A. 1 Educational Philosophy

The educational philosophy of The Caepe School has been influenced by research and data from experts in the area of education. It is and will remain an ever-evolving project and process incorporating new research and data to drive its core beliefs and adjust accordingly to better serve its population of students. Operating as a private school for the last five years, we have had the opportunity to "test" our philosophical approach to **improving pupil achievement**. We believe the data speaks for itself. According to Educational Records Bureau, the CTP4 is the only standardized achievement test designed specifically for high-achieving schools comprised of college bound students focused on setting high standards.[1] Our test results provided here, along with five years of student, teacher and parent testimony is evidence that our mission, vision, philosophy and program of instruction result in **successful student growth and achievement**.

CTP4 national standardized test median percentile scores through the Educational Records Bureau:

Grades 6, 7, 8 combined								
Year	approx. count	Reading Comprehension	Quantitative Reasoning	Writing Mechanics	Vocabulary	Writing Concepts and Skills	Mathematics	Verbal Reasoning
2011	30	74	87	74	80	86	74	62
2012	29	71	86	69	85	82	76	75

Given the national average is 50, our students have consistently score above the national average. We are an educational institution and as such, the academic growth and achievement of our target population is our first order of business. We believe this includes the education of our parents and community at large. Our school community hosted the documentary *Race to Nowhere* for the Anthem community of parents, teachers and students in 2010.[2] Living in "a nation at risk", in the state of Arizona, The Caepe School was founded on the deep knowing that a mediocre education was not enough to transform our system and change the world.

From his book *From Inspiration To Transformation: Education for the Evolution of Consciousness* Tobin Hart says: *Education is often seen as something to get through in order to reach the checkout with the grade or degree rather than being seen as a clearing for deep experience. Schooling seemed mainly to foster a numbness that kept my own knowing and the immediacy of the world at a distance. The exceptions were those rare times when something or someone was so sharp as to breakthrough the haze or when I was granted enough freedom and encouragement to meet the world firsthand.*[3]

A Caepe education includes the education of the mind and the heart, balances intuition with intellect and mastery with mystery, and cultivates wisdom over the mere accumulation of facts. This is very difficult to accomplish in a large school setting and requires the small class sizes that we offer at The Caepe School. Our class sizes in our three-year plan range between 18-24 students. This class size is the smallest available in our area schools.

Philosophical Approach to Educating the Target Population:

Target Population District Schools (DVUSD)

	Gavilan Peak	Anthem School	Diamond Canyon	Sunset Ridge	Desert Mountain	Canyon Springs	New River
School Type	District	District	District	District	District	District	District
Zip Code	85086	85086	85086	85086	85086	85087	85087
Grades Served	K-8th	K-8th	K-8th	K-8th	K-8th	K-8th	K-6th
Number of Students	880	855	1014	1212	943	845	275
AZ Learns Rating	Excelling	Excelling	Excelling	Excelling	Highly Performing	Highly performing	Performing Plus
Free or reduced lunch	8%	10%	10%	10%	16%	20%	26%

Target Population Charter and Private Schools

	North Valley Christian	Anthem Prep	Caurus Academy	Ridgeline Academy	Stepping Stones Academy
School Type	Private	Charter	Charter	Charter	Charter
Zip Code	85086	85086	85087	85085	85086
Grades Served	K-8th	K-9th	K-8th	K-8th	K-8th
Number of Students	200	413	330	546	220
AZ Learns Rating	Not Available	Excelling	Performing Plus	Performing	Performing Plus
Free or reduced lunch	Not Available	Not Available	27%	Not Available	Not Available

The Caepe School maximum enrollment capacity by year 3 is 120 students. This enrollment number falls FAR below any other school in the area. The small class size and attention to the total individual is what allows us a unique education for the target population.

The Caepe School serves families who want their children educated in a nurturing environment that encourages creative freedom of expression along with rigorous academic standards. These families want their children to love learning and grow as total and complete individuals. Caepe parents seek and value the development of curiosity, imagination, initiative, entrepreneurship, and social skills focused on in a school setting. Healthy balanced lifestyles as well as scholarly growth are at the core family values of our community. The TCS community embraces modern technology; "real world" hands on experience, teamwork, confidence, prudent risk taking and self-esteem. We value an educational approach and workload that stretches but does not stress each child to their full potential and leaves room for family time, sports, the arts, joyful play, and other leisure activities.

Our professional community of teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, coaches, and mentors **improve student achievement by knowing and supporting the Mission in all that we do**.

The Employee Handbook states:

TCS is a learning community dedicated to the education of our young people. We are a professional community of teachers, coaches, administrators, and support staff. Each of you serves the greater good; every day, your efforts further the principal values of the institution. It is within that context that I present this handbook of policies and procedures. If I could reduce this handbook to two rules they would be:

1. *Know and support the Mission in all that you do.*
2. *Be considerate of others at all times.*

Mission Statement: Every child is unique, each with his or her own set of strengths and challenges. Our mission is to provide a positive and affirming learning environment where we will guide and inspire each student to develop and succeed as a **total individual – academically, physically, socially, culturally and emotionally**.

Vision: The vision of The Caepe School is to provide students with a prestigious college preparatory education. Our mission and goals encompass attention to the whole child to be successful in college and life. We expect students to develop as well rounded individuals while providing them an opportunity for learning in the humanities, mathematics, the sciences, history and the arts. We guide students to **develop intellectual acuity and independence, self discipline, self confidence, and sound moral and ethical values including a focus on behaviors that reflect positive energy, ownership and pride, being a team player, bringing your best, remaining open minded, as well as relational and community minded, and honest, candid, forthright and proactive in their communications** with others.

Students are also encourages to participate in **athletics on a team sport and are provided instruction and practice in many lifelong athletic skills** to include dance, yoga, martial arts, triathlon training and personal training.

The Caepe School seeks to graduate students who will throughout their lives consider themselves **lifelong learners who pursue wisdom and use their talents and skills to find the intention for their life and serve the greater good**. Our community of students and parents strives to be individuals who collaborate for the overall care of the community. We recognize the richness of our diverse population and use these unique talents, experiences and backgrounds to enrich the lives of our students and the community at large. No forms of hatred, bigotry or prejudice are tolerated. We want every member of **our school community to value diversity and show respect and care for each individual.**

The following principles, concepts and practices are fundamental to the program of instruction at The Caepe School and support the Mission and Vision.

Social & Emotional Development and Success that supports the mission:
Our teachers implement the Responsive Classroom.[4] This approach along with other research and literature captures what educators have learned from books like *Yardsticks*[5] and *Teaching Children to Care*.[6.] This is a way of teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. Developed by classroom teachers, the approach consists of practical strategies for helping children build academic and social-emotional competencies day in and day out.
Guiding Principles

The Responsive Classroom approach is informed by the work of educational theorists and the experiences of exemplary classroom teachers. Seven principles guide this approach:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach—individually, culturally, and developmentally—is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
7. How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Classroom Practices

The Responsive Classroom is a general approach to teaching, rather than a program designed to address a specific school issue. It is based on the premise that children learn best when they have both academic and social-emotional skills. The Responsive Classroom approach consists of a set of practices that build academic and social-emotional competencies and that can be used along with many other programs.[7, 8,9.]

These classroom practices are the heart of the Responsive Classroom approach:

- **Morning Meeting**—gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- **Rule Creation**—helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
- **Interactive Modeling**—teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique
- **Positive Teacher Language**—using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
- **Logical Consequences**—responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity
- **Guided Discovery—**introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility
- **Academic Choice—**increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
- **Classroom Organization—**setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
- **Working with Families**—creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
- **Collaborative Problem Solving**—using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

Supporting Behavior at School

The Caepe School uses the Responsive Classroom approach to partner with parents regarding expectations for behavior at school. We recognize that parents and teachers are crucial role models for the social development of children. Our faculty and staff

implement and practice the Standards of Behavior listed below and ask the same from our entire Caepe School community; which includes our students, parents and family members.

Standards of Behavior

a) *Positive Energy*
The Caepe School Community members focus on the positive and are enthusiastic about learning. They focus on the current task and relationship. They always speak in a quiet and positive tone while representing The Caepe School and they encourage others.

b) *Ownership and Pride*
The Caepe School community members are mindful of how they present themselves. They are professional in their language and appearance. They are organized and orderly. They are respectful and considerate of others and are punctual. They understand how their actions and behaviors are a reflection of themselves and The Caepe School.

c) *Team Player*
The Caepe School community members are good listeners, cooperative and look for opportunities to support and help other team members. They are focused and committed to the goals of the school and others as their own. They are accepting of other people's personalities, style and preferences and are nonjudgmental. They demonstrate a commitment to and understanding of the mission of the school and live it every day in their behaviors and attitudes.

d) *Bring Your Best*
The Caepe School community members are committed to being their best and improving themselves each day. They are a role model for success, confidence and self esteem.

e) *Open-Minded*
The Caepe School community members are consummate learners and willing to change and grow. They are flexible, willing to hear and accept other people's ideas; especially when they are different then their own. They don't always have to be right.

f) *Relational and Community Minded*
The Caepe School community members understand the school's high value for relationships and community and model this in their behavior.

g) *Communicative*
The Caepe School community members are honest, candid, forthright and proactive in their communications with others.

Physical and Social Development and Success with Research Data:

Our middle school students participated in one or more TCS sports in the Mountain Valley Athletic League (We have a no cut philosophy and encourage every child to participate.) Middle school students also have the opportunity to participate in an early morning Running Club. Our Lower school students have the opportunity to participate in an intermural athletic program. All students have time daily at recess and intermural sports.

The Caepe School serves athletic scholars looking for a balanced approach to education with

athletic opportunities in a competitive league. Too often in large school settings, only "the best" athletes get to play sports. We encourage our entire student body to engage in an active lifestyle and provide ample opportunities for their developing bodies to "move".

The latest research shows that for your brain to function at its peak, your body needs to move. In *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain,* John J. Ratey, MD, demonstrates exactly how and why physical activity is crucial to the way you think and feel.[10] He explains how aerobic exercise prepares your brain to learn, improves mood and attention, lowers stress and anxiety, helps stave off addiction, controls the sometimes tumultuous effects of hormonal changes, and guards against and even reverses some of the effects of aging on the brain.

The American Academy of Pediatrics' new policy is based on far-reaching benefits of recess, which, the AAP states, needn't necessarily be outdoors, or even physically rigorous. From the article "The Crucial Role of Recess in School." [11] These benefits affect the following areas of child and adolescent development:

Cognitive/Academic Multiple studies have demonstrated that recess, whether indoors or outdoors, makes children more attentive and productive in the classroom.

Social/Emotional "Recess offers a child a necessary, socially structured means for managing stress," according to the AAP policy statement. Kids learn to negotiate, cooperate, share and solve problems on the playground. They also develop coping skills such as perseverance and self-control.

Physical While some kids spend recess socializing, the opportunity for vigorous activity is important, according to the AAP. Given the surge of childhood obesity, 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day is recommended for children. Any amount of moving around will help offset the sedentary hours spent in class, according to the AAP. To combat childhood obesity, some schools incorporate structured activities into recess or substitute recess with P.E. class. There are many benefits to such programs; the downside, however, is it denies the unstructured time that belongs to the child.

The rational for the selected approach for the target population is based on our experience, research and data collected during the last five years in operation. In 2008, The Caepe School was founded by a small group of committed people who wanted more for the education of our children. In his book *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire,* Rafe Esquith says, "Mediocrity is not an option in room 51." [12] The Caepe School was founded on this deep knowing that a mediocre education was not enough to transform our system and change the world.

In his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell writes about the mystery of the Rosetto people. Their healthy long lives are unexplainable given all medical research. Gladwell shares that the only conclusion to derive after all the scientific research data collected, is that the power of the community and their social activities and sharing of their lives explains this medical phenomenon. He says, "They had to appreciate the idea that the values of the world we inhabit and the people we surround ourselves with have a profound effect on who we are."[13]

At The Caepe School, we embrace the seeking of knowledge that the team of educators pursued to explain the Rosetto Mystery with concrete data. At the end of each day at The Caepe School, the research studies, parent and teacher testimonies, the data collected over the last five years, and the experiences of this community, ALL indicate that our students are achieving academic success as well rounded total individuals. We believe this is not a mystery but a result of our educational philosophy that we have shared here.

A.1 Sources

1. "CTP Comprehensive Testing Program Grades 1–11." *Assessment of Student Achievement CTP*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2013.
2. *Race To Nowhere*. Vicki Abeles. Reel Link Films, 2010. DVD
3. Hart, Tobin. *From Inspiration To Transformation: Education for the Evolution of Consciousness*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007.
4. "Responsive Classroom." *Home*. N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2013.
5. Wood, Chip. *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14.* Turner Falls*:* Northeast Foundation for Children. 2007
6. Charney, Ruth Sidney. *Teaching Children To Care*. Turners Falls: Northeast Foundation For Children, Inc., 2002.
7. Denton, Roxann Kriete. *The First Six Weeks of School.* Turner Falls: Northeast Foundation For Children, Inc. 2000.
8. Charney, Clayton, Chip Wood. *Guidelines For The Responsive Classroom®*.. Northeast Foundation For Children, Inc. 1998.
9. *Doing Morning Meeting: The Essential Components.*Lynne Bechtel, 2004. DVD.
10. Ratey, John J. *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*. New York: Little, Brown and Company. 2008
11. Murray, Robert MD., and Catherine Ramstetter, PhD. "The Crucial Role of Recess in School." *Pediatrics* 131 (2013): 183-188. Print.
12. Esquith, Rafe. *Teach Like Your Hair is on Fire: The Methods and Madness Inside Room 56.* New York: Penguin Books, Reprinted 2007.
13. Gladwell, Malcom. Outliers: The Story of Success. New York: Little Brown and Company. 2008.
14. Great Schools http://www.greatschools.org/