lives that provide protection from delinquent behavior and failure (including employment, living arrangements, current relationships, and skills). The PACT is an evidence-based assessment used by social service agencies and juvenile justice professionals to monitor student needs with regard to social-emotional learning and possible psychological treatment. By identifying protective factors, it also provides a starting point for SLA's strength-based approach to instruction of social-emotional skills. Using these assessments and guided by SLA staff, students will create a Personal Education Plan outlining their long-term and short-term behavioral goals, goals that will complement their ECAP and academic goals as well.

Career Exploration

SLA will require all students to enroll in *Career Exploration*, a course offering learning experience that will give students the opportunity to explore various career pathways and skills. Replicating a program from another Rite of Passage charter school, SLA will develop a potential partnership with Junior Achievement and use the organization's volunteers and resources within the course curriculum and instruction. Junior Achievement provides instruction that focuses on work readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy. To assist with career and long-term academic planning, students will have access to the Arizona Career Information Center (ACIS) website to participate in postsecondary planning tasks. They will explore occupational areas and will work on their Education Career Action Plan (ECAP). During the pre-operational year, the Counselor and Instructional Leader will develop the curriculum for *Career Exploration*, and the designated Teacher will create the curriculum map and quarterly assessments.

Instructional Initiatives

Response to Intervention (RtI)

At SLA, the Response to Intervention (RtI) Model will be a school-wide initiative that will utilize all available resources for students in need of academic and/or additional behavioral

support. RtI provides students the opportunity to make significant progress whether they are at-risk for failure or are not meeting their full potential. Although the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) encourages utilizing the RtI process as an alternative approach for the identification of students for special education services, the intent of the process at SLA will be geared to identifying effective avenues for student success and for maximizing their potential.

The RtI Model will utilize instructional strategies such as universal screening and on-going data analysis to inform instructional delivery, instructional interventions, as well as collaborative problem-solving among staff to enhance all students' performance. Students will be assessed daily (often informally) to identify whether or not they have achieved the learning objective for the day. Tracking grades weekly also supports the timely identification of students in need of additional support. SLA will adhere to the philosophy and implementation of RtI as outlined in the *Arizona Response to Intervention Self-Assessment*.

Where students have difficulty with behavior, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) will be maximized at all tiers. Our CMO, Rite of Passage, has mastered the use of PBIS in its youth programs across the country and will provide training and support in implementing effective PBIS strategies school-wide and in the classroom. On a classroom level, interventions will include giving students positive feedback five times for every one negative interaction; actively supervising students at all times; positively interacting with students throughout the day; and correcting problem behaviors at the lowest possible confrontation level. Advisement instructors will provide additional assistance. Tier 2 and Tier 3 targeted interventions will include cognitive behavioral strategies, which have been vital, effective components of all Rite of Passage programs. These interventions will be provided by the Counselor and school administrators. For those few students who still need assistance, referral will be made for Special Education Services. When necessary, SLA will contract with an identified provider for Special Education Services which may include psychological, speech and audiology services.

Research-Based Instructional Practices

Although staff will learn about all nine of the research-based practices outlined in *Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, 2nd edition* (Dean, Hubbell, Pitler,& Stone, 2012), staff development will primarily focus on two strategies at the beginning of the first school year including reinforcing efforts and providing recognition,and setting objectives and providing feedback.

Reinforcing efforts and providing recognition*:* As explained by Walberg (1984), positive reinforcement of student effort influences student achievement, and it is best to recognize students for specific examples of an accomplishment (Marzano, 2003). Praise should not be overly general. As in other Rite of Passage schools, SLA will encourage staff and Teachers to utilize a 5 to 1 positive feedback to constructive correction/feedback ratio when communicating with students.

Setting objectives and providing feedback:When Teachers communicate what is to be learned, students usually expend more effort and consequently increase their learning, especially if they know why it is important to them (Hunter, 1982). Effective standards-based instruction is dependent upon the Teacher's ability to communicate the objective and learning criteria as part of the lesson (Jamentz, 2002).

The single most effective instructional modification that enhances achievement is feedback (Hattie, 1992). To accurately assess student performance and provide effective

feedback, SLA will issue regular academic grades and detailed performance feedback in each class on a weekly basis. Teachers will receive staff development to remain informed about how to ensure feedback is criterion-referenced, timely and specific. According to research, effective feedback explains what students are doing correctly, provides an explanation of what students are doing incorrectly and helps them learn how they may correct it (Marzano, 2003). Additional strategies will be studied throughout the year through a professional book study of *Classroom Instruction That Works*. These research-based strategies include:

- Identifying similarities and differences
- Summarizing and note taking
- Homework and practice
- Nonlinguistic representations
- Cooperative learning
- Generating and testing hypotheses
- Cues, questions, and advance organizers

During this professional development, Teachers will revise their curriculum maps to integrate important study skills within and across the curriculum, ensuring that students utilize and master valuable study skills. Classroom use of technology by both Teachers and students will also be emphasized by SLA Administrators, as it will enhance the implementation of these instructional strategies.

Culturally-Relevant Pedagogy

Darling-Hammond(2005) states that race is one of the predominant issues in our society and suggests that Teachers cannot pretend to be colorblind. Teachers must understand that learning may differ across cultures. As defined by Gay(2000), culturally responsive teaching involves "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them; it teaches to and through the strengths of these students." This philosophy of instruction calls for Teachers to avoid cultural stereotypes and become thoroughly informed of the various cultures within their classrooms. In addition, Teachers must have deep knowledge of their content in order to deliver subject matter in various ways, in representations that connect to students' everyday lived experiences at home, within their communities, and in global settings.

As documented on their curriculum maps, SLA Administrators and Teachers will develop methods and tools for accomplishing the following instructional guidelines of culturally relevant pedagogy, as outlined by Villegas and Lucas(2002) and Irvine and Armento (2000):

- Involve students in the construction of knowledge
- Learn more about building on students' interests and linguistic resources
- Learn more about tapping community and home resources
- Help students examine the curriculum from multiple perspectives

SIOP Pedagogy for English Language Learners

The English Language Development (ELD) Program provides students with an equal opportunity to complete an academically rigorous high school program with challenging, yet comprehensive, instruction in all content areas. Student diversity is addressed through a variety

of services including Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) instruction and mainstream content classes. The ELL program at SLA will allow ELL students to achieve English proficiency in a supportive environment thatwill emphasize learning English in context rather than in isolation. Southwest Leadership Academy's administrative staff and Teachers will be trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), a set of research-based strategies to assist in planning and delivering effective lessons for English language learners. Arizona Law requires that students with a home language other than English be assessed for proficiency in oral language, reading, comprehension and written communication. Based on the results of the AZELLA assessment, students may be placed in the English Language Development (ELD) program designed to aid them in acquiring English. Students will be required to take a mainstream English course, an ELD core course and an ELD Elective course each semester.

Content Area Reading (Year 1) & 21st Century Media Literacy Skills (Starting Year 2)
As delineated in the Common Core State Standards, all core classes will teach reading skills. At the high school level, students must learn to read for information, to evaluate arguments and persuasion, and to determine the reliability of source material among other more advanced literacy skills. To provide students with multiple opportunities for learning these skills, all teachers at SLA will receive training in reading instruction strategies and will incorporate the strategies in their lesson planning and instruction.

Technology and critical thinking skills will also play a vital role in preparing students for the 21st century. SLA Teachers and Administrators will work to incorporate 21st Century Skills within their curriculum maps, again based on the work of Heidi Hayes Jacobs. These skills involve: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and leadership, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, access and analysis of information, and curiosity and imagination.

Meeting the Diverse Needs of Students

To meet the varied needs of our diverse student population, SLA will include the following elements in its education plan:

Professional Learning Community
As outlined on the school schedule and calendar, the Principal, Counselor, Teachers and Staff will create a bi-weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) focused on working together to ensure that all students learn as observed through formal and informal assessment instruments. The PLC's primary goal will be the achievement levels recorded on the Performance Management Plan. Their action steps will be guided by the following questions:

1. What do we want each student to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

Assessment data and the answers to these questions will serve as a catalyst for evaluating instructional strategies, interventions, curriculum scope and sequence, materials, school programs and instructional initiatives.

Orientation Program
All students will participate in a two-week orientation program to learn the school's behavioral and academic expectations, identify personal learning challenges, and prepare for the emotional

and social challenges ahead. This program begins with assessments, including academic (MAP and informal classroom assessments) and risk/need assessments (PACT) to determine student needs. Teachers will then confirm or adjust a student's educational program and interventions. Based on need, students will begin the basic cognitive behavioral program through ART instruction and a customized Student Handbook with reflective exercises.

Advisement Period

The Advisement period will serve as a time for a school instructor (Teacher, Behavioral Mentor or Administrator) to monitor the overall academic and behavioral progress of approximately 14 students per class. The Advisement Instructor will utilize instructional resources and lesson plans provided by the Counselor to teach pro-social skills and character development through ART. These lessons will be based on identified problems students bring from the community into the school setting. Advisement will also help to develop SLA's relationship-based culture. Advisement instructors will provide personalized attention to students, calling them and/or their parents every day they miss school to address truancy immediately and communicate that they care. While the administrative office will call parents in the morning to notify them of their child's absence, the Advisement instructor will call later in the day to say personally, "We missed you today. Are you OK? I look forward to seeing you tomorrow when we . . ."

Credit Recovery

SLA plans to utilize computer-based instructional programs developed by Blueprint to provide students with opportunities for credit recovery. This web-based program provides curriculum, instruction and assessments for middle school and high school students. The program is accredited through AdvancED. Students who need to recover credit in grades 9 and/or 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics will be given first priority in credit recovery opportunities. SLA will also research and secure alternate funding sources to provide Blueprint credit recovery options on campus during the summer break.

Friday Learning Lab/Exploratory Hour

Every Friday afternoon, students who need additional academic assistance will attend Friday Learning Lab to receive out-of-class tutoring and help with homework, retake quizzes or assessments, receive remedial instruction, participate in credit recovery or engage in enrichment opportunities. This Learning Lab time is scheduled every week, as noted on the school schedule. Through this scheduled assistance time, students will receive the help they need within a week of underperforming on an assessment. The instructor will be a Teacher, the Counselor or a Behavioral Mentor; staff will rotate through this position on a weekly basis.

Those staff members not supervising or assisting students in the learning lab will lead extracurricular activities in Exploratory Hour. During this time, Teachers will have opportunities to share their interests or hobbies with students, providing enrichment opportunities while also enhancing Teacher-student relationships. Examples of activities include: scrapbooking, flag football, yoga, creative writing, photography, etc.

Reading Intervention Program

For students who read well below grade level, SLA will utilize *READ 180*, a systematic, evidence-based reading intervention program developed by Scholastic. Each student is administered a Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) test if MAP scores in reading indicate a need for additional assessment. The SRI provides more information regarding a student's reading

level and needs. Periodically, while using *READ 180*, the SRI is re-administered to monitor progress. This course directly addresses individual needs through whole class instruction, small group differentiated direct instruction, *READ 180* software for intensive, individualized practice, and modeled and independent reading. *READ 180* provides students with opportunities to read high-interest fiction and nonfiction.

Scholastic's *READ 180* program has been formally evaluated numerous times across a range of grades and student demographic characteristics. Overall, these studies have found *Read 180* to be an effective reading intervention strategy for adolescents. The program was also found to be aligned with many key elements of an effective adolescent literary program as summarized by the Center on Instruction's 2007 report, *Interventions for Adolescent Struggling Readers* (Scammacca et al., 2007) and as described in *Reading Next A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* (Biancarosa& Snow, 2004). *READ 180* also aligns with the Response to Intervention (RtI) model by providing opportunities for early intervention, progress monitoring, data-driven instruction and a gradual approach to skill development.

Mathematics Intervention Program

SLA will utilize *CatchUp Math* for our supplemental mathematics initiative. *CatchUp Math* is an evidence-based and research driven program targeting at-risk youth who need additional assistance with mastering math Common Core Standards. *CatchUp Math* utilizes self-paced, multi-modal presentations and adaptive, diagnostic technology to enrich students' math skills. Instructors are able to monitor student learning by pulling student data reports.

Highly Qualified Special Education Teacher(s)

Teachers with credentials and extensive experience in special education will be hired to provide monitoring of RtI procedures, assistance in classrooms with accommodations and modifications, and if necessary, pull-out instruction for students requiring intensive assistance. Additional Special Education Teachers will be hired as the student enrollment increases. SLA will provide instruction for special education students in mainstream classes. A thoughtful implementation of RtI will enable Teachers and staff to address student learning needs and provide them with an academic environment that promotes success.

Summer Mentoring Program and Activities

Behavioral Mentors will work during the summer as mentors to students, checking in on students through phone calls, community events, and possibly home visits. Behavioral Mentors will host and supervise activities at the school such as basketball games in the gym, movie days, and service learning projects. After alternate funding sources have been secured, Behavioral Mentors will proctor Blueprint online credit recovery opportunities for students in the computer lab.

Bilingual Staff

The Registrar at SLA will be bilingual in order to facilitate communication between the school and Spanish speaking parents. Additionally, SLA will seek bilingual staff for Behavioral Mentor positions. These staff members will be crucial in developing a close connection to English language learners and an inclusive school culture.

Personal Education Plan Aligned with ECAP

As a complement to their ECAPS, students will be encouraged to take ownership of their learning by developing a Personal Education Plan with the guidance of their Advisement

instructors. Using assessment data, particularly formal assessments such as MAP, Stanford 10 and AIMS, students will create academic goals for learning. Students will also add behavioral and leadership goals to their Personal Education Plan based on specific information from the PACT and staff feedback. For some students, goals may include identifying triggers that lead one to become angry or aggressive; other students may be developing leadership skills through service learning projects. Students will engage in self-reflective activities to evaluate their progress with their academic and behavioral goals throughout the year, sharing and celebrating the achievement of their goals with their Advisement Instructor and classmates.

Parent Engagement

Through parent engagement, SLA will convey our belief that parents, community members, the school faculty and staff must work as a team to ensure students learn and become successful in their lives and community. To promote this belief, SLA will:

- Initiate a Parent Advisory Council with parents, Teachers and Administrators who want to serve in an advisory capacity to SLA Leadership. By forming the Parent Advisory Council, SLA will bring together parents, community members and school faculty and staff working as a team to ensure students learn and become successful in their lives and community
- Offer *Active Parenting* to enhance parenting skills and foster healthy relationships at home
- Schedule quarterly conferences to discuss academic achievements and long-term goals
- Provide volunteer opportunities for service learning projects and other school functions

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