C.3 Personnel

Vista College Preparatory ("Vista College Prep") believes that exceptional teachers are the key lever for student academic achievement and every staff member that is recruited, hired and trained is committed to the belief that all students deserve an excellent education.

A. Staffing Plan Overview

In Y1 of operation, Vista College Prep will serve kindergarten and first grade with 126 students. With 18 students in each classroom, we will need seven classroom teachers. We will have three kindergarten teachers and four first grade teachers. One of these teachers will be Special Education certified **Figure C.3.1** identifies the 10 staff members, instructional and non-instructional, that we will need to hire in year one.

Figure C.3.1: Year One Staffing Plan

Instructional Personnel	Total FTEs	Non-Instructional Personnel	Total FTEs
Executive Director	1	Office Assistant	1
Manager of Business and Operations	1		
Teachers – SPED Certified	1		
Teachers	6		
TOTAL	**9**	**TOTAL**	**1**

In Y2 of operation, Vista College Prep will serve kindergarten, first grade and second grade with 198 students. With 18 students in each classroom, we will need 11 classroom teachers. We will have three kindergarten teachers, four first grade teachers and four second grade teachers. Two of these teachers will be Special Education certified. **Figure C.3.2** identifies the 14 staff members, instructional and non-instructional, that we will need in year two.

Figure C.3.2: Year Two Staffing Plan

Instructional Personnel	Total FTEs	Non-Instructional Personnel	Total FTEs
Executive Director	1	Office Assistant	1
Manager of Business and Operations	1		
Teachers – SPED Certified	2		
Teachers	9		
TOTAL	**13**	**TOTAL**	**1**

In Y3 of operation, Vista College Prep will serve kindergarten, first grade, second grade and third grade with 265 students. With 18 students in each kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classroom and 22-23[1] students in each third grade classroom, we will need 14 classroom teachers. We will have three kindergarten teachers, four first grade teachers, four second grade teachers and three third grade teachers. One of these teachers will be Special Education certified. **Figure C.3.3** identifies the 19 staff members, instructional and non-instructional, that we will need in year three.

[1] Vista College Prep will increase class size to 22-23 students starting in grade 3.

Figure C.3.3: Year Three Staffing Plan

Instructional Personnel	Total FTEs	Non-Instructional Personnel	Total FTE
Executive Director	1	Office Assistant	1
Manager of Curriculum & Instruction	1		
Manager of Business and Operations	1		
Special Education Coordinator	1		
Teachers – SPED Certified	1		
Teachers	13		
TOTAL	**18**	**TOTAL**	**1**

Voluntary Non-Academic Instructional Staff

During each of the first three years, Vista College Prep offers between 40 and 45 minutes of enrichment for students. These periods of enrichment will likely be art or music. Conservatively, we anticipate teachers teaching these subjects and have not allocated this time as a preparation period. However, our goal is to solicit support from community members or retired professionals in the arts and music who would volunteer their time to teach a unit in their respective area of expertise. Having the opportunity for a volunteer content specialist to teach enrichment subjects would allow additional time for Vista College Prep staff to meet in grade-level teams or work closely with the Executive Director for additional instructional support. Students would also benefit from the passion and knowledge of a content specialist. All volunteers would provide fingerprint clearance cards, submit unit plans and all materials to the Executive Director for review, as well as meet weekly to assess progress.

B. Recruiting, Hiring, and Training Instructional Staff

"More than any other variable in education – more than schools or curriculum – teachers matter."[2] Recognizing that teacher quality is the single greatest factor in determining student achievement we are dedicated to recruiting and retaining the best and brightest talent available. Our staff recruitment efforts will be national, exhaustive, and selective. Vista College Prep has budgeted $8,000 dollars in our planning year to ensure we have the resources to identify only the best instructors. In Y1, we expect a staff of 10, including two leadership team members (Executive Director and Manager of Business and Operations), seven Teachers, and one Office Assistant. We will recruit the most committed and most capable teachers, offer a mission-oriented and achievement-focused team environment, and provide comprehensive professional development.

With Teach For America's Director of Alumni Affairs on our founding board, we will utilize this expertise in helping us expand our network to access any and all effective pipelines to ensure we are able to attract the highest caliber of educators. Upon authorization, positions will be advertised and posted on:

- Teach For America's newsletters and online (local and national)
- Vista College Prep's website
- Career and Education websites
- Newspapers
- Schools of Education

We will also depend heavily on referrals—tapping into our network of Building Excellent Schools Fellows who may have a candidate apply but is looking to remain or move to Arizona.

[2] Ripley, Amanda. "What Makes a Great Teacher?" The Atlantic Online. January/February 2010.

All Vista College Prep instructional staff must have a deep alignment and commitment with the mission and vision of the school. In addition to the faithful adherence to Vista College Prep's mission, there are additional beliefs upon which the school bases its culture and norms around the potential for student success. These include: (1) All children can and will learn, (2) All staff receives targeted, mission-driven, and individualized professional development, (3) Joy and rigor create a culture of achievement, 4) Interim assessments allow for targeted intervention, (5) A longer school day/year and strategic daily schedule maximize student achievement, and (6) A strong, pro-active partnership between home and school fosters strong learning for every child.

Vista College Prep has created a detailed hiring process that will allow the Executive Director to hire Highly Qualified teachers with a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college/university, screen for mission and school culture alignment, and meet the qualifications of the specific role. The qualities sought in our candidates are based on our core values (plus humility). As a result, we look for the following qualities as depicted in **Figure C.3.4**.

Figure C.3.4: Qualities Sought in All Candidates

HUMILITY	• Wants feedback and shows a desire to grow • Implements feedback immediately and effectively • Reflective about his/her practice
ACHIEVEMENT	• Demonstrated a capacity to learn and achieve • Strong content knowledge • Takes initiative (action-oriented, exudes a sense of urgency) • Classroom management and skill (when applicable) • No typos or mistakes in spelling and grammar
RESPECT	• Professionalism • Respect for low-income communities
ENTHUSIASM/OPTIMISM	• Mission alignment • High expectations and belief that all students can achieve
COMMUNITY/INTEGRITY	• Align actions and beliefs • Team trumps individual mentality • Belief in school-wide systems/consistency over personal preferences
HARD WORK	• Relentlessness • No excuses (even when it's hard)

In the interview we keep in mind the following "golden rules":

- Candidate talks 80 -90% of time
- Push to know more, get more examples and specifics
- Break through ability to talk about education and into what this looks like in real time
- Get to real beliefs about what's necessary on the ground level – every day, in every class

It is just as critical to remember in the hiring process that there is no guaranteed correlation between teacher efficacy and:

- Educational licensure, graduate work, or years of experience
- Ability to articulate "eduspeak"
- Similarity of personal background to students
- Political ideology or spiritual belief

- Depth of concern for the challenges that children in poverty/of color face

Instead, we must remember that mission fit is about what it will take to make the end game of student achievement possible and the true internalization of "no excuses."

There are at least 10 steps in the Vista College Prep hiring process[3]. Below are samples of what we would include in each step, as well as what the process looks like for difference candidates in **Figure C.3.5**.

Figure C.3.5: Process by Candidate Type

Instructional - Administrator	Instructional – Teachers	Non-Instructional Staff
1. Resume Screen 2. Response to Written Questions 3. Phone Screen 4. Demo Lesson and First In-Person Interview 5. Case Studies 6. School Walk Thru: Questions and Observations 7. Professional Development Session 8. Response to Scenarios 9. Teacher Support and Development 10. Second In-Person Interview 11. Reference Check	1. Resume Screen 2. Response to Written Questions 3. Phone Screen 4. Response to Scenarios 5. Demo Lesson and First In-Person Interview 6. Case Studies 7. School Walk Thru: Questions and Observations 8. Second Demo Lesson (incorporate feedback) 9. Second In-Person Interview 10. Reference Check	1. Resume Screen 2. Response to Written Questions 3. Phone Screen 4. Response to Scenarios 5. First In-Person Interview 6. Case Studies and Project (same day as first interview) 7. School Walk Thru: Questions and Observations 8. Second Project (incorporate feedback) 9. Second In-Person Interview 10. Reference Check

Resume Screening

A resume is a chance for a candidate to communicate who they are in a limited amount of space. What they choose to share (content) and how they share it (professional quality, proper grammar, spelling, etc.) provides us with important information on whether or not to move forward. The goal of step one is to screen in or screen out resumes within 1 – 3 minutes of review.

Response to Written Questions

If after reviewing the resume, a candidate is deemed as having potential, that individual will receive a follow-up email with a series of questions. Candidates are asked to respond to a series of three questions, which should not exceed one paragraph. The candidate is given two business days to respond.

One sample question is outlined below and includes a scoring system to be used in evaluation. The goal of step two is to screen out as many candidates as possible in very little time on our end.

[3] Our hiring process was highly informed by Capitol Collegiate Academy in Sacramento, CA.

Each response should be considered either "Strong/Aligned" or "Weak/Misaligned." A response may be judged those two buckets. If it is "Strong/Aligned," it should be scored on a scale of 1 – 3 (3 being the strongest, most aligned response). If it is "Weak/Misaligned" it should receive a 0. Following each question will be a detailed example of the types of ideas and thoughts that the reviewer should be looking for during evaluation. This list is not inclusive, but should indicate a clear pattern as to what is acceptable and aligned.

After reading the responses to these three questions, we would move forward with those answers that consistently score "Strong/Aligned" (typically a score of 4 or below). Candidates that reflect answers which are "Weak/Misaligned" should result in a generic email or letter articulating that "we've received your written responses to our questions and thank you for your time and energy. However, we're not interested at this time…"

In reviewing written responses, we will also be looking for the quality of writing and the candidates' general ability to articulate clear, cohesive, and supported ideas. Any written responses that have been completed in a shoddy manner with multiple errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, etc. or lack command of the written language should be automatically eliminated from the hiring process.

Sample Question and Evaluation Tool

QUESTION: What do you think are the key factors to ensuring success working with a predominantly low income, urban population of students?

(Strong/Aligned Response)	**(Weak/Misaligned Response)**
- High expectations with high levels of accountability at all levels (students, teachers, leaders, etc.) - Structure/disciplined learning environments - Relentlessness - Extra support / time for students - High quality teachers who take responsibility for their student's performance - No-excuses	- Anything suggesting that they are making excuses for students' lack of success. - Overall focus on tangential issues vs. high expectations - Home lives are tough, so need to counsel them - Must have families involved, or there's nothing the school can do - Focus on having curriculum reflect their cultural backgrounds
1 2 3	**0**

TOTAL SCORE FOR WRITTEN RESPONSES	**_____ / 9**
5 or higher – move to STEP 3 (based on having three questions)	
4 or lower – email or letter thanking for time and effort	

Phone Screens

The goal of the phone screens is to determine if the candidate is truly a mission fit: (a) at their core, does this candidate believe that all children can learn and that school and teachers can make that happen, no matter what and (b) has a powerful, whatever it takes work ethic.

Sample Questions and Evaluation Tool (to be scored using the same system as the written responses from the resume screen)

QUESTION: Highest Expectations

Our students often come to us several grade levels behind academically. Should they be held to the same standards at the end of their first year as students in wealthier districts, most of those students start at or above grade level already? Should the expectations be the same?

(Strong/Aligned Response)	**(Weak/Misaligned Response)**
-Absolutely -We have to set high standards so kids can strive to get there -Kids that come in with a lot of challenges will need more support to get there, but we can't change the expectations for them	-No, it's not fair -I think you should aim to see a lot of growth in a year, but you shouldn't hold them to the exact same standards as kids who started out better off, it's too much to ask.
1 2 3	**0**
TOTAL SCORE FROM PHONE SCREEN	**_____ / 12**
7 or higher – move to STEP 4 (assumes four questions)	
6 or lower – email or letter thanking for time and effort	

Demonstration Lesson and First Interview

There are two options for demonstration lessons to take place with a teacher candidate. If they are currently teaching in the Phoenix area, the first is to visit them at their school and observe them in their natural setting. This provides for an opportunity to not only evaluate their instruction, but to get a sense of the school culture and expectations that they've been working in prior to possibly joining Vista College Prep. The second option is for the teacher candidate to come to Vista College Prep and teach a demonstration lesson.

In the second instance, the teacher candidate should be provided with the following information prior to coming to model their lesson.

- An explicit standard (learning outcome) to be covered during the lesson.
- A brief amount of information about what the students have been learning up until this point and what they'll be learning following this point (provide context).
- A time constraint, i.e. you'll have 20 minutes to deliver your lesson (strict enforcement).
- Information regarding what resources will be available to them for delivering their lesson, i.e. LCD projector, overhead, whiteboard with dry erase markers, poster paper, etc.

Although it can be extremely valuable to see how someone responds when they are unsure of the situation they are entering, the goal of the demo lesson is to determine how well the teacher candidate can deliver a lesson and the means in which they communicate/work with students and adults.

During the demo lesson, if deemed appropriate and available (and starting in our second year), teachers either within the grade level team of the proposed candidate or in the same department as the proposed candidate should be welcomed to participate in the evaluation. This is a chance to extend leadership opportunities to teachers who have demonstrated mastery of what it means to be a "Vista College Prep Teacher."

Case Studies

The purpose of the case studies component of the interview is primarily to create an experience in which the teacher candidate has to articulate their thinking in an "on-the-spot" manner. Answering the question,

"how does this person think through a problem," is the driving force behind each case study. More specifically, the four options provided below allow for the interviewer(s) to further explore an area of concern that they may have with a candidate - they may need more information to be sure of their dispositions or core beliefs. Below is a brief overview of the topics covered in each case study.

1. **The "sole provider mentality"** – Understanding when "Whatever it Takes" needs to be spread out amongst a team and you need to use supports/processes
2. **Working within consistent systems** – Personality vs. Systems
3. **100% -** do you really believe it? (Loving students enough to hold them accountable)
4. **Data analysis** – using evidence to create concrete/detailed plans

Sample Case Study: Disengaged Student

Goal: Does the teacher candidate have the "sole provider mentality" or do they recognize and reach out for supports to tackle problems? Do they use the "Whatever it takes" attitude and work ethic appropriately, differentiating when to take on a problem by themselves versus using a team and system of supports?

Vanessa, a student in your 2nd grade class, has become increasingly disengaged (her head is down with little participation) in class over the past two weeks. Noticing the lack of engagement from your student you pull her aside for a conversation during homeroom. She doesn't share much information with you regarding her change in behavior and affect. That afternoon you call home to speak with her mother. It has been two days since you called home and you have not received a call back from the family. Vanessa is becoming increasingly disengaged, failing to complete homework assignments, and participating in class at an absolute minimum level.

Question: How do you respond? What do you do and why?

School Walk (Questions and Observations)[4]

The purpose of the school walk is to give the candidate the opportunity to see what your school is about. At this point, the candidate is a strong potential. This is the chance to continue to vet the candidate and also to provide a comparison between multiple prospects. The school should highlight the following key areas:

- Culture (student engagement, behavior, systems)
- Curriculum (rigor, completion and quality of work)
- Campus (overall environment)

The school walk should be an engaging experience for the candidate. There should be 2-3 different people giving the school walk, each highlighting a different physical area of the school, but touching on each of the three major areas. A candidate needs a minimum score of seven (averaged by all people involved) to move forward.

Sample Evaluation for Culture

CULTURE

Strong Observation	**Weak Observation**
- Specific observations about student and teacher	- Generalities about the classroom (it was good,

[4] This step would not be included until we are hiring for Y2.

interactions (using events, quantitative summaries) - Is able to provide multiple examples - Questions about what the school policy is in relation to what was being implemented (candidate should ask at least 2 questions for each area visited) - Makes connections between culture and student achievement - Engages effectively with staff when introduced	students were doing their work, management was effective) - Unable to provide specifics when probed - Few to no questions - Does not see culture as a factor in student achievement - Does not recognize strong and weak areas accurately - Does not engage with staff when introduced
1 2 3	**0**

Professional Development (Administrator)

This is a critical component of the job description and one that should be clearly vetted in the candidate. The purpose of this section is to see the ability of the candidate to plan adult learning, execute effectively, link need to content in a meaningful way, and ensure accountability of staff. Select staff members should be asked to participate in the professional development in order to solicit opinions and make the experience as genuine as possible.

The following are a set of guidelines to provide to the candidate:

- Explicit learning outcome to be covered during the PD
- Any prior knowledge/learning or relevant information and resources that are relevant to the success of the PD
- Brief summary of the group in attendance (where they are in their teaching in regard to proficiency)
- Time constraint; ideally the session would be 30 minutes for a truncated or incredibly specific learning outcome
- Information regarding what resources will be available to them for delivering the PD

The goal of the demonstration PD session is to determine how well the school leader candidate can deliver a session and the means in which they communicate/work with teachers. During the session, members of the Instructional Leadership Team or its equivalent should be present. Additionally, teachers in the leadership pipeline should also be encouraged to attend. This is a chance to extend leadership opportunities to teachers who have demonstrated mastery of what it means to be a "Vista College Prep Teacher." All teachers will be required to sign up for the PD session ahead of time to ensure that we are able to give an accurate number to the candidate and find the appropriate space.

PD Sessions will be scored by all in attendance. Teacher feedback will factor as 20% of the overall score, with leadership comprising the remainder of the total. All participants will use the same scoring tool. A candidate must average a 17 (out of seven questions, worth three points each) in order to proceed to the next round.

Sample Question from Scoring Tool

Mission Alignment **_____/3**

- During session demands 100 % engagement and compliance.
- Demonstrates belief that all children can achieve at high levels based on how he/she speaks with class as a whole and individual students.

Scenarios (Administrator)

The purpose of the scenarios component of the interview process is primarily to create an experience in which the candidate has to articulate their thinking in an "on-the-spot" manner in situations that will more than likely come up as a school leader. Answering the question, "how does this person think through a problem," is the driving force behind each scenario. More specifically, the four options provided below allow for the interviewer(s) to further explore an area of concern that they may have with a candidate - they may need more information to be sure of their dispositions or core beliefs. Below is a brief overview of the topics covered in each case study.

1. **Human Resources:** How do you handle difficult staff situations?
2. **Accountability**: How do we hold students accountable when a lot is at stake?
3. **Finance**: Budgeting is always a challenge, so how do we make the difficult decisions?
4. **Communication**: How do you craft messages to ensure clarity and brevity?
5. **Achievement**: How do you hold achievement in relation to other factors?

Sample Scenario: Difficult Staff Member

Goal: Does the leader candidate have the skills to handle difficult staff members? How do they ensure that each person feels heard and represented? Is the leader able to balance human resources with student and staff best interest effectively?

Mr. Johnson, a fourth year English teacher, has struggled over the last several weeks. He has not turned in his lesson plans on time for the last month, has challenged his department chair at weekly meetings, and continues to snap at his students during class. Three parents have called the school voicing concern over the tone Mr. Johnson has set in his room. Additionally, both the English department chair as well as his grade-level colleagues have privately spoken with you about the challenges they have faced with Mr. Johnson's attitude and lack of motivation. You decide to meet with Mr. Johnson after school to discuss the change.

How do you approach the conversation? What do you do and why?

Now assume that after this conversation, Mr. Johnson adjusts his attitude for two weeks, but then reverts back. You also notice that the grades in Mr. Johnson's class have decreased over the last month.

What do you do and how do you respond now?

Teacher Support and Development Feedback

The purpose of the unit and lesson plan feedback is to determine the level at which a candidate reviews and assess the proficiency of teachers. A candidate will receive a packet of information given to them that details the planning, results, and self-critique of a teacher. The candidate will be given 30 minutes to review the material and prepare for a meeting with the teacher. The Executive Director will be the teacher that is given the feedback (in year three, we will expand this process to include the Manager of Curriculum and Instruction). The initial session will take 15 minutes, after which the teacher and the administrator will give feedback to the candidate. The candidate will then be given a second teacher's information, with another 30 minutes to prepare and review. The Executive Director (or another staff member in year two) will again play the role of the teacher. After the second feedback round, the candidate and the administrator will review:

- *What went well?*

- *What changes did you feel you made between "teachers?"*
- *What worked about those changes and what would you still like to adjust?*
- *What were your ultimate goals and objectives in each meeting? Do you feel that you met those objectives? How do you know?*

Final Interview and References

This is the final opportunity to meet with the candidate. This is the time to ask any lingering questions of the candidate and also to debrief the entire interview process. It is important to gauge the candidate's opinion of the process in order to determine whether they have the commitment, stamina, and sense of urgency required of the position. This is also a time to answer more specific questions that the candidate should have and to speak candidly about the role. If a person makes it to this level, they are more than likely one of a select few people remaining in the process, so it is critical to flush out the nuanced differences between remaining candidates, determine their interest and dedication to the role and mission, and find the best fit.

All candidates should have at least three references checked. Each reference check should cover the following topics:

- What can you tell me about this person?
- How many days were they absent last year?
- If this person was not going to succeed in this job, what would be the reason?

Putting it all Together

A combination of all steps should give the Vista College Prep leadership team a clear sense of whether or not they would like to offer a position to the candidate. If a candidate has successfully navigated the resume screen, written response to questions, phone screen, demo lesson, case studies, and in-person interview (and additional steps for leadership positions), they should be seriously considered for a position. With the goal of ensuring that along the way the candidate has shown their true colors, the hiring process, should provide a clear sense on the areas that are most critical to success as a Vista College Prep staff member:

- Intelligence; has demonstrated capacity to learn and achieve
- Takes initiative; is action oriented. Exudes a sense of energy / urgency
- Strong communicator: verbal and written
- Mission alignment
- Reflectiveness / Ability to take and implement feedback
- Classroom skill: Behavior management (when applicable to the position)
- Classroom skill: Instruction (when applicable to the position)
- Team trumps Individual mentality

After the final interview, the Executive Director (and other administration team members starting in year two) will review all steps and make a final decision.

Vista College Prep will not discriminate against any potential or current employee on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, or any other protected classification, in accordance with applicable law.

New Hire Logistics and Compliance

Vista College Prep will comply with all provisions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and applicable Arizona laws as they apply to the certification of our employees. Once a Highly Qualified candidate is selected, it is critical that Vista College Prep ensures all paperwork and fingerprinting is tracked and completed in a timely manner[5]. **Figure C.3.6** identifies sample logistics that will ensure proper accountability, identify how statuses are verified, and track progress toward completion. At all times, the Academic Achievement Committee's dashboard will include a teacher licensure breakdown and make sure that no matter the profile—graduate from an in-state education program, out-of-state education program, foreign country's education program, or pursuing alternative certification—Vista College Prep teachers are appropriately highly qualified and have met all fingerprinting requirements.

Figure C.3.6: Sample New Hire Steps[6]

Step	Due Date	Notes
Signed Employee Application	Within 1 day of final interview	During final interview, prospective candidate must submit a signed one-page application that includes an acknowledgement that everything written on the application is true.
Offer Letter	Sent upon decision	Offer letter will reference that hiring is conditional upon submitting applicable fingerprint clearance card (including need for identity verified prints if member of instructional staff).
Payroll and Tax Forms • Direct Deposit Form (with check) • Form I-9 • Form W-4	June 2013 (or within one week of receiving an offer)	All forms are submitted to the Executive Director (Y1) and Manager of Business and Operations (starting Y2) for processing.
Distribute New Hire Packet • Staff Handbook • VCP Staff bio • Personnel Form	June 2013 (or within one week of receiving an offer)	Materials returned will be signed form acknowledging the candidate has read the staff handbook, completed bio and personnel form.
Fingerprinting	June 2013 (or within one week of receiving an offer)[7]	Pursuant to **A.R.S. § 15-183.C.5**, all persons engaged in instructional work directly as a classroom, laboratory or other teacher or indirectly as supervisory teacher, speech therapist or principal shall have valid AZ fingerprint clearance card. All staff that will be teaching will need to obtain Identity Verified Print Fingerprint Clearance Card.
Set-up Meeting with Manager of Business and Operations to	Time allocated during summer	During this meeting staff will review options for medical coverage and select

[5] Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-512, we will follow all fingerprinting requirements and specifications on type of clearance based on whether the newly hired staff member is serving students in a non-instructional or instructional capacity, or is an emergency hire.
[6] Information based on Building Excellent Schools training focused on "Employee Rights and Employer Responsibilities" from Carol Chandler, Stoneman, Chandler & Miller LLP on 4/10/12.
[7] No staff member will be instructing children unless we have proper documentation for all fingerprint clearance cards.

Discuss Benefits	professional development	your package

Vista College Prep can recruit and hire effectively, but if we do not grow, support and coach our teachers, we will not be able to fulfill our mission. A recent *EdWeek* article discussed a report that "found that the highest-achieving CMOs place a heavy focus on the coaching of educators, along with setting high expectations for student behavior."[8] At Vista College Prep, we do both.

Summer Professional Development

To ensure our instructional leaders are prepared and ready to deliver rigorous standards-based instruction on a daily basis, we have 17 days of staff development during the summer. Key topics covered during summer professional development include:

- Curriculum planning & Development
- Instructional Practices
- Assessments
- School Culture Building and Norming
- School Routines and Structures

Throughout the summer staff will participate in role plays, evaluate scenarios, create and adapt curriculum, learn systems that include everything from how students enter the building to how they sharpen pencils. Additionally, as a staff, we will travel to at least one of the schools studied by the school leader during her Fellowship year with Building Excellent Schools.[9] This will serve as a model for the entire staff and orient our own discussions around excellence.

Professional Development during the School Year

Teachers participate in weekly professional development. For 2.5 hours per week, teachers and the leadership team plan and discuss curriculum, analyze student data to modify or adjust lesson planning and continuously seek ways to improve the quality of instruction we deliver to students. We provide ten dedicated professional development days during the year, allowing us to contract external professional development as needed, and offer teachers opportunities to visit high-performing schools to observe best practices. Five of those ten days are devoted to data evaluation following our six-week assessments where teachers and instructional leaders evaluate students' small group levels, determine lesson modifications and evaluate whether any skills or concepts need to be retaught. Data-driven instruction allows teachers to recognize what information is not being accessed by some or all students and helps them to understand why. As a staff, we analyze the results of data on a weekly basis and analyze the results of internal assessments through extended professional development blocks. The goal of each data analysis session is to make program improvements to ensure all students are achieving mastery on all objectives. The actions plans required from this information may include re-teaching, spiraling material more extensively, individual tutoring, small group sessions, or increased homework on a specific objective. Teachers will be expected to use the information gathered to modify their planning. Teachers will work with the Executive Director and Manager of Curriculum and Instruction (Y3) on those

[8] Cavanagh, Sean. "Different Strategies for 'Teacher Coaching' in Top Charters." http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/charterschoice/2012/03/top_charters_take_different_approaches_to_teacher_coaching.html?cmp=ENL-EU-NEWS2. 3/26/12.

[9] Through her Building Excellent Schools Fellowship, Lead Founder Julia Meyerson observed 39 high performing charter schools across the country. For the purposes of this visit with staff, she will choose a school based on proximity and grade-level appropriateness. This visit will happen during the summer if there is overlap or during the first few months of school.

modifications, as needed. We will monitor student mastery of standards as well as reading levels and fluency.

Classroom Observation

Ensuring each teacher's professional and instructional growth throughout the year is a critical component of Vista College Prep's model. Our proposed Executive Director, Julia Meyerson, has received extensive training on supporting teacher growth and development as part of the Building Excellent Schools (BES) Fellowship. In addition, she completed a leadership residency at a no excuses charter elementary school, Capitol Collegiate in Sacramento, CA, where she focused on teacher evaluation and development, and has continued to support and learn from Phoenix Collegiate Academy, BES school here in Phoenix. The Executive Director (with Manager of Curriculum and Instruction starting in Y3) have a regular and set schedule of observation where every teacher is receiving feedback at least once per week and twice per week for brand new teachers. In a school where the staff, parents and our surrounding community feel and recognize that 'only the best teachers work at Vista College Prep' and by continually providing opportunities to demonstrate leadership, observe best practices, and participate in customized training sessions, teachers become part of a school culture where they are challenged and valued.

Evaluation

Vista College Prep agrees with the Arizona Taskforce on Teacher and Principal Evaluation when they stated that "the goal of teacher and principal evaluations is to improve performance that yields to higher quality education."[10]

The Board of Directors will evaluate the Executive Director annually. This evaluation will be based on the degree to which the school has reached the academic and organizational goals established in the adopted accountability plan. If the Executive Director fails to reach acceptable academic and organizational outcomes, the Governing Board may terminate the Executive Director and seek a qualified replacement.

The Executive Director will evaluate the management team, including operational, administrative, and instructional leadership staff, based on a data-driven, fair and clearly defined evaluation process. The process includes multiple measures of performance, including annual formal observations, monthly and/or weekly informal observations, staff self-reflections, and student achievement data. Vista College Prep has modeled our formal evaluation cycle based on the 2012 implementation of the Arizona Framework for Measuring Educator Effectiveness. At Vista College Prep, formal evaluations are strongly influenced by the following framework:

- Quantitative data on student academic progress that accounts for between 33% and 50% of each evaluation outcome
- School data (i.e. grade-level results on tests, survey data) that accounts for no more than 17% of each evaluation outcome (optional)
- Teacher performance (performance on the Vista College Prep Teacher Development Rubric) that accounts for between 50% and 67% of each evaluation outcome

[10] Information gathered from a Statewide Awareness Presentation by the Taskforce: http://www.azed.gov/teacherprincipal-evaluation/files/2012/04/statewide-awareness-presentation.pdf

Retention

Vista College Prep believes that teacher quality is the number one predictor of student achievement and we recruit, develop and compensate based on this philosophy. Vista College Prep teachers work an extended day, extended year and participate in 27 days of professional development. As a result, it is important that we create a professional growth environment that acknowledges high performance and encourages teachers to stay at Vista College Prep. Our goal when hiring for leadership positions will always be to promote from within.

Compensation and Benefits Plan

Executive Director

During the start-up year, the Executive Director will receive a salary from January through July. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE at $4,800, the total expenditure for seven months is $30,800. The Executive Director's salary will start at $50,000 in Y1 and increase to $60,000 by Y3. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure is $55,000 in year one, $59,950 in year two, and 67,100 in year three. The Executive Director's salary intentionally falls below market rates during the early years of school operation based on our small school size upon opening and our slow growth model of adding one grade level per year. As Vista College Prep grows, assuming solid school and job performance, the Executive Director's salary will be adjusted to reflect performance and correspond to other high performing charter school compensation benchmarks. The Executive Director's compensation plan will be designed and approved by the Governing Board.

Manager of Business and Operations

During the start-up year, the Manager of Operations and Business will receive a salary starting July 8, 2013 (the first day of staff professional development). With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE at $4,000 the total expenditure for one Manager of Business and Operations for one month is $3,667. The Manager of Business and Operations' salary intentionally falls below market rates during the early years of school operation. As Vista College Prep grows, assuming solid school and job performance, the Manager of Business and Operations' salary will be adjusted to reflect performance and correspond to other high performing charter school compensation benchmarks. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure is $44,000 in year one, $50,600 in year two, and $53,825 in year three (based on 3% COLA).

Manager of Curriculum and Instruction (Y3)

Assumes 1 FTE for a Manager of Curriculum and Instruction in year three. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure is $52,800 in year three.

Teachers

During the start-up year, teachers will receive a salary starting July 8, 2013 (the first day of staff professional development). With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE at $3,500 the total expenditure for six teachers for one month is $19,250.

- Assumes 6 FTEs in year one. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure for six teachers is $231,000.
- Assumes 9 FTEs in year two. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure for nine teachers is $356,895 (based on a 3% COLA).

- Assumes 14 FTEs in year three. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE the total annual expenditure for 14 teachers is $571,825 (based on a 3% COLA).

Special Education Teachers

During the start-up year, the SPED teacher will receive a salary starting July 8, 2013 (the first day of staff professional development). With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE at $3,700 the total expenditure for one SPED teacher for one month is $3,392.

- Assumes 1 FTE for a Special Education Teacher in year one. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure for one teacher is $40,700.
- Assumes 2 FTEs for a Special Education Teacher in year two. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure for two teachers is $83,842 (based on a 3% COLA).
- Assumes 1 FTE for a Special Education Teacher in year three. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure for one teacher is $43,179.

SPED Coordinator

Assumes 1 FTE for a Special Education Coordinator in year three. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure is $52,800 in year three.

Office Assistant

During the start-up year, the Office Assistant will receive a salary starting July 8, 2013 (the first day of staff professional development). With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE at $2,200 the total expenditure for one Office Assistant for one month is $2,017. With 10% of required employer contributions per FTE, the total annual expenditure is $24,200 in year one, $24,926 in year two, and $25,674 in year three (based on a 3% COLA).

Required Employee Contribution

In addition to salaries, Vista College Prep pays for Social Security, Medicare, State Unemployment and Workman's Compensation. We assume that collectively, employee benefits will be 10% of total salaries. Vista College Prep will pay $18,200 during the start-up year, $18,400 in Y1, $19,732 in Y2, and $31,447 in Y3.

Employee Insurance

Vista College Prep will participate in The Joint Purchase Education Trust (JPET),[11] through the Arizona Charter Schools Association, and all full-time employees will be eligible for insurance JPET's quote is $400 per employee per month. Employee insurance costs will be split 70/30 with the employee responsible for 30% of the costs. VCP will cover 70%, making our monthly payment $280 per employee per month. Assuming all employees elect to receive insurance, the total increases from $38,400 in Y1 to $72,960 in Y3.

[11] We are aware that Holmes Murphy is in the process of changing this option. However, while it may be a different name, we have confirmed that the estimate of $400 remains the same.