



Arizona Charter Schools Program
Arizona Department of Education

Mission: AZ Charter School Program Ensures High-Quality Educational Choices by
Selecting, Monitoring, and Assisting Transformative Leaders

Arizona Charter Schools Program Start-up Grant Project Years 2024-28 Subgrantee* Site -Based Application

** In compliance with Uniform Guidance 2 CFR §200.330, AZCSP awardees have been determined to be subrecipients of CFDA 84.282 A awarded to the Arizona Department of Education, Charter Schools Program, October 1, 2018. Subrecipients will also be known as non-federal entities.*

Purpose

Arizona Charter Schools Program is to, from the amount available (ESEA §4302(b)(3)), support the startup of new charter schools, the replication of high-quality charter schools, and the expansion of high-quality charter schools on a competitive basis (ESEA §4303 (b) (1)).

Eligibility

The applicant must apply for the startup subgrant to obtain assistance in planning, program design, and the initial implementation of its charter schools. The entity applying for this grant must be a Not for Profit organization registered and in good standing with the Arizona Corporation Commission at the time of the application submission.

Applicants can apply in 202 if they meet the following conditions:

1. the applicant has already submitted its charter application to the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) by June 2022 or,
2. the applicant must have an ASBCS approved replication application approved by December 13, 2022, or,
3. the applicant must have an ASBCS approved expansion application approved by December 13, 2022.
4. New Arizona State University (ASU) sponsored charter schools must also be approved by December 13, 2022.

Before the non-profit organization can receive the AZCSP application, it must complete and submit the Arizona Charter Schools Program Grant Eligibility Form and the applicant Registration Form. Both forms are available at the AZCSP website: <http://www.azed.gov/charter-school-program/>.

Notice

1. The charter school must meet the federal definition of a charter school found in ESEA §4310(2).
CHARTER SCHOOL —The term “charter school” means a public school that—
 - a. in accordance with a specific State statute authorizing the granting of charters to schools, is exempt from significant State or local rules that inhibit the flexible operation and management of public schools, but not from any rules relating to the other requirements of this paragraph;
 - b. is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
 - c. operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school’s developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
 - d. provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
 - e. is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
 - f. does not charge tuition;
 - g. complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) (commonly referred to as the “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974”), and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - h. is a school to which parents choose to send their children, and that—
 - i. admits students on the basis of a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A), if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated; or
 - ii. in the case of a school that has an affiliated charter school (such as a school that is part of the same network of schools), automatically enrolls students who are enrolled in the immediate prior grade level of the affiliated charter school and, for any additional student openings or student openings created through regular attrition in student enrollment in the affiliated charter school and the enrolling school, admits students on the basis of a lottery as described in clause (i);
 - i. agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State, unless such State audit requirements are waived by the State;
 - j. meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements;
 - k. operates in accordance with State law;
 - l. has a written performance contract with the authorized public chartering agency in the State that includes a description of how student performance will be measured in charter schools pursuant to State assessments that are required of other schools and pursuant to any other assessments mutually agreeable to the authorized public chartering agency and the charter school.
2. The proposed school shall meet one of the following definitions of educationally disadvantaged:
 - a. A school serving at least 40% racially and ethnically diverse students; or
 - b. A school serving at least 40% economically disadvantaged students eligible for federal lunch program support; or
 - c. A school serving at least 40% students with disabilities; or
 - d. A school serving at least 40% English Language Learners (ELL).Select one of the four categories on page 3 of the accompanying AZCSP Eligibility Form.

3. To receive a replication or expansion subgrant, the applicant must demonstrate that it is a high quality charter school as per ESEA §4310 (8).

HIGH-QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOL. —The term “high-quality charter school” means a charter school that—

- a. shows evidence of strong academic results, which may include strong student academic growth, as determined by a State;
- b. has no significant issues in the areas of student safety, financial and operational management, or statutory or regulatory compliance;
- c. has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for all students served by the charter school; and
- d. has demonstrated success in increasing student academic achievement, including graduation rates where applicable, for each of the subgroups of students, as defined in section 1111(c)(2), except that such demonstration is not required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.

The mission statement of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (“Board”) is: “To improve public education in Arizona by sponsoring charter schools that provide quality educational choices.” In the fall of 2006, the Board approved an application process for the replication of existing high-quality charter schools. Thus, AZCSP adopts the Board’s replication eligibility criteria to define “High-Quality Charter School” that meets all criteria described below.

Academic Performance Criteria

An academic dashboard for each school operated by the charter holder is available through the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) online system.

The academic framework includes two indicators. Schools are evaluated by one of the following indicators:

1. *State Accountability: State Accountability is the default indicator used to evaluate the academic performance of all charter schools sponsored by the Board. This indicator includes two measures:*
 - *The letter grade of each school operated by the charter holder as assigned through Arizona’s A–F Letter Grade Accountability System, and*
 - *State designations for school improvement.*
2. *School-Specific Academic Goals: A charter holder that operates a school that serves a special population that does not have an achievement profile established by the State Board of Education for state accountability pursuant to A.R.S. § 15-241(I) may petition the Board to adopt unique, school-specific academic performance standards. Only charter schools that have been approved by the Board to use the substitute indicator of school-specific academic goals will be evaluated under this indicator.*

Free Standing Charter School

- *A minimum Overall Rating of “Above Standard” on the academic dashboard in each of the last two years when data are available that includes the grade levels operated.*

Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Network Schools

- 75 percent or more of the schools operated by the charter holder must have a minimum Overall Rating of “Meets Standard” in the most recent fiscal year presented on each school’s academic dashboard.
- If the Board determines that one or more certain Associated Schools are excluded for academic purposes, then 100 percent of the remaining Associated Schools must have a minimum Overall Rating of “Meets Standard”.

Financial Performance Criteria

A financial dashboard for the charter holder is available through ASBCS online system.

Free Standing Charter School

The charter holder has no measure rated “Falls Far Below Standard” for the most recent fiscal year presented on the charter holder’s dashboard.

Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Network Schools

75 percent or more of all Associated Charters have no measure rated “Falls Far Below Standard” for the most recent fiscal year presented on the Associated Charters’ dashboards. If one or more Associated Charters are excluded for financial performance purposes, then 100 percent of the remaining Associated Charters must have no measure rated “Falls Far Below Standard” for the most recent fiscal year presented on the Associated Charters’ dashboards.

Operational Performance Criteria

An operational dashboard for the charter holder is available through ASBCS online system.

Free Standing Charter School

The charter holder meets the operational performance standard for the most recent completed fiscal year and the current evaluated year.

Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Network Schools

75 percent or more of its Associated Charters meets the operational performance standard for the most recently completed fiscal year and the current evaluated year.

Compliance Criteria

The charter holder and its Associated Charters must be in compliance with its charter, other contractual agreements with the Board, and all applicable federal and state laws as evidenced by Compliance Checks Policy Statement conducted by the Board.

4. A subgrant may be no more than 5 years of which no more than 18 months can be used for planning and program design. ESEA §4303(d)(1)(B) & 4303(h)(1)(B).
5. AZCSP encourages applicants to propose academic programs and instructional practices that work for all students including serving students in rural communities.

6. Allowable costs are described in the Budget Narrative Section G. Instructions for describing Planning and Implementation activities are in the Budget Narrative Section G.

Application Evaluation

The AZCSP grant is aligned with the US Department of Education Charter Schools Program Priorities and the submitted application will be scored in light of these priorities. All applicants will be subject to review of previous state and federal education performance. *2 CFR §200.205 (1)* The Evaluation Criteria are provided to assist in meeting the expectations of the application. It is not the application.

Application Submission

In preparing the application for submission, use 12-point Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri font, double line spacing, and 1-inch margins. Tables may be in an 11-point font.

Submit in pdf format to AZCharterSchoolProgram@azed.gov

Application deadline is **October 11, 2022, 11:59 PM (MST)**

Capacity interview will be held during the week of November 14, 2022.

Application Assistance

In-person application assistance is available in public trainings provided by AZCSP staff. Locations and dates are posted on the AZCSP webpage: <http://www.azed.gov/charter-school-program/>. Important written information regarding the application, its policies and procedures are also located on the AZCSP web page. AZCSP recommends applicants to attend the public training opportunities and to use the resources provided.

Note: Select highlighted boxes [] to insert your responses.

AZCSP 2024-28 Application

- The term *District* in Grants Management Funding Applications refers to the charter LEA.
- The following application is a Site-based Application.
 - Sections A – D are *District* level questions. All questions regarding governance refer to the District.
 - Sections E – G are *School-site* level questions.
- All questions in this application must be answered.

District questions:

A. ESEA Part C 4303 Compliance – Total Points Possible: 10 points *(It is recommended that applicants review the following citations from ESEA Title IV, Part C Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools. Failure to address them accurately and completely will disqualify the application from consideration. Links to ESEA Title IV, Part C, 4301 et. al, CSP Nonregulatory Guidance, and Office of Management & Budget Uniform Guidance can be found at the AZCSP Website.)*

Scoring Section

1. A description of how school governance is prepared to continue to operate once the subgrant funds are no longer available. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(vi)(II)*

[A priority for Desert Sage School (DSS) regarding using CSP Grant funds is to provide our school leaders, teachers, and parents/guardians with quality and relevant professional development and support. The lasting effects of the pandemic are still prevalent, resulting in the need for additional student support in academics as well as their social and emotional (SE) skills and well-being. By providing high-quality Waldorf and SE-informed training, DSS school leaders and teachers will continue to meet DSS's mission and gain the mentoring, guidance, and skills needed to continue as an informed support system for students and their families.

When subgrant funds are no longer available, DSS will continue to operate by:

State Equalization Funds. A conservative budget will be created by DSS based on enrollment forecasts. Enrollment will determine hiring, so a large annual surplus will increase the staff, educational resources, and supports needed to continue operating after the CSP grant funds have run out.

To ensure increased enrollment, DSS is prepared to launch a strong marketing and outreach plan to ensure DSS's enrollment continues to grow. The strategic plan highlights and celebrates the benefits of being a public Waldorf school, a cell phone-free environment, and the successes DSS has had with improving student academic skills, their SE learning, and building a strong community both on and off campus.

DSS will also be amending the school's name to Desert Sage High School to ensure the community immediately knows and understands the population of students DSS serves.

DSS will also remain in good standing and in compliance with the Arizona Corporation Commission, Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, and the Arizona Department of Education to ensure full access to state equalization funds.

State, Federal, and Private Grants. DSS and its School Governing Board will continue to pursue federal, state, and private grants to ensure the school's long-term budget projections and monthly cash flow are sustainable and meet students' needs, the school's mission, and support the ongoing development of our Public Waldorf program of instruction.

Budget Monitoring. DSS has contracted with Aspire Business Consultants, a firm that provides compliance and financial management services to Arizona charter schools. We are also working with Dynamic Duo, a firm that provides bookkeeping and general accounting services. These professional services, along with our in-house Administrative Director and Board Treasurer will ensure that the School’s annual budgets, cash flow, audits, forecasts, and funding management are conservative, sustainable, and effectively maintained. With this combined expertise, experience and guidance, DSS will be able to remain a fiscally responsible and sustainable organization.

Fundraising. DSS's Governing Board (the Board) raised over \$1,000,000 in contributions and pledges during the school's planning period. The Board will continue fundraising to support additional financial needs to ensure a sustainable budget and program. Support funds will include and not be limited to bridging opportunity gaps for student involvement, which supports student retention, social well-being and DSS’s mission.

Nonprofit Partnerships. DSS is committed to engaging with other nonprofit organizations that provide schools with volunteer services to support their programs and curriculum due to Grant awards the nonprofits receive. Partnering with these organizations will ensure DSS continues to deliver quality experiences while cultivating community relationships, and maintaining a sustainable budget.]

2. A description of how the eligible applicant will support recruitment and enrollment practices to promote inclusion of all students, including by eliminating any barriers to enrollment for educationally disadvantaged students including foster youth and unaccompanied homeless

youth. **(2 points)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(viii)(I)*

Demographics. In alignment with our mission, Desert Sage School (DSS) is committed to the critical work of diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-bias education, and social justice. We honor, celebrate, and welcome students, families, faculty, and staff of all races, ethnicities, and countries of origin, all cultural, religious, and political affiliations, all socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, and other articulations of human identity.

Tucson is a diverse city and home to a population of approximately 545,340 people.

Approximately 14.6% of Tucson residents were born outside of the United States, over 100 languages are spoken, 44.2% of the population identifies as Hispanic, and 22 Indigenous tribes are represented. Further, two Indigenous Reservations, located just southwest of Tucson, are adjacent to Tucson: the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O’odham Nation.

Currently, in our first year of operation, we have enrolled 26 students. Our student population, while small, has remained stable. Of our current 26 enrolled students, the racial breakdown is:

- 46% White Non-Hispanic
- 35% Hispanic
- 8% Black
- 7% Multiracial
- 4% Native American

Of the School’s current student population, an average of 73% qualify for free or reduced lunch, according to the Title I information collected at the time of registration. While our current student population is small, our racial and ethnic diversity generally reflects the overall

demographics of our community. Economically, our student population is, proportionally, more disadvantaged.

Enrollment Targets. As we aim to provide transportation from the south and southwest areas of the Tucson metropolitan area, we wish to increase the percentage of Hispanic and Native American students, which should comprise at least 50% of our student population in future years. Further, we will collaborate with Youth on Their Own, a nonprofit that serves homeless teens in Tucson with the aim of increasing their graduation rates.

Enrollment Policies. Our admission and enrollment policies and procedures aim to ensure that educationally disadvantaged students and their families are not discouraged from seeking admission and enrollment. To ensure fair and equitable enrollment procedures, DSS will enroll all eligible students who submit a timely application, unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building as required by ARS§15-184, in which case the school will use a lottery process. DSS will not discriminate against any student, parent, family, or community member on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, academic performance, language ability, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or special education requirement, in compliance with all federal, state, and district guidance/laws.

Our nondiscrimination policy shall always be prominently posted on the enrollment section of our website as well as on our primary marketing brochure. Our board-adopted nondiscrimination policy reads as follows:

Desert Sage School fosters a climate of purposeful inclusion, where all feel safe, valued, cared for, and given an opportunity to form meaningful

connections. Desert Sage School cherishes the diversity of humanity. It is in this spirit that Desert Sage School affirms its ethical and legal commitment to a policy of equal opportunity and nondiscrimination.

Desert Sage School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), national and ethnic origin (ancestry), sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, political affiliation, and age to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the School, including in admission and enrollment. Desert Sage School abides by the procedures mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and will provide eligible students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE), including following Section 504 plans and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Recruitment Practices. Our outreach and marketing plan is broad and multi-faceted, which is designed to support our intent to enroll students who reflect the diversity of the greater Tucson metropolitan area. As 44% of Tucson’s population identifies as Hispanic and approximately 28% of households in Tucson speak Spanish, we recognize that Spanish-language marketing is essential and must be incorporated into our approach to recruitment; this practice will support our aim of promoting inclusion and eliminating barriers to enrollment. Having a Spanish-speaking person available to engage in conversations with prospective students and their families about our school will support our effort to enroll students from Spanish-speaking households.

Paper Publications. A marketing brochure will be developed that articulates the benefits of Public Waldorf Education, encourages families to visit our website and learn more about our program. This marketing brochure will be printed and available in English and Spanish; this brochure will include our nondiscrimination policy, which affirms our commitment to serving

educationally disadvantaged students. Other print publications include postcards to invite families to information sessions and posters that can be posted on bulletin boards across the city, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods.

Direct Mail Campaigns. We will purchase a mailing list that includes families with the appropriate age range. We will send mailings to families within ZIP Codes that are within a five-mile radius of the School. Further, we will include ZIP Codes that are further than five miles and are in the south and southwest parts of the greater Tucson metropolitan area; this effort will target areas that are predominantly Hispanic and Native American, which will include families who reside on the two Native American Reservations: the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O’odham Nation. The direct mail campaigns will inform families of our school, drive them to visit our website, invite them to attend an informational session, and encourage them to enroll. We currently hold a nonprofit mailing permit, reducing the cost of direct mail.

Information Sessions. As Public Waldorf Education is unfamiliar to most families, it is important to hold information sessions to help parents understand the benefits of this approach to education. Information sessions are meant to be informative and to encourage families to enroll their children. Information sessions will be held on our campus and virtually over Zoom.

Middle School Visits. We will contact charter middle schools, particularly those who serve students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, and ask that we be allowed to present our school directly to students. While the public middle schools in the Tucson Unified School District may not allow us to present information to students, there are many public charter

schools that serve educationally disadvantaged populations that serve students through 8th grade. Some charter middle schools hold high school information nights whereby charter high schools may present their programs to their students and parents. Developing strong feeder-school relationships will be key to sustaining our enrollment in the long term.

Community Events and Bulletin Boards. There are several community events that will allow us to set up a marketing booth, which include Festival of Books, Cyclovia, School and Camp Fair, and the Heirloom Farmers Market. Further, we will create a marketing poster in English and Spanish and post them on community bulletin boards throughout the community, particularly in the south and southwest areas of Tucson, including the two Native American reservations.

Electronic Media. The enrollment page of our website shall be clear, simple, and enable prospective students and their families to enroll. Further, social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram will be maintained with anecdotal stories about our program to generate interest and build brand awareness.

Radio, Television, and Newspaper. Periodic press releases will be sent to the local media to encourage them to share our stories and possibly interview members of our board, administration, and/or teaching staff.

Community Based Organizations. We will work to cultivate relationships with various community organizations that specifically serve educationally disadvantaged students, particularly organizations that serve children in foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth.

Such organizations include Youth On Their Own (a nonprofit that serves homeless youth), nonprofits that serve foster children, and tribal education centers.

Shadowing. Prospective students who are in the 8th grade or older will be allowed to shadow a current student for a day. This program is available on a space-available basis and arrangements must be made in advance. Having student ambassadors will aid in cultivating connections with prospective students and encouraging them to enroll.

Transportation. Section 7 describes our transportation needs. As transportation poses a barrier for attendance for economically disadvantaged students, we will use grant funds to purchase school buses and/or vans to transport students to and from school. Our highest priority will be to provide transportation for students from the southern neighborhoods and the Native American Reservations, which are areas that are predominantly Hispanic and Native American. Highlighting transportation in our marketing to these neighborhoods will help to eliminate a barrier to enrollment of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.

Enrollment Calendar. The open enrollment period will take place between November 1 and February 1 each year for the following academic year. The open enrollment period may change in future years. If, at the end of the open enrollment period the number of applications received are *fewer* than the number of seats available for a particular grade, all applications for that grade shall be offered enrollment. The open enrollment period will be extended until enrollment has reached full capacity for each grade level. Once full capacity has been reached for each grade level, an ordered waitlist will be established on a first-in-time basis, determined by the date and time each application is received.

If, at the end of the open enrollment period the number of applications received *exceeds* the number of seats available for a particular grade, students will be selected for enrollment through a random lottery. The lottery process will also generate an ordered waitlist for the students not selected for enrollment. The lottery will take place and parents or legal guardians will be notified of the results within five (5) business days after the end of the enrollment period. Applications received after the open enrollment period will be added to the waitlist on a first-in-time basis, determined by the date and time each application is received.

To promote inclusion and to remove barriers for educationally disadvantaged students, enrollment preference shall be given to: children who are in foster care and children who meet the definition of unaccompanied youth prescribed in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Additionally, the School will also give enrollment preference to siblings of students who are already enrolled, children or legal wards of employees or governing board members of the school. These populations will be excluded from the lottery process.

Enrolled students will not be required to re-apply; they will be able to continue their education at DSS. While parents of current students may be asked to affirm their intent to re-enroll, enrolled students will not be denied the opportunity to continue their education.

Enrollment Process. To apply for enrollment, parents and legal guardians ordinarily complete the application online at the School's website. A parent or legal guardian may also apply in-person at the school or apply over the telephone. The application only collects basic information, such as the student's legal name, address, and the parent(s)' contact information. The application is the only document required to apply for enrollment. Once the family has been notified of the student's offer of enrollment, the parent or legal guardian must submit the following documents within ten (10) business days to reserve a seat in the incoming class:

Proof of the student' age and identity, proof of Arizona residency, and a military identifier form. Immunization records (or exemption form) and a home language survey do not need to be received to secure enrollment, but these documents must be received prior to attendance.]

3. A description of how the eligible applicant will support all students once they are enrolled to promote retention and reduce the overuse of discipline practices. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(viii)(II)*

[Student Retention

Dropping out of school happens at a single point in time, but it shouldn't be viewed as a sudden event; rather, dropping out is typically the final stage in a long process of disengagement from school. While there are sometimes sudden life events that precede dropping out, which schools have little control over, disengagement is an area where we can have high impact. The disengagement that precedes dropping out can be social and/or academic. Desert Sage School works on both of these aspects to promote retention. Tucson's dropout rate is 15% and many of our students are at high-risk for dropping out.

Socially, we **prioritize relationships in all aspects** of the school. An administrator is always at the front door to greet all students as they enter the building, as well as to make connections with any parents who are doing drop off, and all teachers begin class with a personal acknowledgement of each pupil. We have a **cell phone locker** at our front door, and ten minutes before classes start, all students put their cell phones away for the day. Without cell phones, we have observed that students become more invested in the relationships they have *in* the building– with each other, with their teachers, and with their studies. Our students meet once a week in an **advisory group**, a small group of students (5-12) and one advisor, with whom they will remain throughout all four years of high school. The advisory class is a place to

form relationships and receive social-emotional support and education. The advisor acts as a mentor, coach, and advocate for all students in his or her advisory. When designing **curriculum** and choosing instructional **methods**, teachers consider relationships and purposefully build in opportunities for students to connect with the teacher and with each other. Our program of instruction is very **hands-on and experiential**, which also provides a lot of opportunities for students to connect via shared experiences. On the second day of school this year, we took all of our students to the top of Mount Lemmon, where they created nature-based art projects, shared lunch, and hiked together. At the end of that day, one student said, “This school has done more for me in two days than any other school has ever done for me in my life.” This particular student’s older brother had dropped out of high school a few years earlier. We also have a **robust after-school club program**, which currently includes rock climbing, Dungeons and Dragons, beading, knitting, study hour, and animal husbandry. Clubs are very popular, and the majority of our students arrive at least half an hour before school and stay until we close the doors. We have received several comments from students like, “Normally I don’t talk at school, but I already have so many friends here.” Our **discipline system** is also focused on restoring relationships rather than on punishments and rewards.

Academically, we have several processes in place to improve retention. First, we **focus on literacy**. A certified Reading Specialist tests all incoming students’ reading levels using a quick word recognition survey test. As part of this test she also interviews each student, inquiring about current feelings about reading, prior struggles and any help received, and any issues the student would like to self-report. Any student scoring two or more levels below grade, or who self-reports issues with comprehension or “hating” reading, etc., receives further, more in-depth follow up testing. This testing is done within the first month of school. We use this test, in

addition to state and benchmark testing, to assess students because by the time students reach high school, standardized tests designed for their grade level often fail to identify a root cause of low literacy, and may falsely indicate issues that don't actually exist. For instance, a report may indicate that a student struggles with "summarizing," even though they have this skill – they just can't read the passage. We also administer a similar test in mathematics. We dedicate at least one PD per quarter to literacy data analysis and strategy building, for all teachers in all disciplines.

We have a "**Student Success Team**" which uses a multi-tiered **Response to Intervention** (RTI) approach to monitor and respond to any students who have been flagged as academically struggling via testing or by teacher surveys. This team meets once a week and examines data, shares observations, and studies transcripts and credit progress. The team also studies the latest research on dropout factors and prevention.

DSS has a **full time Special Education Director/Lead Teacher** who teaches an inclusive support class (both Special Ed and non Special Ed students), where students with IEPs receive services and all students can get help with assignments and learn remedial skills. This teacher also supports all students in core classes and regularly meets with teachers to advise them on planning and instruction.

Waldorf education, by nature, has several features which promote retention by increasing academic success. The **holistic nature of our curriculum and methods**, which appeals to the head, heart, and hands – or the *thinking, feeling, and willing* capacities of students – increases opportunities for engagement by giving students multiple opportunities and modalities to

connect to content, much like the proven principles of UDL. We promote **arts-integration** in all classes, increasing access and motivation; and in science, we use a method called the “**phenomenological method**”-- students experience phenomena and make observations *before* reading, receiving lectures, or otherwise being “taught” about a topic. Our **experiential** approach deepens empirical knowledge, develops curiosity, strengthens observation skills, builds background knowledge, and helps students connect and relate to their learning. Integrated, experiential learning benefits all students, but it has been shown to be particularly effective with Special Education and EL students, as well as those in the bottom 25% (of academic performance).

One of the most noticeable features of Waldorf education is the careful intentionality of the curriculum. All schools must align curriculum to State Standards, but our curriculum is also **developmentally, vertically and horizontally aligned**. Developmental and vertical alignment serve as a form of scaffolding and allow multiple, repeating entry points to state standards, while horizontal alignment reinforces concepts and deepens understanding.

Developmental alignment refers to age-appropriate, developmentally-attuned curriculum that attempts to both mirror and support the developmental characteristics and needs of each grade level, and it is a key component of the Waldorf educational philosophy.

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Educate the <i>powers of observation</i> through a study of <i>polarities</i> .	Educate the <i>powers of comparison and contrast</i> through a study of <i>processes</i> .	Educate the <i>powers of analysis</i> through <i>individualized study</i> .	Educate the <i>powers of synthesis</i> through <i>integration</i> of all previous learning.

As students grow from freshmen to seniors, they become increasingly capable of mastering complex cognitive functions, and move with greater ease between the categories described in the framework of Bloom's Taxonomy.⁷ Research has shown that educational programs grounded in an age-appropriate understanding of development (sometimes called Piagetian Programs), have some of the most profound effects on achievement.⁹ The developmental stages described by Waldorf founder Rudolph Steiner closely mirror those of Piaget.¹⁰ The role of the teacher in both programs is to scaffold learning by deliberately connecting the abstract to the concrete. When students have a solid foundation and understanding of the concrete, they more easily acquire skills that allow them to reach higher levels of abstract and complex thinking.¹¹

Reducing the Overuse of Discipline Practices

Our approach to discipline is restorative and focuses on **rebuilding relationships**, **developing social-emotional intelligence**, and **giving students skills** to peacefully resolve conflicts on their own.

The first tier of any effective discipline practice is **building teachers' capacity to effectively connect to students and manage classrooms**, so we dedicate approximately 25% of our Professional Development time to classroom management and trauma-informed, positive discipline education for teachers. We use protocols such as those provided by the National School Reform Facility to help teachers work through dilemmas and problem-solve, to see children differently, or to structure conversations around selected readings on the topics of trauma-informed and restorative practices, or Waldorf approaches to discipline. When teachers are highly skilled in this area, discipline incidents are radically

reduced. Teachers are able to view behavioral incidents and missteps as a reflection of the student's lack of skill, dysregulation, and need for help— rather than as insubordinate disrespect. It's somewhat unusual for high schools to dedicate this much PD time to behavior, but we feel that teachers must be highly skilled in this area in order for students to be able to receive the full benefit of our program of instruction.

The second tier of our discipline system involves **building capacity in students**. Students who misbehave are often in a state of dysregulated emotional arousal, so we teach students practical skills to help them learn to control their own feelings and behavior, so they need less outside regulation from teachers and other adults. We are in partnership with an outside contractor who focuses on mindfulness and emotional regulation to develop an SEL curriculum.

The third tier of our system is our **discipline matrix**, which clearly outlines behaviors and possible consequences.

Finally, when serious incidents do occur, rather than suspending students, we favor a **restorative process**, in which students in conflict with each other or with teachers sit down in a circle with supporting adults to get to the root of the conflict and come up with a plan of action to restore the relationship and mend any mistakes that may have been made. We are currently considering a restorative circle process that involves students and are researching several models.]

4. A description of how the eligible applicant will support the use of effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies to operate each charter school that will receive funds under AZCSP. **(2 points)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(VI)*

Desert Sage School deeply values parent, family, and community engagement as an integral element for a healthy school. We believe that the first step is to foster relationships with families, which begins with consistent contact. Every morning the Pedagogical Director stands outside and greets each student and family member during drop-off. This is the first contact strategy. It is designed to create a warm and welcome environment, and to provide families with a personal encounter each day. This opens the doors for families and lays the groundwork that fosters open communication.

Our next contact strategy is to periodically survey our families. Due to DSS's emphasis on building relationships and fostering personal connections we have experienced a high percentage of family participation in the surveys. These surveys serve to keep the school grounded in the needs of the students, and to take the pulse of the families being served.

As a new school we must not assume what the needs of the students and/or families are. To ensure that their ideas and thoughts are heard and considered, we will be forming a committee to create a plan for a parent council.

We have regular parent and family education nights planned throughout the school year. In Waldorf education, there is a deep commitment to childhood development as a foundational element to the curriculum and school culture. Parents and families can benefit immensely

from parent education evenings where various topics around childhood development are discussed.

In 11th grade, students will be participating in internships out in the community. This is an opportunity for them to sample careers they are interested in within a protected environment, and with a mentor. The program will also include feedback from the community partners, adding a layer of assessment for DSS students that will help to inform their work readiness, areas that can be improved upon, and areas in which they are thriving. Our mission includes helping students to “achieve their own unique aspirations,” which includes life skills needed for careers. The mentor internship interviews and surveys will provide data to analyze for program effectiveness and growth.

Each year we visit several middle schools, giving us the opportunity to check in with middle school staff and administration as to the ebbs and flows they are seeing with their students, and to hear the thoughts and ideas of students on their way to high school. Having an understanding of students’ desires, apprehensions, and wonderings about what lies ahead, gives DSS a way to stay current with the needs of our future population.

We are building relationships with community organizations that primarily serve educationally disadvantaged students, including Youth on Their Own, Pascua Yaqui Tribe Education Center, International Rescue Committee, Iskashitaa, and the Tohono O’odham Nation Department of Education. We actively seek out opportunities for collaboration with these and further organizations in these fields.

We also recognize that there are many ways that parents, families, and community members can be engaged that will be uncovered as the school years progress. It is an integral part of the Culture and Engagement Director's role to continue monitoring their engagement and to foster and grow further strategies through evaluation.

The three Co-Directors meet weekly during a collaborative leadership meeting that is an integral part of our organizational structure. During this meeting we utilize the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) as an operating system. EOS serves as a structure that enables the organization to be its most effective and to efficiently track, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the engagement with family and community members. Tracking data in this format allows for patterns to be observed and to illustrate clear paths of growth and areas of improvement, as well as strengths.]

5. A description of the roles and responsibilities of eligible applicants, partner organizations, and charter management organizations, including the administrative and contractual roles and responsibilities of such partners. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(I)*

[DSS is governed and overseen by the nonprofit corporation's Board of Directors, now known as the School Governing Board (the Board). As required by ARS §15-183, the Board ensures responsibility with federal, state, and local rules, regulations, and statutes relating to health, safety, civil rights, and insurance and oversight over:

- Compliance
- Financial obligations
- Academic- program of instruction
- Student assessment and outcome
- School Policy

- Operations

The Board also ensures the school's leadership and faculty carry out the vision, mission, values, core principles, and pedagogy of DSS in a manner consistent with the charter approved and authorized by the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools and the agreements made with the Arizona Department of Education and the Alliance for Public Waldorf education.

DSS's administrative leadership team (the L3 team) is unique, comprising a three (3) member team that includes a Pedagogical Director, Administrative Director, and a Culture and Engagement Director. The L3 team, derived from the Entrepreneur Operating System (EOS) model, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of DSS and strategic planning. They share the responsibility of implementing DSS's commitment to compliance, sound finance, school policies, state and federal regulations, facility management, staff and faculty management, professional development, school community, program of instruction, student monitoring, and student and family support. Details of their primary responsibilities and indicators of success include but are not limited to:

	Administrative Director	Pedagogical Director	Culture and Community Engagement Director
Primary Indicators of Success	School is in compliance Audits are passed Finances are sound School facility is physically, mentally and emotionally safe	Students are succeeding or outperform on standardized measures The achievement gap is closing Student retention and satisfaction is high The graduation rate is high	Discipline is positive Learning environment is peaceful, rhythmic, beautiful, and productive School culture is rich with celebrations, festivals, traditions, field trips, and school clubs

	Grant money is coming in Enrollment is increasing	Teacher retention and satisfaction is high	Student retention and satisfaction is high
Primary Roles	<p>Financial Management</p> <p>Compliance Management (ADE and Charter)</p> <p>Manages Contractual Services</p> <p>Manages and oversees facility</p> <p>Oversees Legal</p> <p>Manages and oversees health and safety (Fire, police, health department, property, first aid/nurse, emergency preparedness, fire drills, safety measures, etc)</p> <p>Oversees and implements community outreach, marketing, recruitment, and enrollment plan with with Culture and Community Engagement Director</p> <p>Calendar and Schedule compliance</p> <p>Manges Student Information System</p> <p>Point of contact for ADE and GME</p>	<p>Hires teachers</p> <p>Manages and oversees curriculum development with teachers – curriculum map, state standards alignment, unit plans</p> <p>Mentors and evaluates teachers, ensuring fidelity to program of instruction</p> <p>Plans and implements assessments of students, and school assessment system</p> <p>Monitors student outcomes</p> <p>Manages and implements professional development, pre and post service PD training, and the Professional Learning Community</p> <p>Supports Culture & Community Engagement Director with discipline system and training staff in classroom management</p> <p>Manages and oversees master schedule</p> <p>Devises and implements a system for credit/graduation tracking; ensures students are scheduled correctly</p>	<p>Discipline (setting up discipline system, implementing and running system, researching and implementing restorative practices)</p> <p>School culture (events, whole school meetings, field trips, parent nights, special days/weeks i.e career day, graduation)</p> <p>Manages and oversees student life, student leadership, internships, and student council</p> <p>Oversees and implements community outreach, marketing, recruitment, and enrollment plan with Administrative Director</p> <p>Manages and oversees school Nutrition Program (Lunch, Breakfast, Snack Menu & Vendor coordination)</p> <p>Manages and oversees Arts Programming, Arts and Culture Grants</p>
Oversees	<p>Finance Team</p> <p>Grants Manager</p> <p>Registrar</p>	<p>Teachers</p> <p>Reading Specialist</p> <p>ELL Coordinator</p>	<p>Guest Teachers</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Advisors</p>

	Office Manager Special Education (compliance side) School Counselor	Special Education (pedagogy side) District Test Coordinators	Wellness Coordinator Guest Speakers Student Discipline Support
Shared Roles	Budget decisions Calendar and Schedule Hiring Committee member School activities calendar Professional development Discipline	Budget decisions Calendar and Schedule Parent Nights and Parent Contact Advisory & Wellness Program School activities calendar Professional development Discipline	Budget decisions Calendar and Schedule Hiring Committee member Advisory & Wellness Program School activities calendar Professional development Discipline

Aspire Business Consultants and Dynamic Duo. To ensure the school's financial sustainability and legal compliance, DSS has partnered with two contracted services, Dynamic Duo Business Solutions LLC and Aspire Business Consultants. Contracting with these two companies ensures that DSS is financially stable, fiscally responsible, and up-to-date with all state and federal compliance and legal matters pertaining to budget, payroll, employee benefits, retirement, reporting, audits, and grants management. These firms are not managing DSS in any manner, but are in a consulting role. Dynamic Duo is playing the role of bookkeeper, as this firm receives invoices and pays our bills.

FocusHR. FocusHR is a firm that performs human resource functions, including managing payroll, payroll liabilities, and onboarding new employees.

Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. To ensure the implementation of DSS's pedagogy and program of instruction continues to align with the principles of Public Waldorf education, DSS is an initiative member of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (APWE). The mission of APWE: "...is to revitalize public education through innovation that is developmentally sound, to support the development of high-quality Public Waldorf education that meets the needs of the students of our times." The Alliance supports collaboration amongst its members in the formation of strong learning communities.

The path of the membership process: The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education offers three categories or phases of membership Initiative Member, Developing Member, and Full Member. Each phase has distinct characteristics, rights, and responsibilities. The categories reflect the development of a school from its founding days to a mature, fully established school. Being a member ensures that DSS operates from the principles of Public Waldorf education and is in an ongoing process of adapting, implementing, growing, and supporting students in alignment with Rudolf Steiner's developmental and educational philosophies.

As a member, during the initiative phase, a school is expected to:

- Become familiar with the Core Principles of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and demonstrate that it is working towards implementing these and building a climate of social justice, diversity, moral integrity, positive relationships, citizenship, and imagination;
- Be compliant with all applicable district, state, and federal requirements;
- Develop an academic program with appropriate rigor that reflects both the Principles of Public Waldorf education and public accountability as required by

applicable state standards;

- Demonstrate that students are learning (test scores, assessments, and any additional measures);
- Demonstrate evidence of the continued study of Public Waldorf education by a core group;
- Ensure the engagement or involvement of at least one experienced educator, with a certificate from a course of teacher preparation that meets established Alliance criteria, who will guide the initiative;
- Demonstrate that school governance and leadership is being developed with an awareness of the Alliance Core Principle on Collaborative Leadership and in a form that is supportive of the goals of Public Waldorf education.

Furthermore, as an initiative member, a group/school will be provided with:

- Connection to a mentor school;
- Access to any Alliance publications and resources, including sample charter documents, references for study, information on relevant courses, alignment to relevant state curriculum requirements;
- Assistance in arranging visits to other member schools;
- Opportunity to participate in committee work;
- Identification of membership through the use of the phrase “XYZ School Initiative, Registered with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education.”

- An annual support site visit by Alliance staff or a designated individual to provide peer support and review of progress]

6. A description of how the eligible applicant will solicit and consider input from parents and other members of the community on the implementation and operation of each charter school that will receive funds under AZCSP. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(IV)*

[Two of the seven Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education have implications around parent and community input regarding the implementation and operation of our charter school. These principles include the intent for public Waldorf schools to respond to the cultures represented in their communities to provide maximum access to a diverse range of students. Further, public Waldorf schools view schools as learning communities, which includes the notion of operating the school in the context of the wider community. Our charter school, for example, was initiated and born out of parents’ strong desire to offer a public Waldorf education at the high school level in the Tucson community. The majority of founding board members are parents of students or have a connection with a K-8 Waldorf school in Tucson. While Desert Sage School will always strive to find ways to best solicit input from parents and the wider Tucson community, the school will implement and incorporate the following ideas into its operations.

To solicit and consider input from *parents*, Desert Sage School will:

- Survey parents annually with specific questions around curriculum, operations, and transportation

- As a component of parent-teacher conferences, parents will be offered opportunity to provide feedback regarding their children's needs as well as to share their thoughts regarding the school's operation
- Send a survey, on an annual basis, to parents of students who were in the inquiry pool, but elected not to apply or enroll to solicit feedback about their decision to choose a different educational option
- When a family disenrolls their child, the parents will be interviewed to learn the reasons as to why the decision was made to transfer to a different school and to solicit feedback on their child's experience
- A parent council will be created by the end of the first year, to build and foster parent involvement and incorporate their perspectives in the operation of the school
- A closed social media group will be created for parents of enrolled students, with a member of the administrative team serving as the moderator; all parents will be invited and encouraged to join

To solicit and consider input from *community members*, Desert Sage School will:

- Survey mentors of internship sponsors regarding our students' participation and the support they receive from our school
- Solicit feedback from guest and volunteer teachers and organizations who engaged with our students and school for a limited period of time
- On an annual basis specifically solicit input from community organizations and partners that serve high school students, particularly from educationally disadvantaged communities. These organizations include: Youth On Their Own, Pascua Yaqui Tribe

Education Center, and the Tohono O’odham Nation Department of Education.

- Cultivate close relationships with the two other Waldorf schools in the Tucson community, which will increase the opportunity to learn and reinforce best operational practices from each other
- Cultivate relationships with local charter schools that serve students through the 8th grade, in part to build enrollment pipelines, but also to learn from administrators and students about their needs and desires for high school

The school’s administrative team will evaluate, as part of the teams weekly meeting, its effectiveness around how to best solicit input from parents and community members. The administrative team will also work to make adjustments to the school’s strategies based on the effectiveness of the school’s efforts.]

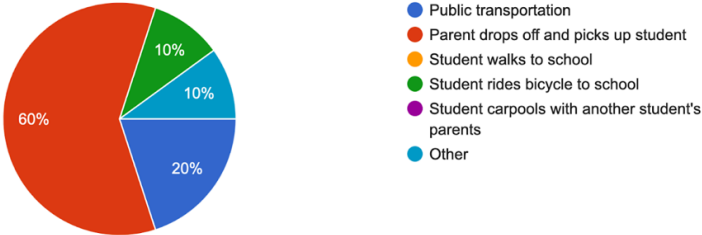
7. A description of how the eligible applicant will consider and plan for the transportation needs of the school’s students. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(1)(E)*

[While Desert Sage School is fortunate to have leased a facility in a central location accessible by public transportation, the Tucson metropolitan area is geographically large, which makes transportation difficult for many families, particularly if they are low-income and/or reside in areas that are far from the School. For example, public transportation from the San Xavier District of the Tohono O’odham Nation takes one hour and 24 minutes *one way*, but is just 21 minutes by car. As Desert Sage School desires to enroll Native American students from the two reservations adjacent to Tucson—the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O’odham Nation—providing free transportation to and from centrally located pick-up and drop-off locations on these reservations would enable students from these

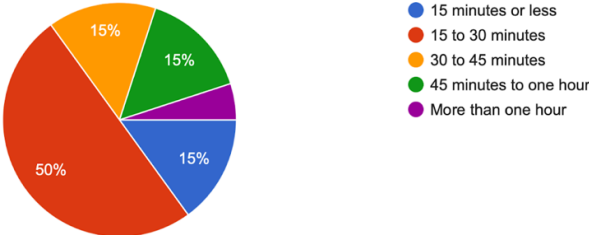
indigenous communities to enroll. Many of the lower-income neighborhoods in the Tucson metropolitan area are far from the city’s core. Two small buses and/or 15-passenger vans would enable Desert Sage School to focus our recruitment efforts in communities that would otherwise not be able to consider our School. Our inability to provide transportation in our first year was a barrier to parents of educationally disadvantaged students from enrolling their children.

We surveyed the parents of our current students regarding transportation. The results are as follows:

How does your student get to and from school each day?
20 responses

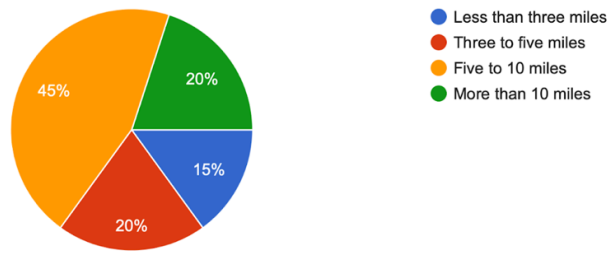


Approximately how long does it take for your student to get to and from school (one way) each day?
20 responses



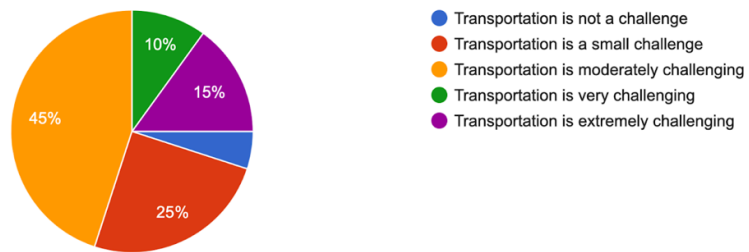
Approximately how far, in miles, do you live from Desert Sage School?

20 responses



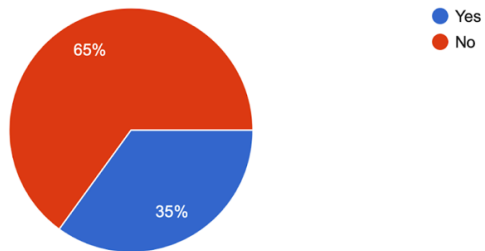
To what extent is transportation to and from Desert Sage School a challenge?

20 responses



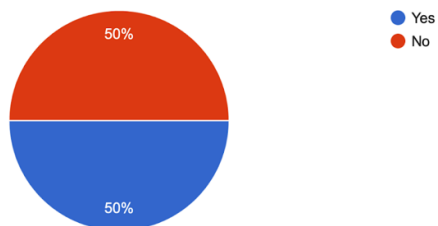
Has your student ever missed school due to transportation issues?

20 responses

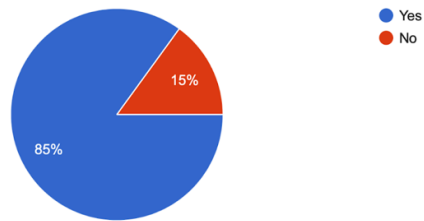


Has your student ever been late to school due to transportation issues?

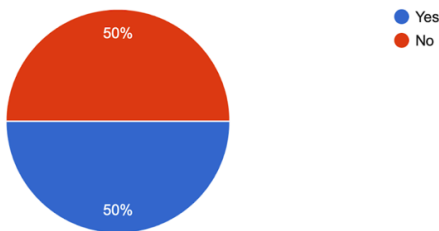
20 responses



If Desert Sage School were to provide free transportation from a location within a 10-minute drive of your home, would you take advantage of the service?
20 responses



Does transportation to and from school present a financial burden to your family?
20 responses



This survey was taken on September 20, 2022, just six weeks into our first year of operation. The response rate was 77%. This survey shows that:

- Most students (60%) are dropped off and picked up by their parents
- Despite our central location on a major bus route, just 20% take advantage of public transportation, which is currently free-of-charge.
- The majority (65%) of our students reside more than five miles from the school
- More than one-third (35%) of our families describe transportation as “very challenging” or “extremely challenging.”

Comments from parents regarding transportation include:

“Public transport is not an option due to [my child’s] age/mental and emotional needs.”

“Affording gas isn’t our only issue. My tags are also expired and we don’t have the funds to fix the car and get the tags updated. We don’t have a good estimate of how long it will take us to get that done either due to our current financial situation.”

Given this information, we believe that providing transportation from specific key locations in the greater Tucson area will provide a much-needed service to our current students and will help tremendously with the recruitment and retention of new students. While the transportation routes would be finalized and designed around actual student enrollment, we foresee the need for at least two vehicles which would serve the following areas:

Proposed Southwest Route (Native American Reservations)	
Pascua Yaqui Tribe (Casino del Sol)	15 miles
Tohono O’odham Nation (San Xavier Mission)	13 miles
Proposed South Route	
E Valencia Road & S 12th Avenue	10 miles
E Valencia Road & S Tucson Blvd	8 miles

On an annual basis, by May 1 each academic year, Desert Sage School will survey its current population to learn how the school may be able to better serve the student population’s transportation needs. Further, Desert Sage School will proactively recruit students from geographic areas and underserved communities that would benefit from receiving free transportation to and from the school.]

8. A description of the administrative relationship between the charter school and the authorized public chartering agency including how the school's performance in the State's accountability system and impact on student achievement will be one of the most important factors for renewal or revocation of the school's charter, and how the authorized public chartering agency involved will reserve the right to revoke or not renew a school's charter based on financial, structural, or operational factors involving the management of the school. **(1 point)** *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(1)(C)(i)(II)*

[The Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS), DSS's authorizer/sponsor, approved DSS's charter application on December 16, 2021, with flying colors. At the time, DSS's charter application was the only application that was 100% substantively complete, with a final score of 100% on two out of the three sections and 96% on the third section. Given a few more days to edit the application, DSS would have also brought the third section up to 100%, a testament to the solidity, dedication, passion, experience, and collaborative spirit of the founding Board, most of whom have moved into positions in the school, or remain on the current School Governing Board.

DSS operates as an Arizona nonprofit corporation. The school governing board, previously known as the Board of Directors, is an independent entity under the authorization of ASBCS, which is responsible for DSS's accountability to provide a quality public high school inspired by Public Waldorf education to the community of Tucson, Arizona.

Since the application and planning phase of the charter entity, DSS has established a strong relationship with its authorizer. In addition, the DSS team regularly communicates with ASBCS to ensure a strong understanding of the expectations ASBCS has set forth for DSS as a newly operational charter school as of August 8, 2022.

As the authorizer and per ARS §15-183(R), ASBCS "shall have oversight and administrative responsibility for the charter schools that it sponsors." Therefore, ASBCS grounds the actions in evidence of DSS's performance under the performance framework adopted by the authorizer. The performance framework is publicly available and accessible on DSS's website.

The performance framework, per ARS §15-183 (R1-4), includes:

- The academic performance expectations of the charter school and the measurement of sufficient progress toward the academic performance expectations.
- The operational expectations of the charter school, including adherence to all applicable laws and obligations of the charter contract.
- The financial expectations of the charter school.
- Intervention and improvement policies.

As stated above, DSS is held accountable for three (3) performance frameworks: Academic, Financial, and Operational. The purpose of the Academic performance evaluation is to ensure that DSS provides a learning environment that can demonstrate measurable improvement in pupil achievement based on the State's accountability system. The financial performance evaluation aims to ensure DSS has a solid fiscal management practice and

implementation process. Finally, the operational performance evaluation aims to ensure that DSS implements its education program proposed in the charter application and is adhering to statutory and contractual compliance requirements.

The fourth accountability system set forth by ASBCS, 'intervention and improvement,' determines how DSS is meeting the expectations of the academic performance framework. ASBCS evaluates DSS annually to ensure that DSS meets or is making sufficient progress toward the expectations. An Overall Rating of "Meets Standard," "Above Standard," or "Exceeds Standard" in the fiscal year evaluated provides an opportunity for DSS to demonstrate sufficient progress and or submit a school improvement plan to ASBCS. Conversely, if DSS receives an Overall Rating of "Does Not Meet Standard" or "Falls Far Below Standard" for three consecutive years, it has failed to demonstrate progress.

ASBCS conducts a First Year Review under ARS §15-182(E)(1) and AAC R7-5-505. A Second Year Review, under ARS §15-182(E)(1) and AAC R7-5-501(B) and AAC R7-5-502 for new charters such as DSS. ASBCS also reviews DSS at five-year intervals using the performance framework adopted by ASBCS per ARS §15-183(I)(3).

Furthermore, as a new charter, DSS receives pop-in visits by the authorizer in years one, two, five, and ten. ASBCS may also conduct pop-in visits anytime throughout the school year. Pop-in visits ensure DSS's adherence to safety documentation and the implementation of the program of instruction. Pop-in visits also focus on familiarizing the authorizer with DSS and their staff, building relationships with the school leaders, and paying witness to DSS's successes.

DSS will develop, modify, and update systems and processes that demonstrate evidence of DSS's progress from the feedback of the authorizer's reviews, evaluations, and pop-in visits related to their academic, financial, and operational performances. To provide examples of DSS's plan to uphold the authorizer's performance framework expectations, below are the best practices that DSS may demonstrate, but are not limited to:

Academic

- DSS ensures to meet or make sufficient progress toward the academic performance expectations set forth in the performance framework.
- Ensures to design a method to measure pupil progress toward the pupil outcomes adopted by the state board of education, including participation in statewide assessments and the nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement test designated by the State.
- Ensures completion and distribution of an annual report card.
- Ensures providing a comprehensive program of instruction that is consistent with Public Waldorf education standards and State standards.

Financial

- DSS ensures to meet or make sufficient progress toward the financial performance expectations set forth in the performance framework.
- Ensures compliance with applicable statutes and regulations regarding using Federal Funds set forth by the state board of education.
- Ensures proper disbursement of, and accounting for, federal funds.

- Ensures compliance with the procurement standards set forth by the Arizona Department of Education.
- Ensures transparency in adopted budgets, audits, and financial reports.
- Ensures avoidance of apparent and actual conflicts of interest.

Operational

- DSS ensures to meet or make sufficient progress toward the operational performance expectations set forth in the performance framework.
- Ensures adherence to compliance set forth by the authorizer and the state board of education, including but not limited to fingerprinting, enrollment, schedule and calendar, documents, open meeting law, agendas and minutes, systems and procedures, policies, and website.
- Ensures compliance with all federal and state laws relating to the education of children with disabilities.
- Ensures compliance with federal, state and local rules, regulations and statutes relating to health, safety, civil rights and insurance.
- Ensures operating best practices consistent with Alliance for Public Waldorf Education standards.]

Assurances

By submitting this Application Form, the applicant organization agrees to the following:
Type your initials in the box provided.

- [amw]
a. The applicant will make following information publicly available, consistently with the dissemination requirements of the annual State report card, including on the website of the school, information to help parents make informed decisions about the education options available to their children, including –
- i. Information on the educational program;
 - ii. Student support services;
 - iii. Parent contract requirements (as applicable), including any financial obligations or fees;
 - iv. Enrollment criteria (as applicable); and
 - v. Annual performance and enrollment data for each of the subgroups of students, except that such disaggregation of performance and enrollment data shall not be required in a case in which the number of students in a group is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or the results would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student. ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(2)(G)
- [amw]
b. The applicant will annually provide AZCSP such information as may be required to determine if the charter school is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the objectives.
- [amw]
c. The applicant will obtain technical assistance provided by AZCSP to meet the proposed objectives. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303 (f)(2)(D)*
- [amw]
d. The applicant will cooperate with AZCSP in evaluating the program assisted under this subpart.
- [amw]
e. Such other information and assurances as AZCSP may require.
- [amw]
f. The applicant will comply with the State’s open meetings and open records laws. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(F)*.
- [amw]
g. The applicant shall ensure that a student’s records and, if applicable, a student’s individualized education program as defined in IDEA, are transferred to a charter school upon the transfer of the student to the charter school, and to another public school upon the transfer of the student from a charter school to another public school, in accordance with applicable State law. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4308*.
- [amw]
h. The applicant will use financial management systems, including records documenting compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award, that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by general and program-specific terms and conditions; and the tracing of funds to a level of expenditures adequate to establish that such funds have been used according to the Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. 2 *CFR §200.302&303*
- [amw]
i. The organization and its school leaders and faculty will actively participate in AZCSP Technical Assistance for the life of the grant.
- [amw]
j. The applicant agrees that all cost charged to the grant are direct costs throughout the life of the grant. There are NO indirect costs.

The charter holder, if part of a network of schools, will abide by the following:

[amw] The charter holder contract with its charter management organization does not cede charter school control of funds and operations to the management organization.

[amw] The charter holder has appropriate internal controls between the two entities to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of CSP dollars (for example, preventing related-party transactions, preventing conflict of interest, ensuring appropriate segregation of duties between schools and management organizations).

[amw] The charter holder has Conflict of Interest policies published in its Articles of Incorporation, its By-Laws, and its internal operational policies of the school.

LEA Authorized Representative

[April M. Wiley]

Title

[Board President]

eSignature of LEA Authorized Representative

[*April M. Wiley*]

Date

[October 11, 2022]

Applicant Organization

[Desert Sage School]

Date Submitted

[October 11, 2022]

B. Abstract - Non-Scoring Section. (Max 300 words)

Provide an abstract narrative that includes objectives, expected outcomes, and impacts.

[DSS's founding board recognized through research that far too many students graduate from Arizona high schools without the foundational skills necessary for success in college, career, or personal well-being. Our objectives, outcomes, and impacts are embedded in our mission and can be broken down by:

Objectives

- Make Waldorf high school education accessible to all students.
- Bridge opportunity gaps through data-responsive student supports and a rigorous, developmentally-attuned, arts-integrated, experiential, and relationship-centered curriculum, which addresses every student's intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Improve students' social-emotional capacities and practical life skills.
- Create a school that is an inspiration and model for education reform; share best practices with the wider education community.

Outcomes

- Our rigorous teacher training and comprehensive PD systems lead to a program of instruction that is continuously improved and meets the needs of disadvantaged students.
- Students and families develop social-emotional capacities that improve relationships.
- The achievement and opportunity gaps are bridged for our students.

Impacts

- Students reflect on their educational experiences with a sense of belonging and excitement for learning, ultimately becoming self-motivated, adaptable, and competent lifelong learners.
- Communities and families are transformed by the opportunities inherent in an excellent education.
- Our school inspires others who seek to reform education and close achievement gaps in a way that honors the humanity of each individual.
- Students enter adulthood with confidence, compassion, self-discipline, the ability to work with others, mastery of analytical and critical faculties, and reverence for the beauty and wonder of life.

DSS intends to take the best of what Waldorf education has traditionally offered and marry that approach with a system of rigorous, data-responsive accountability. We believe that DSS will prove that all students, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic levels, EL status, or special needs, can make meaningful and substantial growth that opens the doors to opportunity, success, and personal fulfillment.

]

C. Charter Entity Founders – Total points possible: 40 points

1. Provide a clear and concise mission statement aligned with the needs of educationally disadvantaged students - **Non-Scoring Section.** (Max 75 words)

[Guided by the principles of Public Waldorf education, we celebrate diversity, embrace equity, and cultivate inclusion to create space for an educational experience that bridges opportunity gaps, develops students’ academic and life skills, and inspires lifelong learning.]

2. Describe the background of the applicant’s founders and school leaders and their past experience to support the successful planning and implementation of the school. *2 CFR §200.205 Non-Scoring Section.*

[Steve Brown, Founding Board Treasurer and Secretary

In 1975 Steve was one of the founding Board Members of Long Trail School in Dorset, Vermont and served on their board for ten years, including four years as the Board Chair.

While technically a private school, Long Trail School, from its founding, operated similarly to what is today called a “Charter” because it was eligible to receive tax-payer funds, as there was no public high school in the area. Steve also taught Spanish, AP Psychology, and Ethics there. The school started with 14 students; they now enroll 200+ students. Steve provided leadership during those first years by always reminding everyone—Board, Faculty, Students, Families, the Community—of, and holding one another accountable to, Long Trail School’s core values, vision, and mission, “Long Trail School was established on the founding principles that 'every student is unique, small group instruction responds to individual needs, high academic standards motivate students, and financial need should not deter qualified students from applying.”

In 1984 Steve left full and half-time teaching, sold his family’s small grocery store, and returned to school, where he worked toward an MA degree in Pastoral Ministry, with a focus on education. For the next twenty-five years taught and served on multiple boards of directors of civic and environmental groups (all of which had education components, including as Board Chair of several); worked in education for non-profit and government entities at city, county, state, national and international levels; and taught at at faith-based,

charter, and independent schools. He is now semi-retired and until the COVID pandemic, taught part-time in an A+ rated, K-5 public school in Tucson.

Linda Biederman, Founding Board Member, Teacher

For more than 20 years, Linda has been active in the world of education. Her own high school experience, which offered her both encouragement and opportunity to express herself artistically, inspired her to consider the relationship between art and learning, and pursue the study of education. She received her teaching credential in both French and Art from Montana State University, after which, for seven years, she taught French and Physical Education, coached Volleyball and served as a dorm mother to boarding students at a college preparatory high school. Here she found that the more her students were immersed in their lessons with all their senses active, and with their hands involved in the creation of something truly their own, the more they learned, and kept, from the experience. As a new parent, her search for a school for her young children that embodied the principles she'd learned and developed in her own teaching led her to the local Waldorf school, Pre-K through 8th grade, from which her youngest will graduate this spring. Linda's experience as a Waldorf parent, long-time chair of the Parent Council, and member of the Board of Trustees, strengthened her appreciation for both the principles of Waldorf Education and the importance of parent involvement in a child's schooling. When, in 2016, a group formed to conceive a way to bring a Waldorf inspired High School into being, Linda jumped in with both feet, and was a key member of the team that brought the school to life. Linda is currently teaching Movement Education and French at DSS, deeply grateful to be back in the classroom.

April Wiley, Founding Board President

April brings a combined twelve years of Early Childhood Lead Teacher, K-6 Substitute Teacher, teaching abroad, and Assistant Director experience. She has chaired or co-chaired fundraising, festival, and event planning committees for the past ten years. April has twenty years of volunteer experience in various fields of education, health and wellness, community events, and facilitating support groups. Thirty years of customer service experience in multiple professions such as restaurant service, management, and sales; and managed small self-owned businesses in Childbirth, Sales, and the Arts. April recently completed a year-long Waldorf Foundations program that offered further insight and training into Waldorf High School pedagogy (accredited by Antioch University) and has participated in many Waldorf-related workshops and studies. April brings the experience of a thirteen-year Waldorf community member and employee and the experience and insight of the disabled as a wheelchair user. Her passions have always lived with quality education, community building, social and emotional support, and service excellence.

David Wagner, Founding Board Member, Administrative Director

David Wagner's professional experience spans secondary education, college admission, and property development and management. In addition to secondary teaching, David co-founded a progressive public charter high school in Prescott, Arizona in 2000 where he managed the school's finances, led the school's student recruitment efforts, and established a transportation program to bring students to the school from outlying communities. David also taught at Ha:sañ Preparatory & Leadership School, a small charter school in Tucson that serves Native American students where, as a teacher and college counselor, David's students achieved a 100% admission rate to baccalaureate institutions, along with financial aid awards to make their college enrollment affordable and possible. Having served as an

admissions officer for three liberal arts colleges, both public and private in various parts of the country, David brings an in-depth knowledge of the U.S. higher education landscape as well as a deep understanding of admission and financial aid, particularly at institutions where the cost of attendance is extraordinarily high. At Desert Sage School, David is teaching mathematics and serves as a student advisor. Administratively, David serves as the registrar, facilities manager, financial manager, and website manager. David also leads the School's recruitment efforts and ensures compliance in non-instructional areas such as finance, enrollment, and personnel. David holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from The Evergreen State College and a Master in Teaching from Seattle University. David is currently a candidate for the M.Ed. in School Counseling through Prescott College.

Sarah Bromer, Founding Board Member, Pedagogical Director

Sarah Bromer brings 20 years of classroom teaching experience to our school as well as several years as an outdoor educator. Sarah's classroom teaching career began at a private elementary school for girls in New Orleans, where she pioneered and taught a lab science program for girls in grades K-4, writing original, Common Core-aligned curriculum as well as budgeting, purchasing supplies, and organizing a new lab. Living in New Orleans and witnessing the gulf that existed in that city between private and public education left a deep impression on Sarah and inspired her to become a public school educator. She moved to Tucson to complete her Master's Degree in Education at the University of Arizona. In 2005 she joined the founding team at City High School, a non-profit charter high school in downtown Tucson that served primarily disadvantaged students. This experience gave Sarah extensive experience in writing original curriculum, aligned with Arizona state standards, that served the unique needs of disadvantaged students, as well as in helping to

create many elements of a new school, such as a functional professional development community and a robust and healthy student culture. Sarah also founded and taught an award-winning youth radio program (City High Radio). Sarah's students, most of whom were struggling readers and writers, [won](#) the [New York Times](#) and [NPR](#) student podcast contests for several years in a row. Sarah is highly qualified in history and English and is also a certified Reading Specialist. Her passion is looking at systems to find the leverage points that make bridging opportunity gaps for students a reality. Sarah is the Pedagogical Director at Desert Sage School, and her primary responsibility is overseeing the academic systems of the school (curriculum, assessment, instruction), as well as professional development and the creation of a restorative discipline system.

Venus-Tyané Kuya, Founding Board Vice-President, Culture & Engagement Director

Venus-Tyané is an International Teaching Artist specializing in Foley, Devised Theatre, and Branding. She studied Musical Theater in Berlin, Germany and has a Bachelor of Arts in Global Arts & Culture and Global Education. She worked for over 10 years with the non-profit Literacy Connects using the arts as a tool for increasing literacy and educational equity. She has worked as a performer for many US productions, including Nickelodeon and Stories that Soar! She has performed in various large productions internationally, from Friedrichstadtpalast to Jazzclub Neukölln. Venus-Tyané worked as the Musical Director for the performing arts school JMEM Berlin, and the subsequent touring production. She has toured throughout Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Estonia, Czech Republic, India, South Korea, and Japan. She has a passion for the arts and people's stories as expressed through their various cultures and is dedicated to making a positive impact that has a world ripple effect. She is the Culture & Engagement Director at Desert

Sage School, and her primary responsibility is ensuring that the school culture reflects the mission, vision and values laid out in the charter.]

3. Participate in a Capacity Interview¹ to be scheduled by AZCSP. **(15 points)**
4. Using the most recent data available, select the appropriate option below to demonstrate the quality of the applicant serving educationally disadvantaged students. *2 CFR §200.331 (b)(1)* **(15 Points)**

Option A – Freestanding Start-up

Enter the percentage of disadvantaged students in a previous school or classroom managed by the applicant that passed the assessments. (Choose one table and only one table).

Table 1

Academic Year ²	State		School Name		Position	
[2012]	[Arizona]		[City High School]		[Reading and Writing Support (RWS) Classroom Teacher]	
State Assessment Used	% of students passing the state assessment		% of disadvantaged students passing the state assessment		% of disadvantaged students’ academic growth increased by at least one year ³ on the state assessment	
AIMS HS Reading	Math	ELA/Reading	Math	ELA/Reading	Math	ELA/Reading
[]	[]	[50%]	[n/a]	[50%]	[n/a]	[72.2% or 80%]

Provide source documentation to support the submission in the above table. Data will be verified by the AZCSP staff.

¹ A standardized interview conducted to gauge the applicant’s actual or potential ability to perform.
² Submit the full academic year; e.g. FY 18-19.
³ 50% Student Growth Percentile (SGP) = one-year academic growth determined by Arizona Department of Education Accountability & Research
⁴ An assessment that is free from out-side control demonstrating a comparison of student understanding or performance against a set of uniform standards within the same school year.
⁵ A local assessment consists of a formal set of assessment approaches and tools developed or selected by school(s) to meet their own needs. It is distinct from assessments developed by an individual classroom teacher for his or her own purpose. Reliability and validity of the assessment must be included in the description.

[DSS's Pedagogical Director (Ped Director) taught at City High School (Tucson, Arizona) from 2005-2021. From 2005-2014, she taught 10th Grade Humanities, Senior English, Reading/Writing Support, and Radio Production. In 2014 she went on a partial maternity leave and stopped teaching RWS and Senior English. Over the next several years our Ped Director continued to run her radio program, and later became the school's Reading Specialist, Literacy Coach, tutor, Literacy Coordinator, and District Test Coordinator. The last year for which she has her own classroom data is 2012-2013, which is why we elected to use data from that school year.

The Reading/Writing Support class was designed to improve reading and writing skills for students who struggled significantly in this area. Failing 8th grade AIMS scores were used as the primary criteria for placement in the class, and scoring below 7th grade on a reading screener was the secondary criteria.

All students in our Ped Director's class qualified as "educationally disadvantaged" in multiple categories: 72.2% had IEPs, 88.9% qualified for free or reduced lunch, 61.1% were in the ethnic categories of Hispanic, Black, or American Indian, and 16.7% were EL students. Most students had multiple categories of disadvantage, with 95% qualifying as disadvantaged in two or more categories and 40% in three or more categories. Students remained in the class until they passed the AIMS test and/or reached a reading level of 7th grade or higher.

AIMS HS Reading was administered to all sophomores in the state of Arizona in the spring of the 2012-2013 school year. Juniors and seniors who had previously failed AIMS were allowed to continue taking the AIMS test during fall retakes and spring administrations until they passed. Freshmen did not take the test, which is why our spreadsheet does not show fall 2012 results or Spring 2013 results

for those students. Sophomores did not have results to list in the fall 2012 administration column, but did participate in the 2013 test administration.

In the **2012-2013** school year, **50% of our Ped Director's age-eligible students (10th-12th graders) had passing scores on the AIMS HS Reading test** (9 of the 18 students who were old enough to take the test). Students who passed in Fall 2012 and were still enrolled in the RWS class are included in the data for "percent passing" for this multi-age class, because they had not yet reached an 8th grade reading level and had also been in 's class the year prior.

Five students jumped to a new Performance Level (FFB-Approaches or Approaches-Meets) at some point (Fall or Spring) during the 2012-13 school year. Among our Ped Director's students, 67% either passed the test or jumped to a new level during the 2012-2013 school year.

We used **15 points as our 50% SGP number** for this class. We calculated this data by averaging the score changes for *all* City High School students during the Fall 2013 Reading AIMS HS administration, which was the only year for which this data was available to us. That year 14 students took the test and had an average score change of 15 points.

Among the students in our Ped Director's class, 13 out of 20 students (72.2%) in 2012-2013 had passing scores on AIMS and/or exceeded the school's 50% SGP number. We elected to also include Fall 2013 scores for the 2012-2013 class in our spreadsheet as it was the only method to demonstrate year-to-year growth for the freshmen and sophomores in the class. **Including the 2013 fall data raises the number of passing and/or 50% SGP exceeding students to 16, or 80% of the RWS class of 2012-2013.**

Please see the attached spreadsheet, titled "Sarah's Reading Writing Support AIMS Data 2012-2013 for AZCSP Grant" for additional details. |

Academic Year ²	State	School Name	Position	Independent Benchmark Assessment ⁴ used	% of disadvantaged students passing		% of disadvantaged students' academic growth increased	
					Math	ELA/Reading	Math	ELA/Reading
[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]

Provide source documentation to support the submission in the above table. Data will be verified by the AZCSP staff.

[[]]

Table 3

Academic Year ²	State	School Name	Position	Locally Developed Assessment ⁵ used	% of disadvantaged students passing		% of disadvantaged students' academic growth increased	
					Math	ELA/Reading	Math	ELA/Reading
[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]

Provide source documentation to support the submission in the above table. Data will be verified by the AZCSP staff.

[[]]

Option B – Freestanding or Expansion/Replication affiliated with in-state Charter Management Organization (CMO)

Academic Year ²	Charter District	% of students passing the state assessment		% of disadvantaged students passing the state assessment		% of disadvantaged students' academic growth increased by at least one year ³ on the state assessment	
		Math	ELA/Reading	Math	ELA/Reading	Math	ELA/Reading
[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]	[[]]

*Provide source documentation to support the submission in the above table.
Data will be verified by the AZCSP staff.*

[]

Option C – Freestanding or Expansion/Replication affiliated with out-of-state CMO

Demonstrate the academic achievement results (including annual student performance on statewide assessments, annual student attendance and retention rates, student academic growth, high school graduation rates) for educationally disadvantaged students (defined by AZCSP) served by the charter schools currently operated or managed by the applicant comparable to the average academic achievement results for such students served by surrounding public schools in the State and the State average.

*Provide source documentation to support the submission in the above table.
Data will be verified by the AZCSP staff.*

[]

5. Define the geographical and demographic community the charter school will serve; provide the supporting data on how the applicant would address the needs of the defined community; and name community partners and how they will assist the planning and implementation of the school. **(10 points)**

- a) What are the distinctive characteristics of the target community?

[Far too many students graduate from Arizona high schools without the foundational skills necessary for success in college or career. Many students in DSS’s target population will fall into the special subcategories of FRL (Free and Reduced Lunch), EL, Bottom 25%, and Special Education. The middle schools within the target area of DSS achieved an average proficiency on the 2019 AzMERIT of 35% in Math and 38% in ELA, while high school students in the target area achieved an average of 23% in Math and 32% in ELA. Most students in our target population do not achieve proficiency on state exams. The approach and

methods described in this application have the potential to offer hope for students in these groups who have not been served by traditional schools.

Current Students

The current students at Desert Sage School reflect the ethnic diversity of the larger Tucson community. Our students are:

- 46% White Non-Hispanic
- 35% Hispanic
- 8% Black
- 7% Multiracial
- 4% Native American

This breakdown roughly mirrors the demographics of Tucson's overall population.

Our students hail from 14 different Tucson zip codes, with the majority residing in the 85711 and 85712 zip codes.

Some of the other distinctive characteristics of our community are:

- 4% are English Learners.
- 12% have IEPs
- 8% have 504 plans
- 73% qualify for free and reduced lunch
- 73% come from single-parent homes
- 12% have parents who have been incarcerated
- 75% are potential first-generation college students.

The latest achievement data available in ADE (2019) for DSS's current students are as follows:

	Percent Minimally Proficient	Percent Partially Proficient	Percent Proficient	Percent Highly Proficient
Math	39%	44%	12%	5%
ELA	18%	39%	32%	11%

Literacy support is a fundamental part of our program of instruction. We administered a school-wide quick word recognition reading test, and 42% of our students scored two or more levels below grade level, with 12% scoring at the 5th grade level or below.

Tucson Community–Target Community

The population of Tucson, Arizona, is approximately 545,340, with 14.6% of whom were foreign-born, higher than the 13.5% national average. To give an idea of Tucson's diverse community, the list provided below is based on the most recent census bureau.

Non-Hispanic

- White: 44.3%
- African American or Black: 4.55%
- Asian: 3.05%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 1.73%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.21%
- Two or more races: 2.76%
- Other Races: 0.18%

Hispanic

- White: 26.03%
- African American or Black: 0.37%
- Asian: 0.12%
- American Indian and Alaska Native: 1.56%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.04%

- Two or more races: 5.92%
- Other races: 10.17%

DSS's location, located in the 85716 ZIP Code, is home to families who reflect the diversity described above. An example of the various cultures and socio-economic backgrounds near DSS's location below depicts ethnic and socio-economic diversity from six (6) nearby middle and high schools of different sizes.

School & Distance	Grades Serving	Total Enrolled	Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity		Total *FRL Students
Mansfeld Middle Magnet School 3 miles	6-8	919			292 (32%)
			Native American/ Alaska Native	22 (2%)	
			Asian	19 (2%)	
			Black	69 (8%)	
			Hispanic	650 (71%)	
			Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	
			White	130 (14%)	
Two or More Races	29 (3%)				
Doolen Middle School 3.2 miles	6-8	607			228 (38%)
			Native American/ Alaska Native	9 (2%)	
			Asian	15 (3%)	
			Black	101 (17%)	
Hispanic	269 (44%)				

			<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td> <td>20 (3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>157 (26%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two or More Races</td> <td>36 (6%)</td> </tr> </table>	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	20 (3%)	White	157 (26%)	Two or More Races	36 (6%)									
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	20 (3%)																	
White	157 (26%)																	
Two or More Races	36 (6%)																	
Paulo Freire Freedom School-University 3.7 miles	6-8	75	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Native American/ Alaska Native</td> <td>1 (1.3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>4 (5.3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic</td> <td>29 (39%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>37 (49%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two or More Races</td> <td>4 (5.3%)</td> </tr> </table>	Native American/ Alaska Native	1 (1.3%)	Asian	0	Black	4 (5.3%)	Hispanic	29 (39%)	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	White	37 (49%)	Two or More Races	4 (5.3%)	27 (36%)
Native American/ Alaska Native	1 (1.3%)																	
Asian	0																	
Black	4 (5.3%)																	
Hispanic	29 (39%)																	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0																	
White	37 (49%)																	
Two or More Races	4 (5.3%)																	
Tucson High Magnet School 3 miles	9-12	3,216	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Native American/ Alaska Native</td> <td>150 (5%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>50 (2%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black</td> <td>190 (6%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic</td> <td>2,197 (68%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td> <td>3 (.09%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>510 (16%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Two or More Races</td> <td>116 (4%)</td> </tr> </table>	Native American/ Alaska Native	150 (5%)	Asian	50 (2%)	Black	190 (6%)	Hispanic	2,197 (68%)	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3 (.09%)	White	510 (16%)	Two or More Races	116 (4%)	740 (23%)
Native American/ Alaska Native	150 (5%)																	
Asian	50 (2%)																	
Black	190 (6%)																	
Hispanic	2,197 (68%)																	
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3 (.09%)																	
White	510 (16%)																	
Two or More Races	116 (4%)																	
Catalina High School	9-12	572		218 (38%)														

2.5 miles			Native American/ Alaska Native	17 (3%)	
			Asian	11 (2%)	
			Black	98 (17%)	
			Hispanic	294 (51%)	
			Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	16 (3%)	
			White	110 (19%)	
			Two or More Races	26 (5%)	
City High School 3.5 miles	9-12	160			104 (65%)
Native American/ Alaska Native	5 (3%)				
Asian	0				
Black	8 (5%)				
Hispanic	67 (42%)				
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1 (.63%)				
White	69 (43%)				
Two or More Races	10 (6%)				

*FRL- Free and Reduced Lunch

Special Education

Included in this diversity is the demographic of Special Education (SPED) students. The largest district in Tucson, Tucson Unified District, has an estimated enrollment of 47,000 students, of which 14.9% of students are Special Education students. For charter organizations, the percentages for Special Education range from 1.8% to 12.6%.

AzMERIT percentages in 2019 for SPED students (students with disabilities) According to the Arizona Department of Education, 13% pass for ELA and 15% for Math.

SPED Percentages in Arizona's Largest Charter Organizations

Charter Organization	Total Enrollment	Percent Special Education	Percent Weighted Special Education
Great Hearts Academies	8,849	4.2%	2.9%
BASIS Schools	8,441	1.8%	1.1%
Legacy Traditional Schools	7,615	5.5%	3.1%
Imagine Schools	7,524	9.1%	4.5%
Leona Arizona Management	6,780	10.2%	2.8%
Primavera Technical Learning Center	6,033	5.3%	2.7%
PPEP TEC Schools	5,680	12.2%	12.5%
Sequoia / EdKey Schools	5,235	12.6%	13.9%
American Leadership Academies	3,897	9.3%	8.1%
Eduprize/STEPUp Schools	3,520	11.3%	8.3%
La Paloma Schools	3,040	9.7%	2.5%
Benjamin Franklin Charter School	2,676	8.4%	4.3%
The Odyssey Preparatory Academy	2,454	6.8%	4.9%
Sonoran Science Academies	2,106	4.4%	2.2%
Arizona Connections Academy Charter School	2,101	11.9%	15.1%

Due to the multifaceted nature of Waldorf education, families who are familiar with Waldorf pedagogy see that it can support students with unique learning needs, often increasing the Special Education student count. Families are drawn to Waldorf education's whole child approach that meets the student's academic, social, and emotional needs. To support the potential of Special Education enrollment, DSS is staffing a full-time Student Services (SPED) Director to ensure DSS has the proper support in place well before a student enrolls.

English Learners

Also among the diverse demographics are English Learner (EL) students. According to the Arizona Department of Education, the reclassification rate of students who became proficient in English in 2018 was about 15%. In addition, national data from the 2015-2016 school year illustrated that, among high school students, rates of chronic absenteeism (defined as missing more than 15 days in a year) were higher for ELs than for their non-English Learner peers.

DSS's research through a market analysis study of the largest district schools revealed the following average percentage for English-Language Learner Assessment (AzELLA) results were:

2019 Grades K-12

Number of students tested: 3974

- 10% of students demonstrated they were Pre-Emergent/Emergent
- 25% of students demonstrated they have Basic knowledge
- 53% of students demonstrated they have Intermediate knowledge
- 12% of students demonstrated they are Proficient

2019 Grades 8-12

Number of students tested: 910

- 12% of students demonstrated they were Pre-Emergent/Emergent
- 21% of students demonstrated they have Basic knowledge
- 60% of students demonstrated they have Intermediate knowledge
- 11% of students demonstrated they are Proficient

2021 Grades K-12

Number of students tested: 3022

- 15% of students demonstrated they were Pre-Emergent/Emergent
- 30% of students demonstrated they have Basic knowledge
- 46% of students demonstrated they have Intermediate knowledge
- 9% of students demonstrated they are Proficient

2021 Grades 8-12

Number of students tested: 679

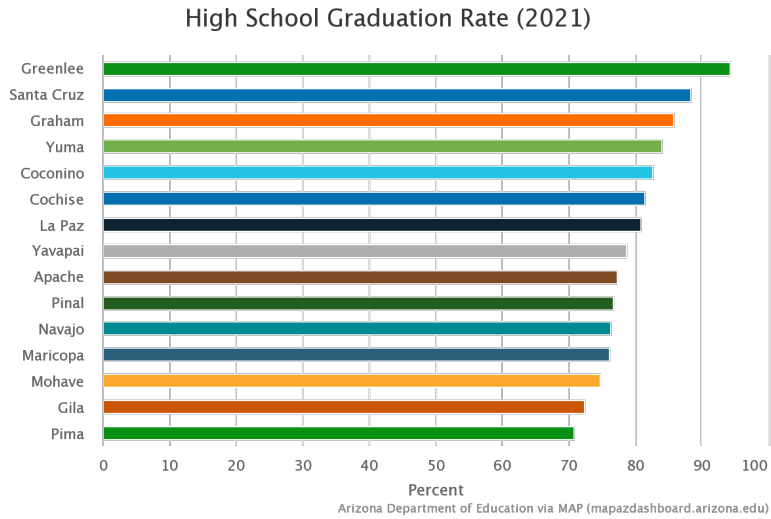
- 14% of students demonstrated they were Pre-Emergent/Emergent
- 19% of students demonstrated they have Basic knowledge
- 60% of students demonstrated they have Intermediate knowledge
- 9% of students demonstrated they are Proficient

To further demonstrate the need for EL support, the most recent census reveals that 67.39% of Tucson residents speak only English, while 32.61% speak other languages. The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Spanish, which is by 27.09% of the population.

Education Attainment

Those who do not finish high school are much more likely to be unemployed, and when employed, their earnings fall far below those with a high school degree or higher. This gap can add up to a substantial deficit in earnings over a lifetime. Economic consequences follow through to the community at large with lower wages, less spending power, and the likelihood of higher costs for public assistance.

Arizona's public high school students graduated 77.8% on time in 2019, ranking eighth out of ten (10) western states. Pima County, also Tucson's metropolitan statistical area, had the worst on-time graduation rate among Arizona counties in 2021 at **70.7%**.



The graduation rates in Arizona were consistently lower than those nationwide. Compared with the national averages, Arizona had 74.4% Hispanic students, 64.1% Native American students, and 73.3% of black or African American students who graduated on time. In addition, Hispanic and Native American students had the most significant gap in graduation rates between the U.S. and Arizona, measuring 7.3% and 7.2% difference. In contrast, Asian/Pacific Islander students experienced the slightest difference, measuring 2.6 percentage points.

Local District Graduation and Dropout Rate - 2021

To better understand the community DSS will serve and currently serves, DSS researched the largest district (Tucson Unified School District) serving approximately 47,000 students that surrounds DSS's location. Data collected from the district depicts graduation and dropout rates from the most recent data provided by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Note ADE collected the chart's data in the fiscal year 2021, which was impacted by the pandemic.

Subgroup	Number Graduated	Number in Four (4) Year Cohort	Graduation Percentage	Dropout Percentage
All	2521	3134	80%	5%
African American	139	180	77%	5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	87	78	76%	8%
Asian	93	87	94%	2.5%
English Learners	137	208	67%	<2%
Foster Care	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1532	1935	79%	4.6%
Homeless	71	126	56%	12%
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	1187	1355	85%	<2%
Migrant	*	*	*	*
Military	18	19	95%	*
Multiple Races	95	117	81%	5.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	223	328	68%	4%
White	603	723	83%	4.5%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Local District Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiencies

ADE collected the data provided on the below charts in the fiscal year 2021, which was impacted by the pandemic. Providing this data is necessary to reflect how great the pandemic affected student achievement.

Grade Eight (8) ELA- 2021

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	1566	17%	65%	18%	13%	4%
African American	98	*	*	*	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	63	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	25	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1025	14%	68%	18%	12%	2%
Homeless	28	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	1069	13%	70%	17%	11%	2%
Limited English	143	*	96%	*	*	*
Migrant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Military	22	50%	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	11	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	246	5%	*	*	*	*
Two or More Races	62	19%	*	*	*	*
White	282	30%	50%	20%	22%	9%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Grade Ten (10) ELA- 2021

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	851	19%	69%	13%	15%	4%
African American	72	*	*	*	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	26	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	12	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	505	16%	72%	13%	12%	3%

Homeless	*	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	504	13%	76%	11%	*	*
Limited English	79	*	>98%	*	*	*
Military	*	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	117	*	*	*	*	*
Two or More Races	40	28%	*	*	*	*
White	188	29%	57%	14%	21%	8%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Grade Eight (8) Math- 2021

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	1677	9%	80%	11%	6%	3%
African American	109	*	*	*	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	72	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	23	52%	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1109	7%	83%	10%	5%	2%
Homeless	28	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	1156	6%	85%	9%	5%	2%
Limited English	165	*	96%	*	*	*
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*
Military	21	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	12	*	*	*	*	*

Students Disabilities	265	*	*	*	*	*
Two or More Races	68	*	*	*	*	*
White	284	17%	65%	17%	12%	5%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Grade Ten (10) Math- 2021

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	911	13%	73%	14%	11%	2%
African American	76	*	*	*	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	27	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	13	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	552	9%	78%	13%	*	*
Homeless	*	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	539	7%	81%	12%	*	*
Limited English	87	*	>98%	*	*	*
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*
Military	*	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	127	*	*	*	*	*
Two or More Races	42	*	*	*	*	*
White	192	24%	59%	17%	*	*

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

ADE collected the data provided in the charts below in the fiscal year 2022; providing data for both fiscal years 2021 and 2022 helps DSS understand the impact of the pandemic on students and the acceleration rate of student progress since. In addition, this information

will inform the steps and measures DSS will take to provide acceleration opportunities for DSS students and improve their academic outcomes.

Grade Eight (8) ELA- 2022

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	2581	25%	56%	20%	20%	5%
African American	167	*	*	*	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	101	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	32	*	*	*	*	*
Foster Care	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1729	20%	59%	21%	17%	3%
Homeless	54	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	1261	17%	63%	19%	15%	2%
Limited English	285	*	92%	8%	*	*
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*
Military	38	*	45%	32%	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	376	*	90%	6%	*	*
Two or More Races	125	34%	50%	17%	21%	13%
White	417	41%	42%	18%	30%	11%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Grade Eleven (11) ACT ELA- 2022

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	2295	36%	37%	27%	23%	13%

African American	133	*	*	*	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	66	*	52%	32%	*	*
Asian	64	62%	20%	17%	23%	39%
Foster Care	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1424	27%	43%	29%	21%	6%
Homeless	24	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	839	24%	47%	29%	20%	4%
Limited English	78	*	*	*	*	*
Migrant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Military	15	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	11	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	142	*	78%	14%	*	*
Two or More Races	96	49%	22%	29%	31%	18%
White	501	58%	22%	20%	28%	30%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Grade Eight (8) Math- 2022

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	2648	13%	72%	15%	10%	3%
African American	173	*	80%	16%	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	105	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	33	*	*	*	*	*
Foster Care	12	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1779	11%	75%	14%	9%	2%
Homeless	62	*	*	*	*	*

Income Eligibility 1 & 2	1305	9%	79%	13%	7%	2%
Limited English	270	*	*	*	*	*
Migrant		*	*	*	*	*
Military	39	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	12	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	396	*	94%	3%	*	*
Two or More Races	128	19%	66%	15%	9%	10%
White	418	26%	57%	16%	18%	8%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Grade Eleven (11) ACT Math- 2022

Subgroup	Students Tested	Passed	Minimally	Partially	Proficient	Highly
All	2582	25%	47%	27%	13%	12%
African American	167	*	63%	22%	*	*
American Indian/Alaska Native	74	*	61%	27%	*	*
Asian	68	*	28%	19%	*	*
Foster Care		*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic/Latino	1614	17%	53%	30%	11%	6%
Homeless	30	*	*	*	*	*
Income Eligibility 1 & 2	981	16%	57%	28%	10%	6%
Limited English	146	*	82%	16%	*	*
Migrant	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Military	15	*	*	*	*	*
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	12	*	*	*	*	*
Students with Disabilities	246	*	85%	11%	*	*

Two or More Races	106	39%	33%	28%	20%	19%
White	541	49%	28%	23%	20%	29%

*Asterisk indicates ten (10) or fewer students

Furthermore, when DSS wrote the Charter application, DSS researched and calculated the baseline figures for ELA and Math using an average of all potential middle and high school feeder schools within a five-mile radius of DSS’s planned location to calculate the baseline scores for ELA and Math. According to the ADE report cards, the middle schools located within the target area achieved an average proficiency on the 2019 AzMERIT of 35% in Math and 38% in ELA, while high schools achieved an average proficiency score of 23% in Math and 32% in ELA.

Health, Poverty, and Crime

The physical and economic environment shapes a youth's health and can impact the odds of their success academically and personally. Poor health means more missed school days and lower academic attainment and may also contribute to financial and family stressors, which can then lead to crime. Unfortunately, not all Arizonans have equal access to the resources needed to be physically and economically healthy.

Health- Arizona

Subgroup	Year & Percent Rate
Low Birth-Weight Babies	2017- 7.5%
Teen Births	2017- 11%
Children Without Health Insurance	2018- 8.4%

Teen Pregnancy

The health, education, social, and economic chances of teen parents and their offspring are

affected both immediately and over time. Teenage mothers are more likely to live in poverty and often have lower educational levels. For the community as a whole, this can have significant social and financial repercussions.

With 27.0 births per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19, Hispanic or Latino teenagers had the highest birth rate among the races and ethnicities recorded in 2020. For Black or African Americans, the teen birth rate was 20.7, while it was 10.9 for whites.

In 2019, 24% of Arizonans in grades 9 through 12 reported being sexually active at the time (had sexual intercourse with at least one person, during the 3 months before the survey). Of those, 49% did not use a condom during their most recent sexual encounter, and 16.3% did not utilize any type of birth control.

Mental and Behavioral Health

Like physical activity, behavioral health is essential to one's overall well-being. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) lists substance use disorders, alcohol and drug addiction, severe psychological distress, suicide, and mental disorders as behavioral health concerns. Behavioral health issues can impact a person's health, survival, and performance, affecting the behavioral health of the person who lives with them daily and eventually the community.

Adolescent Mental Health

40.6% of Arizona high school students reported feeling depressed or hopeless nearly every day for two or more weeks, which prompted them to stop engaging in regular activities in

the year before the survey, according to the 2019 Arizona High School Risk Behavior Survey results. 20.9% of people had serious thoughts of trying suicide, 16.1% had plans for how they would do it, 10.4% had done it, and 4.2% had a suicide attempt that ended in an injury, poisoning, or overdose required medical attention. Children and adolescents aged 6 to 19 made up 7% of all suicide deaths. Research also shows that anxiety disorders are among the most common psychiatric diseases in children and adolescents and they can raise the risk of suicidal thoughts.

Trauma

The term "traumatic stress" often refers to a person's physical and mental reaction to situations that put their life, their bodily or psychological integrity, or the lives of those who are very important to them in danger. Traumatic stress in children and adolescents can be brought on by a variety of circumstances, such as:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse
- Neglect (failure to provide for a child's basic physical, medical, educational, and emotional needs)
- Interpersonal violence or victimization (e.g., assault, rape)
- Community violence (e.g., gang violence, riots, school shootings)
- Natural disasters
- Terrorism
- Traumatic loss or grief (e.g., murder of a parent or sibling, death of a parent in battle)
- Medical trauma (e.g., severe injury, life-threatening illness)
- Accidents

A child or adolescent who has experienced a number of traumas may grow more helpless with each new experience and more certain that the world is unsafe.

Adolescent Stress

In an article published by *Psychiatric Times*; *Teens in America: How the COVID-19 Pandemic is Shaping the Next Generation* it states that “While teenagers have been largely spared the ravages of COVID-19, the full picture of their experience is just beginning to emerge. The pandemic has exposed many teens to trauma and tested their fragile resilience. The school closures, canceled proms, and separation from friends seemed a small price to pay to save the lives of thousands. But in exchange, the 14- to 18-year-olds who represent the younger side of Generation Z were robbed of the capstone of their formative years. It created an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety among some teens, about both the future and their place in it.”

Adolescent Substance Use

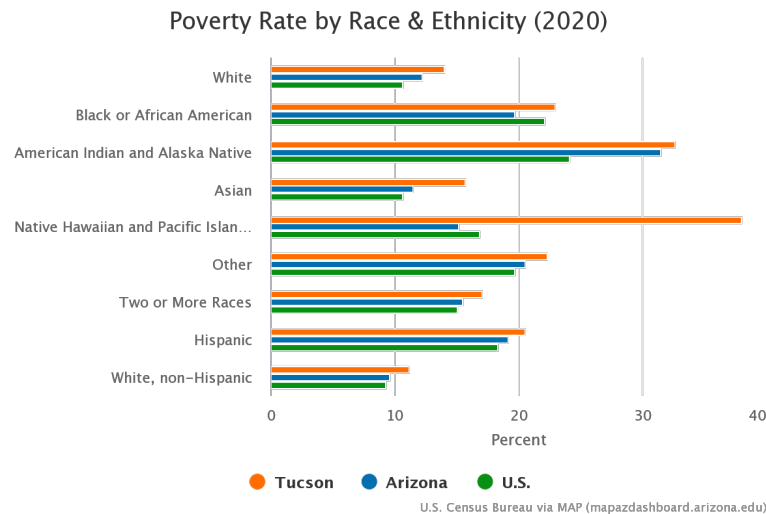
In Pima County, as opposed to 4.7% in Arizona, 6.8% of eighth, tenth, and twelfth-grade students smoked at least one cigarette every day in the 30 days before the survey.

Students in the eighth, tenth and twelfth grades also reported using alcohol 30 days before the survey, at a rate of 24.2% in 2018. In Arizona, one out of five students (20.2%) admitted to drinking. However, alcohol use among teenagers has declined for some time.

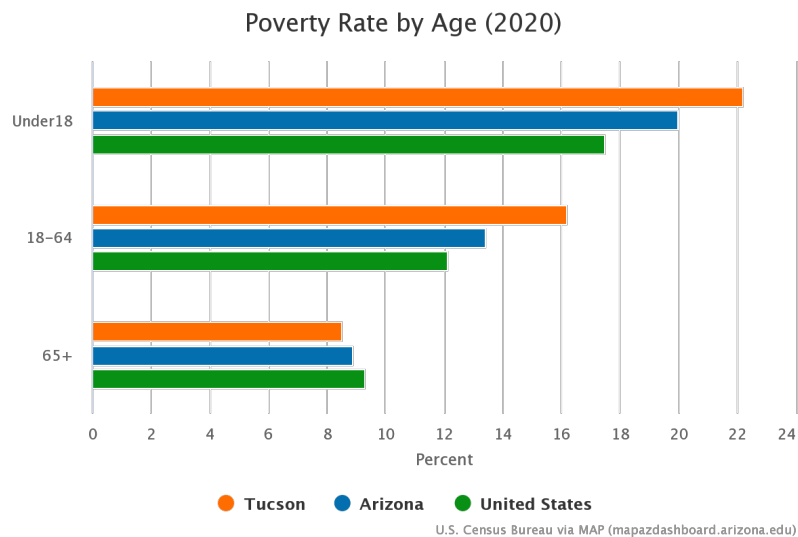
In Pima County, there is a rising trend in the number of eighth, tenth, and twelfth-graders who report consuming marijuana. While 16.3% of eighth, tenth, and twelfth-grade students in 2012 reported using marijuana once or more throughout the 30 days, 20.1% of those students reported doing so in 2018. Arizona (15.7%)

Poverty

Poverty, a possible behavioral and mental health factor, can also be a predictable metric for educational achievement. Tucson saw higher overall poverty rates in 2020 than the nation. The highest discrepancy was seen by native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, whose poverty rate was more than 20 percentage points higher. Additionally, Tucson's American Indian and Alaska Native communities had poverty rates that were significantly higher than the average.



Compared to the United States (17.5%), Tucson (22.2%) and Arizona (20%) had greater poverty rates among young people. In Tucson (16.2%) and Arizona (13.4%), the working-age population (18-64 years), the poverty rate was higher than the national average (12.1%).



Developing skilled and productive future workers can benefit an individual and the local economy, and maintaining high-quality school systems can attract a talented workforce to the area. In addition to the significant economic effects of developing a young, skilled workforce, sound school systems raise the desirability of an area from a quality-of-life perspective. Low student achievement means students may be ill-equipped to attend college or perform high-skilled labor. Low-performing schools also may indicate socio-economic challenges in the community, such as poverty.

Crime

The underlying factors that contribute to crime have been extensively studied and documented. Crime is primarily the result of numerous unfavorable social, economic, cultural, and family circumstances. The social and economic growth of communities, particularly at the neighborhood level, is significantly impacted by crime rates. In 2020, there were 473.5 violent crimes for every 100,000 people in the Tucson Metropolitan Statistical Area. That slightly decreased compared to the state average of 484.8 violent

offenses per 100,000 people. In terms of violent crimes per person, Arizona ranked second among the western states.

Juvenile Community- Arizona

Subgroup	Year & Percent Rate per 1,000
Children in Juvenile Detention Centers (Ages 8-17)	2018- 1.2%
Opportunity Youth (16-19 Year Olds Not Enrolled in School and Not Working)	2018- 4%

Potential leading factors to crime may include but are not limited to:

- Lack of educational opportunities
- Lack of financial resources
- Void of meaningful employment options
- Poor housing/home environment
- Dysfunctional family conditions
- Substance abuse
- Inequality
- Lack of support to families and neighborhoods
- Low value placed on children and individual well-being

To prevent crime, it is essential to understand its roots. Increasing social involvement and community engagement may reduce crime rates and improve quality of life. Therefore, early intervention to increase social and educational opportunities at an earlier stage may improve achievement outcomes, provide more economic security and provide meaning and purpose to an individual's life.]

- b) What are the needs including academic needs of the community supported by data? What are the major challenges the charter school would face? What is the plan to address those challenges?

[**Need 1:** A need for the economic opportunities that come with graduation and college attendance.

Need 2: A need for academic support in the areas of basic literacy and math skills, with extra supports for disadvantaged students, in order to close the achievement gap

Need 3: A need to improve the health and academic success of students by building social-emotional, interpersonal competencies.

Need #1: Economic opportunities that come with graduation and college attendance.

As evidenced by the data in question 5a above – both the data about our local Tucson community and about our current students – the population of students that Desert Sage will serve has a strong need for economic opportunity. The rate of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) qualification at our school is 73%, which is far above the local district averages, and places us in the category of “mid-high poverty school.” Our students come from families that are struggling economically. Many of them cannot afford gas to drive their children to school, and use public transit because currently it is their only option. They send their kids to Desert Sage in the hopes that we will be able to provide them with an education that will open doors of economic opportunity. A struggling single mom of one of our students said she sent her son to our school because she had read somewhere that colleges sometimes favor Waldorf graduates. Most of our students’ parents never graduated from college. 75% of them will be first generation college students. In 2019,

66% of Arizona high schools' graduating students enrolled in a two-year or four-year college. College completion rates are even lower. In 2015, only 27% actually finished a two- or four-year degree within six years. According to the latest Arizona Board of Regents annual Educational Attainment Report, during the pandemic, college admissions and completion rates declined. In 2020, only 46.3% enrolled in a college program.

Challenges associated with this need for economic opportunity via strong attendance and high graduation rates:

- **Poor Attendance**—Good attendance is necessary for academic success, social-emotional growth and health, and graduation progress. Many of our students are frequently absent due to illness, anxiety, and family stresses. While many of these absences are excused, we feel that many could nevertheless be avoided.
- **Lack of Transportation**—Students cannot attend school regularly without safe, affordable, and reliable transportation, which is a challenge for many of our students. Gas is expensive. City buses are currently free (due to pandemic measures), but this affordable transportation can be difficult due to bus frequency or number of transfers. It can also feel dangerous or intimidating, particularly for our female students and students in vulnerable subgroups. Our transportation survey found that 30% of the parents of our current students indicated that transportation to and from school is “very challenging” or “extremely challenging.”

- **Lack of Healthy Food and Sleep**—Many of our students do not have access to regular, healthy meals, which can make it difficult to arrive at school with the energy needed to succeed. Our FRL percentage is one indication of this need; however we also have received anecdotal reports from students and parents that support this need. Healthy food and snacks can be expensive. Many of our students also have poorly regulated sleep cycles (also as reported to us anecdotally by students and their parents). Parents report that students are overstimulated by screens, do not exercise enough, and do not have regular bedtimes. They arrive at school tired, which also makes it harder to learn. This is an area that is difficult for a school to influence.
- **Low Graduation Rate and High Dropout Rates**—our students are at high risk for dropping out, for the following reasons: low academic performance and a history of school failure, economic hardship and needs of the family, the threat of teen pregnancy or other life-altering events/emergencies that are more likely to occur in families with high poverty, social-emotional and interpersonal struggles and lack of capacity and resilience, and credit deficiencies.
- **Low College Attendance Rates**—We do not believe that college is the right path for all students, and we encourage students to pursue whatever vocational dreams feel right to them. However, we also understand that teenagers change their minds frequently and sometimes don't realize that they want to attend college until they are in their senior year. Sometimes by then it is too late, because they cannot meet Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) requirements and are credit deficient. We feel strongly that all students should be prepared for college so that they have the freedom to choose that path at any

time. We are in the process of planning an internship program, which will provide an “in” in the business world for our students. However, perhaps the greatest impact we can have on students’ long term economic opportunity comes from ensuring that they are able to graduate high school with the skills, knowledge, and confidence required to be successful in college.

Plans to address the challenges associated with the need for economic opportunity via strong attendance and high graduation rates:

- **Attendance** – We plan to address the challenge of frequent absences in several ways. Our **program of instruction** fosters healthy relationships and ensures that each student feels known and recognized. Our **advisory** program further deepens relationships and provides each student with a mentor who notices patterns, communicates with parents, and ensures that the student feels safe and connected at school. Our program of instruction is also inherently motivating and inspiring because it **addresses the whole student, involves direct experiences, leans heavily on artistic expression, and strives to connect its content to the children’s experience**. We are in the process of developing a **social-emotional learning program** at DSS which can give students skills that make school less daunting and anxiety-producing for them, as well as allowing them to form deeper friendships. We do not allow cell phones at school (we put phones in a **phone locker** at the beginning of each day), and we have already seen evidence that this practice deepens connections between students and the school. As one boy said, “At most schools I don’t talk for months, but here I made friends during the first week. It’s

so weird.” **Communication with parents** is also key. We call parents of absent students every morning to find out what’s happening and why they haven’t come to school.

- **Transportation** – We plan to address this challenge by securing grant funding to buy at least two small school buses or 15-passenger vans to transport students to and from school. Routes will be determined based on the needs of our population.
- **Healthy Food and Sleep** – We are committed to providing healthy breakfast, snacks, and lunch to all students, free of charge. Our **movement program** ensures that all students have a chance to move their bodies in healthy ways, which improves sleep and boosts concentration and energy for the school day. We are developing a curriculum for our health and wellness program, which will provide education for students to help them understand how and why to make healthy choices. We currently have two clubs – Rock Climbing and Hiking – which also help students develop healthy habits that we hope will improve the quality of life for our students, as well as their school performance.
- **Graduation/Dropout Rates** – Tucson’s dropout rate is 15%. Many of our students are at high risk for dropping out. The number one reason that students drop out is because they have not received the support they need to succeed at school. They have become disengaged. They have a pattern of school failure, and don’t feel hopeful or successful. The disengagement that precedes dropping out can be social and/or academic. Desert Sage School works on both of these fronts to promote retention and address this challenge. We increase graduation rates and prevent dropouts by **prioritizing**

relationships in all areas of the school, beginning with a personal greeting at the front door for all students. Our **cell phone locker, advisory program, robust after school programing and tutoring, and hands-on and experiential program of instruction** all provide opportunities for students to connect via shared experiences. Our restorative **discipline system** decreases suspensions and time out of class, and focuses on building capacities for emotional regulation in both teachers and students and in restoring relationships, rather than on punishments and rewards. We dedicate regular professional development (PD) time to this topic, to improving and refining our discipline practices. Our **Student Success Team** meets weekly to examine data around attendance and credit progression, to ensure that no student falls through the cracks of our system.

Academically, we have several processes in place to improve retention, which are further detailed below, but include a **focus on literacy, a Response to Intervention** process, and having a certified **Reading Specialist, a Special Education** teacher, and a seasoned **college recruiter/college counselor** on our staff. Our cycle of **continuous improvement in the areas of curriculum development, methods, and assessment; our use of data** to inform, evaluate, and revise our program of instruction; and our **research-backed, time-tested Waldorf approach** all work together to promote retention and graduation.

- **College Enrollment** – We plan to address the challenge of improving college attendance in several ways. Our Administrative Director is a former college admissions counselor for three liberal arts colleges, including public and private institutions and will lead the charge toward educating students and their families regarding college opportunities and the college search, admission, and financial aid process. As Desert Sage School aims to promote and encourage college attendance, it is critical that students develop the

academic and social skills while in high school required to be successful in college. We provide students with the academic support they need to build, develop, and reinforce those skills. Our **arts-rich, developmentally-aligned program of instruction** engages the whole student, connects them to their environments, provides in-depth experiences, and encourages mental connections and creativity. Low literacy skills are often at the root of academic failure in school, which is why we test all students' reading levels in the first month of school to **ensure that struggling readers are given support, and dedicate professional development time to providing teachers with strategies to increase literacy across the curriculum.** Our **focus on data**, including **data disaggregated by subgroup**, our **Student Success Team, RTI Process, Reading Specialist**, and **Special Education** teacher, also support academic development and growth. Additionally, our **advisory** program helps students develop social-emotional skills necessary to be successful in college. We will proactively work to familiarize students with the range of higher education options in the United States in several ways. Beginning in 2023, we will **invite college representatives to visit our campus** to present their institutions to our students. We will proactively **take students to local college fairs** and **visit colleges**, will **work with students of color to coordinate fly-in programs** which are typically offered for free by colleges nationwide. We will **educate students and their families about the college search, admission, and financial aid process** through workshops, which will include case studies. In students' junior and senior years, we will **walk every student through the college search, admission, and financial aid process, including scholarship applications**, and support students in securing the next best step after high school graduation. We are student-centered in our

approach in this process, and aim to set students up for success, whether they pursue higher education or other post-secondary opportunities.

Need #2: A need for academic support in the areas of basic literacy and math skills, with extra supports for disadvantaged students, in order to close the achievement gap.

The ACT test (Math and ELA) is used to measure academic proficiency in Arizona’s high school students. This test recently replaced AzMerit; most data was gathered during pandemic years, so we may need a few more years to accurately assess Arizona students’ competencies. However, preliminary data suggests that students in Pima County and in our “home” school district (Tucson Unified School District or TUSD) have a need for more academic support. In 2022, in Pima County, the percent of all students passing the ACT ELA was 40% and the percent passing the ACT Math was 29%. In TUSD the percent passing for ELA was 36% and 25% for Math. The data shows significant achievement gaps at both the county and district level, a few of which we have highlighted below.

	All Students	White Students	Hispanic Students	Students with Disabilities	Free and Reduced Lunch Qualifying Students
ELA ACT 11th Grade TUSD	36%	58%	27%	*	24%
ELA ACT 11th Grade PIMA COUNTY	40%	57%	29%	10%	27%
MATH ACT 11th Grade	25%	49%	17%	*	16%

TUSD					
MATH ACT 11th Grade Pima County	29%	47%	19%	5%	17%

The latest achievement data available in ADE for DSS’s current students is from 2019:

	DSS Percent Minimally Proficient	DSS Percent Partially Proficient	DSS Percent Proficient	DSS Percent Highly Proficient
Math AASA	39%	44%	11%	5%
ELA AASA	18%	39%	33%	11%

Challenges associated with the need for academic support in the areas of basic literacy and math skills, with extra supports for disadvantaged students, in order to close the achievement gap.

- **Low literacy levels** – Many students in Arizona are far behind their grade level peers in reading. Our Pedagogical Director (PD), has been testing the reading levels of incoming high school students for over a decade at another charter school in Tucson that serves a similar population (City High School). Each year, approximately 20-30% of all incoming freshmen at that school arrived reading two or more levels below grade level. Post pandemic, that number jumped to 50%. At Desert Sage, the Pedagogical Director administered the same school-wide quick word recognition reading test, and 42% of our students scored two or more levels below grade level, with 12% scoring at the 5th grade level or below.

We know that poor reading skills are at the root of most academic struggles, including in math. Comprehension issues, such as the ability to infer, summarize, or recount details, can be hard to isolate from basic decoding and vocabulary issues. In our experience, reading levels from a Pre-K to 3rd/4th grade level are usually the result of poor phonics or a lack of familiarity with common words, whereas reading levels from a 4th to 8th grade level are usually due to inadequate vocabulary. Students at this level are able to read common words, but struggle with uncommon and rare words. All struggling readers can become easily frustrated by high school level work, to the point of disengagement.

It is extremely challenging for teachers to raise achievement levels of all students in their class when the class has a wide range of abilities and needs, which have become quite distinct by the time they reach high school.

Elementary school teachers are often trained to locate and correct reading difficulties, but high school teachers generally lack this training, and often mistake low reading skills for other issues such as poor motivation, behavioral issues, lack of enthusiasm, or apathy. They attempt to inspire students to get excited about a reading that is at the student's frustration level.

The need to raise literacy levels in Arizona students is crucial. Adding more urgency to this issue is the inequity evidenced by the achievement gap. Students who are part of a demographic that is already disproportionately struggling with poverty, poor health

outcomes, food insecurity or discrimination are also disproportionately struggling with basic reading skills and vocabulary.

- **Low math skills**—We administered a test of basic math skills to all of our incoming freshmen. The results were in keeping with the trends in the data across Arizona. The majority of our students lacked proficiency in basic math skills, making the step forward into the study of algebra and geometry a daunting challenge. More than 75% of the group lacked a working understanding of fractions, and only 10% have a solid grip on their multiplication tables. Our clear task is to provide remedial instruction, making the steady progress needed to bring our students to grade level, while delivering a curriculum that allows students to master State Standards at their grade level. At this stage in their education, the sense of past failure or perceived inability is also a major hurdle on the road to success.

The issue of the achievement gap for disadvantaged students is also present in math. In Pima County 29% of all students in 11th grade passed the ACT Math test. 47% of white students passed, versus 19% of Hispanic students. Only 17% of low income students passed the test.

- **Attendance, healthy eating and sleeping habits, and social-emotional struggles.** These challenges to academic growth are detailed under Need # 1 above and Need #3 below, so we will refer the reader to those sections rather than repeating them here. However, we would like to acknowledge that they do present challenges to academic growth in literacy and math.

Plans to address the challenges associated with the need for academic support in the areas of basic literacy and math skills, with extra supports for disadvantaged students, in order to close the achievement gap.

- **Plan to address the challenges with literacy**– Our plan to address this challenge begins with data collection. To solve a problem, we must first collect all the evidence we can. As mentioned above, we have already tested all students at DSS with a quick word recognition test, which we used to find and flag students who score at least two levels below grade level. These students are given further testing, either by the Reading Specialist or Special Education Teacher. We also interviewed all students about their history of reading struggles, their self-perceptions as readers, and their plans for the future.

Literacy data is shared with the entire faculty. Raising reading scores is a whole school effort, and literacy data is always kept at the forefront of discussions about student success and achievement. The data is also disaggregated by subgroup to see what literacy gaps exist.

We dedicate our weekly, two-hour PD session to literacy at least once per quarter. At these PD sessions we:

- analyze reading data and use the data to evaluate and revise our curriculum, methods and assessments.
- Learn strategies to build vocabulary and increase comprehension in our subject area

- Read, research, and learn about the latest developments in adolescent literacy instruction
- Collaborate to share successes, problem-solve, and find new ways to close the literacy gap.

Our “Student Success Team” uses a multi-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to monitor and respond to any students who have been flagged as academically struggling via testing or by teacher surveys. This system ensures that struggling students are placed in increasingly intensive interventions until their needs are met. Literacy interventions can include whole-class vocabulary instruction and reading strategy instruction, while more intensive interventions include reading support classes, supplemental curriculum, push in/pull out tutoring and one-on-one or small group instruction, and even phonics instruction for students who need it.

DSS has a full time Special Education Director/Lead Teacher who teaches an inclusive support class (both Special Ed and non Special Ed students), where students with IEPs receive services and all students can get help with assignments and learn remedial reading skills. This teacher also supports all students in core classes and regularly meets with teachers to advise them on planning and instruction.

Our curriculum, with its developmental, vertical and horizontal alignment, connects with students’ age and stage and forges connections between the books they read and other areas of the curriculum, which increases accessibility. Developmental and vertical alignment serve as a form of scaffolding and allow multiple, repeating entry points to state standards,

while horizontal alignment reinforces concepts and deepens understanding. Developmental alignment refers to age-appropriate, developmentally-attuned curriculum that attempts to both mirror and support the developmental characteristics and needs of each grade level, and it is a key component of the Waldorf educational philosophy.

We also aim to foster the students' interest in reading by bringing them literature that speaks to their experience of the world. When they come to feel that the world of written language has relevance for them, we can more fruitfully expand the range of books we bring. A significant part of our task is to cultivate interest and enthusiasm in our students for the world they inhabit and the many ways it can be understood. Literacy is more than simply word recognition: it involves intentionally, gradually, cultivating a love of reading in a supportive atmosphere by selecting material that is culturally appropriate and connects to the students' own life story.

We are in the process of researching for-purchase, evidence-based supplemental curriculum such as Read 180 or KIPP, but our plan at this time is to develop a unique supplemental curriculum that is tailored to our specific curriculum and is aligned to the specific needs of our students.

- **Plan to address the challenges with mathematics**

As with literacy, we must begin with data collection. We have administered an in-house-designed basic math skills assessment to all students, and we have collected all available state data about our students' math skills and deficits, to help us define their specific needs. We are researching benchmark testing systems as well.

After examining the data, we begin the task of differentiation. Lessons are being presented to our whole group, after which the Pedagogical Director and Special Education teacher work with sub-groups to provide focused attention to students needing extra support. Also, we offer after-school tutoring two afternoons a week.

We regularly dedicate time in our Professional Development to differentiation strategies and our Special Education teacher presents on topics such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which can help support students who are struggling in math.

Our math Curriculum Team is in the process of researching and adapting supplemental math curriculum. We are also in the process of creating a math support class. Our supplemental curriculum will undergo the same process of selection, evaluation, and revision as our general curriculum.

Our “Student Success Team” and Response to Intervention (RTI) system monitors and responds to any students who have been flagged as academically struggling via testing or teacher surveys. This system ensures that struggling students are placed in increasingly intensive interventions until their needs are met. Math interventions can include whole-class remedial math instruction and “math literacy” or vocab instruction, while more intensive interventions include reading support classes, supplemental curriculum, push in/pull out tutoring, and one-on-one or small group instruction.

DSS has a full time Special Education Director/Lead Teacher who teaches an inclusive support class (both IEP and non IEP students), where students with disabilities receive services and all students can get help with assignments and learn remedial math skills. This teacher also supports all students in core classes and regularly meets with teachers to advise them on planning and instruction.

As mentioned above, one of the primary obstacles to student success is the antipathy toward mathematics that develops when a lack of mastery over the fundamentals makes each successive step in learning that much more difficult. To find the place where a learner has lost the trail is the first step. The more challenging remedial deed is restoring or initiating a sense of love for the subject, cultivating an interest in developing the art of clear, patient thinking that the study of mathematics is uniquely able to bring. Waldorf pedagogy gives DSS a great many tools to help our students warm to the study of number and ratio, both through the multi-sensory approach that speaks to the range of learning styles and through its reliance on caring, supportive teacher-to-student relationships.

- **Plan to address the challenges associated with attendance, healthy eating and sleeping habits, and social-emotional struggles.** As we stated above, to spare the reader from repetition, please see Need 1 and Need 3, above and below, to read about our plan to address these challenges.

Need #3: A need to improve the health and academic success of students by building social-emotional, interpersonal competencies.

Before the pandemic, teenagers in Arizona and across the country were already struggling with social-emotional issues that interfered with their schooling and caused suffering for themselves, their families, and their communities. According to the US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, “Mental health challenges in children, adolescents and young adults are real and they are widespread...Even before the pandemic, an alarming number of young people struggled with feelings of helplessness, depression and thoughts of suicide – and rates have increased over the past decade.”

Our school has only been open for two months, and already the need for support in this area has been made abundantly clear to us. We are in the process of selecting a tool to measure the social and emotional health and wellbeing of our students, but in the meantime we have plenty of qualitative data to support our identification of this as an area of need. Several of our students (8%) have 504 plans for anxiety, but three times as many parents and students have reported to us that they struggle with anxiety to the point that it interferes with their school attendance, ability to focus in class, and ability to remain in class.

During the pandemic, many of our students were homeschooled or zoom-schooled. They missed out on one of the most important time periods for social-emotional growth and learning: middle school. Many of us may wish that we could have skipped middle school, but this passage, with all its slings and arrows, is critical for healthy social-emotional development. Students in the middle grades work through interpersonal conflicts, develop social-emotional strategies, and cultivate resilience. We have observed that our students seem to behave as if they are still in middle school. They struggle with personal space and boundaries, making and keeping friends, removing their masks and showing their faces (many wear masks not out of fear of covid, but because they don't

want others to see their acne, etc.), self regulation, perfectionism, communication, and even making eye contact. In the first week of school, 5 of our 26 students had what they described as panic attacks.

We do not have data on the types or number of traumatic experiences our students have had, but over half of them have self-reported traumas/adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to us. Trauma impacts students' ability to be present, focus, and learn in school. According to the American Psychological Association, trauma can:

- Lower students' academic performance
- Lead to more school absences
- Increase the possibility of dropping out
- Result in more suspensions and expulsions
- Fundamentally impact a child's reading ability

There are many ways a school can give students skills that can help mitigate the effects of trauma and allow them to thrive and succeed at school. Establishing relationships of trust is a foundational first step that will help us to better understand the specific issues that bear on our students and their families.

Challenges associated with the need for social-emotional, interpersonal competencies include but are not limited to:

- **Students' lack of opportunities to form meaningful relationships with teachers and peers during the pandemic.**

We learn about ourselves in relationship with others, and in the prime years of social

development, our students found themselves in social isolation, experiencing the world through screens. The screen is a world that tells you what you want to hear and shows you what you want to see, and when it doesn't, allows you to dismiss, ignore or criticize without meaningful consequences or feedback. How to be in society with others is a skill that must be consciously addressed and nurtured.

- **High levels of trauma and adverse childhood experiences among students**

In addition to the recent severe, general trauma of the pandemic, a significant percentage of our student population have experienced rough passes in their personal and family lives, some very rough. Can we be the calm, solid presence they need?

- **Students' and families' lack of access to information about health, sleep, and emotional regulation strategies**

Student and family education is an important element of building a healthy community. We strive to create an environment that inspires lifelong learning in our community through family education nights and community events. Many families lack access to information about health, sleep, and emotional regulation strategies that are rooted in childhood development. Helping parents and informing them about our approach to these important life skills is a factor that can help students to go on to “achieve their own, unique aspirations.”

- **Our lack of a counselor and additional support staff**

The need for a competent and caring professional who is trained in trauma and counseling has become apparent. As the students step out of the pandemic years of isolation and zoom-fatigue back into the world of personal interactions, connections, and relationships, the necessity for one-on-one guidance with a professional, alongside the other intentional SEL elements of the curriculum and school, is clear.

- **Teachers’ lack of training in the areas of restorative discipline and classroom management and trauma-informed pedagogy**

Many of our students suffer from multiple adverse childhood events that were traumatic.

While we want to build competencies in our students, we also recognize that our teaching staff needs to have these same competencies in order to be able to effectively help students.

If a teacher is easily triggered or angered, for instance, it will be difficult for him to help his student learn to self-regulate, not having mastered this skill himself.

Plan to address the challenges associated with the need for social-emotional, interpersonal competencies include but are not limited to:

- **Our curriculum**—our curriculum is holistic and relationship centered, which means that teachers consider the students’ need for connection in every lesson. This is part of our philosophy of “head, heart, and hands.” We know that when the affective domain is activated, students are more likely to “own” their learning, because it connects to their emotional as well as their cognitive “self.” Our approach is also experiential, which means that students are doing things together. This simple act of working with a partner to do something that has a real-world component has the effect of helping people forge connections, problem-solve together, collaborate, and bond through shared experience. Field trips also help students develop SEL competencies.
- **Our cell phone policy**—we have already seen the benefit of removing phones from our school. (As stated in other parts of this application, we have a cell phone locker, and students put their phones in the locker for the day ten minutes before classes begin. They leave them there until the end of the school day.) We plan to include questions about our phone policy in our upcoming student and parent survey; however, observational data

suggests that students *don't* like the policy, but simultaneously report much higher than average levels of connection to peers and much higher engagement with school. Parents are in full support of the policy.

- Our **supplemental SEL curriculum**—in our advisory program (see below), we engage in activities that build relationships and help students develop social-emotional competencies. We are also in collaboration with a social worker and meditation teacher who is creating an SEL curriculum that is tailored to the specific needs of our students (as determined by teacher reports and surveys).
- Our **advisory program**— According to The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) there are core competence areas that SEL centers around. “The five broad, interrelated areas of competence are: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.” Our advisory program gives the opportunity to explore these five topics throughout the year in small groups. Students form a ‘school family’ whom they stay with for the duration of their high school career. Through a combination of formal exercises and informal discussions advisors and advisees discover and work their way through the intricacies of the five broad areas.
- **Parent education**—We will host parent community-building nights with guest speakers who can help parents navigate challenges by presenting them with information about their child’s developmental stage and needs, healthy brain development, the importance of rhythm, and tips for helping teens eat and sleep well.
- **Professional development for teachers**—At our school we provide training for teachers in trauma-informed practice, and we also use a lot of the same techniques on ourselves. For instance, we engage in meditation and artistic practices together and learn about techniques

for self regulation in the classroom during our PD time when we study restorative discipline and classroom management together.

- **Counselor**—as soon as our budget allows, we plan to hire a school counselor who can provide more targeted interventions and support for students who need it most.

Our restorative discipline system—Our discipline system is based on restoring productive relationships between students, or between students and teachers. We avoid the use of punishments and rewards as a motivation for positive behavior, and instead try to help students understand natural consequences, while giving them the tools to develop empathy and understand one another better. We also collect data in this area, and are committed to using a data-responsive approach to this area of school culture.]

- c) Who are the existing and potential community partners and how will they be involved in the planning and implementation of the school?

[Adolescents are seeking and building a sense of self; they're developmentally preoccupied with issues related to their identity, their relationships, and what it means to be a human being in the modern world. While all of us are on that path, our students are facing these questions for the first time, without the experiences or the resources of adults. Therefore, they benefit greatly from a wider, caring community that supports their journey.

The instant interconnectedness of our era that has made adolescence so complex and challenging also has the potential of giving today's students a way of affecting positive change in a wider radius than ever before. This can happen if the young people in our care learn to look outward into their world in ever widening circles – to take an interest in the way the greater community functions.

DSS is committed to forming durable relationships with businesses, agencies, and individuals in greater Tucson, that will offer our students the chance to see beyond their immediate horizon, and acquire first hand experiences of the many ways a person can meaningfully engage with the world.

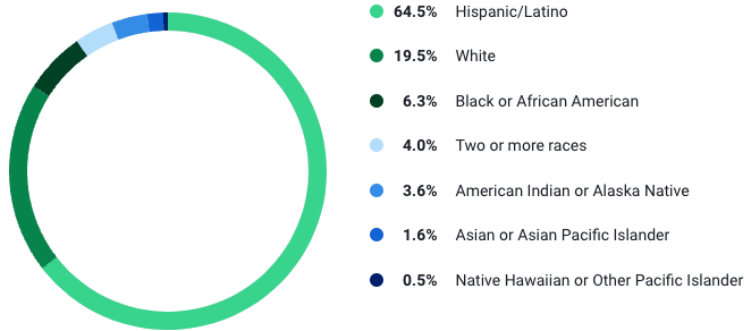
To further demonstrate DSS's understanding of our Target Community, DSS has conducted additional research to support the need for community engagement in the following ways,

Attendance, Dropout, Absenteeism

10.9% of school-age children in the U.S. attended private schools in 2020, compared to 89.1% of those who attended public schools. Tucson (89.7%) and Arizona (91.2%) had slightly higher public school attendance rates, of which 24% were Charter schools. This demonstrates that Charter schools have seen a significant rise in popularity in the last two decades.

DSS researched the largest district (Tucson Unified School District) serving approximately 47,000 students that surrounds DSS's location. There, their enrollment demographics are 64.5% Hispanic/Latino students, 19.5% White students, 6.3% Black students, 1.6% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander students, 3.6% American Indian or Alaska Native students, and 0.5% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students enrolled in Tucson Unified District schools. Furthermore, 4% of students identify as belonging to two or more races, and 0% have not indicated their race or ethnicity.

Enrollment by Diversity



Students on free or reduced price lunch	0.9%
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Students learning English (average)	9.4%
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Historically, schools in America have failed to meet the academic needs of students of color, and of students from economically disadvantaged families. This failure is documented by the disproportionate representation of these populations in the Bottom 25%. Dropout rates in Tucson suggest that our target population is less likely to graduate from high school.

Data collected from the mentioned district depicts dropout rates from the most recent data provided by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) to be an average of 5.3% as demonstrated above in 5a. Tucson and South Tucson’s dropout rates are 15% and 36%, respectively.

According to research, “Pre-pandemic, the rates of chronic absence were stable in Arizona at about 14 percent. During the pandemic, with the physical closure of school buildings in spring 2020, the chronic absence rates declined to 9 percent as schools stopped reporting attendance. This may or may not represent improved attendance for any individual student. In 2021, the

state’s chronic absence rate exceeded pre-pandemic levels and was up to 22 percent. Compared to previous years, the average number of days absent in a given month increased after the outbreak of the pandemic and a higher percentage of students reached the cut-off for being identified as chronically absent earlier in the school year.”

Transportation Needs of Our Current Families

Many lower-income neighborhoods in the Tucson metropolitan area are far from the city's core, making it challenging for many families to travel within this area. Though DSS is centrally located, transportation is still a barrier. To help us understand our families' needs, we surveyed the parents of our current students regarding transportation. The result is as follows:

- 85% said they would take advantage of transportation
- 50% said transportation provides a financial burden
- 50% said their student was late to school due to a transportation issue
- 35% said their student missed school due to a transportation issue

In light of this information, DSS feels that offering transportation to and from a few key destinations in the broader Tucson area will significantly benefit our present students and the recruitment and retention of new ones.

After School Program and Parent Participation

High-quality afterschool programs, according to research, enhance students' academic performance, attendance, and social and emotional growth. Research has indicated that after-school programming helps students' social and academic achievements, but success also

depends on a few critical factors. Students must receive a consistent dose of afterschool programs, well-trained staff, and high-quality programming in order to completely benefit from all of its advantages. The most thorough national and state-specific analysis of how kids and youth spend their after-school hours has been offered by Afterschool Alliance since 2004. One of the most important conclusions from their 2020 America After 3PM report is the ongoing demand for afterschool activities. According to their data, three kids are waiting to enroll in a program for every child who is currently enrolled. That comes out to about 25 million kids who cannot participate in after-school programs. Program cost, availability, and accessibility or transit issues are listed as impediments.

Research from the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education shares that “no matter their income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior and adapt well to school.” The research also states that “the most accurate predictors of student achievement in school are not family income or social status, but the extent to which the family . . . becomes involved in the child’s education at school.”

DSS is committed to using data gathered from this application process, data collected during our Charter authorization process, and ongoing data gathered from the parent, student, and community surveys to inform the decisions and creation of our programs.

Community Partnerships

To promote the development of strong community partnerships, DSS has begun forming relationships with various organizations and community members to deepen our students learning and experiences as well as supporting DSS's leadership team in the following ways:

Funding and Financial Management

Community Donors: DSS has developed and continues to cultivate partnerships with individuals and institutions in our community who believe in our team, mission, and pedagogy to and back DSS with generous donations. Due to their support, DSS was able to partner with the individuals and organizations listed below, secure our facility, hire our team, and open our doors. DSS is committed to growing our donor base to ensure we can offer the best experiences and opportunities to our staff, faculty, students, and their families.

Grant Support: DSS is committed to securing sustainable funding to ensure the continuation of our school and the services and experiences we provide for our students and their families. Therefore, partnering with expert grant writers is a top priority.

Fundraising Support: DSS's board partnered with Clyde Kunz and Associates LLC to conduct a feasibility study to help DSS better understand the reach they may have for cultivating donor contributions for capital campaigns or program support. The results of the study are an integral part of DSS's strategic planning. DSS also partnered with Alexander and Carillo Consulting who provided the Board with expert advice and training on effective strategic planning and fundraising goals.

Budget Management: DSS has partnered with Dynamic Duo Business Solutions LLC for support with:

- Financial Reviews and Assessments
- Budgeting & Forecasting
- Financial Reporting
- Recruiting Strategies
- Bookkeeping

DSS has also partnered with Aspire Business Consultants to ensure DSS meets state and federal compliance related to budget, audits, and grant management.

Operational

Operating System: DSS is in partnership with Barrio + CO, a local business support service dedicated to collaborating with business owners and executives to solve operational challenges using proven frameworks and methodologies. DSS's Board had a year-long training in the Entrepreneurial Operating System known as EOS. DSS benefited greatly from the EOS methods, which were critical to the success of our organization. For example, EOS guided DSS to identify our teams' strengths and weaknesses, define who is accountable, cultivate healthy communication and transparency, create an operational rhythm, set goals, track and measure progress, and assess, analyze, plan, and implement our short-term and long-term goals. Due to EOS, DSS's small team remained on track and accomplished daunting tasks in a short amount of time.

Mentor Schools: Successful Public Waldorf high schools, such as Credo High School and George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science, support DSS's leadership team with mentorship. They provide guidance and advice on the following:

- Implementing the program of instruction
- Best practices
- Operational matters pertaining specifically to Waldorf education

In addition, they have been integral in supporting DSS with the nuances of marrying public and Waldorf education.

Volunteer Professionals: DSS has partnered with the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona through its Catchafire program, which provides nonprofit support services. Catchafire is a platform where nonprofits can engage with professionals who volunteer their time to support the development and continuity of an organization. By partnering with Catchafire, DSS has saved nearly \$40,000 in professional service fees. Areas of support and development Catchafire volunteers have provided DSS include:

- Fundraising
- Visual branding advice
- Marketing strategy
- Mission, vision, and values

- Time management coaching
- Organization storytelling
- Visual Brand Guide
- Social media set-up
- Website update
- Email layout and template
- Flexible human resources support
- Customer Database (CRM) set-up

Risk Management: DSS has partnered with ENPICA, an Education and Nonprofit Insurance Company, to provide DSS with ongoing risk management training ensuring DSS continues to provide a safe space for anyone who walks through DSS's doors.

Employment Support: DSS has partnered with Focus HR to limit compliance risks and help DSS with the growing complexities of employment law. Focus HR's services include payroll management, employee benefit support, workers' compensation support, retirement planning, and human resource outsourcing. Partnering with Focus HR allows the staff and faculty to feel secure in their positions and supported if needs or concerns arise.

Policy Development: DSS partnered with Osborn Maledon Attorneys at Law to help DSS develop a policy manual that adheres to regulatory compliance and education law. The individual DSS worked with to create the policy manual has extensive knowledge and expertise with Charter schools and state compliance as they once served on the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools. With their support, DSS adopted a policy manual that aligns perfectly with

our organization’s mission, vision, and values. Areas the policy manual addresses include but is not limited to:

- Governing Board
- School Finances
- School Safety
- School Administration
- Employees
- Special Education and Section 504
- Students
- Community Relations
- Title IX—Sexual Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures
- Conflict of Interest Policy

Curricular

Guest Instructors and Parent Volunteers: Engaging with guest instructors and parent volunteers provides DSS with a more affordable option to broaden students' learning. It offers opportunities and exposure to different cultures, trades, talents, and skills. Currently, guest instructors support the music and movement programs teaching music theory and Capoeira, a Brazilian form of martial arts. Guest instructors spend four to eight weeks with the students to ensure the best experience possible. Other subject areas that guest instructors and parent volunteers will support include but are not limited to:

- Main Lesson
- Science
- Art
- Theater

- Language Arts
- Math
- Life Skills
- Gardening

The music and movement classes mentioned above are in partnership with the non-profit organization Tucson Capoeira and local small business Musical Colors.

Mentorships and Field Study: Long-term field study projects of a student's choosing allow students, and their community mentors, to explore and study their chosen subject in depth enough to enable student learning and vocational development and acquire practical skills or experience. Furthermore, they provide opportunities for students to form professional relationships with their mentors, allowing them to improve interpersonal communication, reach past their comfort zones, and develop their self-confidence.

The components of the study include:

- A mentor relationship
- A progress journal
- A research paper
- A presentation display
- A physical project or media demonstration
- A speech delivered to the school community

In traditional Waldorf high schools, the long-term studies are held in grade 12. However, DSS is considering including grade 10 students, on a smaller-scale, as most traditional Waldorf high schools have feeder schools whose students have worked towards developing and presenting long-term research projects. DSS's students may not have had much experience. Therefore, providing them with a smaller-scale opportunity may provide the exposure needed to improve the experiences and outcomes of their grade 12 (senior) projects.

Internships: DSS is committed to offering opportunities for grade 11 students to engage in internships with local community partners to experience different career fields. Internships will allow students to explore/discover their unique interests and aspirations, set future goals, plan their next steps, and develop a viable plan. Backed by DSS's college and career preparation support, DSS will provide students with the best possible options that inspire students' higher education and/or career goals.

Local Theater Collaborations: DSS engages with local theaters such as Scoundrel and Scamp, The Rogue, and Arts Express to collaborate with student productions and performances. In addition, students will have direct involvement working with theater mentors: stage managers, actors, costume designers, set designers, acting coaches, and directors, providing them with practical theater experience.

Recreation Clubs: DSS's Board is actively fundraising to provide scholarships to students who want to participate in a recreation program, such as DSS's Indoor Rock Climbing Club in partnership with Arizona High School Climbing Association. Unfortunately, due to the high percentage of disadvantaged students, many of them have not had the resources to take

advantage of the fantastic recreation programs Tucson has to offer. Therefore, the Board is committed to creating equal opportunities for these students.

Community Gardens: DSS partnered with Mission Garden, a living agricultural museum of the Sonoran Desert, which enabled DSS to offer an informational session about our initiative before we were charter approved or secured a location. Now, DSS would like to deepen the partnership by providing students with opportunities to volunteer at the garden or attend an education-focused workshop that offers new perspectives on Tucson's land and local vegetation. In addition, DSS plans to continue holding community info sessions as part of our marketing and outreach campaign to reach parts of southwest Tucson.

Professional Development

Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (APWE): APWE aims to support schools in their sustained growth and to deepen their practice. They promote, provide assistance, and collaborate with its members to develop robust Public Waldorf schools through continuous guidance in self-reflection, peer evaluation, and effective action based on the school's needs and in alignment with the school's mission and APWE's seven core principles.

Teacher and Leadership Trainings: As the growth of Public Waldorf Schools continues, Waldorf training centers and universities are expanding their training programs to support the needs of traditional, public, and Waldorf-inspired high schools. Our current training partners are the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, Antioch University, and the Center for Anthroposophy.

Each institution offers a combination of training in theory and practice for educators and leaders. DSS is committed to providing our school leaders and faculty with quality professional development and training. Therefore, DSS will dedicate a substantial amount of CSP funds to professional development and training to ensure they have the best support possible for their success.

Special Education Support: DSS has partnered with the educational assistance program EDvance, which aims to equip teachers with the tools they need to raise the academic achievement of students with disabilities. EDvance offers professional development and provides a space where professional learning communities can come together to support one another.

Waldorf Community Support: Arizona Council of Waldorf Education's (ACWE) goal is to bring inspiration, collaboration, and support to the governing boards and leaders of Arizona's traditional, public, and Waldorf-inspired schools. Annually, representatives from each school come together to support one another in their school's growth. In addition, each school has an opportunity to share its triumphs and challenges and receive support from other successful programs.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ): DSS is engaging in partnership with Alma Partners, whose goal is to help organizations bridge the gap that sometimes opens up between ideals and actions. They help organizations leverage the current social and cultural moment to strategize, transform, and more deeply align their practices with their fundamental values so

they may continue to thrive. Alma Partners offers DEIJ professional development workshops and support with,

- Admissions and enrollment practices
- Marketing, communications, and community engagement
- DEIJ curriculum
- Strategic planning

DSS is also engaging in a partnership with the nonprofit organization Youth on Their Own (YOTO). The organization's program focuses on financial assistance, basic human needs, and guidance to ensure that youth experiencing homelessness have the resources necessary to stay in school and graduate. DSS looks forward to working with YOTO for their advice and support on how DSS can best support homeless youth and collaborate in forming a plan, with their expertise and experience, to help improve graduation rates overall.

Recruitment and Retention

Students: Tucson is well-known for its expansive and breathtaking murals. Before DSS's opening, a parent volunteer helped to provide an opportunity for the founding students of DSS to collaborate on an artistic project. They organized a mural painting with a founding board member. Enrolled and prospective students gathered on numerous weekends to design, map out, and paint the mural on DSS's building. It was a joy-filled successful project that paved the way for the relationships DSS aims to cultivate in support of its school culture, student

recruitment, and retention. The goal of DSS is to continue collaborating with its parent community and greater Tucson to ensure DSS becomes a model school for community collaborations.

Teachers: DSS has engaged in a potential partnership with the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) Andover, whose mission is to address the lack of diversity in teaching faculties across the nation. They recruit students of color and scholars committed to diversity, counsel them through the graduate school application process, and advocate for their higher education funding to ensure they have the best chance of completing their education and securing their future jobs. As a result, graduates have successfully secured jobs as K-12 teachers, principals, counselors, professors, university administrators, and leaders. Partnering with IRT allows DSS to recruit diverse teachers passionate about closing the achievement and opportunity gaps.

Feeder Schools and Higher Education: DSS is committed to partnering with potential feeder schools, local and state universities, and community colleges. Partnering with likely feeder schools provides middle school students with opportunities to meet the leaders and students of DSS. Engaging in school visits and high school fairs is crucial to DSS's marketing plan to recruit students. Partnering with local and state college education departments allows DSS to engage with potential future teachers, school leaders, counselors, interns, board members, and guest instructors, ensuring DSS has a robust talent pool to meet the needs of our succession plans.

Facility

Facilities acquisition: As DSS enrollment increases, the search for a new location will be a critical step in ensuring we can continue growing. Therefore DSS has partnered with the Facility Resource Center (FRC), a nonprofit organization offering free services to Charter schools in search of and acquiring their next locations. FRC supports DSS by strategically identifying the best possible location for our next phase based on data of the school and the surrounding community. FRC also offers guidance and support with possible funding resources to ensure DSS acquires a space within its financial means. FRC was a great resource for DSS in the planning years and we look forward to continuing our partnership with them.

The Colliers in Arizona was instrumental in securing DSS's current location. The agent we had the pleasure of working with had real estate expertise and Charter experience as he sits on the board of another Charter school. The agent went far beyond their call of duty and supported DSS through our charter application, facility search, lease negotiation, and property acquisition processes. In addition, they helped DSS understand the nuances of Charter realty and how to navigate and acquire what's suitable for DSS; we will continue to partner with this Colliers agent as we move into a facility expansion phase.

Charter School Capital is currently DSS's facility and lease management group acting as a liaison between DSS and the building owner. They have become a reliable support resource helping DSS improve its understanding of the 'Charter world' and provide essential quarterly feedback to our leadership team. They support us with our building management, but they also help us by providing valuable marketing, recruitment, and enrollment advice. Their support has been a source of reassurance and validation; we are fortunate to be in partnership with them.

Other Community Partnerships

DSS is actively and continuously looking for potential partners to support our school's mission, enhance our students' experiences, and provide opportunities to improve student achievement.

DSS is fortunate to be a part of a community that prides itself on positive change. Other partnerships we are currently engaged with or are engaging with are:

Current

- Arizona Charter Schools Association: charter support, training, and resources.
- Desert Sky Community School K-5: collaborations, support and resources.
- Tucson Waldorf School K-8: collaborations, support and resources.

Engaging

- Randolph Community Center (RCC): sports facilities.
- University of Arizona: museums and resources.
- Spadefoot Nursery: gardening support and resources.
- Nonprofits: service work

Providing Educational Choice

Arizona is a leader in school choice, with five available options for parents and students to choose from for their education: public schools, charter schools, private schools, homeschools, and online learning. Traditionally, U.S. Waldorf schools operated in the private sector, but the number of public schools inspired by the Waldorf approach is growing fast, fueled partly by the

charter school movement and the desire for unique approaches to teaching and learning.

"Waldorf education is becoming contagious," says Betty Staley, a veteran Waldorf educator who has trained public school teachers at Rudolf Steiner College. "A lot of people feel there's got to be another way in education."

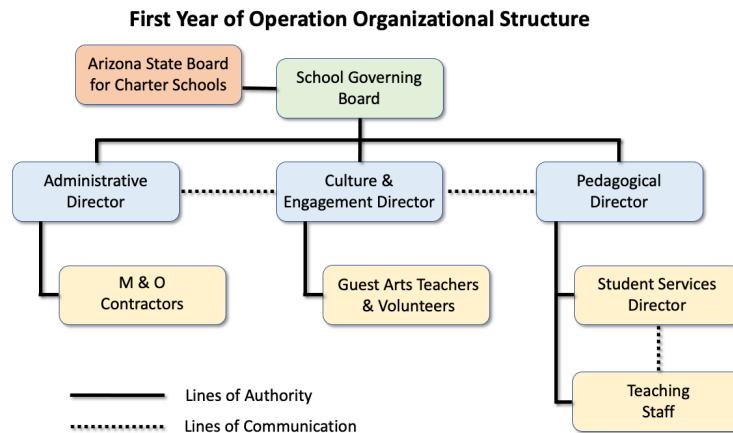
"Waldorf-inspired approach differs from many other public schools in the extent to which Waldorf schools extend their focus beyond providing students with specific knowledge and skills to prepare them for college and career, to also prepare children for meaningful lives in the broadest sense by developing them for physically, socially, artistically, and cognitively meaningful engagement with the world." DSS will be the only high school in Tucson inspired by the Waldorf approach, providing a choice for students who have yet to find the 'right' education option. Our academic curriculum, with opportunities to bridge achievement gaps, encourages engagement in learning through rigorous academics brought to life through exploration, inquiry, and real-life experience.]

D. Governance – Total points possible: 30 points

1. Describe how the charter school will be governed and managed. An organizational structure chart shall be submitted.

[

The organizational chart below outlines areas of responsibility held by the various positions in year one (1) and how those will impact the school's operations. This section also details DSS's organizational oversight.



ASBCS

The mission of the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools (ASBCS) is: “To improve public education in Arizona by sponsoring charter schools that provide quality educational choices.”

Through legislation in 1994, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools was created. The [Arizona State] Board [for Charter Schools] is a charter authorizer responsible for overseeing public charter schools that operate under a contract with the Board. Overseeing more than 550 charter schools, the Board is the largest charter school authorizer in Arizona and is one of the nation’s largest independent state authorizers. In support of our mission, the following are the ASBCS’s three strategic goals:

- Promote the ASBCS mission and continue to improve its authorizing practices to ensure quality educational choices are available to Arizona students and families
-
- The ASBCS will continue to monitor and improve its Performance Frameworks and processes in order to meet the changing needs of the educational landscape and to ensure compliance and high expectations of the charter schools it authorizes
- To provide increased support, collaboration, and communication to the ASBCS charter holder portfolio and charter school community

Having oversight from ASBCS ensures that DSS will adopt a framework that provides evidence of DSS's performance, improvement, and compliance following state and federal laws and statutory responsibilities.

The school's Governing Board reports directly to ASBCS and is the point of contact for ASBCS.

Governing Board

The school's Governing Board ("Board") supports a governance philosophy that is ethical, strategic, ambitious, and deliberative by establishing broad policies based on DSS's mission, vision, principles, and statutory obligation. In addition, the Board strives to have each member bring value to the school through active participation, to sustain cooperation and collaboration between school leadership, faculty, and the Board, and to seek input from all stakeholders, including staff, students, parents/guardians, and the wider community.

To ensure DSS's Board can fulfill its compliance, legal, and statutory requirements and support the school's mission, the Board's members will represent diverse cultures, skills, and backgrounds adequate for effectively governing DSS. DSS's Board will follow our non-discrimination policy in all facets of filling board vacancies and strives, as is practical, to be free from the domination of members of the same affiliation, including by birth or marriage.

DSS's nondiscrimination policy is as follows:

The Board does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), national and ethnic origin (ancestry), sexual orientation, disability, sex, or gender expression, disability, marital status, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include but are not limited to hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to

providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, students and their families, volunteers, subcontractors, and vendors.

To address the Board's needs, the current officers/members will develop a matrix of skills needed to address open board positions/seats. Key skill sets vital for the Board include but are not limited to experience and understanding of Waldorf pedagogy, education, fundraising, finance, governance, human resources, legal, and advocacy. To meet these needs, the Board will strive to fill member positions/seats by recruiting within the DSS and Tucson communities. Furthermore, the Board supports DSS by ensuring adequate resources are aligned to meet established goals. Support is also provided by recognizing and encouraging excellence throughout DSS and its leadership team. The leadership team reports directly to the Board, and the Pedagogical Director is the school's representative on the Board who reports on the conduct, affairs, and operations of the school.

Leadership Team

To oversee the daily management of the school, the Board hired and delegated responsibilities to an Administrative Director (AD), Pedagogical Director (PD), and Culture and Engagement Director (CED). The AD, PD, and CED comprise a unique and collaborative leadership team known as the L3. DSS's decision to hire a three-person leadership team stemmed from the overwhelming responsibilities school leaders take on and learning from other schools about how there is a lack of support for school leaders in traditional models. DSS's Board saw this as an opportunity to think creatively to ensure DSS will have every chance to succeed. Employing a leadership team that will also step into other roles, such as teaching and social and emotional support provided DSS's Board with the assurance of achieving the best possible outcome.

The L3 team is ultimately responsible for the school's overall success – providing the school community with operational management and leadership consistent with Waldorf principles, and ensuring the program mission, vision, and goals are implemented and met. They are the primary faces of the school, responsible for representing the school to its constituents, including faculty and staff, parents/guardians, students, alums, neighbors, and the broader community. The L3 team is responsible for overall communication with the community, ensuring that parents/guardians, faculty, staff, and Board feel connected to the school. They ensure that there are open lines of communication, as well as monitor and address any emergent community school issues in a timely manner.

The essential responsibilities and oversights of the L3 team include but are not limited to the following:

Administrative Director (AD)

The AD ensures the safety and well-being of all students and employees under the school's jurisdiction, supervises the operation and maintenance of all school facilities, manages and implements all emergency protocols and procedures, and manages and reports all legal matters including any allegations of abuse, neglect, or crimes committed. Duties include:

Compliance

- Holds ultimate responsibility for the school's adherence to state standards and compliance with the Charter.

- Works in collaboration with the PD, CED, and SSD to ensure robust classrooms, educational programs, and pedagogical policies and growth meet the needs of students and families and comply with standards.
- Submits reports to external agencies as required by the state.

Budget Oversight

- Manages all areas related to business and budget, ensuring annual audits are conducted and are in compliance with the state and Charter.
- Ensures state funds are properly managed and used by following the guidelines set by State and Federal agencies.
- Oversees any fundraising campaigns in collaboration with the Board.
- Manages the School's business operations and financial health, and assures adherence to policy, procedure, and program goals.
- Develops a budget in collaboration with the accountant and Board treasurer, and approves expenditures.

Contractual Management

- Steers Professional Development and training for the operational and management staff.
- Oversees, manages, and hires all contractual services including but not limited to: custodial, facilities, IT management, website maintenance, and any business, financial, or operational support.

- Makes recommendations and decisions about the need for additional contractual services.

Personnel development

- Collaborates with the PD, CED, Student Services Director (SSD), and Teachers to define the teaching and non-teaching positions needed to implement the School's program and ensures the selection and employment of competent personnel to fill positions as needed.
- Oversees and acts on hiring and terminating personnel in consultation with HR the Board, PD, CED, and Teachers when this applies to faculty.
- Collaborates with the PD and CED in all areas related to the growth of the School.

Enrollment/Records Management

- Supervises all areas related to enrollment, student and staff files, record keeping, managing the student information system (SIS), and ensuring the SIS is promptly and adequately maintained, updated, and kept in working order.
- Will use the SIS to run data reports, download data on AzMerit/ACT scores, GPAs, attendance rates, semester grades, and any reports or documentation related to the students.

Grants

- Oversees all matters on grants and ensures written content is aligned with the school's mission, vision, values, core principles, and program goals.

- Oversees and manages the budgeting and use of all grant funding in collaboration with the accountant, business consultant, and auditor.

The management and operational contractors report directly to the Administrative Director.

Pedagogical Director (PD)

The PD is ultimately responsible for seeing that the mission and core principles of DSS are reflected in the program and curriculum. The PD is the pedagogical voice of the school, providing strategic pedagogical leadership to the faculty and working with the parent/guardian community to ensure the educational needs of each student are met. The PD is responsible for maintaining the ongoing relations with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (APWE) and other educational groups as needed for professional development and improvement of the school's pedagogy. The PD is responsible for monitoring student, teacher, and faculty development, progress, and mood in the classroom through informal contact and classroom visits. The PD is responsible for providing assistance to parents/guardians with questions and concerns about academics and pedagogy. The task of the PD is to support and develop Teachers to become the best Public Waldorf Teachers they can. Specifically, the Pedagogical Director manages:

Faculty Oversight

- Set, implement, and review pedagogical goals to support the Strategic Plan adopted by the school Board.
- Lead and support Teachers in caring for student relationships within their classrooms.

- Provide professional learning community (PLC) time for Teachers to bring student work and curriculum to the group for reflection and feedback to help Teachers better align curriculum with learning outcome goals.
- Provide input that develops the quality of teaching and standards integration through informal walkthroughs, mentoring, peer evaluations, PLC protocols, and summative evaluations.
- Design a school assessment calendar for essential formative, summative, and state assessments in all core subjects, including AzMerit/ACT, PSAT, and SAT
- Align calendar to curriculum maps and school calendar.
- Implement a standardized formative benchmark testing system.
- Analyze assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness for all students.
- Examine achievement data for each subgroup (SPED, ELL, Bottom 25%, FRL) to determine where gaps exist.
- Collect and evaluate unit and lesson plans to ensure fidelity to the program of instruction.
-

Curriculum Development

- Oversee and implement decisions to move forward on any curriculum upgrades and/or changes based upon the pedagogical vision and consulting of the Teachers.
- Develop a Curriculum Map and a Scope and Sequence for all existing core classes that align with the school's mission and exceed the state's standards.
- Communicate with the Student Services Director to maintain awareness of students with different learning needs.

- Survey the community to determine curricular needs and interests, which includes creating and distributing surveys to community members; ensure all parents/guardians of incoming and existing students, students, and other community stakeholders have a voice in Desert Sage School.
- Oversee and collaboratively design unit plans and align them with standards, ensuring the integration of the curriculum across all domains.
- Hold “Curriculum Retreats,” in which Teachers participate in protocols to individually and collaboratively revise the curriculum in response to data gathered in the evaluation phase.

Faculty Mentoring

- Coordinate Program assessment and development work, including periodic self-study and peer-review.
- Promote clear communication and cooperation among faculty regarding pedagogy and related matters.
- Provide mentorship and serve as a talking partner for faculty and faculty new to the school.
- Support and develop the faculty to ensure they can provide students with a high-quality Public Waldorf education.
- Manage and implement teacher evaluations and reviews following the methodologies and schedules established by the Teachers.
- Oversee and manage faculty Professional Development.
- Train non-Waldorf Teachers in Waldorf pedagogy and offer ongoing training to all Teachers.

- Provide Professional Development that connects student achievement data and the practice of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

Budget Alignment

- Ensure decisions are made with a full understanding of the financial health and strategic goals of the school and with the intent to preserve the integrity of the school's mission.
- In collaboration with the AD, budget funds for Professional Development for Teachers and Specialty Teachers specifically geared towards addressing the special needs of students in sub-groups.
- Meet quarterly with the AD to review the budget for Professional Development, curriculum, and instruction. They will use the strategy reflection sheets and surveys from Teachers to determine which resources are needed to successfully implement Professional Development strategies.

Special Services

- In collaboration with the SSD, seek and recommend additional support services which may include but are not limited to: Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, and/or Trauma Informed Therapy.
- Promote clear communication with and documentation of any outside student support services.

Pedagogical Alignment

- Support the work of the Teachers and carry out established school policies related to pedagogy, and review those policies and make recommendations for change in order to ensure continuous improvement.
- Facilitate the Teachers' work to effectively develop a pedagogical policy for the School and to nurture its cultural life.
- Coordinate recruitment, hiring, and selection processes for new faculty members.
- Advise Teachers on how to comply with local, state, and national standards.

Grant Development

- With the AD, properly manage grant funding pertaining to the development and improvement of the school's pedagogy and faculty's Professional Development.
- Provide written documentation of pedagogy and program research, testing, and implementation to enrich the content of grant applications.

The SSD and DSS's teaching staff report directly to the Pedagogical Director.

Culture and Community Engagement Director (CED)

The CED is ultimately responsible for collaborating and overseeing marketing, community outreach, student life, student discipline, student leadership, and civic engagement. In addition, the CED works in support of the AD and PD to lead the design, implementation, and evaluation of arts education, school culture, signature programming, and celebrations.

The signature programs will have a dual focus of being centered around the Sonoran Desert's culture and creating and maintaining relationships with local communities. The CED will also actively participate in strategic planning, grant development, and volunteer

and arts administration. The CED will engage with community partners, national business leaders, and international partners to deliver the best comprehensive artistic and leadership development opportunities and experiences for the community of DSS. The CED will also represent DSS at various stakeholder and donor presentations to increase awareness and support for DSS. The CED will manage:

Discipline

- Implement and manage, together with the PD, a discipline model that is restorative and focuses on rebuilding relationships, developing social-emotional intelligence, and giving students skills to peacefully resolve conflicts on their own.

Arts Integration

- Support the PD, Teachers, and Specialty Teachers with arts integrated teaching by providing research, content, and experiences to support the program of instruction.
- Coordinate and supervise arts programs including, in-school programs, graduate arts courses, and teacher in-service workshops, public presentations, and special events.
- Coordinate with the SSD to ensure the most effective and accessible arts methods, as well as accessible student leadership experiences and opportunities.
- In collaboration with the PD and Arts Teacher create and distribute arts supported curriculum to Teachers to help enhance their curriculum with a special focus on diversity and culturally responsive teaching.
- Plan, develop, and implement arts integrated Professional Development. Monitor arts programming for alignment with state standards, mission, vision, and values.

Budgeting/Materials

- Develop budgets for arts education and student leadership programs; tracking to ensure that programs operate within financial parameters set forth by the AD and Board approved budget.
- Purchase and distribute general supplies and materials needed to ensure adequate implementation of the arts and leadership curriculum.
- Participate in planning and the development of the annual budget which relates to the arts and leadership programs.

Community Outreach

- Direct, guide, and support guest speakers, volunteer teachers, and presenters where needed.
- Maintain professional and consistent communication with local and global services.
- Develop and maintain relationships with local school districts, feeder schools and organizations to strengthen connections with the local Tucson community, with a special focus on embracing and encouraging diversity and inclusion within the community.

Program Development

- Work in collaboration with the AD and PD to identify potential arts and leadership program needs.
- Work in collaboration or as support to fundraising, student life, festivals and celebrations, and community outreach committees.

- Develop and facilitate leadership programs, including providing individual student mentoring or consultations as needed.
- In collaboration with the AD and PD develop national and international partnerships and opportunities for student exchange programs.

Grant Development

- Participate in grant proposal planning, preparation, and tracking; ensure compliance with grant reporting requirements.
- Identify trends and needs in arts education and leadership programs by evaluating, designing, and preparing program descriptions, desires, and narratives for grant applications.
- Work in collaboration with the AD and grant writers to apply and submit for grants specific to arts education and student leadership.

Marketing

- Work in collaboration with the AD to develop and implement a robust marketing and outreach plan geared toward building student enrollment, developing community partnerships, fostering name recognition, and growing the donor base.

Arts instructors, special program instructors, and volunteers, report directly to the Culture and Community Engagement Director.]

2. a) Create a Logic Model using the graphic organizer provided.
b) Provide a brief narrative description to accompany the Logic Model. See the Logic Model Components Definitions in “Terms to Know” [CLICK HERE](#)

Desert Sage School is the third stand-alone Public Waldorf high school in the nation. We are proud to be on the forefront of a movement to bring Waldorf education – which has historically been reserved for wealthy families in America – to the public. Our objective is to use the Waldorf approach, the Principles of Public Waldorf education, and operational excellence to create opportunities for the children of Arizona. We intend to raise academic achievement and close the achievement gap for disadvantaged students in a learning environment that is arts-rich, meaningful, and joyful.

We begin with our *people*, our *partnerships*, our *principles*, and our *funding* – these are the resources needed to put our plan in motion. We have hired a dedicated staff of fully and partially Waldorf-trained teachers and administrators, all of whom are deeply committed to our mission, and all of whom believe that the seven Principles of Public Waldorf Education have the power to transform the lives of our students, their families, and their communities. We have also hired a certified Reading Specialist and full time Special Education teacher. We are connected to and supported by our partnership with the Association for Public Waldorf Education (APWE), and are mentored by leaders in the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and the Research Institute of Waldorf Education. The President of APWE and the head of the Research Institute are both mentors to our Pedagogical Director, and they offer their guidance monthly to our team. The seven Principles of Public Waldorf Education serve as our philosophical foundation and guideposts as we build our curriculum and the rest of our program of instruction. The principles are:

1. Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human being.
2. An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program within established legal mandates.
3. Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society.
4. Public Waldorf schools foster a culture of healthy relationships.
5. Public Waldorf schools work to increase diversity and access to all sectors of society.
6. School leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal structures.
7. Public Waldorf schools cultivate a life-long love of learning and self-knowledge.

Our funding comes from state equalization through enrollment, grants (federal, state and private), and donations. Together, our *people, partnerships, principles, and funding* give us a strong foundation on which to build our school.

From there, we begin our work. Our first task is to give our teachers and administrators quality Waldorf teacher training. All of our teachers have either been previously trained or began their training this past summer. Two of our administrators are currently engaged in intensive Waldorf leadership training. Next, we create a robust Professional Development program. Our faculty attend two meetings per week. On Mondays, we have a one-hour meeting that concerns administrative matters such as scheduling, festivals and events, budget, and operations. On Wednesdays, we have a two-hour meeting that is reserved solely for pedagogical matters. We do not discuss business or operational matters at this meeting, and we consider it our “sacred” time for developing ourselves as educators. This vigilance allows us to ensure that we have the time and space to do the deep work needed for the success of our school. PD meetings include time for

creation, evaluation, and revision of our program of instruction; examination of data for the purposes of changing and improving practice; and in-house and outside expert training for staff in areas such as literacy strategies, social-emotional learning, restorative discipline practices, and culturally responsive teaching.

The outcome of the above activities is a faculty that is knowledgeable, creative, and mission-aligned; leaders who have the vision to inspire and transform; a staff that has the skills to meet the needs of disadvantaged students; and a restorative discipline system that is rooted in repairing and building up relationships and gaining capacities for emotional health and self-regulation.

Next, we begin the activity of data collection and analysis. We will regularly disaggregate data to determine the specific needs of disadvantaged students. While we highly value teachers' intuition and expertise about their students, we know that our biases can cloud our judgment and impede our ability to see the whole picture. Data about our students is something we are always curious about, and always responsive to. We conduct in-house baseline testing of literacy and math skills, collect and organize available data from the state, and choose and collect in-house assessment data, including from benchmark testing programs, in order to get a full picture of our students and their needs. We use the data to inform our system of evaluation and revision of our program of instruction (curriculum, methods, assessment).

Using our training and the data we've gathered, we create a program of instruction that is tailored to meet the needs of our specific students, and build the systems of support needed to ensure that our curriculum is accessible to all..

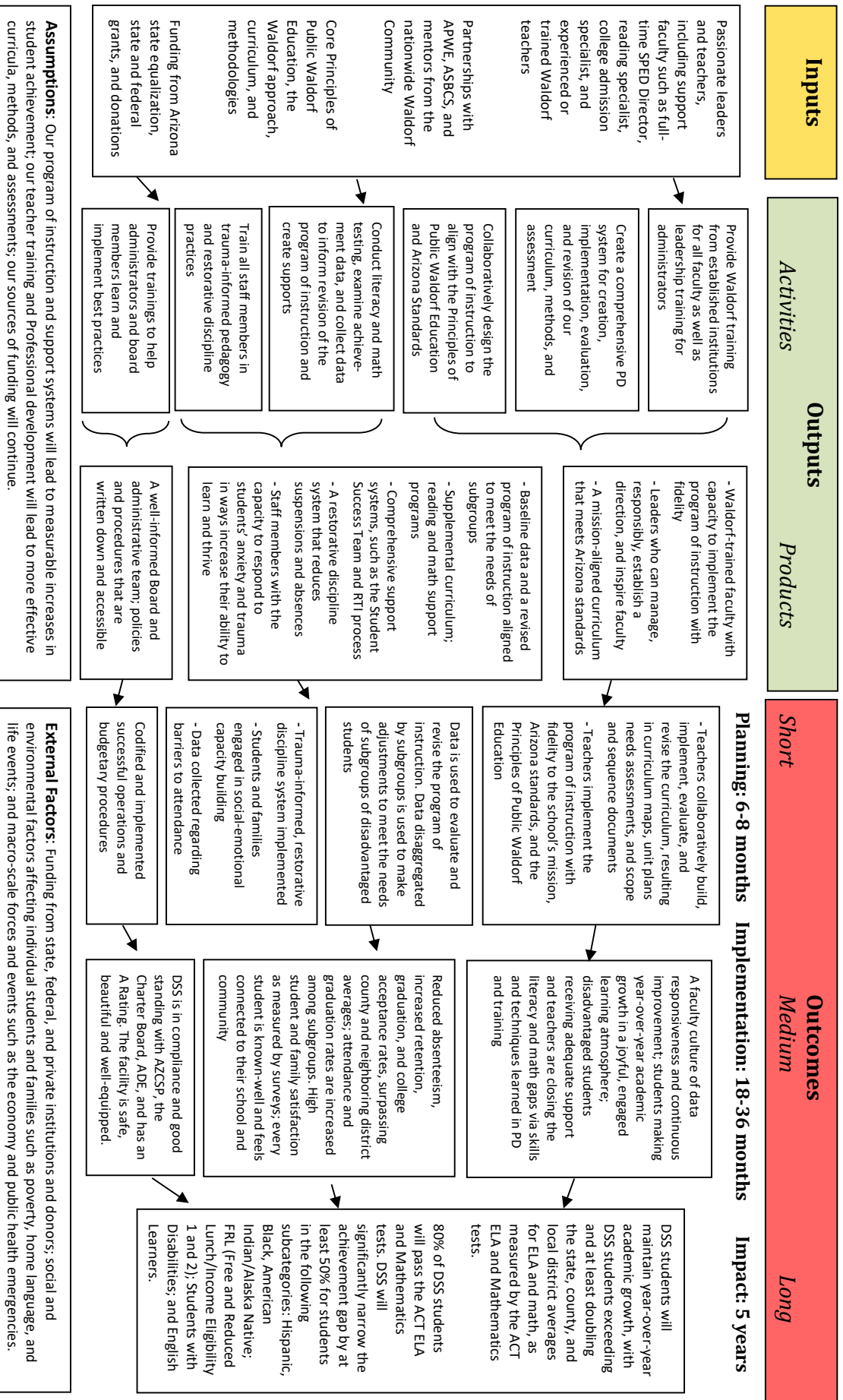
The outcome (product) of these activities (data collection and program/systems creation) is valuable data, which gives us the knowledge and structure we need to realize a developmentally-appropriate, art-infused curriculum that is tied to our values and mission, meets all Arizona standards, corresponds with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education core principles, and is adapted to meet the needs of our specific student population. This is buttressed by a comprehensive system of support including the Student Success Team, RTI Process, push in and pull-out literacy and math supports, our Study Skills class, and our Advisory program.

We also want to provide our administrators and board members with training in operational excellence. We know that without sound operational and business practices, it doesn't matter how amazing our program of instruction is; the school's success hinges on sound management. The product of this training is a well-informed Board and admin team with the capacity to create financial and operational systems that will allow the school to thrive and survive as a healthy, sustainable enterprise.

The above inputs and outputs will result in the outcomes we desire. Below is the logic model that indicates our short, medium, and long-term outputs and how we plan to measure each one.]

Arizona Charter Schools Program Logic Model

Project's Objectives: 1) Strong academic achievement and a joyful learning environment; 2) operational excellence; and, 3) bridging the achievement gap.



3. Describe how the governing authority will measure the impact of proposed project through Logic Model's implementation, evaluation, and revision for the life of the grant.

[The school's governing Board (the Board) will ensure that all aspects of DSS's and CSP Grant intentions and goals are well-defined, aligned with the school's mission, attainable, and sustainable. In addition, to measure the proposed project's impact, the Board will closely monitor the implementation and use of the inputs and outputs as outlined in the Logic Model, and through evaluation and analysis of the relevant data, determine if the school is meeting its objectives and intended outcomes. Through this process, the board can make meaningful revisions to and decisions regarding the actions steps that guide us from objectives to outcomes over the life of the grant.

The Board will utilize the Logic Model as a tool for evaluating and assessing the progress and success or lack thereof, and will implement the following performance measures to evaluate the school's progress:

- DSS's yearly operation ranks high and remains in excellent standing with the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools, AZ Charter School Program, AZ Department of Education, AZ Corporation Commission, and Alliance for Public Waldorf Education.
- The percentage of disadvantaged students maintaining year-over-year academic growth. The percentage of students making one, two, or more years of academic growth as measured by in-house literacy and math testing. The percentage of disadvantaged students passing ACT Aspire, ACT Math, and ACT ELA. The percentage of students exceeding the 50% SGP. The percentage of disadvantaged students exceeding the average scores of students

from Pima County and our neighboring district.

- The percentage of students demonstrating year-over-year growth on state tests, percentage of students passing ACT Aspire, ACT Math, and ACT ELA. Student performance on key in-house benchmark testing and key summative assessments. To measure social-emotional growth we will use surveys, including established surveys for measuring social emotional health, for example, the Search Institute Survey of Student Attitudes and Behaviors, and/or the Search Institute Survey of Developmental Relationships for measuring social emotional health.

The Board will also utilize the Logic Model to inform the development of questions used in the formal bi-yearly and yearly evaluations of the leadership team and the school's overall operational, financial, and instructional progress. By using both formative and summative assessments, the Board will determine what support or intervention measures are needed to ensure the success of the proposed project. During the evaluation and assessment process, the Board expects to see evidence in the following areas, which include but are not limited to:

- **Context Examples-** evaluating relationships and capacity (resources).
 - Partnerships
 - Staff
 - Funding
 - Time
 - Research base
 - Equipment/Materials
- **Implementation Examples-** accessing quality and quantity (activities and outputs).
 - Policies and Procedures
 - Professional development

- Support methods
 - Who DSS is reaching
 - Community Involvement
 - Assessments and benchmark testing
- **Outcome Examples-** measuring effectiveness, magnitude and satisfaction.
 - Achievement and proficiency
 - Stakeholder surveys
 - Partnerships
 - Professional development
 - Instructional practices
 - Systems
 - Funding
 - Student enrollment and retention
 - Absenteeism rates, graduation rates, college admission rates

Attaining Operational Excellence: Once the evaluations and assessments are completed, the Board will provide feedback to the school leaders and, in collaboration with the school leaders, identify, define, and resolve issues (guided by the EOS model) discovered during the evaluation process.

Structured weekly leadership and all staff meetings allow DSS to discuss and track the programs' overall effectiveness and problem areas. Tasks from the discussions addressing the issues are delegated, broken down into SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based) goals, and tied to a deadline of a week, a specific date, or within 90 days, also known as a 90-day Rock or a Quarterly Rock.

S	M	A	R	T
Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-based
Who's involved?	What metrics am I going to use to determine if I meet the goal?	How will I accomplish the goal?	Does it seem worthwhile?	What's the realistic timeframe I can accomplish this goal?
What do I want to accomplish?	Are there milestones of specific tasks within the goal?	What tools and skills are needed?	Is this the right time?	What can be reached and accomplished within that time frame?
When do I want to achieve this?		What would it take to attain them?	Does the goal align with other goals?	
Where does my goal take place?			Am I the right person to accomplish this goal?	
Why is the goal important?				

Breaking down the goals into realistically attainable steps ensures the team is accountable by tracking, attaining, and reporting on the action steps until they reach full completion of the goal. In addition, this action step cultivates transparency and strong communication between the team members and the Board, ensuring nothing falls through the proverbial cracks.

DSS experienced early in the planning phase that this structure proved effective and allowed DSS to accomplish all of its goals in an efficient and timely manner. Delegating tasks were divided and selected on a volunteer base, meaning whoever volunteered to take on a task has the skills, experience, motivation, and time to accomplish the task— in other words, having the right person in the right seat. If no individual volunteered, the task was broken down even further and appointed a lead to ensure the task was reaching completion, or DSS outsourced the task to an experienced professional or community member to ensure completion.

Attaining Year-Over-Year Growth: Data collection and analysis are fundamental to the success of a student's academic achievement. DSS will regularly disaggregate data to determine the specific needs of our disadvantaged students. We will conduct in-house baseline testing of literacy and math skills; collect and organize available data from the state, county, or local district; and choose and collect in-house assessment data, including benchmark testing programs, to get a complete picture of our students' needs. Once collected, we'll use the data to evaluate and revise our program of instruction (curriculum, methods, assessment), and implement a revised support plan – backed by the necessary professional development or training needed – to achieve success. Through this monitored, documented, and evidence-based process, the Board can determine whether the program of instruction and student support is effectively meeting the established goals.]

4. What is the succession plan for governing body members and key school leadership to sustain the school's mission?

[DSS's administrative leadership model facilitates that the school's DSS's leadership will be able to sustain the school's mission. It is unlikely that all three members of the school's leadership team would depart simultaneously, which ensures stability and consistency. Members of the school's leadership team participate in Professional Development opportunities, including Waldorf-specific leadership training. While leadership stability can never be guaranteed, the collaborative leadership model of the school's organizational structure helps to minimize disruptions caused by changes in leadership.

DSS aims to identify the critical needs and positions and develop an action plan which will be implemented, monitored, and adjusted each year. DSS will ensure the succession plan strengthens DSS's overall capability by:

- Identifying critical needs, positions and the problem of practice;
- Identifying and analyzing patterns and themes based on data collection, root cause, and organizational alignment;
- Focusing development of individuals to meet future needs.

DSS will develop a solid succession plan with a five-phase approach, as outlined below.

- Assess
 - Identify the problem of practice through data collection.
 - Student performance, instructional assessments, stakeholder surveys, operational performance, financial performance, and systemic issues.
 - Analyze patterns and themes based on data collected.
 - Root causes, organizational alignment, and prediction.
 - Identify critical positions needed to ensure continuity.
 - Identify skills, competencies, knowledge, and experience needed to ensure success.
- Create
 - Create an outcome-based action plan emphasizing leadership improvement, talent development, instructional transformation, and cultural shift.
- Implement
 - Implement by prioritizing improvement;
 - aligning operations and support to needs;
 - recruiting, developing, retaining, and sustaining the talent pool;

- targeting professional learning opportunities;
 - setting clear expectations;
 - responding to student learning needs;
 - providing rigorous evidence-based instruction;
 - removing barriers;
 - soliciting stakeholder satisfaction;
 - engaging students and families in pursuing goals, and
 - developing a sustainable community focused on learning.
- Monitor
 - Monitor short-term and long-term goals.
 - Adjust
 - Adjust plan as needs arise for continuity and alignment.

DSS will conduct the formal assessment and re-evaluation of the succession plan yearly. In addition, DSS will also perform informal quarterly check-ins to document where the operation or program may need improvement proactively. The gathered information will inform the formal evaluation and assessment process and help determine and prioritize needs, positions, or vacancies.

To ensure DSS can launch and complete its succession plan, DSS is committed to using strategic marketing and recruiting efforts to develop an abundant talent pool for filling Board vacancies and critical school positions. One of the strategies is to offer a variety of community events, workshops, speaker series, and training to engage our DSS community and the Tucson community at large. The purpose is to bring community members directly onto the campus by providing quality, practical, and beneficial

offerings. By doing so, DSS will capture the interest of individuals who may be or become inspired to support the school's success.

The focus of DSS's community offerings includes but are not limited to:

- Parenting Support
- Artistic Expression
- DSS Information Sessions
- Positive Discipline Support
- Waldorf Specific Training
- Skill Building
- Hosting Local Organizations Events
- Financial Planning for Teens and College Students
- Life Skills Support

DSS ensures the planned events will align with DSS's mission, vision, core principles, and provide a service grounded in accessibility, community building, and bridging opportunity gaps.

Clearly defined systems, professional support, transparency, communication, follow-through, and consistency are foundational to the succession of DSS's administrators and Board members. DSS is committed to creating specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based strategic plans to ensure our success and the sustainability of our programs.]

5. What process is in place or will be in place for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project. (34 CFR 75.210(g)(2)(ii))

DSS will have a twice-a-year, multi-tiered improvement evaluation and assessment system linked to the succession plan. The review and evaluation involve all stakeholders of DSS, including the governing board, leadership, faculty, staff, parents/guardians, students, and involved community members such as volunteers and contractors. The purpose of this system is to document and assess measurable data which will inform the continuous improvement plan of DSS such as attendance records, student performance, leadership, teacher, and staff evaluations, and the overall operational performance.

Parent/Guardian and Student Feedback

One of the most significant assets to DSS is the parent/guardian and student population. Therefore, their feedback is an essential source of ensuring DSS's improvement. Twice a year DSS will send parent/guardian and student satisfaction surveys to gauge how they and their child feel about DSS's performance. The parent/Guardian survey will provide DSS feedback on but not limited to questions with a focus on:

- Communications
- Parent support
- Student support
- Academic successes/concerns
- Operations

The student survey will provide DSS feedback on but not limited to questions with a focus on:

- Communication

- Academic successes/concerns
- School culture
- Student support
- Conflict resolution

Faculty Feedback

DSS ensures opportunities for staff and faculty to provide and receive feedback by scheduling two all -meetings a week. One session is reserved for administrative and school culture triumphs and concerns. The other is a two-hour Professional Development meeting that is reserved solely for pedagogical matters, including but not limited to curriculum, instruction, assessment, classroom management, discipline, philosophy, and achievement data analysis. During these meetings time is devoted to Professional Learning Community (PLC) work, which takes the form of teachers seeking and receiving support to better their practice. The Pedagogical Director conducts weekly walkthroughs and classroom observation, and shares supportive, formative feedback with faculty. Summative evaluations of all teachers, in compliance with Arizona State Board for Charter School's (ASBCS) Performance Framework and Arizona's Professional Teaching Standards are conducted at least once per year.

Financial Feedback

DSS receives external feedback on financial matters through multiple sources. Each source works closely with DSS's leadership team to ensure the school meets DSS's

responsibilities and commitment to the State and Federal laws, rules, regulations, and provisions. To comply with ASBCS's yearly audit requirement, DSS has secured the below support:

Business Consultants: DSS has contracted with a group specializing in Charter finance management. By hiring this firm, DSS ensures that school leaders and Board members have a solid understanding and support system regarding the School's financial obligations and commitments. In addition, they provide advice and assurances on financial compliance, budget management, and most importantly, sustainable cash flow projections.

Auditor: DSS has contracted with an external Auditor experienced with nonprofit and Charter School audits. This contracted service provides DSS with the highest assurance level, including an in-depth examination and confirmation of technical and financial performance.

Bookkeeper: DSS has contracted with a bookkeeper that provides day-to-day support with bookkeeping solutions that meet DSS's financial needs. Services include but are not limited to developing and maintaining a chart of accounts, developing sustainable budgets and forecasts, and ensuring DSS is in good standing with local, state, and federal expectations.

Governing Board Feedback

In addition to the performance framework reviews DSS's authorizer, ASBCS, provides, the Board will give additional feedback to DSS through bi-annual leadership and schoolwide assessments. The Board is researching and adopting a summative assessment for the school's leadership (Director) Team, which will align with the schoolwide self-assessment tool provided by the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (APWE), Arizona's Professional Administrative standards, and ASBCS's performance framework.

As an APWE initiative member, DSS is committed to the principles listed below. They ensure that Public Waldorf education and DSS are evolving and continuously renewed through practice, research, observation, and active reflection. These seven core principles guide DSS in every aspect of the School.

The seven core principles of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education:

1. Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human being.
2. An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program within established legal mandates.
3. Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society.
4. Public Waldorf schools foster a culture of healthy relationships.
5. Public Waldorf schools work to increase diversity and access to all sectors of society.

6. School leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal structures.
7. Public Waldorf schools cultivate a life-long love of learning and self-knowledge.

Though these principles guide all Public Waldorf schools and schools inspired by Public Waldorf education such as DSS, every school is unique, and responds to the characteristics and needs of the community it serves.

The self-evaluation framework provided by APWE ensures DSS continues to meet the above principles and adhere to Waldorf curriculum and best practices. The framework is broken down into five sections and has a rating system of:

3= Consistently evident

2= Evident with some inconsistency

1= Infrequently evident, area of "needed improvement."

The five sections or areas of self-assessment relate to all aspects of the School and fall under these categories:

Teaching and Learning Environment

- Evidence of Waldorf Curriculum, Student Engagement, Student Support, Collaboration Among School Leaders and Faculty, Positive and Restorative Discipline, Relationships, State Standards, Safety, Conflict Resolution Practices, Transparency of Policies and Procedures, and a Respectful Environment.

School's Partnerships with Parents

- Evidence of Strong and Respectful Communication, Follow-through with Agreements, Parent Support, Parent Meetings, Parent Volunteer Opportunities, Informative Conferences, Well-Written Student Reports, Parent Inclusion, and Participation in School-wide celebrations.

Collegial Relations

- Evidence of Respectful Communication, Efficiency of Faculty Meetings, Professional Development, Artistic Opportunities, Structured Meetings, Collaborative Work with all Subject Teachers, and Conflict Resolution Support and Follow-through.

Organizational Life of the School

- Evidence of Policies and Procedures, Evaluation Systems, Clear Communication with School Leaders and Governing Board, Clear Job Descriptions, Transparent and Timely Budget Development, School is Fiscally Sound, Adherence to Compliance, Operations Aligned with Core Values and Mission, Efficient and Timely Student Assessments, Clear and Transparent Emergency and Crisis Plans, and School Community Engagement.

The evaluation also provides an opportunity to share other pertinent observations, ensuring the Board has ample opportunity to share their thoughts and comments.

DSS will use all documented data to inform improvement plans and as a comparative tool to gauge progress and areas that need attention in the path to meeting the school's mission, vision, and fully realized program of instruction.]

6. Describe how the charter school that is considered a local educational agency under ARS§15-181 will comply with sections 613(a)(5) and 613(e)(1)(B) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. *ESEA, Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(A)(iii)(III)*

[DSS's commitment to recruiting, enrolling, retaining, and meeting the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, fulfill DSS's mission to "...celebrate diversity, embrace equity, and cultivate inclusion to create space for an educational experience that bridges opportunity gaps..."

One aspect of Public Waldorf education the founding team was eager to provide the Tucson community is accessible learning for students of all academic levels. Due to the wrap-around support students receive through DSS's support program, pedagogy, methodology, and program of instruction, students are exposed to multiple modalities and opportunities to deepen their learning. Some examples of how students broaden their understanding of subjects, which is unique to Waldorf education, are:

- Creating their own "textbooks," also known as Main Lesson books, allows students to capture what they are learning through writing and illustrating the subject matter they dove into for a four-week block period. Main lesson book creation enables students to own their learning which aids in absorbing the content they are studying instead of trying to memorize content from a book.
- Curricular learning content is delivered through multiple approaches. As a result, teachers reach different learning styles by engaging students through their senses, movement, and artistic expression.
- The integration of intellectual, artistic, and practical instruction can be seen throughout the curriculum. In addition, the development of social skills and ethical values are woven throughout the curriculum and every grade level, resulting in learning experiences that capture the student's interest or provide

students with skills that bolster their confidence.

- Academic content and subjects are brought to students at an appropriate age which meets their intellectual and emotional development, meaning they are more ready to receive the content and teachings unfolding before them.

The program of instruction and curriculum DSS provides is welcoming to students of different academic levels, learning styles, and needs due to the rhythmic and deepening approaches the instruction offers. Combined with developing strong and trusting relationships with their teachers and school leaders, students feel safe, seen, and respected, allowing them to relax in their learning environment while being well supported.

To further ensure DSS meets this mission, DSS hired a Student Services Director (SSD) in year zero (0) (planning phase) to provide immediate support to those students who may require it in year one (1) of the implementation phase. The SSD provides visionary leadership for the school's support services (SPED) program for students with unique learning needs. They take active roles in decision-making, and help facilitate positive outcomes for students who need extra support. In collaboration with the Pedagogical Director and the Support Services team, the SSD is responsible for implementing and maintaining grades 9-12 support services (SPED) programs and services in conformance to state and federal objectives and laws; planning, designing, and implementing all phases of service provided by the support service team; serving

as a resource to students, families, school personnel, and the Board; and maintaining adequate staffing to ensure objectives of programs and services are achieved.

The essential responsibilities of the SSD include but are not limited to the following:

- Analyze assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness for all students and students in key subgroups, with the goal of making adaptations to meet the needs of all sub-group learners.
- Collaborate with the Pedagogical Director and core and Specialty Teachers on student development, learning ability, and behavior.
- Attend periodic meetings with faculty, staff, and administrators; and informational meetings with parents/guardians, to form the best support plan for each student and their needs.
- Assist with administering standardized assessments, in compliance with IEPs/504s.
- Employ a variety of instructional techniques and strategies aligned with instructional objectives, in order to meet the needs of all students, and maintain compliance for those students with IEPs and 504's.
- Evaluate and document student progress and provide individualized support/instruction/plans.
- Provide wrap-around supports and accommodations in Teacher classrooms.
- Meet with the Support Services Team and Teachers individually and in collaborative PLC (professional learning community) time to help Teachers

adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of special education students (with fidelity to their IEP/504 plans).

- Maintain compliance with all state and federal requirements for special education including, delivering support services as described in IEP's, and completing IEP/504 progress reports on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Properly document issues, concerns, and important information concerning students and parents/guardians as they present themselves.
- Observe and evaluate student work and development by providing and implementing a benchmark system to track progress, and provide written assessments to be shared with the student's support team.

As the voice of students with additional learning needs, the SSD understands proactive discipline strategies, restorative practices, and the ability to assist with school-wide support efforts. The SSD ensures that best practices are implemented with fidelity to, and in compliance with, IEP/504 plans. Ultimately, the goal of the SSD, in partnership with the support services team, which consists of the students' parents/guardians, Teachers, and the Pedagogical Director, is to support the student in all aspects of their learning process. In addition, if a student has an unidentified disability, the SSD ensures timely development of support plans through thorough evaluations and support team meetings to help bridge the student's learning gaps. If in-house support is unavailable for these students, DSS is committed to contracting external help to ensure each student gets the best possible support for their academic success.

Currently, DSS offers a Study Skills class that is embedded in the schedules of students who need Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). Students have 55 minutes each day, giving them extra time to complete core subject material, work on skill building, or have core subject material modified or retaught to meet their needs. Throughout the day, the Study Skills room is available to the students if they need a quiet space to work or study. In addition, the SSD is available to support whenever support is necessary.

DSS strives for inclusive practices and offers support in classrooms as well. Directors work closely with teachers and students in English and Math subjects to ensure the best possible support and outcome and to have direct exposure to the type of support students need. With this exposure, the leadership team and teachers can continuously access a student plan and inform any changes necessary. In addition, they are, again, strengthening the student's relationships with school leaders and teachers.

To ensure the sustainability of DSS's support program, the SSD has engaged in a community partnership with the Pima County Superintendent's office, which offers a program known as EDvance. The program supports new Support Services Directors and support teams in various fields specializing in Special Education. "EDvance is an educational support program designed to empower staff to advance the achievement of students with disabilities. Through professional development, professional learning communities, and/or coaching, your teams will strengthen their skill sets to ultimately

strengthen those of their students." Partnering with this organization also allows the SSD to form strong relationships with other professionals in the field to turn to for additional guidance when support is needed.

EDvance offers direct training with all departments related to the Exceptional Student Services (ESS) with the Arizona Department of Education. In addition, they provide support and guidance on Grants available for schools, such as the IDEA Entitlement Grants, IDEA basic funds and other grants not widely known by new charter schools as DSS.

The partnership with EDvance is fully funded by an external organization partnered or tied to EDvance, allowing DSS's SSD to join the support network free of charge. However, with access to AZCSP Grant funds, this partnership will continue should the program lose its funding. It's a partnership worth keeping and one that DSS is grateful to have as it will significantly enrich and strengthen our student support program.

On-Site Reading Support

DSS has employed a PD who is also a certified Reading Specialist (RS) to ensure students have immediate on-site reading support. The RS will identify and support each student needing extra reading and reading comprehension support. A goal of the RS is to evaluate the reading levels of all students and transfer students in year one (1) and all incoming freshman and transfer students in the subsequent years. The RS

is also responsible for teaching reading support classes as a professional development subject to support DSS teachers' growth in the area of literacy instruction.

The essential responsibilities of the RS include but are not limited to the following:

- In collaboration with the SSD the RS will design and implement a comprehensive, encouraging, supportive, and engaging literacy support class.
- Analyze assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness for all students and students in key subgroups, with the goal of making adaptations to meet the needs of all learners.
- Attend informational meetings with parents/guardians, to form the best support plan for each student, and employ a variety of instructional techniques and strategies aligned with instructional objectives in order to meet the needs of all students.
- Evaluate and document student progress and provide individualized support/instruction/plans.
- Analyze assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness for all students and students in key subgroups to make adaptations to meet the needs of all sub-group learners.
- Develop yearly comparisons of student growth, proficiency, and mastery.
- Assist Teachers in the revision of curriculum for sub-groups of concern.

- Make adaptations to the curriculum to serve the needs of students in the four subcategories.
- Collaborate in establishing a Data and Assessment Team and set goals, priorities, and roles/responsibilities for assessment schoolwide.]

Additional Questions for the following:

Option B – Freestanding or Expansion/Replication affiliated with in-state CMO

7. Describe how well the applicant meets the criteria of Academic Performance, Financial Performance, Operational Performance and Compliance set forth by the authorizer, the Arizona State Board for Charter Schools.

[]

Option C – Freestanding or Expansion/Replication affiliated with out-of-state CMO.

7. Describe the extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have closed; have had a charter revoked due to noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements; or have had their affiliation with the applicant revoked or terminated, including through voluntary disaffiliation.

[]

8. Describe the extent to which one or more charter schools operated or managed by the applicant have had any significant issues in the area of financial or operational management or student safety or have otherwise experienced significant problems with statutory or regulatory compliance that could lead to revocation of the school’s charter.

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School Site Questions

E. Preference Points - Not Required -- Total points possible: 5 points added to the total score

Describe how the applicant will increase high school student academic achievement and graduation by participating in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or early college high schools.

[The Governing Board adopted a dual credit policy that enables enrolled students to earn high school credit from any regionally accredited college or university. For credits to be awarded by Desert Sage School, the coursework must be college-level, academic in nature, the grade received be a “C” or higher, and the course must not be offered, or will not be offered, by Desert Sage School. Pursuant to Arizona law, three (3) semester credit hours will be the equivalent to one high school credit (Carnegie Unit). Further, Desert Sage School will reimburse parents or legal guardians for tuition, plus required books in an amount not to exceed resident tuition at an Arizona community college. A maximum of one (1) course per semester, including summer term is eligible for reimbursement. If paying the cost upfront would present a financial hardship for a particular family, a mechanism exists that will enable Desert Sage School to pay the costs directly.

This dual credit program benefits students in multiple ways. Primarily, this policy enables students who wish to challenge themselves the opportunity to engage in higher-level courses not offered by Desert Sage School. Students who wish to pursue advanced mathematics, for example, will not only be able to concurrently earn high school and college credit, but will also be able to demonstrate to highly selective colleges and universities that they have the skills and discipline requisite to be successful in their rigorous academic programs. As 73% of our student population qualify for free or reduced lunch, the opportunity to enroll in college courses free-of-charge opens the door for our students to simultaneously engage in advanced coursework, earn college credit,

boost their self-confidence, and increase their chances of admission to highly selective colleges and universities that tend to have large endowments and offer the most generous financial aid packages.]

F. Leadership – Total points possible: 15 points

1. What process is in place or will be in place to develop challenging curriculum including supplemental curriculum aligned with the state standards that meets the unique needs of disadvantaged students?

[Overview of Curriculum

Desert Sage School (DSS) offers students a holistic, rigorous, relevant, culturally-responsive, and Waldorf-inspired curriculum that exceeds the Academic Standards of the state of Arizona. Based on a tightly integrated, multi-disciplinary program of instruction that is rooted in human development, DSS education is discovery-based, experiential, arts-integrated, and relationship-centered. DSS students will graduate with all of the credits required to gain admission to competitive four-year colleges. Our curriculum is also aligned with the principles of Public Waldorf Education:

The Seven Principles of Public Waldorf Education

1. Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human being.
2. An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program within established legal mandates.
3. Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society.
4. Public Waldorf schools foster a culture of healthy relationships.

5. Public Waldorf schools work to increase diversity and access to all sectors of society.
6. School leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal structures.
7. Public Waldorf schools cultivate a life-long love of learning and self-knowledge.

The DSS curriculum is built around an understanding of adolescent development which closely mirrors Piaget’s theories of child development. For each grade, the curriculum is guided by developmental “themes,” which become increasingly complex and reflective through the grades, as teachers lead students through higher and higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. The theme for 9th grade is “Polarities,” for 10th, “Process,” for 11th, “Analysis,” and for 12th, “Synthesis.”

Year	Developmental Theme
Ninth Grade	Polarities
<p>Educate the <i>powers of observation</i> through a study of <i>polarities</i>.</p>	<p>As young people enter high school in the ninth grade, their lives are often full of contrast and tension. They are transitioning intellectually, emotionally, and physically from childhood to adulthood. They are both bound by their physical changes and liberated by their new ability to think conceptually. Many adolescents feel a conflict between the desire for affiliation and a sense of alienation. Our objective is to reflect these polarities in their educational experience. Students’ experiences of inner polarities provoked by these changes are reflected back to them in the thoughtfully developed school curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: In science, students study the polarity of heat and cold; in geography, the pressure and release of plate tectonics; in history, the dramatic conflict of the world’s major revolutions; in literature, the history of the theater through tragedy and comedy; in art, black and white drawing and printmaking.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are challenged to exercise powers of exact observation: in the sciences, to describe and draw precisely what happened in experiments and demonstrations; in the humanities, to recount clearly a sequence of events or the nature of a character without getting lost in the confusion of a story’s many details. <p>The objective is to train exact powers of observation and recollection so that the students can develop steadiness in their own thinking as they navigate the often-confusing gauntlet of adolescence</p>
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Year	Developmental Theme
Tenth Grade	Process
<p>Educate the <i>powers of comparison and contrast</i> through a study of <i>processes</i>.</p>	<p>By tenth grade, many adolescents are actively seeking equilibrium and order. The curriculum explores equilibrium through the study of balance in natural and social phenomena. Students are expected to develop and apply powers of comparison. These comparisons help bring order to chaos, balance to opposition, and acceptance to differences. From order and balance, a new, more mature awareness can arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students experience: in chemistry, acids and bases and an introduction to chemical equations; in social studies, cultural similarities and differences and the development of civilization. These reveal the possibility of equilibrium arising out of the balancing of extremes. • Students are called upon to exercise powers of comparison, weighing contrary phenomena to determine their value and significance and investigating their origins. • Students discover that in the balancing of opposites, new forms can arise, whether in emergent civilizations or new chemical compounds. <p>The objective is to help students find their own balance by discovering the process of balance in natural and human phenomena.</p>

Year	Developmental Theme
Eleventh Grade	Analysis: The Quest for Identity
Educate the <i>powers of analysis through individualized study.</i>	<p>The personal experience of many juniors involves a search for identity and independence. Out of the chaos of adolescence, they begin to form a new vision of themselves, and in the eleventh grade, are often more ready to journey into the unknown. The curriculum delves further into purely abstract concepts in order to strengthen the student's independent analysis and abstract theorizing. Existential questions and new depths in the inner life of thoughts, feelings and deeds may arise. Students begin to find their own paths in life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students investigate the invisible through subjects that draw them into areas not accessible to the senses. This requires developing a new confidence in abstract thinking. • In literature, this journey is captured in the study of the Grail legends (Parzival) and multicultural "heroes' journeys" such as "The Hero with the African Face." In chemistry students study the periodic table – an insight based on intuition; and in physics, the invisible world of the atom and of electricity. <p>The objective is to strengthen analytical and abstract thinking: Why are things this way? Why did the events of history take this course? Deeper questions – those of destiny, purpose, and social responsibility – also find their way into the classroom.</p>

Year	Developmental Theme
Twelfth Grade	Synthesis: Myself Within the Community
Educate the <i>powers of synthesis through integration of all previous learning.</i>	<p>Senior year recapitulates and synthesizes all the themes of the high school years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students examine the relationship of humanity with the world. They live with the thoughts of great writers who have questioned humankind's place in the world, by studying broad literary movements like British Romanticism, the Harlem Renaissance, and the American Transcendentalist Movement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjects synthesize many themes: World History, Environmental Science and Senior Essay. Assignments call upon the students to synthesize disparate disciplines. The senior play serves as a social and artistic synthesis of literature and history. <p>The objective of senior year is the synthesis of the K-12 education and preparation for the next stage in learning.</p>
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The Waldorf high school curriculum is often described as a spiral because it constantly builds on what came before and contains numerous subject matter and conceptual crosscuts. For instance, physics is taught in all 4 years of high school. Each year, the students revisit core concepts in physics, but the material becomes more abstract and places more demands on higher level thinking. The curriculum is both vertically and horizontally integrated, with teachers making connections across disciplines and infusing the arts into all subject areas. The Waldorf curriculum is also based on the model of “Head/Heart/Hands,” which means that multiple domains of learning (cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic) are activated in the course of one lesson, and the curriculum is designed to incorporate all these modalities. Connections are sometimes noted between the Waldorf curricular approach and Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences. The curriculum at most private and public Waldorf schools is often described as “classical,” but is increasingly being updated to become more culturally relevant, a process DSS is committed to. Our core curriculum is complemented by electives that build life-skills, foster creativity, and prepare students for the job market. Above all, we believe that our curriculum must be deeply meaningful and kindle the students’ native curiosity and desire to understand their world.

One practice that is unique to Waldorf pedagogy is the **Main Lesson Block (MLB)**. Main Lesson Blocks are four-week, intensive, concentrated studies of a subject that the school has determined is important, distinct, and essential to our curriculum. For example, some of our MLBs for freshmen are *Tragedy and Comedy*, *World History Through Art*, *Organic Chemistry*, *Revolutions*, *Geology*, and *Anatomy*. While our school runs on a block schedule, with most classes meeting every other day, Main Lesson Blocks meet every day, and always first thing in the morning. During the course of a year, students complete 8 Main Lesson Blocks. Each block is 1,845 minutes long and worth .25 credits. A snack break is scheduled after each day's MLB, to give students a break from the intensity of their studies and to allow them to "digest" the content and refresh their minds for the rest of the day. In each block, students create "Main Lesson Books," which are essentially student-created textbooks (described in further detail in question 3, below).

Process in place to develop challenging curriculum aligned with both the Waldorf approach and state standards:

Desert Sage School has hired a Pedagogical Director, Sarah Bromer, who will oversee the development of our curriculum. Sarah has extensive experience designing and implementing both Common Core and Arizona State Standards-aligned, engaging, challenging, original curriculum in the areas of science, English, and history. Sarah is also a certified Reading Specialist who has served as a Literacy

Coordinator and Coach and as a support teacher for struggling readers, including EL, Special Education, low SEI (FRL), and ethnically diverse students, as well as students in the bottom 25% academically. As part of that role, she designed original supplemental curriculum for reading and writing support classes, and also assisted general education teachers in the creation and adoption of curriculum specifically tailored to meet the needs of academically struggling students. She also founded and ran a radio documentary program in which disadvantaged students with very low math and literacy skills frequently won both state and national prizes for their work.

Waldorf schools highly value the creativity and freedom of teachers to design their classes and choose their curriculum, and we believe that this freedom leads to higher engagement and retention for both teachers and students. However, we are also aware that without high standards and rigorous processes in place to ensure quality, this same freedom can lead to a school curriculum that is disjointed, random, and lacking in adequate coverage of important standards, content, and skills. Therefore, we have created several processes to ensure that our curriculum is challenging, engaging, cohesive, philosophically aligned, and standards-aligned.

Every Wednesday, for two hours, our teachers meet for Professional Development. This meeting is reserved solely for pedagogical matters. We have another meeting on Mondays where we handle all administrative and school culture issues, so that our time on Wednesdays is not interrupted. At our PD meetings, in year 1, we focus primarily on curriculum design, assessment, classroom management/discipline

practices, and instructional practices. We also work on data evaluation and other specific topics related to our mission such as literacy, culturally responsive instruction, differentiation, etc. Some of these meetings are also dedicated to collaborative Professional Learning Community (PLC) work time. Much of our curriculum development, evaluation, and revision happens in these meetings. Teachers also create, evaluate, and revise the curriculum twice a year during our staff “Curriculum Retreats,” which happen during pre and post service weeks.

Our system for **curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and revision** – including supplemental curriculum as follows:

- Ensure that all teachers have received **Waldorf training**, which will give them the philosophical foundation and skills to develop and assess curriculum that aligns with our mission. Our Pedagogical Director and Board have researched available programs and have a menu of options available to suit the needs of all new hires.
- **Form a Curriculum Committee**, consisting of the Pedagogical Director, the Special Education Director, and experienced lead teachers from a range of subject areas. The Curriculum Team establishes a shared vision for the program content: curriculum, instruction, assessment, student experience, and outcomes; establishes guidelines for teachers adopting or writing curriculum; and develops a workflow process for the creation/adoption of core, supplementary, and exceptional needs curriculum materials. The Team creates a curriculum calendar that allows for a yearly cyclical plan to design, implement, monitor, and evaluate the curriculum. The School Director and

Pedagogical Director schedule “Curriculum Retreat” days during pre- and post-service PD time. These are full work days focused solely on adoption, implementation, evaluation, revision, adaptation and alignment of the DSS Curriculum. During Curriculum Retreats, the Pedagogical Director will schedule time for Teachers to examine results of data evaluation from prior meetings and proposed changes to curriculum.

Gather and evaluate curriculum materials from both private and public Waldorf schools. Many Waldorf schools follow a general outline of time-tested, developmentally and philosophically-aligned topics with a specific scope and sequence. For instance, it is the norm at most Waldorf high schools to study organic chemistry in the 9th grade, and to begin with the “carbon tower” experiment. Most freshmen engage in a comparative study of revolutions in their history class, and they read *Oedipus Rex* and *12th Night* in an English Main Lesson Block called “Tragedy and Comedy.” There are many available books and online sources that contain descriptions of typical Waldorf units and Main Lesson Blocks (MLBs). Our first task has been to gather all of these resources – books, curriculum maps, course descriptions, syllabi, etc – for each core subject. We are also tapping into our network of Waldorf colleagues, mentors, and association connections (such as through the Association of Public Waldorf Education) to find people who are willing to share curriculum resources. After we have gathered all of the resources we can find for a particular subject, we evaluate the gathered curriculum to determine whether it aligns to our mission, vision, state standards, and the unique needs of our students. The Curriculum Team, for each subject, creates a list of criteria to be used for selection

and evaluation of existing curricular resources, including:

- Aligned to State Standards
- Developmentally appropriate and engaging
- Culturally responsive (in balance with other units, etc.)
- Meets the academic needs of our students

If the potential curriculum meets those standards and is deemed acceptable for our school, it is included in the next step. From there we create a map of all the curricular possibilities for each grade, including our own ideas about what would be appropriate for our school. We examine the curriculum for its potential to integrate horizontally (across subjects for each grade) and vertically (across grade levels within a single subject area), among other criteria, and we select units and MLBs to create our broad outline.

Next we build our school's **Curriculum Map**, with a complete menu of Main Lesson Blocks and core classes, for all four years of programming. For each core subject, we dedicate several days to **unpacking the AZ State Standards, verifying** our map's **alignment** with state standards, adding state standards to our map, and **looking for curricular gaps**.

We create comprehensive **Unit Plans** for each Main Lesson Block and for each unit, which identify essential learning outcomes and contain clear indications of the **scope and sequence** and **pacing** for each class. We do a deeper dive, crosswalking our

units/MLBs with the State Standards for each Unit/MLB, ensuring that our curriculum is fully aligned to and exceeds Arizona State Standards, and that no curricular gaps are present. Unit plans are kept by the Pedagogical Director and are available for viewing by parents and community members. Teachers are also required to submit “Anchor” lesson plans to accompany Unit Plans. Anchor lessons are key lessons for the unit.

We **analyze and evaluate our curriculum for philosophical alignment** with the Core Principles of Public Waldorf education, our school’s mission, and our vision, to ensure that the curriculum is **culturally relevant** and tailored to meet the needs of our school and our students.

We also dedicate time in PLCs to **Integrate the curriculum across all domains**. Teachers meet in grade levels teams to discuss major projects, blocks, and units, and look for crosscutting concepts and areas of potential collaboration and integration, including with our school-wide themes and aims for each grade level.

We will create a **Curriculum Calendar** that allows teachers, students and families to see the scope and sequence of our curriculum, as well as places where alignment allows for collaboration and integration.

As data becomes available for our students, we will **complete a comprehensive Needs Assessment** protocol, as well as conduct surveys of our students and parents to

search for unmet curricular needs and interests.

We will regularly revisit our curriculum during our Wednesday PD meetings to **evaluate** whether it is **meeting the needs of our students**. We will examine achievement data for the following subgroups: Special Education, EL, FRL, Bottom 25%, struggling readers, and various racial/ethnic groups. We will determine whether the implemented curriculum and supplemental curriculum meets the identified needs of students in these subgroups and to determine where gaps exist.

We set aside PLC time for teachers to **troubleshoot** any issues that are preventing them from adequately **implementing** the curriculum. The Curriculum Team develops and adopts collaborative protocols for troubleshooting issues with implementation of the curriculum. Teachers participate in protocols during grade level and department level PLC meetings. Directors collect feedback from teachers, listing roadblocks or materials needs that are preventing successful implementation. The pedagogical director addresses the needs of teachers in a timely manner, ensuring that roadblocks to successful implementation of the curriculum are removed, and that the curriculum can be implemented with fidelity to the design of the program of instruction.

Evaluate the curriculum to ensure that it allows students to meet state standards, is philosophically-aligned, is aligned to student needs, and does not contain curricular gaps that prevent students from meeting standards. In light of data from state testing, in house benchmark testing, in-house literacy and math assessments, and key

summative assessments, the Data and Assessment Team determines areas where the curriculum may not be effectively advancing students toward mastery of standards. The Curriculum Team and Data and Assessment Teams determine what criteria and/or rubrics will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, prepare reports, present data to teachers, and lead PD that is centered around curriculum evaluation and revision.

Revise the curriculum. We provide PLC time for teachers to revise their curriculum. The teachers use data from the Data and Assessment Team's reports, as well as their own data. They bring student work and curriculum materials to the group for reflection and feedback, with the aim of pooling teacher brainpower to determine where the curriculum is falling short and to devise solutions. At these meetings teachers use protocols to structure their feedback and time is provided to work on putting feedback into action.

Examine achievement data for each **subgroup** to determine whether implemented curriculum and supplemental curriculum meet the identified needs of students in subgroups and to determine where gaps exist. The same processes described above are repeated for key subgroups.

Choose or develop **supplemental curriculum**. Although we are in the process of researching for-purchase, evidence-based supplemental curriculum such as Read 180 or KIPP, our plan at this time is to continue developing unique supplemental

curriculum that is tailored to our specific curriculum and is aligned to the specific needs of our students. Many of our students read below grade level and have low math skills, and require remedial curricular materials. Our process for choosing supplemental curriculum mirrors our overall process for our general curriculum, with a special emphasis on the needs of students in subgroups. For example, in English, the Curriculum Team has already identified a need for supplemental curriculum in our Comedy and Tragedy block. Initial testing indicated that as many as 42% of our students are reading two or more levels below grade level. Because reading *12th Night* is a struggle for many of them, we have researched different lower-level or easier versions of this play, from graphic novels to simplified versions, to “translated” versions. We have evaluated the available options, selected, and purchased the books. Students who are struggling choose supplemental materials to read in addition to the full play. By reading many versions of the play, students are able to more easily access the original and understand the story. Our math Curriculum Team is in the process of researching and adapting supplemental math curriculum. We are also in the process of creating reading and math support classes and creating the supplemental curriculum to be used in those classes. Our supplemental curriculum will undergo the same process of selection, evaluation, and revision as our general curriculum.

The DSS curriculum will be in an **ongoing cycle of creation, implementation, evaluation, and revision**. Teachers are evaluated formatively and summatively

through weekly walkthroughs and teacher evaluations, which also supports the implementation and evaluation of the curriculum.

Meeting the needs of disadvantaged students:

Until recently, very little scholarly attention has been paid to the question of pupil achievement (as measured by standardized test scores) in Waldorf schools, either private or public, in the United States. Most of the existing research specifically on Public Waldorf education has centered on elementary schools. Nevertheless, the available research lends strong support to the claim that Waldorf education can improve pupil achievement across socioeconomic, ethnic, and ability groups.

The first public Waldorf school in the US, the Milwaukee Urban Waldorf Elementary School, was founded in 1991. A 1996 Study showed that this diverse, urban school increased grade level reading scores from 26% to 63% in just three years.

In a 2007 paper titled, “Learning From Rudolf Steiner: The Relevance of Waldorf Education for Urban Public School Reform,” Ida Oberman investigated the relevance of Waldorf education for public urban school reform. Her analysis, based on survey data from over 500 graduates of U.S. Waldorf schools, review of documents from the Gates Foundation, and staff-interview and student-achievement data from four public Waldorf schools, listed three key findings on urban public schools with Waldorf methods:

1. In their final year, the students in the study’s four California case study public Waldorf methods elementary schools match the top ten of peer sites on the 2006 California test scores and well outperform the average of their

peers statewide.

2. According to teacher, administrator and mentor reports, they achieve these high test scores by focusing on the “new three R’s” (Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships), rather than on rote learning and test prep, in a distinct fashion laid out by the Waldorf model.
3. A key focus is on artistic learning, not just for students but also for the adults.

A 2012 study called “Twenty Years and Counting: A Look at Waldorf in the Public Sector Using Online Sources,” compared all of the public Waldorf K-8 schools then in operation in the US (those in operation for 5 years or more) to their district counterparts. The authors found that Waldorf students scored below state averages in 3rd grade, but exceeded state averages and their district counterparts by the time they graduated from 8th grade.

The 2015 Stanford S.C.O.P.E study found that at the Alice Birney School—a Waldorf-inspired K-8 charter school in Sacramento—students outperformed district students on state reading and math assessments. These results held across the subgroups of African American, Latino, and socio-economically disadvantaged students. Students at the school also had lower rates of suspension and higher graduation rates across all groups.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation helped launch a public Waldorf high school—the George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science in Sacramento, CA – in 2008. The school replaced a failed America’s Choice program that had existed in the

same building, in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood on the edge of the city. An article in Harvard Education Letter, a publication of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, “*Waldorf Education in Public School – Teachers Adopt – and Adapt – This Developmental, Arts-Rich Approach,*” noted that when the Carver School was converted to a Waldorf school, test scores rose dramatically. In 2008, when the school started, 67 percent of 11th-graders scored “far below basic” or “below basic” in English; in 2011, just 12 percent did. The article also notes that teachers at the school were happier as well. Our Board has been in communication with faculty and administration at the Carver School and they shared previous reports of student achievement data with us. Those reports showed that students at the school were outperforming district averages in every subject, including across socioeconomic and ethnic categories. For Hispanic students at the school (30% of the school population), math and ELA scores were close to double the district average. Students with disabilities scored more than 30 percentage points above district counterparts, and economically disadvantaged students scored 29 percentage points above district averages.

All of the studies listed above show that public Waldorf education has the capacity to improve pupil achievement for all students, including ethnically and economically diverse populations, in a public setting. We believe that our target population will be similarly served by the Waldorf approach.

Advisory Program

Our advisory program supports our curriculum by giving all students an advisor who serves as an advocate, mentor, and support. Advisors regularly check grades and credit progression for all their advisees and are able to advocate for students to get them the help they need to be successful. We are in the process of developing a social-emotional learning curriculum, which will be delivered to students in Advisory. When students are able to self-regulate and have emotional skills, they are better able to access the curriculum in their core classes.

RTI and the Student Success Team

Desert Sage's Student Success Team meets weekly and is composed of the Pedagogical Director, Special Education Director/Lead Teacher, School Culture and Engagement Director, and lead English and math teachers. This team examines data (achievement, grades, teacher concerns, attendance, behavior, and credit progression) to identify and serve students who need extra support. The team uses a 3-tiered Response to Intervention model to monitor progress and move students through a progression of more intensive and individualized supports.

Tier 1: Ensure high quality classroom instruction, screenings, vocabulary support, and group interventions

Tier 2: Targeted individual or group interventions based on universal screeners and assessment data, for example: small group instruction, differentiation, additional resources, increased academic support, mini-lessons to address specific needs

Tier 3: More intensive interventions and comprehensive evaluations, for example: more comprehensive assessments, one-on-one or small group help before or after school, tutoring, Support Services class, Reading Support class, check-in/check-out systems for behavior needs

If Tier 3 Interventions are not effective and do not meet the academic needs of the student, a student may be referred for special education evaluation.]

2. What process is in place or will be in place to design and implement instructional practices aligned with the curriculum to meet the unique needs of disadvantaged students?

[Waldorf teachers use a variety of instructional practices to meet the needs of all students. Many of the traditional methods common to Waldorf instruction are now backed by decades of research and are well known best-practices in teaching, with proven records of effectiveness in raising achievement among disadvantaged students.

Key Pedagogical Methods that Meet Needs of Disadvantaged Students:

- *Holistic, Integrated Learning that addresses the “Head, Heart, and Hands” in a developmental framework*

Waldorf teachers engage all three domains of learning – conceptual, affective,

and kinesthetic – to fully engage the “whole child.” A typical 3-fold lesson at DSS begins with the teacher giving the students something to collectively observe and ponder, engaging their *thinking (the head)*. It could be a verse or a song, a piece of art or an artifact, or a phenomenon to be carefully observed. The purpose of this introductory period of observation is to raise a question in the student’s mind. An important guiding idea for Waldorf educators is “Don’t answer a question that the students haven’t asked.” In other words, the students’ curiosity *must* be activated in order for learning to be effective. Once curiosity has been awakened, the teacher leads the class through an active review of the previous lesson, activating prior knowledge, refreshing the memory, and rebuilding the subject. Then the teacher delivers new material in a way that connects content to the student’s lives, often through storytelling or imagery. This part of the lesson might include experiential learning, direct instruction, or any variety of pedagogical methods. Lively class discussions are common, as are peer-mediated instructional exercises. Whatever method the teacher chooses, the goal is for students to activate their *feeling and/or ethical judgment (the heart)* as well as their thinking, and to connect the lesson to what they already know. The lesson ends with students *doing (the hands)*—turning their new knowledge into an essay, illustration, project, performance, or math problem. This method is complementary to the principle of UDL (Universal Design for Learning), and allows multiple points of entry to the standards, which can be especially impactful for English Learners (EL) and Special Education students, as well as those in the Bottom 25% (achievement). In addition to appealing to

the head, heart, and hands, teachers also strive to connect the lesson to the students' developmental stage and needs. A central part of Waldorf teacher training is in-depth study of adolescent development which, combined with the developmentally attuned curriculum, enables teachers to more effectively "reach" students at each grade level. For example, because 9th graders are often overwhelmed by their newfound abilities to think abstractly, they can sometimes be dramatic or quick to draw conclusions. To balance this developmental tendency when working with freshmen, DSS teachers emphasize the skill of direct, concrete observation, challenging students to use precise language and exercise powers of exact, factual description: in the sciences, to describe and draw precisely what happened in experiments and demonstrations; in the humanities, to recount clearly a sequence of events or the nature of a character without getting lost in the confusion of details – to distinguish between what one perceives and one's subjective reaction to it.

- *Arts-Integrated Teaching*

Teachers integrate art into all content areas. This method of teaching is one of the hallmarks of Waldorf pedagogy. Art – both the viewing of it and the making of it – activates the affective domain of learning, heightens engagement, and forges connections in the students' minds. Arts Integration was the subject of a recent Brookings Institution study, which found that increasing arts educational experiences led to improvements in student discipline, writing achievement, and

compassion for others. These findings were even more pronounced for EL and Gifted students. In the “doing” or “hands” part of a DSS lesson, students commonly use art as a way to reinforce their learning, by illustrating what they know. Art is also used as a way for students to provide evidence of their learning, which can then be assessed. For example, in all Waldorf schools, starting from first grade and continuing through their senior year of high school, one of the primary ways students demonstrate their understanding and actively construct meaning is by creating and illustrating their own Main Lesson Books. These books function as a portfolio of learning, a vehicle for communicating and presenting to others, and as a textbook-type resource for study and review.

- *Inquiry/Discovery Based Learning and the Phenomenological Approach*

Waldorf schools practice a special form of inquiry/discovery-based learning called “the phenomenological approach,” which provides students a direct encounter with phenomena before they learn about its underlying concepts. This method awakens curiosity, and often allows the student to actually participate in a true discovery, walking in the footsteps of great scientists and mathematicians, for instance, rather than simply “learning about” their discoveries. Teachers design classroom experiences that arouse curiosity *before* they teach concepts, and students are encouraged to observe, ask questions, describe, and construct hypotheses about the phenomena before ever learning about the scientific model or theory that explains it – the opposite of what often happens in a typical

science classroom. In a botany class, students observe plants closely and draw them before reading about their parts and structures. In math class, students are given a real world problem to solve before they learn the formula. Whenever possible, teachers strive to give students a *direct encounter* with phenomena. Waldorf science teachers often lead students to experience *discrepant events* – events that do not turn out as we expect them to – thereby arousing curiosity and awe. In the process of carefully observing a phenomenon, or in grappling with a real world problem or discrepant event, the students often are led to actually discover a key formula or concept for themselves. *In other words, students experience the process that led to the scientific or mathematical discovery in the first place.* Inquiry and discovery-based learning, including the phenomenological approach, encourages students to actively question and find patterns and relationships. These methods lead to flexibility, perceptiveness, insight, creativity, and complex thinking. Numerous studies have found benefits to these approaches. At DSS we believe that this approach builds *capacities to do* math and science, as well as teaching skills and concepts.

- *Experiential Education*

In his book *Building Background Knowledge*, the prominent education researcher Robert Marzano writes, “The most straightforward way to enhance students' academic background knowledge is to provide academically enriching experiences, particularly for students whose home environments do not do so

naturally... a direct approach to enhancing academic background knowledge is one that increases the variety and depth of out-of-class experiences.” Leaving the confines of the classroom has the power to build background knowledge rapidly, but in-class experiences can also help students make connections and build background knowledge. In the words of Waldorf educator Henry Barnes, “When children relate what they learn to their own experience, they are interested and alive, and what they learn becomes their own.” Numerous studies have affirmed the relationship between background knowledge and achievement. Researchers have documented cognitive and affective benefits of field trips, including increased motivation for learning, a more positive attitude toward science and environmental concepts, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. All students benefit from experiential learning, but many students in our target population subgroups, perhaps in particular those from low socioeconomic backgrounds and those in the Bottom 25%, will reap the academic rewards of enhanced background information that comes from experiential learning. Others, such as EL and Special Ed students, may especially benefit from the multiple modalities and pathways to learning that are presented by experiential learning.

- *Relationship-Centered Teaching*

Strong teacher-student relationships are one of the highest predictors of student achievement. Peer relationships are also important to student satisfaction,

motivation, and achievement. According to researchers Caine & Caine (1994), “the brain does not naturally separate emotions from cognition, either anatomically or perceptually.” Students who feel a connection to their teacher, and whose emotional needs are met, are more engaged and motivated. A Review of Educational Research (RER) analysis of 46 studies found that strong teacher-student relationships are associated with improvements in engagement, attendance, grades, behavior, and drop-out rates. DSS teachers consciously design lessons around building supportive relationships, by creating opportunities for collaboration, class discussions, group learning, and bonding experiences.

- *Relevant, Place-Based, and Culturally Responsive Teaching*

Much has been written about the disconnect students often feel between their home culture and the culture of school. DSS hopes to break down this potential barrier to achievement by creating a curriculum that is relevant to the place where we live and the cultures of our city. Gloria Ladson-Billings, an early proponent of CRT, named three main components of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: (a) a focus on student learning and academic success, (b) developing students’ cultural competence to assist students in developing positive ethnic and social identities, and (c) supporting students’ critical consciousness or their ability to recognize and critique societal inequalities.

- *Direct Instruction*

This method of instruction has received renewed interest lately, after several studies, including the Hattie meta study, pointed to its high correlation with student achievement. Direct instruction refers to the explicit teaching of skills through lectures, demonstrations, labs, and discussions, and can also refer to the process of teaching in a 3 part structure of “I do, we do, you do,” with a gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student. Direct instruction is one of many methodologies employed by teachers at DSS

- *Project Based Learning*

DSS incorporates many elements of the Project-Based-Learning (PBL) teaching method. PBL involves engaging students in meaningful, challenging, and authentic projects with real audiences. Teachers allow students a degree of choice and present opportunities for critical thinking, sustained inquiry, reflection, collaboration, revision, and problem solving, while scaffolding and aligning student learning to state standards. Preliminary studies support the idea that PBL has the potential to raise student achievement.

The above set of bullet points outlines our preferred methods of instruction. However, to know if these methods are being implemented with fidelity and whether they are effective will require a system of monitoring and evaluation.

Processes in place at DSS to design and implement methods effectively:

1. A strong **Professional Development program** which dedicates at least one, two-hour session per quarter to instructing teachers in key pedagogical methods.
2. A supportive, informal **walkthrough system**. The Pedagogical Director conducts regular (weekly) walkthroughs and classroom observations to look for evidence of implementation of core DSS instructional methods and strategies, meeting one-on-one with teachers afterwards to share observations and help troubleshoot, or sharing feedback via a shared GoogleDoc that can serve as an ongoing conversation. Our walkthrough checklist includes:
 - evidence of consistent implementation of core Waldorf and DSS instructional methods and strategies, to include the three-fold lesson, arts-integration, the phenomenological approach, culturally responsive teaching, SEL, and other core strategies and methods
 - evidence of fidelity to the curriculum, including adherence to Unit Plans, pacing, and Standards integration (ensuring that instruction is taking place in the manner prescribed by curriculum planning documents)

- evidence of fidelity to the assessment plan, including formative and summative assessments
- evidence of adaptation and adjustments of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the needs of students in subgroup populations
- evidence of implementation of strategies learned in Professional Development
- evidence of student engagement
- evidence of successful classroom management
- evidence that instruction is aligned with State Standards allows students to effectively master State Standards

3. A **system of teacher self-reflection** to include self-assessment in teachers' ability to effectively implement methods. The Pedagogical Director uses teacher self-assessments to remove barriers to success and to help educators troubleshoot. Part of this system includes a timeline for providing regular feedback. Teachers reflect on their implementation of the program of the instruction. Topics include but are not limited to:

- Is my classroom instruction aligned with Standards?
- Is instruction taking place in the manner prescribed by curriculum planning documents and with fidelity to the design of the curriculum and the program of instruction?

- Does my instruction allow my students to effectively master State Standards in my classes?
- Are students in key subgroup populations able to effectively master State Standards in my classes?
- Is the curriculum integrated into my instruction consistently?
- What criteria am I using to measure my own instructional quality?
- What are my strengths, weaknesses, and needs?

4. Development and implementation of a **system of peer observation**, whereby newer teachers can observe more experienced teachers at work, to get a fuller understanding of how to implement teaching methods. The observation might focus on instructional techniques, pacing, or discipline struggles, for example. Teachers who are being observed will set the agenda--they will determine what help they need from the observer, and choose an appropriate protocol for the observation. New teachers will engage in at least one peer observation per semester. Established teachers will engage in at least one peer observation per year.

5. **Collection and evaluation of unit plans and anchor lesson** plans by the Pedagogical Director with the purpose of ensuring fidelity to the program of instruction. The Pedagogical Director will develop a rubric or tool to evaluate Unit and Lesson Plans, ensuring that Teachers are:

- a. integrating curriculum into instruction consistently

- b. implementing the curriculum with fidelity to the design of the curriculum and program of instruction
- c. aligning instruction with Standards
- d. teaching in a way that allows students to master State Standards

Teachers use protocols and the rubric/tool to self-evaluate their Lesson and Unit Plans for fidelity to AZ Standards and the DSS program of instruction. The Pedagogical Director evaluates unit and Lesson Plans to ensure fidelity to AZ Standards and the DSS program of instruction, and provides regular feedback. Teacher self-evaluations and the Pedagogical Director's evaluations, side-by-side, form the basis for a conversation and a plan to move forward in a cycle of continuous improvement.

- 6. **Adoption and implementation of protocols for examining student work** in PLC (Professional Learning Community) time, with the aim of determining whether instructional methods are effectively serving the needs of students. The Pedagogical Director and Data and Assessment Team find and evaluate protocols and rubrics for examining student work, including Main Lesson Books. The protocols and rubrics are used by teachers to self-evaluate and peer-evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional practices. The Pedagogical Director uses the gathered student work to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices for all instructional staff, using the criteria and rubrics/protocols created by the Data and Assessment team to measure instructional quality. In PLC time, teachers collaboratively examine student work to determine areas

where instructional practices are not successful (i.e., is not taking place in the manner prescribed by curriculum planning documents, or allowing students to effectively master State Standards). Teachers collaboratively examine student work in key subgroups to determine whether the instructional practices are equitable. The Pedagogical Director collects rubrics and reflections from PLC work to determine whether instructional practices are adequately effective, and to help identify teacher strengths, weaknesses and needs, and the Pedagogical Director leads teachers in goal setting.

7. Examination of student data disaggregated by subgroup. Teachers will regularly examine student data (as a form of feedback on instructional practice) during PD time and will set SMART (or similar) goals for improving their curriculum and instruction in response to data. Disaggregated data is used to modify instruction to meet the needs of subgroups. Teachers record their plans for improvement in their self reflection journals, which are then used by the Pedagogical Director to inform post-walkthrough conversations.

8. Implementing a Board-approved, summative teacher evaluation rubric that is designed to improve teacher performance and student achievement, which includes quantitative data on academic progress for all students, and which contains assessment of teachers' implementation of key teaching methods. At least once a year, a qualified evaluator (the Pedagogical Director and possibly an outside evaluator from APWE or AWSNA) provide feedback by conducting formal qualitative evaluations of teachers, to include observation of at least two consecutive class periods. The evaluation process

involves Teacher self-reflection, conversation, and a written evaluation in narrative form. The evaluation addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher's curriculum and teaching methods, as well as their ability to successfully integrate Standards (Standards integration). This qualitative evaluation, while designed to be formative, will also be paired with quantitative, summative data and be part of the teacher's annual Summative Evaluation that complies with A.R.S 15-189.06.]

3. What process is in place or will be in place to develop a comprehensive academic assessment system to measure the performance of disadvantaged students?

[DSS is committed to high levels of student achievement, which is only possible if teachers use effective and meaningful assessments. Assessments provide students with vital information about their growth as learners, while guiding teachers to adjust and refine their curriculum and methods. As John Hattie advises, in order to increase achievement, "know thy impact." Effective assessment identifies gaps in learning and teaching, as well as areas of strength, and should improve achievement rather than simply measure it.

An effective system of assessment must also disaggregate data to examine subgroups of students and compare their progress to the norm. Without disaggregation, it's easy to mask a school's failure to serve all students, because the majority of students may be achieving at the desired level. DSS is committed to creating an assessment system that effectively defines and helps to close the achievement gaps at our school.

Having a wide range of varied types of assessments is also important. Relying too heavily on one assessment or one type of assessment may lead to false conclusions about students' abilities, needs, or potential. A comprehensive assessment system must include multiple and varied forms of assessment.

Our attitude towards assessment also plays a large role in how effective our system will be. Teachers are often very divided and entrenched in their belief systems around assessment. We are working as a faculty to reach agreements and collaboratively perfect our school's system of assessment. Our aim is to move away from a mindset that views assessment as a system for sorting and ranking students, and towards a mindset that welcomes assessment data as a useful tool to help us better our practice and reach our highest potential as educators. We spend time in Professional Development examining our attitudes and beliefs about assessment; reading popular and influential books about grading and assessment, such as Tom Schimmer (*Grading from the Inside Out*), Robert Marzano (*Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading*), or Joe Feldman (*Grading for Equity*), and evaluating and revising our systems of assessment.

Types of Assessments Used at DSS

Because students demonstrate learning in many ways, DSS strives to assess in a variety of ways that call on students to use their heads, the hearts and hands. Offering multiple pathways to demonstrate learning is a benefit to EL and Special Education students, is a component of UDL, and is a tenet of culturally responsive education.

Formative Assessments: In his landmark book *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*, Dr. John Hattie ranked feedback as the one of the most powerful influencers on achievement, along with formative evaluations. The best teachers not only give frequent and constructive feedback to students, they also *actively use feedback from formative assessments to adjust their practice*. At DSS, formative assessments are used frequently and purposefully. Examples of formative assessments used at DSS include: daily writing assignments, class discussions, Main Lesson Book entries, quizzes and polls, direct verbal questioning, homework, in-class work such as word problems, guided practice, recitations, think-pair-sharing, KWL charts, bell work, self assessment, ipsative assessment, exit tickets, or even a piece of art/dance that models a concept. School-wide benchmark testing is also employed.

Self Assessment: Ideally, teachers and students are partners in the assessment process. Self-assessment and reflection have been shown to increase achievement, by actively involving students in their own learning process. DSS students engage in both formative and summative self-assessment, as well as goal setting. Peer assessment and feedback is also powerfully motivating for students, and is frequently used at DSS. When students participate in the assessment process, scoring becomes more authentic and relevant.

Main Lesson Books: One of the most important summative assessments at DSS is the rubric and narrative-based grading of Main Lesson Books, which serve as a major summative assessment in Main Lesson Block classes. Main Lesson Books are essentially a textbook that the students construct themselves in order to demonstrate that they have mastered the

standards covered by the Main Lesson Block. They are usually beautifully illustrated and contain essays, poetry or stories; diagrams, charts and tables; mathematical formulas; and artwork, maps, or other material relevant to the course of study. This form of assessment is both a learning tool for students and a way for teachers to assess students, as well as for students to assess their own level of mastery. Main Lesson Books are usually graded using both rubrics and narrative feedback. Students often co-create rubrics with the teacher.

Other Summative Assessments-- Various forms of assessment allow students multiple ways to demonstrate mastery. Examples of other summative assessments used at DSS include end-of-unit or end-of-semester essays, narratives, or exams; performance-based assessments (presentations, exhibitions, dramatic or artistic performances, community showcases); projects, and portfolio assessments. In many classes, students are actively involved in designing the rubrics used to grade their work. Because authentic student learning, rather than ranking, is the goal of assessment at DSS, students are often given the chance to redo a project, rewrite a paper, or retake a test in response to feedback. This process of revisiting, refining, and re-submitting work reinforces the idea that learning is something that is driven by the student, and that abilities can grow and are not fixed. The goal of summative assessment at DSS is to *enhance* learning rather than solely *monitor* it, to make learning relevant and authentic, to develop and promote metacognitive awareness in the student, and to lead the students to become more self-aware, invested in, and responsible for their own learning.

State Mandated Testing and Benchmark Testing: External assessments are necessary for the purpose of benchmarking our students' performance against state and national standards, as well as for ensuring equity and closing the opportunity gap for our students. All DSS students will participate in ACT-Aspire (or similar) benchmark testing, and they will all take the state-mandated ACT-Aspire, ACT Math, ACT ELA and AzSCI, which will serve as valuable tools for measuring student performance against the Arizona State Standards. We use the AZELLA scores to monitor progress for EL students.

Steps in the development of our assessment system:

1. **Design a school Assessment Calendar** for key formative, summative, and state assessments in all subjects—including final exams, exhibitions, festivals and public presentations of learning, in house benchmark and in-house basic skills assessments—and align this calendar to our school calendar.
2. **Implement or design and implement a standardized formative benchmark testing system** such as NWEA MAPS or ACT-Aspire.
3. **Implement the school's LMS** (Learning Management System) and train all teachers on its use.
4. **Establish a Data and Assessment Team** that is responsible for creating/evaluating the school's data collection system. The Data and Assessment team sets annual goals, priorities, roles, and responsibilities for the team. They decide what data will be collected, at what regular intervals, to ensure students are on track to master Standards by the end of the academic year. They develop protocols and rubrics to

allow for evaluation of the assessment system, and ensure that the system is aligned to the curriculum and the instructional methodology/program.

5. **Choose and administer school-wide, in house basic reading and math skills**

assessments. The team implements annual in-house reading level and math level assessments, to be administered to all freshmen and transfer students. These tests are separate from, and in addition to, benchmark testing systems such as NWEA/ACT Aspire. The team ensures that all freshmen and transfer students are tested according to the time frame outlined above.

6. **Identify, create, select and implement key classroom-level formative and summative**

assessments for use in analyzing student mastery of standards. The Data and Assessment Team researches best practices in Waldorf assessment as well as research-backed best practices in assessment of student mastery of standards, and form a list of DSS preferred formative and summative assessments. Teachers implement assessments.

7. **Analyze assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness for all**

students. The Pedagogical Director, Special Education Lead, Reading Specialist, and Testing Coordinator identify or design appropriate protocols for looking at student assessment data, and bring data to staff to be analyzed with the use of protocols, with the aim of identifying where student proficiency and growth is/is not occurring. The Data and Assessment Team (including Student Services (SPED) Director, Reading Specialist, Testing Coordinator, and the Pedagogical Director) identify or design appropriate protocols for looking at student assessment data. The team schedules and designs PD/PLC workshops for the purpose of analyzing data with the whole staff, and determines whether DSS's instructional methods and

curriculum are meeting the needs of all students. The team brings data to the staff to be analyzed with the use of protocols, with the aim of identifying where student proficiency and growth is/is not occurring, and teachers are given time to adjust/refine/redesign curriculum and instruction that is not meeting student needs, in response to data, and to practice self-reflection and goal setting. Small PLC groups (CFG or other) use protocols for examining teacher-generated assessments, with the goal of improving both assessment practices and curriculum/instructional practices. Example: https://www.nsrharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/examining_assessments.pdf Data is used by the Intervention Team to guide the RTI process.

8. **Analyze achievement data at regular intervals.** This will be done during the Student Success Team meetings, which use an MTSS-RTI process, and during regularly scheduled PD devoted to assessment and data. At these PD sessions, teachers will use data to identify where student proficiency and growth is/is not occurring, and they will be given time to adjust/refine/redesign curriculum and instruction that is not meeting student needs. The Data and Assessment Team collects data from in-house testing and achievement testing and presents all findings to the teachers during PD time. Teachers will use the findings of the Data and Assessment Team to begin designing and revising assessments, and implement changes as needed, during PLC time and in their classrooms.

9. **Formalize a PD cycle for assessment,** where teachers are given time to collaboratively examine and refine their own assessment systems, to ensure that they are accurately

capturing valid data about student learning and growth. This time is also dedicated to book studies and collaborative vision-forming. The cycle is reflected in the PD Calendar.

10. Develop and use valid and reliable yearly comparisons of student growth, proficiency, and mastery. The Data and Assessment Team will share year-to-year comparisons of student growth, proficiency, and mastery with the staff at least quarterly during scheduled PD time. These reports will be used to make adjustments to curriculum and instruction, especially in the area of differentiated instruction and additional supports for students in subgroups. Data is used by the Student Success Team to guide decisions around interventions. The Data and Assessment Team meets monthly to establish tasks related to tracking and monitoring yearly comparisons. Biannually, the team presents yearly comparisons to the teachers at the pre and post-service bi-annual faculty PD weeks/retreats. The teachers analyze the data to determine proficiency gaps. These gaps guide the faculty as they revise and re-envision curriculum and instruction for the following semester, with the goal of closing gaps.

11. Analyze assessment data to evaluate instructional and curricular effectiveness for students in key subgroups with the goal of making adaptations to meet the needs of all learners. In addition to PD/RTI time devoted to examining data, meetings are held focusing solely on assessment data for students in the following subgroups: ethnic groups (White, Hispanic, African American, Native American, etc), gender, bottom 25% (as measured by various achievement data), FRL (Free and Reduced Lunch) recipients; Special Education students, EL students, and other relevant subgroups as needed. Teachers look for patterns among subgroups, and to tailor instruction and curriculum to the specific needs of all

subgroups. The Data and Assessment Team shares data with the Student Success Team, who use the data to create lists of students in need of interventions, and to evaluate the effectiveness of current interventions. Data will be used by the Student Success Team to create intervention recommendations. The Support Services (SPED) Team also uses the data in Support Services Team meetings to make recommendations and to better support Teachers as they revise curriculum and instruction, and while co-teaching/designing universal and specific accommodations. Teachers, in PLCs, will evaluate the instruction that has been delivered to each separate subgroup, and make necessary adjustments for each group. All Teachers will use data concerning subgroups to refine their curricula on an ongoing basis.

RTI Process and Student Success Team

Desert Sage's Student Success Team meets weekly and is composed of the Pedagogical Director, Special Education Director/Lead Teacher, School Culture and Engagement Director, and lead English and math teachers. This team examines data to identify and serve students who need extra support. Students are moved through a series of interventions and progress monitored until their needs are met. Types of data we examine in this team include:

- Achievement data from state testing, in house benchmark testing, and in house basic skills assessments (bottom 25%, score of less than proficient, or 2 or more levels below grade level)
- Grades, both quarterly/semesterly, as well as grades on major projects or other summative assessments (less than 70%)

- Teacher or parent-reported concerns of any kind. All teachers have access to a form that submits data directly to the Student Success Team
- Attendance data (more than 5 absences per semester)
- Behavior incident data (any moderate or serious behavior incident)
- Transcripts and graduation progress (not on track for graduation)
- Observed changes in behavior (various)

The first tier of our RTI plan includes ensuring high quality classroom instruction, screenings, and group interventions; the second tier is composed of targeted individual or group interventions; and the third tier involves intensive interventions and comprehensive evaluations.]

4. What process is in place or will be in place to monitor and measure educator effectiveness?

[Data analysis

While DSS values teacher intuition and expertise, we also believe that personal biases can cloud perceptions and prevent us from reaching our highest potential as educators. In order to balance hunches and feelings about student performance with facts, we regularly engage in data analysis in our Professional Development work. The school's Data and Assessment team organizes and presents data on student performance and achievement to analyze the effectiveness of the curriculum, instructional methods, and assessments used by teachers.

Looking at data can sometimes make people feel exposed, defensive, or “on the spot.” Desert Sage seeks to have a staff culture that is supportive, data-curious and data-responsive, so use protocols such as the [Data Analysis Protocol](#) or the [Data Dialogue Protocol](#) from NSRF to structure conversations. Using a structured dialog helps to manage the discussion, maintains its focus, and creates a collaborative atmosphere, which allows participants to look at data with fresh eyes and get help coming up with next steps and strategies. We look at whole school data and also data that is disaggregated by subgroups, to ensure that we are not failing to serve particular groups of students, whose needs are sometimes lost in the “whole school” picture.

Examining Student Work

During Professional Development PLC time, teachers bring student work for the group to examine. Using protocols from the National School Reform Faculty, such as the [Tuning Protocol](#), [Learning from Student Work Protocol](#), or other appropriate protocol, teachers collaboratively examine work to help a colleague better align their curriculum, methods, or assessments to meet the learning goals for their units. The process is teacher driven, with teachers seeking answers to questions such as:

- What steps could I take next with this student?
- What teaching strategies might be most effective?
- What else would I like to see in the student work? What kinds of assignments or assessments could provide this information?
- What does this conversation make me think about in terms of my own practice? About teaching and learning in general?

While this practice isn't an official monitoring strategy for school leaders, it is a self-monitoring activity for teachers that also provides valuable information for the Pedagogical Director.

Collection and Evaluation of Unit and Lesson Plans

The Pedagogical Director will develop a checklist and/or rubric to be used to regularly review unit and lesson plans with the purpose of ensuring fidelity to the program of instruction.

Formative Evaluation: Walkthrough Observation System

The Pedagogical Director conducts weekly walkthroughs and classroom observations in order to monitor educator effectiveness and to provide supportive, formative feedback for teachers. The Pedagogical Director has created a checklist of evidence related to elements of curriculum, teaching methods, and assessment that are central to the program of instruction at DSS, including:

- evidence of consistent implementation of core Waldorf and DSS instructional methods and strategies, to include the three-fold lesson, arts-integration, the phenomenological approach, experiential learning, culturally responsive teaching, and other core strategies and methods
- evidence of fidelity to the curriculum, including adherence to Unit Plans, pacing, and Standards integration (ensuring that instruction is taking place in the manner prescribed by curriculum planning documents)

- evidence of fidelity to the assessment plan, including formative and summative assessments
- evidence of adaptation and adjustments of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the needs of students in subgroup populations
- evidence of implementation of strategies learned in Professional Development
- evidence of student engagement
- evidence of successful classroom management
- evidence that instruction is aligned with State Standards and allows students to effectively master State Standards

After each walkthrough the Pedagogical Director makes time to communicate observations and feedback to the teacher, ensuring the teacher has a chance to share struggles and concerns, troubleshoot, and ask for help. This feedback can be in person or via a shared GoogleDoc that can serve as an ongoing conversation

Teacher Self Evaluation:

Teachers will self-evaluate at least once per semester on the following topics:

- Is my classroom instruction aligned with the principles of Public Waldorf Education, DSS best practices, and state standards?
- Is instruction taking place in the manner prescribed by curriculum planning documents and with fidelity to the design of the curriculum and the program of instruction?

- Does my instruction allow my students to effectively master standards in my classes? Am I effectively meeting student needs?
- What assessments am I using to determine the effectiveness of my instruction and what evidence am I using to determine the accuracy and reliability of my assessments?
- Are students in key subgroup populations able to effectively master State Standards in my classes? Am I meeting the needs of all students?
- Is the curriculum integrated into my instruction consistently?
- What criteria am I using to measure my own instructional quality?
- What are my strengths, weaknesses, and needs?

The Pedagogical Director will use the teacher's self-evaluations to inform the walkthrough process and provide more helpful formative feedback. The questions in the self-evaluation form will be collaboratively evaluated and revised annually to ensure that they are meaningful and relevant.

Summative Evaluation:

The Directors of DSS will use a summative assessment tool to measure teacher effectiveness. All teachers will be evaluated at least once per year using this basic framework. The framework is based on the Arizona Professional Teaching Standards. The purpose of the assessment is to improve teacher performance and student achievement, and it includes quantitative data on academic progress for all students. The data portion of the assessment

accounts for between 20-33% of the final outcome of the evaluation. Four summative performance classifications are used to describe teacher performance: Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective. This tool will be presented to the board for approval during the first semester.

Our teacher evaluation tool measures all of Arizona's Professional Teaching Standards, which are as follows:

Standard 1. Learner Development: The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard 2. Learning Differences: The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard 3. Learning Environments: The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

Standard 4. Content Knowledge: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

Standard 5. Application of Content: The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Standard 6. Assessment: The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

Standard 7. Planning for Instruction: The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard 8. Instructional Strategies: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Standard 9. Professional Learning and Ethical Practice: The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard 10. Leadership and Collaboration: The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Our framework, based on the Arizona Professional Teaching Standards, is research-based, incorporates multiple measures of achievement, and has clearly defined expectations.

Each year, a team consisting of the Pedagogical Director and experienced teachers will examine the framework in order to adapt, augment, and personalize it for DSS, to ensure that it measures not only Arizona's professional teaching standards, but also our school-specific standards and mission objectives.]

5. What process is in place or will be in place to recruit, select, and hire quality educators?

[Desert Sage School is committed to finding and hiring the best educators for our students.

We seek teachers and staff who are committed to our vision and mission, who are fully trained as Waldorf educators or committed to receiving training, who have passion and a depth of knowledge for their subject area, and who have the potential or proven experience to serve a diverse population of students with high academic and social-emotional needs.

For the 2022-2023 school year, Desert Sage conducted nationwide searches for our Director positions, advertising on Indeed, the Arizona Education Employment Board, Waldorf job boards such as the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education job board, Waldorf Today, and on our website and social media platforms. Our teaching positions were advertised on Waldorf today, Arizona Education Employment Board, and on our website and social media platforms. Because diversity is important to us, we also advertised on the National Alliance of Black School Educators Board. We also garnered a

lot of teacher interest via our booths at community events such as the Tucson Festival of Books and Cyclovia, where we provided interest cards and info-gathering forms for both students and potential employees.

We were overwhelmed with the interest our school generated in our local Tucson community, in our extended Waldorf community, and nationally. Over 100 people applied for 5 full time positions and a handful of part time positions, and we continue to receive letters of interest and resumes monthly, even though all positions have been filled.

We intend to advertise early for the 2023-2024 school year, and to have all teachers hired by May 1. We plan to advertise on our website and social media, on Waldorf job boards, at community events, at university job fairs, on teacher recruitment websites, through our professional association membership networks, and on local public radio and television stations.

Our system for selecting and hiring high quality educators is as follows:

1. Form Hiring Team for the next school year. The Hiring Team consists of the Pedagogical Director, School Culture and Engagement Director and/or Administrative Director, Special Education Director, and experienced teachers.
2. Create clear and detailed job descriptions and lists of required and preferred qualifications; post these with all job postings.

3. Collaboratively establish criteria for selecting teachers.
4. Design/revise rubrics/checklist/forms used to evaluate candidates.
5. Write/revise interview questions for each position and establish any performance criteria (such as teaching a sample lesson, etc.).
6. Organize applicant information—As candidates apply, the Administrative Director will create an organized folder system in Google Drive where the Hiring Team can easily access applicants' resumes, letters of interest, and letters of recommendation. The Pedagogical Director will create an Applicant Spreadsheet, where all qualified candidates can be organized and sorted via various criteria.
7. Select candidates—the Hiring Team will collectively select candidates for the interview process, using clearly established criteria.
8. Conduct initial interviews—the Hiring Team will conduct interviews in person or via Zoom, as location allows. During interviews, the Hiring Team will use the established rubrics, checklists, and observation forms to take notes and make a recommendation to move the candidate forward or reject them.
9. Conduct second round and third round interviews if needed.
10. Create and send offer letters and request fingerprint-clearance cards from interested candidates.
11. Send contracts to candidates who accept DSS offers.
12. Send timely and polite hiring rejection letters.

13. Build a candidate pipeline by maintaining ongoing relationships and contact with highly qualified candidates who may be a perfect match for DSS in the future.

One of our hiring challenges is finding qualified Waldorf high school teachers. Most Waldorf-certified teachers are elementary and middle school teachers. Waldorf teacher prep programs for younger grades are more widely available and heavily attended than high school programs. Waldorf high schools in the United States, especially stand-alone high schools, are rare. Of the hundreds of Waldorf schools in North America, fewer than 50 include high school programs, and almost all of those are at private schools. Teachers with Waldorf high school experience tend to have little experience working with disadvantaged students, and teachers with experience working with disadvantaged students tend to have very little knowledge of Waldorf education. Desert Sage School is the fifth public Waldorf high school to open its doors in the United States, and the third stand-alone Public Waldorf high school in the nation.

We are committed to having all of our teachers and directors become fully Waldorf trained. There are several types of Waldorf certification and training available. Antioch University and Mount Mary University, in partnership with Great Lakes Waldorf Institute offer Master's Degrees in Arts Education with a Waldorf Certificate. These are three year programs, in which teachers spend summers in person and winters online. The Great Lakes Institute offers a fully online Waldorf certification program. The Center for Anthroposophy offers introductory online Waldorf teacher training classes and online/residency Leadership Training programs. When teachers are offered a position, if

they are not already fully trained Waldorf teachers, the Directors meet with the candidate to discuss what Waldorf training will best suit that teacher and make a plan for enrollment in a program.

We are committed to offering competitive salaries and benefits. Our salary scale for teachers is aligned with the TUSD pay scale and based on experience and tenure, education level, and other relevant endorsements and credentials. We offer the following benefits to employees: Arizona State Retirement, paid social security, a 403B supplemental retirement plan, health, dental, and vision insurance, PTO (paid time off) and paid holidays.

Our plans to increase teacher retention include: competitive salaries and a comprehensive benefit package; Waldorf training for all non-trained staff; training for all teachers in trauma-informed practices; a warm, collaborative, mission-focused climate; a robust and collegial professional development program; strong administrative support and recognition of teachers; and a high degree of flexibility and trust.]

G. Budget Form and Narrative – Total points possible: 5 points

A description of the eligible applicant’s planned activities and expenditures of subgrant funds to support the activities of opening and preparing for the operation of new charter schools, or replicated high-quality charter schools, or expanding high-quality charter schools. If the applicant plans to open its school on August 1, 2021, Planning and Implementation expenditures must be identified as such in the Budget Narrative. If the applicant plans to open its school on August 1, 2021, all expenditures are Planning and need not be identified as such. *ESEA Title IV, Part C, Sec. 4303(f)(1)(C)(i)(V)*

General expenditure guidance:

Costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to meet the objectives of the grant. (See AZCSP website for more guidance on allowable expenditures.)

Activities:

1. Preparing teachers, school leaders, and specialized instructional support personnel, including through paying the costs associated with—
 - a. providing professional development; and
 - b. hiring and compensating, during the eligible applicant’s Planning period specified in the application for subgrant funds that is required under this section, one or more of the following:
 - i. Teachers.
 - ii. School leaders.
 - iii. Specialized instructional support personnel.
2. Acquiring supplies, training, equipment (including technology), and educational materials (including developing and acquiring instructional materials).
3. Carrying out necessary renovations to ensure that a new school building complies with applicable statutes and regulations, and minor facilities repairs (excluding construction).
4. Providing one-time, startup costs associated with providing transportation to students to and from the charter school.
5. Carrying out community engagement activities, which may include paying the cost of student and staff recruitment.
6. Providing for other appropriate, non-sustained costs related to the activities described in subsection (b)(1) when such costs cannot be met from other sources.

Also, salaries are covered only during the Planning period.

LINE ITEMS DESCRIPTION			
Function Code	Object Code	Description	Budgeted Amount
Instruction 1000			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500		0.00
Supplies	6600	Classroom supplies and Chromebooks	78,830.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Support Services 2100, 2200, 2600, 2700			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		3,500.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500	Two buses and/or passenger vans	70,000.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Support Services - Admin 2300, 2400, 2500, 2900			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300	Professional development	33,870.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500	Professional development travel expenses	15,800.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		23,000.00
Operation of Non-Instructional Services 3000			
Salaries	6100		0.00
Employee Benefits	6200		0.00
Purchased Professional Services	6300		0.00
Purchased Property Services	6400		0.00
Other Purchased Services	6500	Marketing and recruitment	25,000.00
Supplies	6600		0.00
Other Expenses	6800		0.00
Indirect Cost Recovery	6910		0.00
Capital Outlay	1906		0.00

Max points possible: 100 points + 5 optional preference points

As our school is currently in its first year of operation, the faculty and staff were surveyed to ascertain their anticipated needs. For faculty, the aim is to best enable them to deliver their curricula in a manner that aligns with state standards as well as our commitment to the Waldorf

approach to teaching and learning. What emerged from this process were distinguishable areas of needed investment: professional development and training, community engagement and transportation, and building the school's infrastructure. In this first year of implementation, the school will focus its activities and expenditures in the following areas: professional development, marketing and recruitment, transportation, classroom technology, and classroom materials.

Professional Development. While ongoing professional development is paramount in the field of education for both teachers and administrators, our aim is to establish, grow, and maintain an identity and philosophical approach to education that is distinctly Waldorf. It is not enough to say that we are “Waldorf-inspired.” Our goal is to make a Waldorf high school education accessible to the Tucson community. To achieve this objective, we wish to have our teachers and administrators partake in professional development opportunities that are designed to enhance their understanding of Waldorf education and to give our teachers and administrators the specific skills and training in Waldorf methods. Through outside Waldorf training institutions—such as the Center for Anthroposophy, Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, and Antioch University—our staff will enroll in training and workshops to enhance their understanding and develop the skills that make Waldorf education distinctive from more traditional forms of schooling.

Additionally, for Desert Sage School, social-emotional learning is not an axiom but is an elemental component of our program. At its core, social-emotional learning involves the basic skills of deep listening and speaking with intention; these skills underlie the students' ability to read and write proficiently. Reading is essentially listening from the heart to the story of another, and writing is the process of looking honestly within to find one's own story, as well as the

courage to share it. In this way, social-emotional learning forms the foundation of all other academic skills. Learning to cultivate and sustain enduring relationships is among the core principles of Public Waldorf Education. Training and support in social-emotional learning is central to supporting this endeavor. Accordingly, we are seeking out various programs and models to implement school-wide. While we have not yet decided on which model will best fit our school, we are committed to the practice, and are researching various programs, including *the Ways of Council* and *Growing Leaders*.

Marketing and Recruitment. Enrolling a robust cohort of 9th graders for our second year of operation is essential for a range of reasons, state funding being among the most fundamental. As Desert Sage School is new and lacks name recognition and brand awareness in the Tucson community, a thoughtful recruitment strategy will be essential in order to meet our enrollment target. While word-of-mouth and individual conversations with prospective families are free and effective, we understand that it will be important to develop a marketing plan that includes a mix of print publications, digital marketing, one or more direct mail campaigns, participation in community events, and traditional media advertising. An annual recruitment cycle that supports our enrollment efforts will be developed and managed by our Administrative Director. Procuring inquiries at the top of the enrollment funnel is where the bulk of the recruitment funds will need to be spent. Once a family has inquired, we will have the opportunity to massage them through the enrollment process through information sessions, open houses, yield events, and individual conversations.

Student Information System. In our first year of operation, we elected to use JupiterED (Jupiter) for our Student Information System (SIS). While Jupiter has been adequate in this first year of operation with a very small student population, it will be important for us to acquire a different, more sophisticated SIS for several reasons. It would be beneficial to have SIS software that syncs with IEP-Pro, which will save significant time for our Special Education Director in submitting required reports to the Arizona Department of Education. Some SIS software programs have an enrollment management module to assist with managing the enrollment process and recruitment funnel. And, a more advanced system will enable us to conduct institutional research to learn about the effectiveness of our program for different groups of students, particularly those from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. SIS programs we are considering include PowerSchool, School Master, and Synergy.

Transportation. Desert Sage School does not own vehicles and is currently unable to provide transportation to and from school for its students. Section 7 elaborates on the need for student transportation, particularly from the south and southwest areas of the Tucson metropolitan area, which are predominately Hispanic and areas where students cannot readily access our campus via public transportation. Procuring two to three 15-passenger vehicles will support students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, remove a barrier to enrollment, and will be a selling point to encourage students to enroll. Further, owning vehicles will enable Desert Sage School to take students on field trips. As experiential learning is integral to our educational program, owning vehicles will enable us to increase the frequency of field experiences for students while reducing the cost as we will not need to rely on rented vehicles.

Classroom Technology. We need Chromebooks for student use, which may be utilized for students to conduct internet research and writing. Chromebooks will also be necessary for state-mandated testing. We anticipate purchasing approximately 75 Chromebooks in the first year.

Classroom Supplies and Equipment. As we begin our first year of operation, the need to procure an adequate inventory of classroom equipment, supplies, curriculum materials, and furniture has become increasingly apparent. The most significant need for curriculum funding will support the subject areas of science, art, and music. Establishing and building our in-house resources for science equipment, literature for English courses, student reference materials for the social sciences, textbooks for mathematics will support our academic program for many years.

Function Code & Object Codes	Timeline	Expenditure	Cost Objective	Estimated Expense
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<p>Professional Development</p> <p><u>PD Tuition</u></p> <p>Object Code: 6300</p> <p>Function Code: 2300</p>	<p>February, 2023 through October, 2023</p>	<p>Waldorf teacher training and administrative development. Specific trainings through the Center for Anthroposophy include: Whistep High School Training, Explorations, Waldorf Leadership, and Great Lakes.</p>	<p>To train teachers in Waldorf methods and approaches to teaching and learning. To train administrators in Waldorf-style leadership best practices. This will enable our teachers and administrators to create a learning community that is as closely aligned with Waldorf principles as possible. Also, to train a school counselor to work with students who would benefit from counseling services.</p>	<p>Explorations: \$2, (3 @ \$890) \$2,670</p> <p>Whistep (2 @ \$8,700) \$17,400</p> <p>Waldorf Leadership: (2 @ \$1,800) \$3,600</p> <p>Great Lakes: (5 @ \$1,200) \$6,000</p> <p>APWE Conference: \$600</p> <p>\$33,870</p>
<p><u>PD Travel</u></p> <p>Object Code: 6580</p> <p>Function Code: 2300</p>	<p>Whistep High School Training in New Hampshire: June/July 2023 (3 weeks)</p> <p>Waldorf Leadership in New Hampshire: April 2023 and October 2023 (3 days each)</p>	<p>Travel for professional development: Whistep High School Training is in Wilton, New Hampshire.</p> <p>Waldorf Leadership Training occurs in April 2023 and October 2023 and requires travel to Keene, New Hampshire <i>twice</i>.</p>	<p>Whistep High School Training and Waldorf Leadership Training both require travel from Arizona to New Hampshire.</p>	<p>Whistep (2 @ \$4,800) \$9,600</p> <p>Waldorf Leadership (2 @ \$3,100) \$6,200</p> <p>\$15,800</p>

	March 2023 through September 2023	Program and material costs to train teachers and administrators using a specific social-emotional development program, such as The Way of Council or Growing Leaders.	To enhance the social-emotional development of our students as a foundation for essential academic skills.	\$3,500
Marketing & Recruitment Object Code: 6540 Function Code: 2300	February 2023 through January 2024	Ongoing marketing and recruitment costs include a mix of: print publications, banners and signage, digital marketing, direct mail campaign, traditional media, and community events.	To recruit students in the greater Tucson metropolitan area, particularly students from educationally disadvantaged communities. To increase enrollment to secure adequate state funding to support general operations.	\$25,000
Student Information System Object Code: 6600 Function Code: 2300	Implementation in March 2023. This software is perpetual.	Implementation of new Student Information System (SIS). The systems we are considering include PowerSchool, School Master, and Synergy. Initial implementation costs vary.	Our current SIS (JupiterED) is inadequate to scale as our student population increases. A more sophisticated system will enable us to enhance student recruitment by enabling us to better manage the enrollment funnel, integrate with IEP-Pro (our online SPED software), and enable us to run detailed, customized reports so that we will be able to analyze and measure our effectiveness.	\$23,000

Object Code: 6600 Function Code: 1000	February 2023 through December 2023	Math: graphing calculators, curriculum materials (textbooks, compasses, rulers, protractors, etc.).	Math curriculum materials are derived from Waldorf sources, primarily from Jamie York Press, which enables our math teachers to incorporate a Waldorf approach to math.	\$3,500
	February 2023 through December 2023	English: books (literature) and other curricular resources.	In addition to English courses, the English curriculum includes Main Lesson Block, which is a signature Waldorf approach to learning. Literature is aligned with the Waldorf curricular developmental themes.	\$4,500
	February 2023 through December 2023	Social studies: books and maps	As in other academic subjects, the Waldorf social studies curriculum supports intellectual development through increasingly complex topics in the social sciences.	\$4,000
	February 2023 through December 2023	Science: Bunsen burners, general lab equipment (beakers, pipettes, microscopes, slides).	The Waldorf approach to the sciences is phenomenological whereby students make discoveries as an incentive to dig deeper. Experiential learning and lab work are paramount to this approach.	\$16,000

	February 2023 through December 2023	Music: various music equipment, such as choral risers and instruments. Storage will also be needed.	Music is among the mainstays of a Waldorf education; music in the Waldorf curriculum awakens and nurtures the deep inner life of students.	\$12,830
	February 2023 through December 2023	Movement (PE): Mats, sports equipment, shade sails (to create shade to be able to hold movement classes outdoors).	Movement (or physical education) in the Waldorf context emphasizes social interaction, mind-body awareness, and health.	\$6,000
			TOTAL	\$250,000

AIMS Scale Scores and Performance Levels
Spring 2012 - Spring 2014

Grade	Performance Level	Reading Scale Scores	Writing Scale Scores	Mathematics Scale Scores	Science Scale Scores
3rd	Falls Far Below	200-378	Suspended	100-302	
	Approaches	379-430		303-346	
	Meets	431-515		347-405	
	Exceeds	516-640		406-540	
4th	Falls Far Below	220-401	Suspended	120-330	200-461
	Approaches	402-449		331-365	462-499
	Meets	450-535		366-415	500-546
	Exceeds	536-660		416-560	547-800
5th	Falls Far Below	240-423	300-438	140-347	
	Approaches	424-467	439-493	348-380	
	Meets	468-555	494-600	381-435	
	Exceeds	556-675	601-700	436-580	
6th	Falls Far Below	250-432	300-448	160-365	
	Approaches	433-477	449-492	366-397	
	Meets	478-570	493-580	398-445	
	Exceeds	571-690	581-700	446-600	
7th	Falls Far Below	260-442	300-449	180-381	
	Approaches	443-488	450-494	382-410	
	Meets	489-586	495-594	411-459	
	Exceeds	587-720	595-700	460-620	
8th	Falls Far Below	270-451	Suspended	200-408	200-472
	Approaches	452-498		409-425	473-499
	Meets	499-601		426-474	500-531
	Exceeds	602-800		475-640	532-800
HS	Falls Far Below	500-626	300-432	300-470	200-474
	Approaches	627-673	433-479	471-486	475-499
	Meets	674-772	480-586	487-536	500-536
	Exceeds	773-900	587-700	537-700	537-800

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Question 4:

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Section C- Charter Entity Founders

Question 2:

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Question 5a:

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- ❖ [Arizona graduation and college attendance rates lag | News | paysonroundup.com](#)
- ❖ [U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on Youth Mental Health Crisis Further Exposed by COVID-19 Pandemic | HHS.gov](#)

- ❖ [This Is How Childhood Trauma Affects Students and What You Can Do](#)
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Question 5c:

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- ❖ [What Research Says About Parent Involvement | Responsive Classroom](#)
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Section D- Governance

Question 1

- ❖ [About | State Board for Charter Schools](#)

Question 3

- ❖ [Developmental Relationships Survey - Search Institute](#)
- ❖ [The Attitudes and Behaviors \(A&B\) Survey - Search Institute](#)

Question 6

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Section F- Leadership

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