A.4 School Calendar and Weekly Schedule
The French American Academy of Arizona

Our school calendar is based on 4 days of instruction for students from Monday through Thursday. Friday is Teacher Planning Day. Friday is an optional day for students wishing to participate in clubs, tutoring or Kids Club (general child care). The school day for all students begins at 8:00am and concludes at 4:00pm allowing 24.33 (repeating) hours of instruction per week for 37 weeks. This schedule allows for 149 school days with a total of 900.33 (repeating) hours of instruction, exceeding the requirements set forth in A.R.S. §15-341.01 and A.R.S. §15-901. Further details and explanation follow.

Teacher Planning Day
Full-time staff and teachers will work on Fridays each week but will not be expected to teach classes. This day represents dedicated time for the teacher to complete instructional preparation and planning, receive professional development, and prepare for the following week.

For staff, Friday is the day for:

- Teacher planning time: General preparation/administration time for setting up lesson plans, preparing accompanying documents and instructional aids, entering evaluation/assessment data, running reports, etc.
- Staff meetings: General information for staff on the events of the year, strategic planning/development, discussion of reports, curriculum review, remediation lists, etc.
- Professional development: training for teachers and other staff, webinars, etc.
- Parent-Teacher meetings: Traditional parent-teacher conferences to discuss student progress, meetings with parents of children to communicate remediation strategies and discuss tutoring.

Student Club Day
Friday is a day of choice for parents and students. Students are not required to attend school on this day, but we will offer a slate of programs for those who have a need to or wish to attend on this day.

Student options include:

- General Kids' Club: General child care for students. A room is provided for this purpose with staff to supervise and occupy the children with crafts, games, themed corners (e.g., pretend play), books, and outdoor recreation. This club is akin to Before and After care and is not intended to be an instructional time. Students may attend tutoring or elect to participate in Special Interest Clubs or study support throughout the day in addition to attending this general child care.
- Tutoring: For students who need additional help recommended by their teachers to reinforce learning gaps.

- Études (Studies): French-language assistance to help students who need a French-language teacher to review poems, review lessons (grammar, conjugation, vocabulary, spelling), projects, or reading for students who do not have French-speaking family or caregiver(s) at home.
- Study Hall: To help students who need an English-language teacher to review poems, review lessons, projects, or reading.
- Special Interest Clubs: Extra-curricular enrichment programs. Chess, art, music, choir, theater, percussion, gymnastics, and basketball have proven successful at our current school and are anticipated being offered at the new Academy. Additional options such as yoga, cooking, reading, and science are being considered based on parent and student feedback and interest.
- External speakers (magician, themed characters, petting zoo, etc.) proposed and/or funded by a potential future Parent-Teacher Organization.

A) Clearly demonstrate compliance with hours/minutes of instruction for each grade level served for the proposed school calendar.

The academic rigor of the French American Academy of Arizona's dual language immersion program of instruction requires more hours of instruction per year than the minimum required by Arizona Revised Statute 15-901 to allow students to successfully progress concurrently through core academic areas in both French and English. The Academy's 149-day schedule complies with A.R.S § 15-901 with an instructional amount of 888 hours per year for Kindergarten and 900.33 hours per year for first through fifth grade. This represents an increase in the required number of hours per year by 532 hours for Kindergarten, 188 hours for grades 1, 2, and 3, and 10 hours for grades 4 and 5.

Hours of instruction by grade level per year

Grade	State of Arizona Requirement	FrenchAm Instructional Hours	Increase Over Requirement	In Compliance
K	356	888	532	Yes
1	712	900*	188	Yes
2	712	900*	188	Yes
3	712	900*	188	Yes
4	890	900*	10	Yes
5	890	900*	10	Yes

**Actual Instructional hours are 900.33 (repeating)*

Hours of instruction by subject for Kindergarten

French American Academy Kindergarten		
Subject	Instructional hours per week	Instructional hours per year
English language arts	8.00 / 480 minutes	296 hours / 17,760
French language arts	8.00 / 480 minutes	296 hours / 17,760 minutes
Mathematics	2.50 / 150 minutes	92.5 / 5550 minutes
Social Studies	1.00 / 60 minutes	37 / 2220 minutes
Science	1.00 / 60 minutes	37 / 2220 minutes
Music	1.00 / 60 minutes	37 / 2220 minutes
Art	1.00 / 60 minutes	37 / 2220 minutes
PE	.50 / 30 minutes	18.5 / 1110 minutes
Computers	.50 / 30 minutes	18.5 / 1110 minutes
Character/Civics	.50 / 30 minutes	18.5 / 1110 minutes
	24 hours per week	888 hours/53,280 minutes per year

Minutes of instruction by subject by grade level per week/year

French American Academy Grades 1 and 2		
Subject	Instructional Minutes per week	Instructional minutes per year
English language arts	365 minutes	13,505 minutes
French language arts	370 minutes	13,690 minutes
Mathematics	240 minutes	8880 minutes
Social Studies	120 minutes	4440 minutes
Sciences	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Music	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Art	60 minutes	2220 minutes
PE	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Computers	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Character/Civics	65 minutes	2405 minutes
	1460 minutes per week	54,020 minutes per year

French American Academy Grades 3 and 4		
Subject	Instructional Minutes per week	Instructional minutes per year
English language arts	365 minutes	13,505 minutes
French language arts	365 minutes	13,505 minutes
Mathematics	240 minutes	8880 minutes
Social Studies	120 minutes	4440 minutes
Sciences	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Music	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Art	65 minutes	2405 minutes
PE	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Computers	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Character/Civics	65 minutes	2405 minutes
	1460 minutes per week	54,020 minutes per year

French American Academy Grade 5		
Subject	Instructional Minutes per week	Instructional minutes per year
English language arts	365 minutes	13,505 minutes
French language arts	365 minutes	13,505 minutes
Mathematics	240 minutes	8880 minutes
Social Studies	120 minutes	4440 minutes
Sciences	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Music	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Art	60 minutes	2220 minutes
PE	65 minutes	2405 minutes
Computers	60 minutes	2220 minutes
Character/Civics	65 minutes	2405 minutes
	1460 minutes per week	54,020 minutes per year

The total instructional hours per week for grades 1 through 5 is 24.33 (repeating) which equates to a total of 900.33 (repeating) hours per year over 37 weeks of instruction. In addition to instructional minutes, students in grades 1 through 5 receive 115 minutes per day for lunch and recess, which equates to a total of 460 minutes per week, and 17,020 minutes per year. The Academy is firm in its belief that recess is a critical

component of a positive learning experience in alignment with research and professional opinion that supports this claim[1].

B) Provide a rationale for the selected weekly schedule that clearly supports pupil achievement in target population.

The Academy's 4-day, 8am to 4pm schedule alternating between English and French instruction was selected for several reasons:

Increased hours of instruction

As stated at the beginning of this section, the dual-language immersion program the Academy offers requires more hours of instruction per year than the minimum required by ARS §15-901 in order to allow students to successfully progress through all core academic areas in both French and English concurrently. This is especially crucial at the Kindergarten and early Elementary grade levels as those years are when the foundations of the languages are being acquired.

Time for recess

A longer school day provides ample time for the successful implementation of our program of instruction while allowing students to have three periods of recess every day, a key component in supporting behavior required for concentration. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in its policy statement, "The Crucial Role of Recess in School," acknowledges the importance of allowing students in elementary education to have dedicated recess time and outlines several benefits of frequent recess breaks, including:

- Cognitive/Academic Benefits: children are more attentive and productive following recess indoors or outdoors, regardless of whether the recess time included structured or unstructured activity
- Social and Emotional Benefits: children learn valuable communication skills, including negotiation, cooperation, sharing, and problem solving as well as coping skills, such as perseverance and self-control
- Physical Benefits: children receive the opportunity to be active in the mode of their choosing and to practice movement and motor skills while experiencing free activity[2]

The dual language immersion program of instruction offered at FrenchAm Academy is challenging; allowing frequent breaks for recess supports classroom learning which in turn helps improve pupil achievement. The school's

[1] "The Crucial Role of Recess in School", American Academy of Pediatrics, January, 2013, vol. 131, Issue 1; http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/1/183

[2] Ibid

educational philosophy of "Learning for Life" encompasses social skills such as learning communication and coping skills, as well as resilience and self-control, skills learned through the structured and unstructured play and social activities students engage in during recess.

Long blocks of time for teaching and assessment

In addition to the benefits offered by recess, a continuous block of time for each subject allows teachers time to explore lessons in greater depth, provides more opportunities for guided practice, and provides sufficient time for more thorough assessments, a key component to dual language learning. This additional guided practice and continual assessment is vital to measuring and supporting student success in a challenging academic environment in which the student is progressing in two languages. A longer school day supports students in our target population in successfully progressing through our dual language immersion program of instruction.

Dedicated time for tutoring

Having a 5th "free" day each week gives students the possibility to receive tutoring with qualified educational staff on an as-needed basis per remediation that does not detract from time spent in the classroom as a group. It allows for students for whom Layer 2 remediation is insufficient who require tutoring to have their needs met in a smaller group environment or even one-on-one without detracting from class time or additionally removing the student from the classroom.

French Language Reinforcement

For students in non-Francophone households, they can receive an additional day of exposure to French language and the opportunity for enrichment through a variety of activities with their peers and French-speaking staff. This additional reinforcement helps support student achievement in acquisition of the second language central to their academic success at FrenchAm Academy.

Dedicated time for teacher administrative tasks and professional development

Friday for teachers is Teacher Planning Day. This is the day for teachers to review the curriculum map, review or develop lesson plans and materials, gather supplemental materials to improve student performance, and generally plan for successful learning outcomes the following week. This day is also the teacher's time to attend to the administrative tasks they must complete in order to track student progress as outlined in Section A.5, Academic Systems Plan. Teachers use this day to prepare reports, assess student progress, develop remediation lists, etc., and to communicate with parents regarding students when necessary.

Teacher Planning Day is also when weekly language team and Combined Teacher Meetings happen. This allows teachers an opportunity for consistent peer

communication to address remediation or general student achievement. During the weekly Combined Teacher Meeting a minimum of 60 minutes is dedicated to professional development per the Professional Development Calendar.

Feedback from current teachers indicates having a dedicated day to plan, perform administrative tasks, have meetings, and receive professional development would be greatly beneficial in improving teacher performance and therefore the chances of improved pupil achievement, in improving job satisfaction, and in becoming a recruiting opportunity for additional staff in the future as the Academy grows.

Elimination of homework

One goal of having 6 hours of instruction per day is to allow almost all coursework to be completed at school, eliminating the need for homework except in cases of poor academic performance which would require additional reinforcement. This allows the child to enjoy leisure activities in the evening or on the weekend and helps reduce the parent-child stress of nightly homework completion.

Alignment with French standard

This schedule is a very close compromise with the schedule established by the French National Ministry of Education. Students in France attend school from 8:30 to 4:30pm, 4 days/week, with a half-day on Saturday to compensate for a 2-hour lunch break each day of instruction. This schedule has been proven to be effective with regard to the basic number of instructional hours per day and the 4-day week[3]. This schedule has been in use with slight variation for all French schools since 1882.

Breakdown of time spent in each language:

Kindergarten

Beginning Year One, the Academy will have a minimum of two classes of Kindergarten.

The Beginning French Kindergarten class will have two hours of English language instruction per day (33% of the day) focused on learning to read and building early reader skills per A.R.S. §15-704. The Kindergarten English teacher will deliver instruction in English during this time. This is the only time of the day during which the class will hear or speak English. The rest of the time (66% of the day, including lunch and recess periods) instruction will be delivered and the class will be conducted entirely in French. This level of immersion enables students without prior knowledge of French to grasp basic French comprehension and progress to a level of mastery sufficient to integrate with Francophone students in first grade the following year.

[3] About-France: Primary and Secondary Schools in France: from “Maternelle” to “Lycee”.

The Advanced French Kindergarten class(es) will have the same 66% French – 33% English ratio, with two hours of English per day focused on learning to read and building early reader skills per A.R.S. §15-704. The remaining 66% of the day, including lunch and recess periods, instruction will be delivered and the class will be conducted entirely in French at a level fitting Francophone students of this age and development.

Elementary Grades

From first through fifth grade, students receive weekly instruction 50% in French and 50% in English. The students will have an entire day taught in each language, two days each per week. Experience the past seven years has shown that this 50% - 50% dual language immersion schedule allows students to successfully master the required standards and knowledge to receive superior (A and B) report card grades, to receive superior (above average) scores on end-of-year standardized testing, and to promote to the next grade. The FrenchAm Academy will follow this schedule and program to support pupil achievement in the target population.

C) Identify professional development opportunities consistent with the information provided in Area IV of the Academic Systems Plan.

When the Professional Development Calendar is created, three days are reserved for teacher training and professional development during the week before students return to classes. The CEO and CAO will select and/or create professional development to be delivered during these three days of staff training. Topics chosen will be aligned to the needs of teachers or staff specific to:

- Serving the needs of the target population
- Serving the needs of student subgroups identified to be in the incoming classes
- Effectively delivering the program of instruction
- Supporting the educational philosophy of Learning for Life
- General staff preparedness, e.g., CPR and First Aid training

In addition to these days of training, staff will receive a minimum of 60 minutes of professional development during the weekly Combined Teacher Meeting on Teacher Planning Day. The CEO will prepare a list of professional development topics for the month based on needs identified during the summer and on feedback and data collected from teachers during weekly Teacher Planning Day team meetings. Final decision of topics to be included and selection of individual(s) or organizations delivering the professional development rests with the CEO. The selected professional development topics will be published on the Professional Development Calendar or a calendar of topics by month. The CEO will consider input from the CAO and Lead Teacher in selecting topics and Administrative staff may participate in all professional development offered

At the end of the academic year on the Final Teacher Planning Day, a full day of assessment of the yearly progress of all students is held to establish benchmarks for the following year. During this time, assessments of student achievement in core academic areas are organized. Teachers share this benchmark information with the next year's instructors so they may know future necessary knowledge acquisition, and look for themes that may have emerged which could influence curriculum and/or instruction the following academic year.