

# EXHIBIT A

**African American Student Services Department**  
**Operating Plan**

This document sets out an organizational and substantive plan for the operation of the African American Student Services Department. The plan presents a narrative description of the student support services provided by the department staff, identifying nature of the services as academic, behavioral or family outreach, and describes the department's role in those services as primary, supplementary or additional. The plan also sets out the qualifications for each position, and recruitment, training and retention.

This plan is the result of experience gained by AASSD under the last five years operating under the supervision of the Court pursuant to the USP, discussions and consultations with representatives of the Fisher Plaintiffs, and consultation with a range of experts, beginning with the distinguished panel of experts who served on the African American Academic Achievement Task Force in 2013, continuing through the engagement of Dr. Dale Fredericks and Dr. Joseph Hines in the spring of 2016, and culminating with the comprehensive study and report by Dr. Gwendolyn Benson of Georgia State University and her team of experts from Trayben Associates in the summer of 2018, which report included specific recommendations for the reorganization of AASSD.

This operating plan is in effect for the 2019-20 school year, and may be amended from time to time following the procedures described herein.

**I. Introduction**

The purpose and mission of AASSD is to provide targeted support to TUSD's African American students, schools, departments, and staff to help the District's African American students improve their academic performance and success in a manner that is culturally appropriate for and responsive to those students, maximizing the impact of positive interventions on African American students. AASSD works with schools, district departments and community partners to increase and strengthen academic support through researched best practices, increased and strengthened parent and community involvement, increased access to, participation in, and completion of Advanced Learning Experiences ("ALEs"), reduced overall discipline and related disparities, and increased academic success and graduation rates.

AASSD is led by a director, and includes an administrative assistant, program coordinator, program specialists, behavior specialists, Response to Intervention ("RtI") specialists, student success coaches, certified academic tutors, and activity assistants. The department director reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, who in turn reports to the District Superintendent. All department staff work together and with students, parents, District resources and other individuals and organizations in the community, in Arizona, and in the nation, on specific tasks and programs to improve academics and support for TUSD's African American students.

## II. Organization of Department and Services Provided.

The organizational structure of the AASS Department is summarized below:

<b>AASSD Structure</b>	
<b>FTE</b>	<b>Position</b>
1	Director
1	Program Coordinator
1	Administrative Assistant
2	Behavioral Specialists
4	Program Specialists
4	RTI Specialists
5	Student Success Coaches
	<b>Part-Time</b>
5	Certified Academic Tutors (Added Duty)
5	Activity Assistants (College Students)
	<b>Total</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>18 Full-time &amp; 10 Part-time</b>

The AASS Department provides the following student support services, organized by position.

### A. Director

The AASSD is led by a director. The work of the director is to strategically lead in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of programmatic strategies to meet the vision, mission, and goals of the department. The director is responsible for establishing a system of benchmarks to monitor growth of African American students on a quarterly basis to identify students not making progress in reading and math at targeted schools. The director (a) serves as a consultant to other departments and schools not targeted for support by addressing issues relevant to African American students and parents, (b) serves as a conduit connecting the African American community to the District, and (c) responds to parent/student complaints regarding equity issues in partnership with District leadership.

### B. Program Coordinator

The AASSD has one program coordinator. The program coordinator assists the director in the implementation of programmatic strategies to improve African American student achievement and educational outcomes. The work of the program coordinator includes working with a group of identified schools to have in place targeted intervention programs to support African American students in ELA and math. The program coordinator works with targeted schools to (a) put in place before and after school tutoring programs for students performing below standard, (b) reviews, analyzes, and collect data to ensure student progress at targeted sites, and (c) supports the work of the program specialists to coordinate district-wide and

regional parent/family engagement events with relevant District departments. The program coordinator (a) coordinates training for student success coaches, (b) works with student success coaches to develop academic progress monitoring plans, and (c) serves on the District discipline review committee in partnership with the Student Relations office.

The work of the Program Coordinator is designed to monitor, support and improve academic and behavior outcomes for African American students. It is generally both academic and behavioral supportive tasks. The program coordinator provides a level of advocacy and support beyond what schools can offer to targeted students where the cultural familiarity and experience of the AASSD team is likely to be effective in improving academic outcomes.

### **C. Behavioral Specialists**

The AASSD has two behavioral specialists in culturally relevant behavioral interventions designed to prevent or reduce disciplinary incidents, and reduce placement in exceptional education. Behavioral Specialists hold a Bachelor's degree in education, counseling, African American studies, or a related field, and have experience with student discipline in primary and/or secondary education.

Each year, the department identifies target schools with the highest behavioral needs for African American students, as shown in enrollment numbers and discipline reports for the prior year. Each identified school is assigned to one of the behavioral specialists.

For each assigned school, the behavioral specialist identifies high-risk African American students at the school (typically students with 3 or more exclusionary discipline incidents), and then consults with the school's behavioral team in the development of an individual behavior plan (an integrated set of behavioral interventions designed to prevent or reduce the incidence of discipline) for each high-risk student that is culturally informed and appropriate. The behavior specialist also coordinates with the MTSS team to ensure that any ongoing academic interventions are consistent with the behavior plan.

The behavioral specialist monitors the implementation of the behavior plan for each student. In many instances, the behavioral specialist actually delivers Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavioral interventions identified by the plan, as an adjunct or additional resource beyond the school's behavioral team. The behavioral specialist may also coordinate access to other intervention resources beyond the normal reach of the school, including mentoring and community organizations with whom the department has developed a working relationship. If applicable, the behavioral specialist may also work directly with a court probation officer in identifying school behavior interventions that may serve as conditions of probation, such as mentoring, social-emotional learning, or "check-in, check-out" procedures.

Finally, a critical element of the behavioral specialists' work is communication with the high-risk student's family, in two-way fashion, both to keep the family informed of the plan, progress, and setbacks, but also to learn from the family (a) information that may bear on the behavior issues and the behavior plan, and (b) how the school and the District can support the family in dealing with the behavior issues. The behavioral specialists' familiarity and experience

with African American cultural elements is a key aspect of building the trust needed for a cooperative relationship between the school and the family in dealing with behavioral issues.

In addition to work at the identified high-need schools, any school can request assistance with individual students that are not responding to Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavioral interventions by the school behavioral team, and for whom the school believes that the resources and experience of the AASSD behavioral team may be effective. Once the department receives such a request, it is assigned to one of the two behavioral specialists, and handled in the same manner as high-risk students described above.

The goal of this intensive work with high-risk students is to prevent or reduce exclusionary discipline, reduce placement in exceptional education, and to create the conditions for academic success. Primary responsibility for the discipline function remains with the school's behavioral team; the AASSD's behavioral specialists deliver supplemental behavioral services in identified high-risk situations in which the cultural familiarity and experience of the team is likely to be effective in improving behavioral outcomes.

#### **D. Response to Intervention Specialists**

The AASSD Department has four Response to Intervention (RtI) specialists in culturally relevant academic interventions for struggling African American students. The department's RtI Specialists are certified teachers with experience working with struggling students, and with African American students generally. Three of the specialists focus on interventions in English language arts, and one specialist focus interventions in mathematics.

Each year, the department identifies the K-8 (ES or MS) schools with the greatest academic needs for African American students, as shown in AzMerit scores, and particularly, the percentage of African American students who do not score "proficient" in math or ELA the prior year. In selecting schools to target, the department also considers other factors, such as the size of the African American and African refugee population, the strength and experience of the academic team at the school, and the like.

Each RtI specialist works with two to three identified schools. In coordination with the school's MTSS team (including the student's teacher, the MTSS facilitator or lead, the Curriculum Service Provider, and if present and applicable, the Reading Specialist teacher), the RtI Specialist develops an academic intervention plan for each African American student in the target grades (3-5 at the elementary level for ELA, and 6-8 at the middle level for math) at each assigned school who did not score "proficient" in that specialists' area. The RtI Specialist works with the A&E department and the school's team to develop a pre-assessment to determine understanding of the grade level standards, develops an intervention plan based on the standards of each student's needs in order to be proficient at grade level - and designs a series of culturally appropriate interventions to address those particular needs.

The RtI specialist works with the MTSS team to set up a schedule for the interventions to minimize impact on regular instruction, using elective blocks, class time and where workable, other time including after school. The RtI specialists monitor the implementation of the

intervention plan, and frequently provide the interventions themselves, as time and circumstance permit.

As with the behavioral specialists, a critical element of the RtI specialists' work is communication with the student's family, in two-way fashion, to keep the family informed of progress and setbacks, but also to learn from the family (a) information that may bear on academic progress, and (b) how the school and the District can help the family support the student's progress. The RtI specialists' familiarity and experience with African American cultural elements is a key aspect of building the trust needed for a cooperative relationship between the school and the family in dealing with academic issues.

The goal of this intensive work with struggling students is improve academic outcomes. Primary responsibility for a student's academic success remains with the school's academic team; the AASD's RtI specialists deliver supplemental academic services beyond what a school can offer to targeted students where the cultural familiarity and experience of the team is likely to be effective in improving academic outcomes.

**E. Program Specialists**

The AASS Department has four program specialists, who provide (a) direct support to students at certain assigned schools, and (b) parent engagement, and/or advocacy, in a specific area. Program specialists must hold a bachelor's degree in education, social services, counseling, African American studies, or a related field, and have two or more years' experience in providing direct services and program oversight for a program or project involving school-age children.

Each program specialist is assigned to one high school. The program specialist for that school works with student in the 9th through 12th grades at each school, providing additional academic coaching and services to African American students in the target grades at the assigned school.

In particular, the program specialist works with counseling staff to make sure that every student in the 12th grade has or develops a post-graduation plan – for college, career and technical training, military service, or employment. The program specialist meets with each student to discuss post-graduation plans, and may connect the student to culturally relevant resources in the process of developing the post-graduation plan (mentors, community organizations, church groups, college representatives, college fairs, historical black colleges and universities (HBCUs)). The program specialist meets with each student periodically during the year to ensure continued attention to planning for life after high school.

For each incoming 9th grade African American student who has performed below grade level on AZMerit and/or did not pass all core subjects in 8th grade, the program specialist reviews testing results for the student, works with the school's MTSS and guidance resources to develop a high school graduation plan, meets with the student to review the high school graduation plan and requirements, curriculum alternatives, and to advise the student about

available culturally relevant resources to help with academic success, including tutoring, mentoring, support groups, and the like.

The program specialist continues to check in with the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students during the year, and provides culturally relevant student guidance and family outreach as needed. The program specialists support the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students through college and career exposure opportunities during the school year, and will provide check-in and progress support.

Primary responsibility for guidance of students remains with the guidance and academic staff of each school, but the program specialists provide supplemental academic services at key times when culturally aware and relevant contact can have an outsize impact on successful high school completion.

**1. College and Career Readiness.** In addition to the direct support at high schools, one of the program specialists focuses on college and career readiness. This program specialist (a) works with the district counseling department to develop and distribute culturally relevant promotional materials on college and career readiness, (b) conducts parent workshops for African American families on college and career readiness, (c) coordinates partnerships with college/university programs and local organizations to connect K-12 students and their families to college and career readiness information, resources, and people, (d) oversees the relationship with the UA Academic Outreach, Undergraduate Office, and African American Student Affairs units to support college and career experiences for students through such events as the annual African American College Day, UA Summer Lit (a three-day overnight leaders-in-training experience for African American students entering their senior year of high school); (e) conduct state university campus tours; (f) provides planning, parent outreach and support for Parent University, a District event co-sponsored by AASSD; (g) College Night, sponsored by the district guidance and counseling office, (h) administers scholarship programs, and (i) develops and coordinates community mentor support for college attendance. These activities are additional academic and outreach services, with some supportive elements for programs and events sponsored by other departments.

**2. Family Engagement and Community Outreach.** Another of the AASSD program specialists focuses on family engagement and community outreach. This specialist coordinates direct outreach (via telephone, home visits, e-mail, ParentLink, and other channels) to families of African American students, in response to particular requests from other departments, such as the Language Acquisition Department regarding ELL matters (both struggling students and ELL targeted events) and the FACE Department regarding particular events and workshops at schools and the family centers. This program specialist also develops and presents workshops targeted to families of African American families on participation in parent conferences, site councils, and parent organizations, and other engagement opportunities. These workshops are conducted at schools on request and at the Family Centers. The program specialist works with the FACE department to coordinate facilities, transportation, and childcare for these workshops. The program specialist develops and maintains relationships with community organizations, linking them and bringing them into events at the District, both to engage them in the District's activities, but to link African American students and families to the community organizations. The program specialist is responsible for coordinating the annual

African American Parent Conference that focus on issues relevant to African American parents and culturally relevant community resources. These activities are principally additional outreach services, with some supportive elements for programs and events sponsored by other departments.

3. **ALE and AVID.** A third AASSD program specialist focuses on Advanced Learning Experiences and the AVID program. This specialist (a) coordinates family outreach regarding ALE courses, include using the AP Potential lists supplied by the ALE Department (based on PSAT testing results); (b) conducts workshops for African American families on the benefits of various ALE opportunities; (c) attends district events promoting ALE programs to speak to African American parents and families on ALE benefits; (d) works with ALE and Curriculum Instruction to assist in the development of CR ALE courses such as the AP Seminar course recently developed at University High School, (e) serves as a liaison to the AVID program coordinator to advocate and represent the African American student interests in AVID development and deployment, (f) and promotes enrollment into University High School and the Cholla High School International Baccalaureate Program. These events are largely additional services of an outreach nature, with some supportive elements for other departments, and some academic components.

4. **Discipline.** The fourth AASSD program specialist focuses on discipline issues. This program specialist attends all discipline hearings, or assigns a designee, where long term suspension is at issue for an African American student, to provide family support and explanation of the process, to ensure that proper processes are followed, to advocate for the interests of African American students in the process, and specifically to advocate for a fair result, and if discipline is imposed, that appropriate restorative resources are engaged for the support of the student during and after any suspension. This is supplemental behavioral work. The program specialist also works directly with the Student Relations department to review and monitor discipline data to identify trends and developments in which the culturally relevant resources of the AASSD may be of assistance, either on a consulting or advocacy basis. This supportive behavioral work. The program specialist also works collaboratively with community resources to (a) implement preventive mentoring programs, (b) and provide parent workshops addressing the code-of-conduct, bullying prevention, and other related parent education workshops. This is additional behavioral work.

**F. Student Success Coaches.**

The AASSD has five student success coaches, who provide additional academic and behavioral support to students at certain assigned schools. Each success coach must hold a bachelor's degree in education, social services, counseling, African American studies, or a related field, and have two or more years' experience in providing direct services and program oversight for a program or project involving school-age children.



Each student success coach is assigned to one of the five high schools not assigned to program specialists.<sup>1</sup> At the high schools, the success coaches provide the same services as the program specialists described above: special additional guidance on (a) post-graduation planning for 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, (b) high school readiness and graduation plan for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who are struggling, (c) academic coaching and progress check-in for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, and individual family outreach as needed.

In addition to the high school assignment, each success coach is assigned to two middle schools (or a middle and K-8 school), within the feeder pattern for the assigned high school. The AASSD selects the particular schools for assignment each year based on assessment of where the services would be most effective, based on school enrollment, academic performance and discipline data. The success coach serves as an interconnected resource in MTSS academic and PBIS behavioral interventions for African American students. The student success coaches serve as an advocate in the development of those interventions in response to identified issues, and are involved in the actual provision of certain academic (but not instructional) and behavioral interventions, particularly where those interventions involve interactions with families, or individual coaching or mentoring students. These services are both academic and behavioral, and are supplemental services to those provided by the school academic and behavioral support teams.

#### **E. Certified Math Tutors**

The AASSD provides TUSD certified math teachers as tutors after-school or on Saturdays, for extra help for African American students in need. The AASSD compensates the tutors for their time as added duty. The Saturday program provides an opportunity for tutoring for students for whom regular after-school tutoring does not work for one or another reason. The math tutors have access to the student's math assessments and coordinate tutoring with the student's regular teacher. The tutoring is standards driven to help students prepare for the AzMerit. This is a supplemental, academic task.

#### **F. Activity Assistants.**

The AASSD also employs college students on a part time basis as activity assistants, to serve as student mentors, and to provide assistance to program specialists at events and activities. For example, working with the program specialist for college and career readiness, an activity assistant may help with planning academic outreach events with the University of Arizona, or planning an HBCU college fair, and serving as a mentor to middle and high school students on college attendance, and helping students make the connection between middle and high school and college entrance. Activity assistants may support the culturally relevant courses in African American literature and history. These tasks are additional tasks, with both academic and outreach elements.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rincon and UHS are assigned to the same success coach.

### **III. Recruitment, Training, and Retention.**

The District utilizes one or more of the following successful methods to recruit, train, and retain individuals in these positions as appropriate for each position:

#### **A. Recruitment:**

- Direct recruitment of candidates already working within the District with experience and knowledge necessary for each position.
- Host a recruitment table at community events and District job fairs.
- Collaborate with University of Arizona departments to recruit qualified candidates with skills and knowledge of the needs of African American students and families.
- Advertise via community partner outlets, social media, job networks and events.
- National advertising via social networks, bulletins and social media.
- Presentations and information at relevant University of Arizona student centers.
- Invitations to qualified candidates who previously applied for or held related positions within the District.

#### **B. Training:**

- District department trainings led by directors and program coordinators from the Advanced Learning Experiences, Career and Technical Education, Family and Community Engagement, Language Acquisition, Gifted and Talented Education, MTSS, Instructional Technology, Curriculum and Instruction, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Instruction Departments.
- Mentoring from District sources in the pertinent focus area.
- Coaching by AASSD Director and Program Coordinator.
- Job shadowing of In-District staff and community partners essential to focus area assignment.
- Professional Development in job-related areas, including: culturally responsive practices, trauma-informed education settings, college preparation, AVID strategies, grief counseling, Adverse Childhood Experiences, funds of knowledge, direct academic interventions.

#### **C. Retention:**

- Community building events and retreats for alignment to mission and goals.
- Ongoing training to further develop competency.
- Regular follow-up and reflection of practices with AASSD Director.
- Weekly collaboration with peers.
- Effective communication of expectations.

## V. General Statement of Operations

AASSD provides a core function of the District: targeted, culturally-responsive student support designed to improve academic achievement and behavioral outcomes for African American students. It is the analog of other similar departments at TUSD which improve outcomes for other student groups.

AASSD utilizes the TUSD student data and tracking systems, including Synergy, Clarity, SchoolCity and other systems, to analyze needs, to identify and allocate student support resources, and to measure impact on outcomes for African American students. Using the data systems, AASSD identifies which students are struggling academically, behaviorally, or attendance-wise, and provides a cadre of potential solutions to match each student's specific struggles. AASSD then helps track progress, and provides options for modifying specific support services to students and their families.

AASSD provides direct and ancillary support based on the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model. AASSD supports schools and students throughout this process, including, for example, by utilizing RTI Specialists to work collaboratively with the MTSS team to provide targeted academic intervention, family/parent communication and other needs to support AASSD and District focus to reduce achievement and discipline disparities, by utilizing behavior specialists to work with schools across the District to implement behavior intervention plans and serve as consultants regarding African American student behavior and discipline, and by utilizing Program Specialists to support schools through proactive strategies that focus on asset-based approaches, culturally responsive practices, and connecting with students and families through positive, empowering learning experiences.

The work of AASSD has contributed to TUSD's African American students graduating at significantly higher rates than African American students throughout the state of Arizona and the United States as a whole, and dropout rates that are significantly lower than African American students in Arizona and the United States as a whole. Although AASSD's true importance to the District, its African American students and Tucson's African American community cannot be measured in definite terms, having a department that focuses on the success of African American students indicates to the students, their families and the community that they are a valued and central part of the TUSD family.

With assistance from the Assessment and Evaluation Department, AASSD analyzes qualitative and quantitative data on a regular basis, including academic, attendance, discipline, graduation, and related data. AASSD collaborates with the Technology Services Department, and the MTSS Director to review and analyze the data, to allocate support resources, target interventions, measure effectiveness and impact, and to design and provide training.

On an annual basis in the late winter or early spring of each year, AASSD staff meet as a group, and with the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, to assess the support services, outcomes, areas for improvement, and to consider operational changes for the following year. This annual assessment coordinates with the broader TUSD budgeting process, so that changes and reallocation of assets and positions can be worked into both the Operating Plan for

the following year, and annual budget request. Based on that assessment, the Director prepares the specific operational goals for the coming year, and makes needed changes in the operating plan and staffing.