

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Jayson Phillips

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Arizona College Preparatory Oakland Campus

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 191 West Oakland Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chandler State AZ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 85225-4598

County Maricopa County

Telephone (480) 224-3930

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Web site/URL

http://www.cusd80.com/ACPOaklan

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E-mail Phillips.Jayson@cusd80.com

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Camille Casteel

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

E-mail casteel.camille@cusd80.com

District Name Chandler Unified School District Tel. (480) 812-7000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Bob Rice

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 31 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 7 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 45 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	60	67	127
7	118	119	237
8	106	100	206
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	284	286	570

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 29 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 47 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 2%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	599
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.017
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Arabic, Cantonese, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Vietnamese, Farsi, Somali, Tagalog, Urdu, Afrikaans, Bengali, Hindi ACP-O has a 0% LEP (ELL) rate.

While we have many languages that are spoken at home by our community, all of our students have been exited from the ELL program and are proficient in English. Below is an example of when they have been released from the ELL program.

Full English Proficient First Year (FEP 1)  
 Full English Proficient Second Year (FEP 2)  
 Full English Proficient Three or More Years (FEP 3+)

We have 3 students (0.6%) who are FEP 1 or FEP 2, and have 62 students (10.9%) who are FEP3+

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 7 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 38

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %  
9 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	98%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

To prepare students in a small learning environment to be successful and disciplined in their academic, personal and professional lives.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

ACP-O is 100% open enrollment. Students are selected after families complete a 3 step process. Families first complete an application. Portions of the application include written responses from students indicating why they want to attend ACP-O. Students then take a Reading and Math placement test. This test usually takes about 4 hours to complete and is typically done on a Saturday morning in January. This test is used to best determine what level of math students should be placed. After completing the exam, students are scheduled for interviews with ACP-O staff members. The interview includes both student questions and questions for parent / guardians. The interview process is an excellent time for students to talk about their strengths, study habits, and interests.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Arizona College Preparatory – Oakland Campus (ACP-O) is a 100% open enrollment school serving 6th-8th graders. Families and students choose ACP-O because of the rigorous curriculum that is offered and the tools provided to students to ensure that while being pushed academically they have the support needed to be successful.

ACP-O was originally called Chandler Traditional Junior High (CTJH) serving families looking for a more traditional educational setting. In 2012, CTJH transformed into Arizona College Prep with an even sharper focus on excellence in academics and a college-prep curriculum. ACP-O is located in a more established neighborhood near downtown Chandler, AZ. As an open-enrollment school, ACP-O is diverse in nature, made up of students who live walking distance from the school and students who take a bus or are driven from several miles away. This diverse student population is academically focused and motivated in achieving success. Students wear a uniform every day with a knight's crest that represents academics, arts and athletics. ACP-O students are chess champions, multiple sport athletes, performers, musicians and talented artists. ACP-O serves students and families who are goal-oriented and enjoy the challenge in learning.

Student enrollment continues to increase as teachers at ACP-O continue to provide a challenging and rewarding educational experience. School milestones arrive almost daily through individual student successes and school-wide accomplishments. In 2014, ACP-O state testing scores placed us as the number one non charter public middle school in the state of Arizona.

ACP-O classes are all taught as honors level classes. The lowest math level offered is Math 7, which is one year above grade level. Currently, ACP-O offers Algebra 2 for 8th graders, which is a junior level class. Students choose from a wide range of electives that include art, band, orchestra, choir, life connections, yearbook, PE, and media. Students in the sixth grade are required to take a music (Band, orchestra, or choir) and alternate between art and PE. Students in 7th and 8th grade can choose to take geometry and algebra concurrently taking the place of an elective to advance an additional year in math.

ACP-O models its master schedule after the high school to help prepare them for the next level. Students see a mixture of both traditional 1-6 bell scheduling (Monday, Tuesday, and Friday) and block scheduling (Tuesday and Wednesday). This differs from other junior high schools in the district. All students at ACP-O take traditional core class (math, science, language arts, social studies, and an elective.) The additional class for 6th grade is called 21st century skills. This English class teaches the importance of research, while honing students' critical thinking and writing skills. In 7th and 8th grade, all students use the extra period to take Spanish. High school curriculum is used to help students transition into Spanish 3, typically taken by high school juniors.

ACP-O delivers a small school feel with the opportunities of a larger school setting. While students want a small school feel, they do not want to miss out on the social experiences offered at a larger school. To supplement, each teacher and administrator offers tutoring, clubs, or coaches a sport. Club opportunities are a reflection of the needs of our students. If a club is not available, students simply need to ask. Staff members will find a sponsor and work with students to ensure that the club is student lead to help build student leadership. Current clubs include both academic such as Spanish, math, and newspaper and nonacademic clubs like magic, adventure sports, painting, and drama.

ACP-O works with administrators from our neighborhood Title 1 schools and travels to these schools to administer the placement test to students on their campus, thus eliminating any barriers to attending ACP. Our Dean of Students reaches out to these families so that they can see that ACP-O is a school for all students.

ACP-O has a full time counselor who helps students design action plans for high school and beyond. Our counselor also meets with students who are struggling as an added layer of support. This includes providing students an "academic coach" through a program we run called Academic Lab. Teachers who do not have

class during first hour are assigned a small group of students to mentor. Pulling students during academic lab allows teachers to build relationships, helps students with organization, and provides an opportunity for group and individual tutoring. Grade reports are printed weekly to help track and celebrate progress.

ACP-O's mission is to prepare students for the next step in education. We collaborate to provide proven research based educational practices to optimize student success. This is achieved by providing rigorous and relevant curriculum, while teaching and reinforcing sound executive function skills in every class. Teachers at ACP-O agree that grades should be based upon students understanding of the material. As a result only students' assessments or long term projects are used to determine grades. This aligns with the grading philosophies of colleges our students hope to attend. The techniques focused on include a standardized annotation system to help students dissect difficult text. We use a common binder system to teach organizational skills and a common agenda to help students learn essential long and short term planning skills. All classrooms utilize Thinking Maps to help students organize their thinking. Finally, every class utilizes Cornell notes to provide a proven framework for building positive study habits.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Honors English classes focused at preparing students for Advanced Placement (AP) English and college study. This is achieved through enhancing the students' grammar skills and vocabulary, while refining reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical skills through the exploration of literature.

Students engage in a wide range of text such as books, articles, poems and or plays that extends across cultures and centuries The language arts develops students annotations skills to help students draw evidence from above grade-level materials. The English department is essential for helping develop and reinforce the school wide goal (Journey 2025) of using ABC and RAFT writing techniques.

Students build writing around strong central ideas or points of view. English teachers help students organize their thinking through the use of Thinking Maps. They support main ideas with sound reasoning and evidence, precise word choice, smooth transitions, and varied sentence structures. English teachers support the science department on research projects, such as science fair that include several steps and use many credible and documented print and digital sources.

At ACP-O, math teachers follow the Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards. At the beginning of the year, students revisit the prior year's standards to make sure they have foundational skills and understandings to be successful. Real-life concepts, problems, and applications are employed throughout the year by integrating algebra, probability, geometry, discrete math, and logic. It is important for us to maintain high expectations, so when students move on to Honors and AP/IB classes in high school they will be prepared. ACP-O offers numerous opportunities outside of the traditional school day that help support our students. These opportunities include: daily before school homework help, conference time (thirty minutes two days a week), and after school support. In addition, students have access to online resources including videos that reteach lessons, offer extra practice activities to support the mastery of essential mathematical skills. We feel strongly that junior high is a time to "learn how to learn". Rather than focusing solely on grades, we help students work on research based success strategies such as Cornell notes, utilizing their agenda effectively, homework completion, positive study habits, and behaviors they ultimately control: self-motivation and effort. These skills are practiced and reinforced in every class as well as three days a week in academic lab.

The science department strives to give students meaningful, hands on science experiences. We start the year exploring and practicing the six criteria of science: consistent, observable, natural, predictable, testable and tentative. The criteria are applied to not only their inquiry labs but to their independent research projects. This process enables our students to critically evaluate research so they don't take information as fact without scrutinizing the evidence and the source. This is a valuable skill in today's digital age. We challenge our students to think critically about the content by applying it to solve problems. When doing a lab, students need to explain why certain events happen, analyze their data, draw conclusions, and discuss in an open and safe forum. Labs are not only used to deepen their understanding of the world around them but to strengthen their language arts and math skills. Tying the labs and activities to current events helps students see relevance in the curriculum. The science department also offers two extracurricular clubs, STEM and VEX robotics, to deepen student's interest in the sciences. Both have grown over the last three years due to the support of our administration and parents. Robotics went from one robot to four and has been invited to the state robotics competition for the last two years.

The social studies curriculum helps students to understand their world and their role within it. This is done by understanding the past, connecting it to the present, and then interpreting how it may affect the future. In addition, students may then determine their civic responsibility to their own communities impacting their future. The department aligns the curriculum to the Arizona Social Studies and ELA Standards to build connections across curricular areas. Embedded into all curricula are geography, civics, and economics.

Students learn the standards in a variety of ways such as, reading and annotating primary and secondary

sources in history citing textual evidence to help them analyze a document. (7-8RI.1) This document-based inquiry helps students to discover the cause and effect of relationships throughout history to present day. Students use Socratic Seminars to help understand the human aspect of Japanese Internment Camps during WW II. This use of Socratic Seminars helps students actively engage in their learning.

Local civic leaders and representatives invite our students to attend town hall experiences to simulate civic responsibilities and duties. During the elections we guide students through the process of voting end with a mock election. ACP-O offers the opportunity for students to travel to the nation's capital to continue their involvement in civic learning with the Close Up program. Through lessons, interactive activities, and multimedia demonstrations, the social studies department guides students to experience the social studies curriculum, not just learn it.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At ACP-O, students learn the basic foundation for Visual Arts through the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design vocabulary. The teacher connects historical time periods in art and artistic movements throughout history to create a rich depth of knowledge and background. Students use a common design notebook to take Cornell notes and demonstrate application of concepts. Each student project incorporates a specific artist and time period that relates to their own artwork. Students are able to identify how and where their own creations relate or fit into history. The visual arts curriculum at ACPO fits all levels of skill and helps students continue to advanced art skills. The visual arts class also incorporates a variety of art media including painting, drawing, ceramics, printmaking, and 3D sculpture to ensure students are able to explore new interests and continue improving skill.

Physical education teaches students about the importance of overall health and wellness. Students learn about being active (60 minutes a day, lifetime sports, etc.), making smart choices in regards to nutrition, and how activity can help them overall. ACP promotes lifetime fitness by teaching students a variety of experiences they can do at home, where workout machines are not necessary. Students participate in fitness station workouts using their own body weight. They learn to read labels and how sugar has been incorporated into many of the products we eat. Our goal in PE, regardless of grade, is to promote physical activity, eating correctly, making more informed decisions in nutrition.

World Languages offers high school Spanish levels 1 and 2 at ACP-O. Foreign language is an avenue for students to gain knowledge of a foreign language and culture. Spanish is a valuable tool in helping students make grammatical connections in English. Teachers work to develop a better foundation grammatically in both English and Spanish. For example, if a student struggles with their understanding of pronouns in English, we make a comparison to Spanish and work to help students better understand the grammar concept in Spanish. Thinking Maps are valuable in helping students make those visual connections. Additionally students are required to take two years of a world language to gain admittance in college in Arizona. Students are exposed to two full years of the high school curriculum, they are able to enroll into Spanish 3 in high school meeting this requirement in only one year; approximately 95% of our students take Spanish 3 in high school and get dual credit from the local junior colleges. Lastly, our language curriculum prepares our junior high students to take a national exam, where the majority of our students place in the top 20% and higher nationally.

All Students at ACP-O have access to Office365. Technology is integrated into every subject area that allows for the supporting core curriculum. For example, the science department requires that all students present their required science fair project through PowerPoint, and teaches students how to use Excel for data analysis. To prepare students for high school, we have students submit their assignments through turnitin.com, as they will be required in high school. Students in 7th grade are further exposed to technology through the elective LCC (Life Connections and Careers.) This class is required for any students who are not taking band or an orchestra elective. LCC provides lessons on digital literacy skills including typing, digital research, online collaboration, leadership, and a deeper exploration of Office365.

Music is a valued and popular subject area at ACP-O. All 6th grade students are required to participate in band, orchestra or choir. The classes meet every other day for an hour. Students learn basic fundamental

skills of learning how to play a musical instrument as well as learn how to read music.

In 7th and 8th grade, students may elect to take band or orchestra. Students are grouped by grade level and are taught curriculum one to two years above grade level. Students are taught to refine their performance skills, as well as learning music history, music theory, music improvisational skills and composition. The various groups perform regularly and participate in festivals in the area. Currently, there are four bands, three orchestras and one choir at ACP-O.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

ACP-O teachers and staff support high expectations by utilizing practical and innovative instructional approaches, methods, interventions and assessments. In math, students receive accelerated instruction that is one grade level ahead. Diagnostic assessments are administered at the start of the year and are used to identify major gaps in knowledge and understanding. These key assessments provide instructional data to guide teachers in planning. Students who demonstrate mastery on these assessments are also then appropriately placed. The math department begins tutoring in the library that continues throughout the school year.

Beyond tutoring, students at ACP-O take advantage of academic interventions throughout the year that are designed to supplement our college prep curriculum. Our school uses an online math program called ALEKS to help students fill in gaps while still attending their math class. A group of students uses ALEKS in our media center in place of attending their elective. Others choose to work on the online program at home. For students who need extra time on campus to work on homework and long-term projects, we offer Power Hour after school three days a week. Tuesday through Thursdays, students can spend an extra hour on campus working with a faculty member. During this time, students also have access to other teachers that they may need for specific content support.

Academic lab and conference period are also valuable tools to help students succeed. Academic lab is a shortened class period built in to everyone's first period class on Monday, Tuesday and Friday to allow teachers to focus on specific academic and social skills. This additional block of time during first period on Wednesdays and Thursdays becomes conference period. During conference period, students are encouraged to visit and conference with any of their teachers for specific academic support. As an example, a language arts teacher might identify students who are struggling with MLA format on a research paper during class. Teachers will then provide a conference pass setting an appointment for further support during the upcoming conference period. Students can also request conference passes to address any academic needs.

Parent/teacher conferences are held in the fall and in early spring. Teachers identify struggling students and invite parents along with their students to attend a conference to discuss progress and interventions. Teachers and administration then work collaboratively to select students who need support in multiple classes. A whole group conference is set where the principal, dean of students, counselor and all teachers attend. The goal of the whole group conference is to highlight successes while determining need and creating a detailed intervention plan to help each student improve in multiple classes.

Assessment is used differently in every class, yet always created to guiding instruction. Each department collaborates to build common assessments that lead to productive PLC conversations in planning meetings. Students are assessed through formative and summative assessments. Variety in teaching style is welcome while learning activities and objectives remain the same in order to strive for mastery of common goals and standards. Final exams play an important role in preparing students for college. ACP-O uses standardized test data to set our Journey 2025 school improvement goal at the start of the year. The Journey 2025 committee then collaborates to create assessments, rubrics, and lessons that allow teachers to track students' progress toward mastery. The first assessment during first quarter sets teaching and learning in motion. Every teacher is involved in administering and using specific rubrics to score the assessments. Detailed rubrics tailored by our committee facilitate dissection of specific academic gaps school wide. As a school we pay close attention to the student in our bottom 25% to ensure that our students achieve proficiency, and growth.

ACP-O is a high performing school because of the hard work of students, dedication of teachers, and commitment of parents. Students attend school ready for a challenge. Students are personally driven to fulfill our school motto, "Strive for the impossible and become extraordinary." Students join multiple clubs and participate in athletics which connects them to the school. Student achievements are celebrated by both athletic and academic banners, proudly display in our gymnasium. Teachers dedicate their time to researching, attending professional development, and collaborating with colleagues to ensure success.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

ACP-O's school climate and culture is a product of high expectations, and a hunger to learn. A strong college prep focus grows from a rigorous learning environment that challenges students to achieve rewarding results. The teachers and staff make sure that students recognize their potential by investing personally in each student and celebrating their achievements throughout the year. Students take pride in award-winning science fair projects that are carefully crafted all year long with teacher support. Students are also engaged and motivated throughout the year with a variety of school events that exhibit goals in action. They join a variety of clubs, participate in dodgeball and sports tournaments, attend themed school dances and even organize impromptu chess tournaments during lunch. ACP-O teachers nominate two students per grade level every quarter to be students of the quarter. This honor is given to students who demonstrate grit, work tirelessly to grow as learners, and who are kind to others. Students of the quarter, along with their parents, are treated to a lunch out with the principal at a local restaurant. ACP-O recently began a new tradition where teachers nominate students to be officially knighted by our school mascot. These knighted students must exhibit characteristics found on legendary coach John Wooden's Pyramid of Success, which we've taught in academic lab. Our mascot visits classrooms with the principal, the dean and one of our 8th grade trumpeters to conduct this knighting ceremony and recognize students in front of their teachers and peers. While teachers know when knighting ceremonies will take place, students do not, adding element of surprise when the trumpeter walks in the room and formally announces the commencement.

On our campus, teachers are there to guide and support student academic, social, and emotional needs. Every teacher has a specific day which they offer tutoring. The math department, for example, assigns one teacher a day to spend their morning supervision duty in the library to help students who have questions. Our student council promotes a positive school culture by cheering on students as they arrive on the first day of school, organizing spirit weeks, hosting dodgeball tournaments and school dances. Our school counselor maintains an open door policy and sets a goal to speak with every child on campus.

Teachers at ACP-O also hold themselves to the highest standards and therefore are deservedly recognized and appreciated throughout the year. Teacher appreciation week is jam packed with actions of thanks and support for teachers from parents and their students. Regularly, teachers receive emails, letters, and notes from former students sharing stories of success and achievement due to the valuable lessons learned while at ACPO.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

ACP-O truly fosters a community of learners. ACP-O offers parent book studies that allow families and staff members to engage as adult learners and share ideas. These book studies, which have consisted of Mindset, Presence, and The Power of Habit include district officials so that there is a connection between the district level and our school site. The booster club runs school dances, volunteer copy mom program, candy gram sales, uniform exchange program, purchases sports tee-shirts, and organizes our PE uniform sales. Parents are also involved in school leadership through our site council and as members of the Arizona STEM Community of Practice program. This leadership group is made up of school administrators, teachers and parents who are interested in continuing to build on our success through future planning and innovation.

ACP-O staff and students work throughout the year to aid and support community partners in need. Our tutoring club meets once a week after school and walks to a neighboring Title I elementary school to help young students with foundational math skills. Our Pay It Forward club has been busy supporting non-profit organizations like, Arizona Helping Hands, Operation Gratitude, St Vincent de Paul, and the American Cancer Society through Relay for Life. Our student council also works with charities like Ronald McDonald Foundation and a local animal shelter called Saving One Life. Although these charity activities are put on by clubs on campus, the entire school community never fails in rallying in inspirational fashion.

This year ACP-O piloted a Healthy Families substance use prevention grant introduced by the Governor's Office of Youth Faith and Family. Staff members were trained to facilitate a formal evening event where families participated in presentations focused on increasing communication and substance use prevention. ACP-O was only one of 15 schools in the state that organized this event and had the highest community support.

At the end of each year, ACP-O celebrates the fine arts program by organizing a Knight of the Arts event. The community is invited to celebrate the hard work and learning that has occurred all year. Student art projects fill the gymnasium while the band and orchestra students musically fill the courtyard. The drama club, ACP-O Live, performs in the cafeteria and science fair projects are displayed in classrooms. ACP-O is fortunate to have a school community that extends beyond all school boundaries.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Professional development goals at ACP-O are set purposefully to increase innovation in the classroom and inspire teaching and learning. This year our teachers participated in interactive courses like blended learning and shared inquiry. Through the blended learning professional development, teachers delved into the newest methods and strategies of incorporating technology in teaching. Teachers studied and discussed flipped classroom models and researched exemplar schools across the country. Staff also explored a variety of online communication platforms that can be used to connect students to technology while in the classroom. Shared inquiry was also a focus this year through Jr Great Books. ACP-O invited facilitators from Jr Great Books to our campus to work with our science, social studies, and language arts teachers. These trainings that took place throughout the year have impacted the way teachers utilize text, pose questions, and organize discussions in class. The biggest impact came from having teachers from different subject areas in the same room. They were all able to make connections to their own curriculum while stepping back and seeing how shared inquiry casts a wider educationally productive net on our campus. These district level professional development sessions directly impact our students because teachers now incorporate more technology and inquiry in their classrooms.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The goal of the school leadership at ACP-O is to support teachers in making informed, data-driven decisions that impact student learning and overall success as young learners. The leadership team consists of a Principal, Dean of Students, and Counselor. In addition to the standard administration positions ACP-O utilizes the lead curriculum teachers, or Team Leaders, to provide feedback on existing practices and make recommendations for productive school improvement. The team leaders are responsible for implementing yearly smart and stretch goals that are determined by departments at the start of the year. Additionally team leaders and standard administration work together to support the needs of each curricula area. The team leaders consists of one teacher from each of the following content areas Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science, Electives, Spanish, 6th grade, and our Special Education. The Principal is responsible for evaluations, hiring, budget, and facilities. The Dean of Students is responsible for athletics, academic lab, and evaluations. The counselor is responsible for 504's, standardized testing, and ensuring ACP-O is meeting the social / developmental needs of our students. The Journey 2025 committee consists of the Principal, Dean of Students, and two content teachers. This team analyzes data to create school improvement plan. They also plan, develop, and create lessons with common assessments that are implemented by the whole school. This team also designs professional development to the staff that directly supports the implementation of the plan. Finally, the Journey 2025 team reviews and evaluates the process using end of year summative data.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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When reflecting with stakeholders upon what separates ACP-O from other schools the conversations always comes back to the academic lab program. Academic Lab provides staff, students, and administration the flexibility to address a wide range of academic, social, and emotional needs. Every student participates in academic lab making it the ideal time to deliver school announcements, ensuring that core academic time is not impacted. All students use a common binder system to help teach organization. These binders are checked during academic lab. Lessons are designed by a rotating group of staff. Weekly lessons are planned with the intent of exposing students to innovative ideas and proven academic and social strategies. The curriculum is not confined to one book; it is open and available for new and relevant solutions that are being created for challenges that students face today. Recently, our academic lab lessons have incorporated Carol Dweck's work on growth mindset, the 7 Habits, executive functioning skills, character education, and college prep study skills.

Academic lab is also used as an intervention. The counselor works in tandem with teachers to create and assign small academic lab groups to specific teachers who have prep during first period. Students get an opportunity to press pause, check in with a teacher who is there to listen, and make guided adjustments. Attendance is taken and grade reports are provided to these small group teachers weekly to help them spot areas of need and celebrate successes as they come. Students who are placed in a small academic lab group are able to exit the group as soon as they exhibit effective organizational and study skills.

Another tradition at ACP-O is, “The running of the champions.” Members of the current athletic teams run through the campus while their peers cheer them on.

Academic lab serves as a time to administer short formative assessments to collect data for our school wide instructional, Journey 2025 goal. ACP-O has worked for the last four years on strategies for improving student’s writing. These lessons are taught by every staff member in academic lab. Short term and medium term data is collected in academic lab. Academic lab creates the opportunity to have all teachers contribute to common school wide instructional goals. According to the latest formative assessment results, students in the initial bottom 25 percent range demonstrated a .44 average increase, on a three point scale, in the task of attacking/annotating the prompt. In 2015 Students scored a 2.6 out of 3.0 on state testing, where the district average was 2.2.

Academic lab is used in so many ways and its impact on the academics and culture of the school extends beyond the classroom.