A 3 Program of Instruction

The program of instruction at The Caepe School is designed to meet the needs of students in its target population and prepare them to compete academically with students from any school in the country when they graduate.

Program Overview
The Caepe School has always been about appreciating the individuality of each child and providing for them inspiring experiences in education. We have aligned our **curriculum** to the Common Core Standards for the 2012-2013 school year. In compliance with the Common Core Standards for reading and writing, we made a shift to including more informational text, including an emphasis on critical reading of primary sources, not only in English Language Arts, but also in science, social studies, and technology. In math, we transitioned from a "mile wide, inch deep" approach to a focused and deep concentration on math skills with an emphasis on hands-on practice.

Teaching is centered on supporting each child individually, allowing us to customize the learning process for every student. We hold our students to high standards from the very beginning stages of the learning process, which shows our confidence in their abilities and translates into success for each child.

We expect students to develop as well rounded individuals while providing them an opportunity for **standards based learning curriculum** in the English language arts, mathematics, the sciences, history and the arts. A study of the humanities is integrated in the core curriculum areas providing students with a cultural experience to attend and contribute to their well-rounded bank of knowledge as well as their global understanding of the world. Students will also be engaged in cross-curricular opportunities in the art of speaking and presenting their learning to a group.

Methods of instruction in all subject areas includes direct instruction in small groups allowing teachers to implement differentiation to a diverse population of learners and access the curriculum to acquire necessary knowledge and skills. Teachers and learners attend to multiple intelligences providing a variety of learning techniques to encourage students and recognize the diverse skills and talents. This may include differentiation of the learning content, the process in which it is presented, the product or assessment, and/or the general learning environment. Through differentiation, the needs of each individual student are met which maximizes potential for growth and success.

Our teachers and students implement and practice Bloom's Taxonomy of higher level questioning across the curriculum to build critical thinking skills. We provide all of our teachers and even encourage student use of a Mentoring Minds Educational Wheel based on the Original Bloom's Taxonomy to encourage use of higher level thinking and questioning during class discussions.[1]This method provides an effective strategy to task-analyze an objective and scaffold and adjust instruction to lead students to mastery of rigorous material even if they begin at a low level of proficiency. Students who need additional help to meet learning goals work with teachers before and after school as needed.

Our students are mentored by teachers and coaches and guided along side peers toward a lifelong love of learning. In this affirming environment, students are empowered to grow and develop a positive self-image while being motivated to high achievement. We challenge each student's academic skill levels to strive for excellence. Students work independently and collaboratively in the classroom, enhancing social skills in a structured environment.

Curriculum Framework for Academic Core Content Areas

English Language Arts
Students in the primary grades learn to read and write, and continue advancing their skills. They are immersed in rich literature, both fiction and non-fiction with an emphasis on informational text, based on their current grade level and reading levels to encourage maximum growth. Students participate in a balanced literacy approach based on research and data. Students are exposed to books and writing exercises that encourage critical thinking and creative self-expression.

Student are engaged in the following Ongoing Reading Foundational Skills using Informational text and Literature:

- Print Concepts
- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics and Word Recognition
- Fluency
- Key Ideas and Details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

As students grow as competent readers our focus is to strengthen reading and comprehension, critical thinking, writing, and expression skills, and to expand each student's vocabulary. Students will read both classic and contemporary literature and learn to connect with the classic themes found in the reading. Students will have daily writing assignments including written responses to texts, critical thinking regarding themes and topics in literature, and writing programs based in expanding vocabulary. Vocabulary development is a key component of both the reading and writing programs. The greater store of words we have at our disposal, the better equipped we are to comprehend what we read and express what we think. Teachers use Writer's Workshops to enrich students' understanding of the writing process and its critical importance in refining skills in English Language Arts.

Methods of Instruction:

Reading Instruction:
"At one magical instant in your early childhood, the page of a book—that string of confused, alien ciphers --shivered into meaning. Word spoke to you, gave up their secrets; at that moment, whole universes opened. You became, irrevocably, a reader." Alberto Manguel
Goals and Components of Reading Instruction based on a Balanced Literacy Approach:
1. automatic word recognition (fluency)
Systematic Explicit Phonics Instruction
Phonics is systematic and explicit instruction of the 44 sounds of the English Language represented by 26 Letters. We follow a phonics continuum that begins with consonants, short vowels, long vowels, r-controlled vowels, vowel digraphs, and lastly the most challenging… the schwa.
2. comprehension of text
Reading to the children, Reading by the children, Reading with the children
Reading Aloud- The teacher reads aloud to the whole class or small group.

Shared Reading- Using an enlarged text that all children can see, the teacher involves the students in reading the text. (Big Books, Poems, Songs, Daily News, Re-reading the products of interactive writing)

Guided Reading- The teacher works with small groups who have similar reading processes. Teacher supports children reading the whole text to themselves making teaching points. (Story introduction, picture walk, predictions, focus, word stretching, story elements, author's style, word patterns, rhyming, decoding, comprehension, and discussion)

Independent Reading- Children read on their own or with others from a wide range of materials.

3. Development of a love of literature and a desire to read

All instruction is based on the Common Cores Standards and grows in complexity with the grade level expectations. We use rich authentic literature and a wide range of text with an emphasis on informational text, as we help students establish good reading habits to read critically and assimilate knowledge from text. We guide children to make connections to their own lives to develop as a life long learner and a voracious reader.

Writing Instruction:
" When we encourage young children to think of themselves as writers, their achievement soars. When we invite students to make something with writing instead of just asking them to write, they go about their work differently. " –Katie Wood Ray

Writing for the children, Writing with the children, Writing by the children
All instruction is based on the Common Cores Standards and grows in complexity with the grade level expectations. We guide children to be able to effectively communicate in writing. Instruction includes: Strategies, Content, Organization, Sentence Variety, Word Choice, Conventions (Grammar & Mechanics), Voice

Shared Writing- Teacher and children work together to compose messages and stories.

Interactive Writing- Teacher and children compose messages and stories using a "shared pen" technique that involves children in the writing.

Guided Writing or Writing Workshop- Children engage in writing a variety of texts. Teacher guides the process and provides instruction through target lessons and conferences.

Independent Writing- Children write their own pieces including stories, informational pieces, retellings, labeling, speech balloons, lists, etc.

Ongoing Writing
1. Text Types and Purposes
2. Production and Distribution of Writing
3. Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Ongoing Language
1. Conventions of Standard English
2. Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

Writing instruction within each unit of study includes teaching Grammar and Mechanics in

Context. This is an intentional shift to teach students to **use** punctuation and grammar principles instead of rules. When students memorize rules, more often than not it stops there and they do not understand how to apply them. Grammar and Mechanics are not rules to be mastered as much as tools to serve a writer in creating text readers will understand. Grammar includes all the principles that guide the structure of sentences and paragraphs: syntax-the flow of language; usage-how we use words in different situations; and rules- predetermined boundaries and patterns that govern language in a particular society. Mechanics, on the other hand, are ways we punctuate whatever we are trying to say in our writing; punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, formatting.
Together this is refereed to as conventions- things that readers expect a courteous writer to do. Although we teach in context our instruction is systematic and explicit.

Students in the Honors Class have additional expectations and increased level of difficulty within each unit of study.

Mathematics
The Caepe School's mathematical goals are based on the philosophy and recommendations of the Common Core Standards and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Mathematics instruction encourages accuracy, precision and problem solving skills as students learn the basic principles of mathematics reasoning. Our goal is to build a solid foundation of mathematics in each student at grade level and then work to move beyond their chronological age or grade level into more advanced mathematical problem solving and a higher level of thinking. Math is a building block subject, which requires a strong foundation. The curriculum develops three areas of mathematical understanding: number sense fluency, the ability to solve for unknown quantities in unfamiliar situations with limited data and instruction, and the ability to make sound mathematical judgments in complex situations. These three over- arching content areas cover the breadth of material in the Common Core Standards.

Method of Instruction:

Instruction is given in small groups to ensure personalized attention and to help students develop a strong conceptual understanding of general problem solving, geometric and algebraic skills, and concepts. We stress the application of skills to practical, real-world situations. When a student's foundation is weak because lower level skills and concepts are not mastered, learning new skills and concepts can lead to confusion, frustration and ultimately prevention of new skill acquisition. Any time there are gaps in a students math skills, trouble lies ahead. We identify these gaps and work with students to fill them as essential learning before moving forward.

In addition to concepts and skills aligned with the Common Core Standards at each grade level, instruction and mathematical practices include:

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
- Model with mathematics.
- Use appropriate tools strategically.
- Attend to precision.
- Look for and make use of structure.
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

Science

The inquiry based learning and Scientific Method are essential component of science everyday. Students develop background knowledge and skills, and a deep understanding of science. Using the inquiry based model students discover the rules and principles while gaining a deeper understanding by internalizing how these principles are manifested in Physical, Life, Earth and Space, Environmental and Health Science. All grade level objectives are presented in a manner that spirals the content. Students will therefore be exposed to concepts multiple times and each grade level will build off the foundation of the previous grade. Units are hand on and project based. The outdoor classroom is an essential, experiential learning component of our science program. All assessments are aligned to the state standards to include lab reports, projects, the EDEE environmental event, and EEE field trip experiences. In the 2013-2014 School year, The Caepe School will also implement the next generation science standards just released and finalized in April 2013.

Method of Instruction: Gradual Release of Responsibility and Inquiry Based Learning

Students become active learners of the scientific method, practicing applications of learning by engaging in experiments, active learning and presentations. They will learn to solve problems through observations, formulating predictions, and creating and testing hypotheses. Students apply the scientific process to a self designed, controlled experiment as well as display and analyze data from these experiments on lab reports. Hands-on, inquiry based science projects and units are enhanced and integrated with reading content area texts.

Students learn the following skills appropriate to their grade level and aligned with the Arizona State Standards for Science and Common Core Standards:

Classroom procedures
Predicting
Observing
Designing an experiment
Collecting data
Analyzing and interpreting data
Making conclusions based on data
Making inferences based on conclusions

Social Studies

The Social Studies program focuses on teaching research skills that employ current and emerging technologies. Throughout the nine years of the social studies curriculum, students at TCS will build academic vocabulary and critical thinking skills by identifying and defining key terms. Students will progress in details of thought and the use of precise complete sentences to construct and defend arguments. They will develop proficiency in constructing and interpreting charts, graphs and timelines, as well as comprehending and summarizing passages and longer texts from primary and secondary sources. In addition to these general skills to support literacy and develop critical thinking, students will also master knowledge and skills specific to social studies and aligned with the Common Core and Arizona state standards. Thematic Social Studies and Integration with text allows students to gain a deeper knowledge of the world around them.

Method of Instruction:

The thematic curriculum is an integrated approach to learning that unites reading, writing, history and mathematics activities under a single central subject. This helps students to understand the interconnectedness of information and increasing their ability to retain what they learn through application of knowledge. Not only does this ignite higher level thinking in our students across the curriculum but also it engages them in their learning to build and sustain general knowledge expected of us as well rounded individuals that we might have missed in more traditional classroom settings. Each thematic study includes a challenge, vocabulary use, and opportunities for implementation across the curriculum and our learning as social beings.

Assessment Plan

Initial Plan and Diagnosis:

Teachers meet prior to the start of school to create long-term plans based on curriculum maps for where students should be at the end of each month to successfully cover academic content in each subject area. Teachers collaborate and consider differentiation of instruction to enrich or remediate as needed.
Teachers review previous spring assessment data for returning students and upon enrollment for new students and use this data to diagnose their proficiency in each subject area and plan instruction accordingly.

Students in primary grades are evaluated using assessments from a tool called Mastery Connect. This assessment is used at least three times per year to evaluate and monitor growth. The Mastery Connect assessment and reporting tool is what teachers use to proactively drive instruction in the early elementary grades. These assessments are aligned to Common Core Standards and covers early literacy and mathematics content. These reports show teachers exactly how each student performed, how that performance compares to the standard and what specific activity they can use to get that performance where it needs to be.

All students in grades K-through 8 are evaluated on mathematics and reading skills using a computerized assessment tool called Mastery Connect. This program is aligned with the standards and gives teachers' detailed reports regarding skills acquired as well as any gaps in instruction. It is an excellent tool for teachers to review and monitor initial placement as well as growth.

Since inception, The Caepe School has used as its annual assessment the CTP-4, a nationally normed test published by Educational Testing Services, creators of AP exams, the SAT college entrance exam, and the GRE, used to qualify candidates for entrance into graduate schools across the nation. The CTP-4 has both an achievement and a cognitive portion and is known for its rigor and high ceiling.[3] Although the CTP-4 is not directly associated with the Common Core Standards or the PARCC assessment, educators across the nation report that they feel it is strongly aligned with Common Core Standards in both content and critical thinking skills. Even though we are not using the PARCC now, our curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Standards. To be in compliance with the expectations of the Charter Board, The Caepe School will transition to the test required by the State of Arizona as it becomes available.

Formative Assessment: Teachers create unit plans with daily objectives to indicate what students

need to master each day in order to be on track to demonstrate mastery on the unit assessment at the end of the month and cumulative summative assessment at the end of the year. Through daily checks for understanding throughout the lesson, the teachers will be able to identify students who are not on track to demonstrate mastery as well as those students who have mastered at a faster pace and need to be enriched. Teachers will use this time and data to adjust instructional plans to ensure mastery and beyond given the unit assessment.

Summative Assessment: At the end of each unit of study teachers will gauge student progress by giving students a summative assessment on the material in that unit that is aligned to the cumulative summative assessment at the end of the year. Students who are not meeting the target goals will come before or after school to receive targeted remediation.

Gifted Education and Special Education Services

The Caepe School will have at least one gifted education teacher on staff and contracted services with one special education teacher for every 100 students, which will result in smaller case loads that support the inclusion model of all students in our target population. This helps to ensure the least restrictive environment and allows attention to the needs of each individual student and an integrated approach to learning.

English Language Learners

Although The Caepe School has not had any students enrolled to date to fit the criteria of an English Language Learner, as part of the enrollment process, families who indicate a primary language at home other than English will be identified and assessed for needs using a contracted service.

A.3 Sources

1. Lujan,Michael. 2008.®"*Mentoring Minds" Educational Wheel*. Based on the Original Bloom's Taxonomy and Revised Bloom's.
2. Bloom B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain.* New York: David McKay Co Inc.
3. "CTP Comprehensive Testing Program Grades 1–11." *Assessment of Student Achievement CTP*. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2013.