Education Plan
A.3.1 Mastery and Promotion

The MCLC is dedicated to the continuous and rigorous development of each student. Promotion from year to year will be based upon the Arizona Common Core and National Standards for each basic subject area as identified in the course of study and will follow the requirements of ARS 15-701 Common School Promotions. The minimum standards that students must achieve shall include accomplishment of the standards in reading, written communication, mathematics, science, and social studies as adopted by the State Board of Education. In addition to these standards, the basic college readiness requirements at MCLC must also be met.

Because the school is dedicated to college, career and community preparation, the absolute minimum for mastery in any area will be equivalent to 70% achievement. The school grading and evaluation system will be standards based but in no event will award either a "D" or "F" grade. The minimum must be at least equivalent to what would be a "C" in other educational institutions. The criterion for determining acceptable levels shall be equal to or greater than the levels as assessed in AIMS and the Common Core Content Standards as measured by benchmark assessment or equivalent rigorous measure.

Teachers will be required to develop a common rubric and evaluation system across the curriculum so that achievement reporting is consistent across classrooms. Additionally, the metric for grades will be matched to both Arizona Core Curriculum and National Standards to help students reach top levels of competence for postsecondary success. The Arizona Common Core Standards will serve as the minimum for achievement of a mastery/passing grade. It is expected that by junior year the standards will elevate to those matching the PSAT/CWRA and other postsecondary entry requirements.

A core belief for the MCLC is that all of our students will achieve at high levels. This belief underlies the education philosophy and operation of all elements in the school community. The clear and long standing evidence on middle level schools indicates that neither retention nor social promotion will increase student achievement and is linked to increased drop-out rates and under-educated graduates. Information from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory points to three major strategies as alternatives to retention and social promotion. These include:

1. Intensify Learning by assuring rigorous standards, a rich curriculum, effective teachers and meaningful learning. These are clearly evident in the four core concepts that underlie all elements of the MCLC.
2. Provide professional development to ensure skilled teachers. The rich professional development program along with the Professional Learning Community and the StrengthBuilding Training and Coaching embedded in the MCLC directly addresses this strategy.
3. Expand Learning Options. The areas recommended are block scheduling, year-round schooling, differentiating learning to include high quality curriculum and instruction, assessment and instruction as inseparable, all students participating in

respectful work, and teachers who understand, appreciate and build upon student differences. These elements are all critical aspects of the MCLC.

Within the multi-age grouping of grades 6/7 and 8/9 with teachers looping to maintain longer contact with their students, each student has the opportunity to participate in learning at their respective instructional levels across two years. Students will continue to participate with their cohort but will participate in enrichment and remediation within the classroom, in the elective strands and in the before and after school programs. However, formal promotion from grade to grade shall not occur until the minimum requirement is met in all core and basic enrichment areas as delineated in the EPO benchmark framework and measured through the common EPO assessment developed by the Design Teams and aligned to the Arizona Core Standards.

Students in special education, if unable to meet regular academic requirements for promotion, must meet the requirements of an alternative curriculum derived from the regular curriculum, which will be developed by an IEP team on an individual basis. Every effort will be made to offer the same quality with creative alternatives that encourage full inclusion through heterogeneous grouping.

Students with Individual Language Learning Plans will also be integrated within the single track curriculum and will receive direct instruction support through ELL services and the elective course support along with the before and after school programs.

The procedure for promotion and retention of students is included in the Student Monitoring Strategy expected across the program. Minimally this will include end of grading period identification based upon the formative and summative assessments in each requirement, notice to parents and parent conference immediately following the grading period in which low student performance is identified, and a written and enacted plan for intervention which is monitored with three week updates to the design team.

No decision for retention shall be made without parent involvement and student counseling. Each student will be permitted to engage in study at a higher level if mastery of standards has been documented. Thus, a student may be partially "enrolled" in class work at multiple levels but will not be promoted until all common core and enrichment criteria are met for that grade level. It is possible for a student to be promoted at any time in the year subsequent to having been retained. However, it is not the purpose of the MCLC to "double promote" students as the program demands enrichment rather than speed.

Intervention Procedures – Grades 6 – 12

When it becomes apparent that a student needs extended opportunities in order to master the Arizona Core Standards in a course, the teacher will immediately:

- assess mastery of standards and critical learnings
- review records of previous decisions concerning academic progress
- develop a classroom plan for corrective action

- closely monitor student progress
- communicate regularly with parents, design team and counselor
- Make referrals through design team if special program support is indicated.

The benchmark assessment program is designed to provide timely feedback to teachers and students so interventions may be initiated promptly.

Student Intervention Opportunities

There will be tutorial options both before and after school for all students. Additionally, there are specific lexile based intervention supports in reading (Achieve 3000) and leveled labs in mathematics. Intervention is built into the design team instructional program in which the teacher of record is responsible for intervention as part of the Professional Learning Community meetings and planning the follow each 3 week benchmark assessment. All interventions will build on the strengths of the student so as to optimize chances for success.

Students who are not yet ready for high school in all subjects will be given the opportunity to participate in the accelerated eighth grade program in which they may bridge to specific high school level classes for which they are prepared but will not be promoted to ninth grade until all core and enrichment criteria per the 8th grade core standards have been fully met.