A.4 School Calendar and Weekly Schedule

Our mission states that through academic rigor and leadership development, Vista College Preparatory ("Vista College Prep") educates students in grades K-5 for success in middle school, achievement in high school and graduation from college. To achieve this mission, it is critical that both our school calendar and daily schedule prioritize literacy and mathematics while our school culture facilitates every opportunity for rigorous instruction.

A. Compliance with Requirement for Number of School Days per Year

With 188 days of school (see **Figure A.4.4** on page 6 of this section) we have eight more days than are required by state statute (**A.R.S. § 15-341.01**).

The annual school calendar (see **Figure A.4.4** on page 6 of this section) includes the following key elements designed to implement and sustain an achievement-focused, disciplined school culture and to support and advance students' mastery of fundamental skills and rigorous academic content: (a) extended instructional day and year; (b) six-week, diagnostic, interim and final assessments; (c) data-driven professional development; and, (d) family orientation and conferences. More details on these elements are provided in **Section C** and **Section D** below.

B. Compliance with Requirement for Hours/Minutes of Instruction

Vista College Prep's school calendar and weekly schedule exceed the minimum requirements of number of school days per year (as outlined in **Section A**) and hours of instruction per week (see **Figure A.4.1**).

Figure A.4.1: Hours of Instruction Required Per Year (A.R.S. § 15-901)

	Hours Required Per Year by AZ	Hours Required by Vista College Prep
Kindergarten	356	1,290
Grades 1-3	712	1,290
Grades 4-5	890	1,290

C. Daily Instructional Minutes

Vista College Prep offers over 2.5 times more instructional minutes for kindergarten than the state requirement. On average, Vista College Prep offers 66% more minutes of daily instruction than is required by Arizona law for grades 1-5. **Figure A.4.2** breaks down the number of daily minutes of instruction by subject and then compares the total to the number of daily minutes required by the state of Arizona.

Figure A.4.2: Daily Minutes of Instruction by Subject (K-2)[1]

Subject	K	1	2	3	4	5
Math	80	80	80	90	90	90
Literacy	215	215	215	155	155	155
Science/Social Studies	45	45	45	100[2]	100	100
Enrichment/Other	90	100	85	80	80	80
Total Daily Vista College Prep Instructional Minutes	**430**	**440**	**425**	**425**	**425**	**425**
Total Daily Instructional Minutes Required by Arizona	**119**	**237**	**237**	**237**	**297**	**297**

D. Rationale for Weekly Schedule

At Vista College Prep, we provide students with a focused and comprehensive literacy curriculum, targeted numeracy and mathematical skills in both math procedures and problem solving, and a standards-based science and social sciences curriculum. Additionally, per the new requirement for schools to consider providing thirty total minutes of recess each day for K-5 students, we have allocated 30 minutes to recess for conservative scheduling. Students also benefit from 40 to 45-minute enrichment classes in Art or Music five (5) days per week.

Vista College Prep operates with an extended school day starting at 7:40 am (school doors open at 7:15 am) and ending at 4:00 pm. In grade five, Vista College Prep offers a Homework Club from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. On Wednesdays, dismissal for all students is at 2:30 pm to allow for dedicated professional development and collaborative planning time. To accommodate this change and include our weekly leadership development lessons, there are four changes/additions to the Wednesday schedule: (1) Morning Motivation is replaced with a Community Circle only for Grades K-2, (2) Writing Workshop is reduced to 30 minutes, (3) Math block is reduced by 10 minutes, and (4) Social Studies/Science and all enrichment classes are replaced by a 40-minute block of leadership development. **Figure A.4.3** (on page 5) details a sample daily schedule for year one.

- **Extended Instructional Day and Year*:*** We provide an extended school year of 188 days, an extended school day of 8 hours and 20 minutes, an intensive focus on mathematics, and triple blocks of literacy instruction. All staff members arrive by 7:00 am daily. All students arrive between 7:15 and 7:40 am and receive an average of 428 minutes (7.13 hours) of instruction daily, from 7:40 am to 4:00 pm (with 73 minutes for lunch, break and recess) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Wednesdays, the school operates with an abbreviated schedule. All students are dismissed at 2:30 pm to provide for 2.5 weekly hours of targeted teacher professional development and collaborative planning to accelerate and increase instruction's impact on student achievement. These days provide students with 350 minutes (5.83 hours) of instruction from 7:40 am to 2:30 pm (with 60 minutes for lunch, break and recess).

- **Six-week, Diagnostic, Interim, and Final Assessments*:*** At the start of each academic year, we assess each student's reading level and math skills proficiency level using the nationally-normed TerraNova reading, language, and math tests in order to: (1) obtain a baseline level for each child against which we can measure growth throughout the academic year; and (2) target and pace instruction and academic support programs strategically to ensure that we close grade-level skills gaps and ensure all students progress at the rate necessary to reach grade-level proficiency and

[1] Number of minutes based on our typical schedule from 7:40 am-4:00 pm.
[2] Starting in 3rd grade each student receives 50 minutes of Science and 50 minutes of Social Studies.

content mastery by the conclusion of the academic year. This test is administered again in May (at the end of the year), to track, evaluate, and compare individual student and cohort progress. Throughout the academic year, as outlined on the proposed calendar, we conduct standards-based interim assessments every six weeks to gauge students' progress in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies and conduct the STEP Assessment to measure reading level growth. We use internal assessments normed against those created by other high-performing charter schools to assess mastery of science and social studies content. The week following each round of interim assessments, we conduct a teacher professional development day during which administrators and teachers analyze assessment results, identify trends in student progress and gaps in skills and proficiency levels, and create instructional action plans for individual students, sub-groups, classes, and grade levels. We discuss students' progress and goals with them individually and share assessment results with parents through progress reports and report cards.

- **Data-driven Professional Development:** The school year begins and ends with staff professional development. Beginning on July 8, 2013, Vista College Prep staff attends professional development for 17 days. This training is followed by 10 full days and an additional 2.5 hours per week of development time during the school year.

- **Family Orientation and Conferences:** Vista College Prep offers two parent orientations throughout the school year. During the first session in April for all newly enrolled families, we present the goals for students at Vista College Prep and provide an overview of the Parent and Student Handbook and key school policies (i.e. uniforms, homework, code of conduct, length of school day and year), discuss the expectations delineated in the school-family-student commitment, distribute the school calendar, and answer any questions families may have. We hold a second Family Orientation for all families, both newly enrolled and returning, three days before the first day of school to review the Student and Family Handbook, school calendar and all expectations for student behavior and parent involvement. Parents and students are invited to sign their School-Family-Student Commitments at this time. Following the close of each trimester, we hold Parent Conferences over three days. At each conference, parents meet with their child's teacher to review and discuss successes, progress, and challenges in academics and behavior and to identify next steps for the teacher, parent, and child to support academic achievement and meeting behavioral expectations. Teachers provide parents with their child's report card and discuss it with them at this time. If parents are unable to attend at a scheduled conference time, we make arrangements to accommodate them at another time.

E. Professional Development

Given the high expectations of teachers, we structure extensive professional development time and ensure that teachers receive planning time throughout the day. First, we have provided for weekly professional development each Wednesday. This block of dedicated weekly time is focused on issues related to teacher needs, school initiatives, instructional areas of focus, and department-specific professional development.

Figure A.4.4 (on page 6) outlines all professional development days during the summer and throughout the school year. Vista College Prep mandates that all teachers participate in 17 days of professional development throughout the summer and 10 days of professionial development throughout the school year. Of the 10 days throughout the school year, five are allocated just for the evaluation of data immediately following the administration of our interim assessments as noted on the annual calendar.

On average, teachers at Vista College Prep receive anywhere from eight to ten hours of professional development and preparation time during the week. In addition to the designated time for school-wide professional development, individual grades have weekly meetings where they check in on a grade-wide

quiz, evaluate trends across the grade and determine what needs to be retaught. We also make accommodations and provide coverage for staff to observe excellent teachers both at our school and at others. This professional development time accommodates the often unrecognized time teachers spend grading, planning, and communicating with families that is not part of the regular school day – we give teachers the opportunity to do this important work within the collegial structure of the school day and allow them to protect their time with families in the evenings.

As detailed in **Strategy IV** of the **Performance Management Plan**, the allocated times allows for focused professional development sessions on individual and school-wide growth goals, opportunities to analyze student performance and constantly role-play and practice the delivery of instructional practices to ensure we are always raising the bar for student achievement.

Figure A.4.3: Sample Daily Schedule for Y1 (Kindergarten and First Grade)

	TEACHER SCHEDULE						
	K-Cohort A	K-Cohort B	K-Cohort C	1-Cohort A	1-Cohort B	1-Cohort C	1-Cohort D
7:15	Arrival and Breakfast-25 mins (7:15-7:40)						
	Morning Motivation-10 mins (7:40-7:50)						
8:00	Morning Meeting/Calendar Math-10 mins (7:50-8:00)						
	Whole Class Phonics Instruction-15 mins (8:00-8:15)			Read Aloud-20 mins (8:00-8:20)			
	Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (8:15-8:45)	Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (8:15-8:45)	Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (8:15-8:45)	Lit. Block 2 - Centers & GR - 60 mins (8:20-9:20)			
9:00	Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (8:45-9:15)	Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (8:45-9:15)	Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (8:45-9:15)				
				Sight Words-15 mins (9:20-9:35)			
	Recess-15 mins (9:15-9:30)			Recess and Snack-20 mins (9:35-9:55)			
10:00	Read Aloud-20 mins (9:30-9:50)			Whole Class Phonics Instruction-15 mins (9:55-10:10)			
	Sight Words-15 mins (9:50-10:05)			Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (10:10-10:40)	Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (10:10-10:40)	Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (10:10-10:40)	Lit. Block 1-A RM & RC (10:10-10:40)
	Lit. Block 2 - Centers & GR 60 mins (10:05-11:05)						
11:00				Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (10:40-11:10)	Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (10:40-11:10)	Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (10:40-11:10)	Lit. Block 1-B RM & RC (10:40-11:10)
12:00	Lit. Block 3 - Writing/Handwriting 45 mins (11:05-11:50)			Lit. Block 3 - Writing/Handwriting 45 mins (11:10-11:55)			
	Lunch and Recess - 40 mins (11:50-12:30)			Enrichment 40 mins (11:55-12:35)			
1:00	Enrichment 45 mins (12:30-1:15)			Lunch and Recess- 40 mins (12:35-1:15)			
2:00	Science/SS - alternates by unit 45 mins (1:15-2:00)			Science/SS - alternates by unit 45 mins (1:15-2:00)			
	Recess-15 mins (2:00-2:15)			Math Block-70 mins (2:00-3:10)			
3:00	Math Block-70 mins (2:15-3:25)						
				Recess-15 mins (3:10-3:25)			
	Choice Time/Academic Support-20 mins (3:25-3:45)						
	Class Community Circle-15 mins (3:45-4:00)						
4:00	Student Dismissal (4:00 pm)						
5:00	Teacher Planning Time (4:10-5:00)						

Figure A.4.4: Annual Calendar

Vista College Preparatory
2013-2014 Academic Calendar

JULY						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	16	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

AUGUST						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JANUARY						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

First Day of School
Staff Development Days
No Staff/No Students
Half Day

6 week Interim Assessments
Data Day - No students
6 Week Progress Reports
Parent Orientation

Natl. ELA/Math Assessments
Parent Teacher Conferences
New Trimester Begins
Trimester Report Sent Home
Last Day of School

188 Days of Instruction
27 Days of Staff Development

Important Dates

JULY	
Jul. 8-31	Staff Professional Development (PD)
Jul. 30	Parent Orientation

AUGUST	
Aug. 1	**1st day of school** (Half Day)
Aug. 2	Half Day (dismissal at 12:30)
Aug. 6-9	Nationally Normed ELA/Math Assessments (August baseline)

SEPTEMBER	
Sept. 2	Labor Day-No School
Sept .3	Staff PD-No Students
Sept. 19	1st 6 week interim assessment
Sept. 23	Staff Data Day-No Students
Sept. 26	1st 6 week progress reports

OCTOBER	
Oct. 7	No School
Oct. 28	2nd Trimester Begins
Oct. 31	1st Trimester report sent home

NOVEMBER	
Nov. 7	2nd 6 week interim assessment
Nov. 11	Veterans Day - No School
Nov. 12	Staff Data Day-No Students
Nov. 14	2nd 6 week progress reports
Nov. 19-21	Parent/Teacher Conferences
Nov. 28-29	Thanksgiving-No School

DECEMBER	
Dec. 2	Staff PD-No Students
Dec. 12	3rd 6 week interim assessment
Dec. 16	Staff Data Day-No Students
Dec. 19	3rd 6 week progress reports
Dec. 23-31	Winter Recess-No School

JANUARY	
Jan. 1	Winter Recess-No School
Jan. 3	Staff PD-No Students
Jan. 20	MLK Jr. Day-No School

FEBRUARY	
Feb. 3	3rd Trimester Begins
Feb. 6	2nd Trimester report sent home
Feb. 17	Presidents' Day-No School
Feb. 27	4th 6 week interim assessment

MARCH	
Mar. 3	Data Day-No Students
Mar. 6	4th 6 week progress reports
Mar. 10-14	Spring Break - No school
Mar. 31	Cesar Chavez Day-No School

APRIL	
Apr. 10	5th 6 week interim assessment
Apr. 14	Data Day-No Students
Apr. 17	5th 6 week progress reports
Apr. 29	Parent Orientation

MAY	
May 13-16	Nationally Normed ELA/Math Assessments (End-of-year)
May 20-22	Parent/Teacher Conferences
May 26	Memorial Day - No School
May 30	Last Day of School for Students

JUNE	
Jun. 2-4	Staff PD-No Students
Jun. 5	3rd Trimester report sent home
Jun. 9-30	Summer Vacation - No School