

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Robert Bickes

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

Official School Name Arizona College Prep Erie Campus

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1150 West Erie Street

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

Chandler AZ 85224-4316
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Maricopa County

Telephone (480) 424-8000

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Web site/URL https://www.cusd80.com/acperie

E-mail bickes.robert@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.camilee@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 Mrs. Barb Mozdzen

(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

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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 30 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 6 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 42 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 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	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	60	63	123
9	102	127	229
10	101	93	194
11	77	87	164
12 or higher	50	65	115
Total Students	390	435	825

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 28 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 48 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	5
(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, 2017	791
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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, French, Mandarin, Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%
 Total number students who qualify: 62

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
17 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>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	34
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 24:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	98%	96%	98%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	96
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	89%
Enrolled in a community college	6%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	1%

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.

ACP seeks to prepare students in a small, academically rigorous, and positive environment to be successful 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-Erie is a public school of choice, so all students who are interested have an opportunity to attend based on the district's Open Enrollment guidelines. Families receive and submit open enrollment forms in January. Forms are time-stamped upon submission. Also in January, students take a placement exam for math to ensure they are put in the correct class. Finally, students have a short interview with a faculty member so we can learn about them and convey our school's philosophies. These steps provide the data our school and students' families need to ensure ACP is an appropriate fit. Once placement tests and interview are complete, students are invited to attend ACP-Erie based on their Open Enrollment date and time and tier level. The data collected throughout the enrollment process is included with the letter to attend ACP.

PART III – SUMMARY

Arizona College Preparatory - Erie Campus is located in Chandler, Arizona in the Chandler Unified School District. Arizona College Preparatory is the district's first secondary school of choice. Since opening, the campus has grown to include just over 800 students and over 50 faculty and staff. As the school has grown, scores on standardized and Advanced Placement tests have remained consistently high.

Our school's mission is to prepare students in a small learning environment to be successful and disciplined in their academic, personal, and professional lives by providing a rigorous, honors-level curriculum, small class sizes, and highly-qualified teachers, and by holding high standards of personal conduct for all students. While 16.8 percent of our student population qualifies for gifted services, every student that attends Arizona College Preparatory – Erie takes honors and Advanced Placement courses. To support high student achievement, our school takes pride in hiring and retaining highly-qualified teachers; 85 percent of the teaching staff holds a master's degree or PhD.

Arizona College Preparatory - Erie serves a diverse student body. Our campus is approximately 14 percent Hispanic or Latino, 28 percent Asian, 5 percent Black or African American, 0.6 percent Native American, 4 percent multiple races, and 48 percent White. These numbers do not capture the full diversity of our campus. While none of our student are served through ELL, many are first- or second-generation immigrants and speak multiple languages including Spanish, French, Mandarin, and Arabic. Students on our campus practice multiple religions including Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. Of the 48 percent of our students categorized as White, a significant minority are Middle Eastern. This diversity is an important element of our school's culture.

The administration, teachers, and staff at Arizona College Preparatory – Erie work together with our parents and community to provide students with a safe learning environment in which they can “strive for the impossible and be extraordinary”, our school's motto. Our relationships with our students' families occur within the context of being a school of choice. Our students' parents are committed to their children's education and value opportunities to be involved in our school community. Connecting with parents both before and after enrollment is vital to Arizona College Preparatory. To help families in selecting and transitioning to our school, we host an annual open house and Parent-to-Parent night, hold weekly campus tours, and interview each applicant.

Our campus is currently near capacity and is transitioning from a 8-12 campus to a 9-12 campus. As the school has grown, the campus community has worked diligently to maintain our small-campus culture and high student success rate. Various school traditions such as first-week welcome activities put on by the senior class, full-school field trips organized by student government, and our annual club fair encourage students to connect with the campus community.

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie campus's philosophy, as stated in the family handbook, includes “fostering a climate that encourages learning and personal growth in a structured, rigorous academic environment.” The statement continues, “We value a commitment to excellence in all we do. We value active involvement in our school community. We value positive relationships between one another.”

The staff at Arizona College Preparatory – Erie have high expectations for student behavior, academic achievement, and school involvement. All of our students take honors and Advanced Placement classes across the curricular areas regardless of their academic background prior to attending our school. Academic support is therefore vital to our students. During class, teachers use best practices such as scaffolding and chunking. Teachers also encourage students to seek help during Success, an academic lab time built into the school's schedule, or during office hours, which all teachers hold outside of the normal class day at least once a week.

Our small campus allows teachers and staff to form meaningful relationships with students and allows students opportunities to take ownership of their school experience. The small school environment provides our students extracurricular opportunities that might not be available to them within a larger school. There

are over 35 academic and non-academic clubs on campus, most of which were established by students. Many of the school's clubs encourage service, celebrate our campus's diversity, give our students a sense of pride, and promote our student's social and emotional development. For example, Key Club and Tutor Club encourage students to give back to the school and the community. The UNICEF and the She's the First club encourage students to help others on a global scale. The International Club celebrates our campus's diversity while Literature Magazine and Dance Club allow students to display their unique talents.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

All students on our campus take Honors Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Grade English and AP Language. These classes provide students with the strong foundation in analytical reading, thinking, and writing necessary for success in college. Seniors have the option of taking either AP Literature or Honors Science and Technical Writing. Students with a passion for English Language Arts can enroll in Speech and Debate, Newspaper, or Yearbook.

The English Department employs diverse instructional strategies to support learning that aligns with the Arizona standards and the AP objectives set by the College Board. English teachers frequently use open-ended questions to promote student discussion and analytical thinking. Students are asked to explain their reasoning and to synthesize ideas from multiple sources. Teachers train students to use tools such as SOAPStone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Tone; a technique recommended by the College Board) to analyze texts and plan their writing. English teachers model how to use and cite resources properly and use TurnItIn to check for plagiarism.

Teachers in the English Department encourage students to exercise their creativity and engage with real-world issues. Ninth-grade students debate contentious current issues. Seniors in Honors Science and Technical Writing collaborate in small teams to create and advertise an original product. Through Speech and Debate, students think critically to develop expository pieces and debate cases or get creative for a dramatic or humorous interpretation piece.

The English Department uses common assessments such as benchmark tests, essays, and district finals to evaluate student learning and inform instruction. Grade level teams collaborate to address gaps in student learning. For example, eighth grade students struggle with the literature standard of identifying theme. Therefore, literary analysis in ninth grade focuses on identifying and analyzing themes. Last year, the English Department used professional development days to review student data and develop common standards-based assessments. English just implemented common district finals as of this Spring.

1b. Mathematics:

Our school's students take honors-level classes across all curricular areas, including Honors Algebra I, Honors Geometry, and Honors Algebra II. Students' progress through the math curriculum, however, varies according to their needs. For example, a Junior in Algebra II can complete their graduation requirements by taking College Algebra while a freshman peer can proceed through AP Calculus BC before graduation. The school's curricular offerings stress college readiness. In addition to AP courses, College Algebra, Trigonometry, and Calculus I and II are offered for dual enrollment through a local community college.

The Math Department's most commonly used instructional strategies include direct instruction, modeling skills, and guided practice, which support teaching fluency and conceptual understanding. Our teachers regularly require their students to explain their reasoning and solve problems that require modeling with mathematics. Students self-grade their daily homework (self-assessment), complete test corrections (reflection and review), and seek additional help during Success – an academic lab time built into the school's schedule.

When the state adopted the new Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards, teachers from across the district met to sequence content and support the adoption of new textbooks. Four years ago, the district adopted new math textbooks that align with these standards and provided textbooks for in-class use and individual student access to the online version. To support vertical alignment, our school's math department identified foundational skill and standards within each course and implemented short, timed mastery quizzes

for each which all students must pass to proceed through each course.

Common assessments include district benchmarks that are administered in SchoolCity – a standards-based assessment and evaluation platform. Teachers can review this data by performance standard, test item, or student proficiency levels to determine individual student needs and provide item-based or standards-based feedback to individual students.

1c. Science:

The science department provides a rigorous curriculum based on the core sciences – biology, chemistry, and physics – with AP classes in all three subjects. The school’s counselors and science teachers encourage every student to take the three core science classes, which is not a state graduation requirement but is preferred by most universities. A common course sequence is to take Honors Biology as a freshman followed by Honors Chemistry and Physics. Some students also take AP Biology alongside Honors Chemistry, AP Chemistry alongside Physics, or take AP Physics. These course offerings are regularly reviewed to ensure that they match our students’ current needs and aspirations. For example, on-level (rather than AP) Physics was introduced three years ago to increase students’ access to college-level physics – students can earn dual credit for this course.

Teachers in the Science Department emphasize hands-on activities, small-group work, and assignments that make real-world connections – for example, estimating the percentage of a typical home’s energy usage that rooftop solar could provide. Commonly-used instructional practices include inquiry and open-ended questioning, which support the science and engineering practices in the new state standards. Our high school science classes spend at least a quarter of instructional time on laboratories, including labs on gene expression and multiple dissections. Teachers supplement labs with online simulations and science videos. For example, eight grade investigative science uses Gizmos, a set of science simulations purchased by the school last year.

In the Science Department, common assessments are primarily teacher-created unit exams and semester finals that are administered across a course (e.g. Honor Biology, which is taught by three teachers). The school district plans to implement common finals based on the new standards in future years. Individual teachers also use frequent formative assessments (typically quizzes or small-group and class discussion) to ensure that students master essential content.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Students at Arizona College Preparatory – Erie typically take Honors World History and Geography, AP U.S. History, and AP Government/Economics. All students must complete three social studies credits for graduation. Freshman students can choose to take AP World History instead of honors, and students in their sophomore, junior, or senior year may choose to take AP World History or AP Psychology as electives. In addition, the AP World History teacher sponsors an AP scholars club supporting students interested in taking AP exams for classes not offered on campus.

The Social Studies Department uses unit essential questions and posted standards to guide student learning of content knowledge and skills and promote student self-evaluation. Teachers ensure that lessons address these standards in a clear, logical sequence. Instructional strategies include direct instruction, project-based learning, and small-group and whole-class discussions. For example, AP Government students complete a project to balance a government’s budget. AP World History students have debates about child labor.

The Social Studies Department uses an array of assessments to track student progress, including tests, essays, and projects. Teachers use these assessments to direct content review and skills practice. For example, when analyzing model AP essays, teachers may choose a content area with which students struggled. Further, teachers use data to differentiate instruction. During the debates on child labor, students were assigned readings based on their learning level. More complicated, higher lexicon readings were

assigned to students who needed enrichment, while more straight forward readings were given to students who needed support. Further, teachers decide on department-wide priorities based on student need. Currently, all history classes emphasize the analysis and use of primary sources, an essential skill that is often challenging for students.

1e. For secondary schools:

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie’s curriculum focuses on preparing all of our students to be successful in college and after; almost all of our students attend a four- or two-year institution after graduation. The school’s AP and dual enrollment courses are central to this success. These courses span the curriculum and all students take at least one AP class before graduation. AP courses offered on campus include US History, US Government and Politics, Macroeconomics, Human Geography, English Language, English Literature, Calculus AB and BC, Statistics, Spanish Language and Culture, Spanish Literature, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics I. Dual enrollment courses are also offered across all curricular areas.

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Despite being a relatively small school, Arizona College Preparatory - Erie offers a wide range of elective courses in the fine arts, physical education, foreign languages, and career and technical education (CTE). All students must take fine arts and physical education in order to meet state graduation requirements. All of our students also take two years of a foreign language in order to meet university entrance requirements. These courses support students’ acquisition of skills that are essential in college and the workplace, including cultural awareness, communication and collaboration, problem solving, and creativity.

Course offerings in the fine arts include band, orchestra, theater, introduction to art, ceramics, drawing and painting, and AP Studio Art. Students in all grade levels can elect to take a fine arts course and every student must take at least one fine arts credit for graduation. Individual students have chosen to pursue a fine art throughout their high school career and have been selected for regional concerts and local art showcases.

The physical education courses on our campus include boys and girls PE, athletic locker, yoga, weightlifting, and health. Athletic locker is held during the school day and supports our student-athletes by providing practice time, study hall, or time to travel to away games and meets, which helps them to balance athletics and academics. Yoga was introduced by our athletic department chair as a new course in the district; it is particularly well-suited to our campus as many of our students need help managing their stress and anxiety.

As a college-prep school, all of our students take a foreign language. Options include Spanish (including AP Spanish Language and Culture and AP Spanish Literature), American Sign Language, and Mandarin. Nearly half of the freshman class enrolls in Spanish III. Upper levels of all three languages are offered for dual enrollment through a local community college.

Diverse cultures are actively celebrated through our World Languages Department. For example, American Sign Language students posted QR codes throughout the school during International Week of the Deaf that linked to student-made videos on vocabulary and deaf culture; Mandarin students decorate teachers’ doors for the Chinese New Year. Community and service are also emphasized. For example, the AP Spanish students worked with the Salvation Army to interview local Hispanic families and translate their needs from Spanish to English so that they could be posted on Christmas Angel Trees.

The Arizona College Preparatory – Erie campus has three certified CTE teachers who teach TV and Film Media I through III, Marketing, Computer Science, and Robotics. The film and media program supports the

NBRS 2019

school as a whole by making videos for school assemblies highlighting the school's sports and clubs and weekly video news updates. CTE assignments include other real-world applications such as video streaming and making commercials and PSAs. Robotics students learn engineering practices and principles while working in small teams to design, develop, and debug competitive robots. Last year, the marketing teacher started the school's chapter of DECA, in which students learn marketing, management, and business skills.

Through Student Government, the student body has the opportunity to take ownership of their school experience and improve the school community. Students in this program commit to engaging with the administration and student body to plan dances, assemblies, schoolwide events and field trips, and fundraisers and drives for the school. Currently, Student Government and the Student Senate combined comprise approximately 10 percent of our student population with members from all grades. Through Student Government, students are challenged to reflect on and improve their leadership skills and gain valuable life skills through real-world experiences. Much of the students' learning comes from their interactions with adult mentors, school administrators, and community members while working on their assigned events. Through their various experiences, students learn time management, how to engage in professional dialogue, how to delegate, and how to break large tasks down to smaller tasks.

3. Special Populations:

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie's philosophy is that all of our students can succeed in a challenging curriculum and be fully involved in the school's culture. All students on our campus take a rigorous, college-prep curriculum including honors and AP courses across the core curricular areas. Students from all backgrounds, including those on Individual Education Plans and 504 plans, also participate in clubs and athletics and take on leadership roles within the campus community.

To serve students across the academic spectrum within the college preparatory framework, our campus works within the larger school district to provide significant flexibility in course offerings. Students who advance beyond the curricular offerings on our campus take advanced math and science classes at other high schools in the district. Conversely, On-level Physics (rather than AP Physics) and College Algebra were both introduced to offer college-level courses for students with interests outside of STEM fields – both courses are offered for dual enrollment for college credit.

During the 2018 administration of the state assessment, schoolwide 86.2 and 92.6 percent of tested students scored proficient or highly proficient in ELA and math respectively. Both Black and SPED students were overrepresented among those who scored below the proficiency cutoff. Among Black students, 35.3 percent scored below proficient in ELA and 20.7 percent scored below proficient in math. Black students were only slightly underrepresented among students scoring highly proficient on the ELA exam (41.2 percent compared to 48.4 percent). The small number of test takers identified as SPED prevents a reliable similar comparison.

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie's effort to close the achievement gap focuses on access; no student is denied enrollment into an advanced class on the basis of their test scores and all students are encouraged to take a challenging curriculum. This is backed by supportive instructional practices and the expectation that all students will pass their classes. Teachers scaffold instruction by teaching study skills, encouraging reflection and self-assessment, and allowing meaningful opportunities for revisions and test corrections. A modified block schedule, in which each class has a weekly two-hour block period, supports teachers in meeting students' individual needs with one-on-one or small-group instruction. An in-school Success period, during which students can visit individual teachers as needed, provides additional time within the normal school day for more individualized instruction and support. This period is particularly important for students whose situations impede them from attending teacher's office hours, which are outside of the normal school day.

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie's special education services support our school's college-prep focus. Only 1.2 percent of the school's population qualifies for special education services; the majority of the students' Individual Education Plans are for ADHD or Autism Spectrum disorders. Learners with unique

needs also include students on 504 plans – primarily for ADHD, Autism, anxiety, or health issues. The Special Education Department, counselors, and all of a student’s teachers work together in formulating IEP and 504s and ensuring that students receive accommodations that support them in completing the school’s challenging curriculum and advancing to college.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

All members of Arizona College Preparatory – Erie’s community contribute to its culture of high expectations in academics and character. The principal promotes the belief that relationships are the cornerstone of education, and he actively encourages positive relationships among and between faculty and students. This culture manifests in many ways. Teachers offer opportunities for academic growth through individual tutoring during a daily school-wide study period and weekly office hours. Students also learn to focus on growth through department-wide test correction policies that allow them to earn points for correcting their errors. Students work diligently to fulfill the high academic expectations of the school. To honor this effort, the school enacts blackout days around major holidays and school events on which teachers do not assign homework or give tests. These breaks communicate to students that their emotional and social growth is important by allowing them to rest and engage in family and school activities without worrying about falling behind in their classes. Students’ social growth is also promoted through traditions such as the annual school-wide field trip and the Knight Games, during which students participate in an evening of interactive games.

Another significant aspect of our culture are the ways that students are celebrated for their unique achievements and experiences. School-wide assemblies honor achievements such as being a National Merit Finalist, earning a perfect score on the ACT, receiving a scholarship, being signed as a collegiate athlete, and being selected as Student of the Month. The International Knights Festival celebrates the diverse cultures represented at our school. Science Knight highlights students who worked hard to complete science fair projects. Our Literary Magazine publishes short stories, poetry, and essays.

Because our students are so active, the teachers are called upon to support those endeavors. Teachers often have five classes, multiple preps, and sponsor clubs or coach. These demands are supported by dependable relationships and appreciation. Teachers hold informal discussions focused on problem-solving. Coaches who need class coverage to make it to events easily find a willing colleague. The principal provides support by being responsive to teachers’ concerns and by protecting teachers’ time. Small gestures of appreciation also go a long way in helping teachers feel valued. People write thank you notes on the white board in the work room; the principal always acknowledges the teachers when the school receives accolades; parents provide breakfast via the Booster Club for faculty meetings; and students write heartfelt notes and give gifts for holidays, Teacher Appreciation Week, and sometimes just because.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Student success at Arizona College Preparatory – Erie is supported through the involvement of family and community.

Parents and guardians of students can choose to be involved in many ways. The Site Council consists of the principal, a teacher representative, student representatives, and interested parents. They meet once per quarter to discuss school updates and issues. In this way, families play an important role in decisions that directly impact students’ daily lives. Parents may also choose to join one of three Booster Clubs – the general Booster Club, Athletic Booster Club, or Football Booster Club. Additionally, parent volunteers chaperone field trips and competitions, judge at competitive events, and provide their expertise to clubs. Providing multiple access points to parents encourages and enables families to be actively involved in shaping school culture and facilitating students’ experiences.

To help parents support and celebrate their students, the school employs a system of proactive electronic communication. Each Sunday the principal sends out the Knightly Update, an email with the week’s schedule and events. It also highlights the accomplishments of the school’s teams, clubs, and individuals. Additionally, every teacher maintains a class blog. Teacher blogs keeps students and parents apprised of daily classwork and upcoming homework, projects, and exams. Further, student achievements are

celebrated on our social media platforms, Twitter and Facebook, and in our online newspaper, The Knight Times.

Community engagement occurs in several ways. First, as a college preparatory school, our college and career specialist organizes many opportunities for students to engage with institutes of higher learning. Throughout the year, we host multiple representatives from universities and offer field trips to tour local campuses and explore programs. For example, students interested in the medical sciences went on a field trip to the cadaver lab at Grand Canyon University. Further, student clubs volunteer for local non-profit organizations. These student-led efforts require students to apply the skills they learn in class to contribute to their community. For example, AP Spanish students worked with the Salvation Army to translate the needs of Hispanic families for the Christmas Angels Program. Other clubs and teams have partnered with organizations such as Feed My Starving Children, Make-a-Wish Foundation, Side Out Foundation, Chandler CARE Center, and Chandler Unified School District's Community Education Program. Local businesses and families are also invited to contribute to school events such as Science Knight and the International Knight Festival.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is essential to Arizona College Preparatory – Erie's ability to provide students with a rigorous, honors-level curriculum and positive culture.

At the district-level, teachers create an instructional growth plan and attend twelve hours of professional development. The growth plan focuses on two elements in the Marzano Focused Teacher Evaluation Model and encourages development through administrative feedback and teacher reflection. A significant focus is the alignment between standard, assessment, and instruction. This year, the Science Department selected "Using Questions to Help Students Elaborate on Content", which supports a shift to the practices in Arizona's new science standards. The Science Department teachers are asking more open-ended and phenomenon-based questions and are working on improving their responses to students' answers.

The focus of the professional development classes changes each year. This year, the classes provide training in equity-based practices to improve outcomes for all groups. Further, several teachers and our principal are part of the district's equity team and have undergone intensive training which they have brought back to the school. Thus far, this team has provided the whole faculty with six hours of equity training. Because administration is directly involved, they are able to integrate equity practices school-wide and support teachers in their development. Equity supports achievement by providing teachers and administration an opportunity to reflect on their practices and incorporate changes to ensure all students are provided the supports and opportunities they need to meet their goals.

In addition, our school's leadership provides teachers individualized opportunities for growth. For teachers who are transitioning into teaching Advanced Placement courses, the school pays registration fees for AP summer institutes. Seasoned AP teachers are provided professional days to enhance their capabilities by being AP readers. The increased capabilities of our AP teachers support school-wide student achievement because all our students take AP classes as upper classmen. In addition, teachers are provided with specialized supports. For example, new teachers are assigned mentors who help them develop classroom policies and procedures consistent with the school culture and expectations as well as instructional strategies to teach honors-level courses to students of varying proficiency. For example, a new teacher enrolled in Arizona's Teacher-In-Residence program spent multiple hours across four semesters observing fellow teachers and reflecting on her observations with an experienced mentor teacher. Because of this responsiveness to diverse teacher needs, the faculty and administration at Arizona College Preparatory – Erie continually enhances their ability to support student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie’s leadership philosophy is embodied by the principal’s open-door policy, which allows all members of the community to share ideas, concerns, and suggestions with him. Further, he regularly communicates to the staff the importance of working with stakeholders at all levels – students, parents, grade-level teams, departments, and advisors – to ensure that students have the resources necessary to reach the school’s high academic and character expectations. As a result, teachers tend to have strong relationships with their students and their families as well as with their colleagues.

This focus on open communication and receptivity to ideas ripples throughout our school. For example, teachers meet regularly under the guidance of their Department Chair to discuss teaching strategies, common assessments, and vertical alignment as well as their needs, concerns, and successes to ensure that all students are learning and being prepared for subsequent classes. This format allowed the Math Department to effectively address the needs of students taking on-level math courses (e.g., freshmen taking Algebra 1) who were identified as the least likely to score proficient on end-of-course exams. They decided to provide these students with more individualized and small-group instructional time through teacher-formed groups and flipped instruction. The principal and the math department are closely monitoring the success of these efforts through standards-based instruction.

This example leads into another aspect of the leadership philosophy: a focus on professional growth aligned with student achievement. The principal and vice principal support teachers in fulfilling their professional learning plans, which are submitted to the district each year, through flexible observations – both formal and informal – and through encouraging a diverse array of teaching strategies.

Department chairs also collect information about resources needed for the next school year that they then pass on to the principal by the end of the first week back from Spring Break. Combined with the proactive scheduling approach – students register for classes at the end of first semester – the leadership team ensures that our school can meet students’ scheduling needs and fully resource academic and elective courses.

Further, the principal and vice principal work together to encourage students and their families to play a significant role in establishing electives and programs. The principal’s open-door policy often results in students expressing interest in a class, sport, or club, which then leads to the development of that program. Classes added to the schedule at the request of students include AP Psychology, yoga, and marketing. Numerous clubs have been formed through student leadership including Red Cross, She’s the First, GSA, and Dance Club. Further, students helped lead the initiative for our growing athletics department, which as of this year offers all AIA sports except for baseball. Students’ investment and success in impacting their educational experience is a direct result of the leadership philosophy at ACP-Erie.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Arizona College Preparatory – Erie’s motto is “Strive for the Impossible and Be Extraordinary.” Our school has high expectations for all of our students. However, we also provide significant supports to help them achieve those standards. The policy of high expectations with high supports has been instrumental to student success. Every student at ACP-Erie takes a rigorous course load; most classes are only offered at the honors or AP level. In addition, many students play sports, participate in clubs, volunteer, and work. Academic and personal growth are encouraged by all faculty and staff; they are central to the school culture.

However, high expectations alone are not enough. To enroll at ACP, students do not have to test into the gifted program and most of the students who enroll do not. The philosophy of high expectations is dependent on the philosophy of high supports. These supports come in many forms: small class sizes, diverse teaching practices, close student-teacher relationships, collaboration among and between departments, and more. Instructionally, teachers use strategies – such as AVID strategies and thinking maps – to help students learn content and skills. Department-wide policies, such as test corrections, focus on the quality and not the pace of student learning. Every faculty member holds weekly office hours for students who need additional help. They post a daily or weekly blog to help students keep track of class requirements and due dates. The school day is structured to provide a daily SUCCESS period when students can seek help, complete assignments, study for tests and quizzes, or attend club meetings. Small class sizes allow teachers to build strong relationships with students and their families. Thus, the policy of high supports is put into practice daily in many ways.

In recent years, equity has been a focus in education. One aspect of equity is access for all groups to rigorous academic courses. ACP-Erie provides that access but does not stop there. Each individual student also has access to the supports s/he needs to be successful. The efficacy of this approach is clear: ACP has a graduation rate of 100 percent, and, in 2018, 92.7 percent of graduates matriculated to a four-year college or university while 6.3 percent enrolled in a community college.