



Best Practices in Quality Authorizing: Renewal

A virtual training for the Maine Charter School Commission

1:00- 1:15 p.m.

Welcome

Training Overview, Introductions, and Icebreaker

1:15- 2:00 p.m.

The Charter School Lifecycle

Commissioners will:

- Learn the general stages and key practices of quality authorizing.
- Identify the Commission's key roles within each stage.
- Focus specifically on renewal and the Commission's responsibilities as defined via national best practice.

Commission Vision

Commissioners will:

- Come to consensus on the legacy goals and vision for the Commission.

2:00 – 2:05 p.m.

5 min break

2:05 – 2:50 p.m.

Renewal and Revocation Decision-Making via Case Studies

Commissioners will:

- Understand what it means to make merit- and evidence-based decisions for (1) renewals and revocations.

2:50– 3:00 p.m.

Questions and Wrap-Up

HOMEWORK:

Please come prepared to discuss the following:

What legacy do you envision for the Maine Charter School Commission and what role do you each play in achieving that?



**SAN MATEO ISD
ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
CAMPUS EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
(SELECTED ELEMENTS)**

ACADEMIC

Indicator 1: Texas A - F Accountability System

Measure 1: Is the school performing well on the Texas A - F Accountability System?
<p><i>Exceeds Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned an A from the Texas A - F Accountability System.
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a B from the Texas A - F Accountability System.
<p><i>Approaches Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a C from the Texas A - F Accountability System.
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a D from the Texas A - F Accountability System.
<p><i>Falls Far Below Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a F from the Texas A - F Accountability System.

Indicator 2: Mission-Specific Goals

MISSION-SPECIFIC MEASURE Measure 2: Are all students demonstrating effective workplace and communication skills?
<p><i>Exceeds Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Each year, the aggregate percentage of 8th students who achieve a score of at least 4 out of 5 on their graduation project as measured by a school developed rubric* is at least 90%.
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Each year, the aggregate percentage of 8th students who achieve a score of at least 4 out of 5 on their graduation project as measured by a school developed rubric* is at least 75% and less than 90%.
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Each year, the aggregate percentage of 8th students who achieve a score of at least 4 out of 5 on their graduation project as measured by a school developed rubric* is at least 50% and less than 75%.
<p><i>Falls Far Below Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Each year, the aggregate percentage of 8th students who achieve a score of at least 4 out of 5 on their graduation project as measured by a school developed rubric* is 50% or less.

*Rubric created in collaboration with San Mateo Health Clinic and the University of Texas at San Mateo. A panel including at least one teacher, one health care professional, and one community member will evaluate each project.

Indicator 3: Texas A - F Accountability System Focus Areas

TEXAS A - F ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM FOCUS AREA MEASURE Measure 3: How well did the school score in the “Closing the Gaps” domain?
<p><i>Exceeds Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned an A in the Closing the Gaps domain.
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a B in the Closing the Gaps domain.
<p><i>Approaches Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a C in the Closing the Gaps domain.
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned a D in the Closing the Gaps domain.
<p><i>Falls Far Below Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> School earned an F in the Closing the Gaps domain.

FINANCIAL

Indicator 1: Near-Term Measures

1.A. Current Ratio

Measure 1.A. Current Ratio: Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Current Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.1; or <input type="checkbox"/> Current Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.0 and less than 1.1, and one-year trend is positive (current year ratio is higher than last year’s) <i>Note: For schools in their first or second year of operation, the current ratio must be greater than or equal to 1.1.</i>
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Current Ratio is greater than or equal to 0.9 and less than or equal to 1.0; or <input type="checkbox"/> Current Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.0 and less than 1.1 and one-year trend is negative
<p><i>Falls Far Below Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Current ratio is less than or equal to 0.9

Measure 1.C. Enrollment Variance

Measure 1.C. Enrollment Variance: Actual Enrollment divided by Enrollment Projection in Charter School Approved
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Variance is greater than or equal to 95 percent in the most recent year
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Variance is greater than or equal to 85 and less than 95 percent in the most recent year
<p><i>Falls Far Below Standard</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/> Enrollment Variance is less than 85 percent in the most recent year

Indicator 2: Sustainability Measures

Measure 2.A. Total Margin and Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin

Measure 2.A.

Total Margin: Net Income divided by Total Revenue

Aggregated Total Margin: Total Three-Year Net Income Divided by Total Three-Year Revenues

Meets Standard

- Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is positive; or
- Most recent year Total Margin is positive, Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is greater than -1.5 percent, and the trend is positive for the last two years.

Note: For schools in their first or second year of operation, the cumulative Total Margin must be positive.

Does Not Meet Standard

- Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is greater than -1.5 percent, but trend does not “Meet Standard”

Falls Far Below Standard

- Aggregated Three-Year Total Margin is less than or equal to -1.5 percent; or
- The most recent year Total Margin is less than -10 percent

Measure 2.B. Debt-to-Asset Ratio

Measure 2.B.

Debt-to-Asset Ratio: Total Liabilities divided by Total Assets

Meets Standard

- Debt-to-Asset Ratio is less than or equal to 0.9

Does Not Meet Standard

- Debt-to-Asset Ratio is greater than 0.9 and less than or equal to 1.0

Falls Far Below Standard

- Debt-to-Asset Ratio is greater than 1.0



ORGANIZATIONAL

INDICATOR 1: EDUCATION PROGRAM

1.A. Material Terms of the Charter Contract

Measure 1.A.

Is the school implementing the material terms of the education program as defined in the charter contract?

Meets Standard

The school implements the material terms of the education program, as set forth in the charter contract, in all material respects, and the education program in operation reflects the material terms, or the school has gained approval for a charter modification to the material terms.

Approaches Standard

The school materially implements instructional and assessment programs focused on student achievement policies and practices focused on ensuring student achievement and well-being; however, one or more of the above elements is developing or in need of improvement.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school fails to fully implement the material terms of the education program, with some of the key design elements only partially implemented or not implemented at all.

1.C. Effective Instruction & Assessment

Elements consistent with the Texas Education Agency's [Effective Schools Framework](#) (ESF) are noted with an “*”.

Measure 1.C.

Is the school implementing practices that support effective instruction and assessment focused on student achievement?

Meets Standard

The school implements instructional and assessment programs focused on student achievement, with the following elements fully developed and functioning effectively:

- Instructional leaders with clear roles and responsibilities who develop, implement, and monitor instructional plans through use of data and other evidence*
- Retaining effective, well-supported teachers by strategically recruiting, selecting, assigning, onboarding, and building the capacity of teachers so that all students have access to high-quality educators*
- Ongoing, job-embedded personalized professional development for teachers aligned to the mission, vision, values, and goals of the school and linked to high-quality curriculum in all core subjects and relevant ages*
- Instructional leaders use normed tools and processes to conduct teacher observations, capture trends, track and support progress over time, and provide timely feedback with clear models and opportunities to practice for teachers*
- All students have access to a TEKS-aligned, guaranteed, and viable curriculum, assessments, and resources to engage in learning at appropriate levels of rigor*
- Instructional materials with key ideas, essential questions, and recommended materials, including content-rich texts, are used across classrooms. The instructional materials are intentionally designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners among other student groups*
- Classroom instruction incorporates rigorous, high-quality experiences that promote critical-thinking skills, with differentiated and scaffolded supports for students with disabilities and English learners among other student groups*
- The school implements high-quality common formative assessments aligned to state standards for all tested areas and PK - 2nd Grade math and reading*
- Teacher teams, supported by instructional leaders, meet frequently and regularly for in-depth conversations about formative and interim student data, effective instructional strategies, and possible adjustments to instructional delivery focused on meeting the needs of both struggling learners and learners needing acceleration*
- Educational programming, including curriculum, engages students in ways that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, responsive, and relevant

Approaches Standard

The school materially implements instructional and assessment programs focused on student achievement policies and practices focused on ensuring student achievement and well-being; however, one or more of the above elements is developing or in need of improvement.

Does Not Meet Standard

The school fails to implement instructional and assessment programs focused on student achievement, in the manner described above. The failures were material and significant to the viability of the school.

Indicator 3: Governance and Reporting

3.A. Governance Requirements

Measure 3.A. Is the school complying with governance requirements?
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The school materially complies with applicable laws, rules, regulations, and provisions of the charter contract related to governance by the board, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board bylaws and policies, including a code of ethics and conflict of interest policy (Model Contract §6.03 & Addendum A-2) • Texas Open Meetings Act (TEC §12.1051) • Texas Public Information Act (TEC §12.1051) • Texas Conflict of Interest Law (TEC §12.1054) • Board composition, election, and membership requirements (TEC §12.111(a)(7); §12.120; Bylaws) • Compliance with board training requirements (TEC §12.123)
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The school fails to materially comply with some of the above governance requirements; the failure(s) were material and significant to the viability of the school.</p>

3.D. Governance Commitment to Student Academic Achievement and Well-Being

Elements consistent with the Texas Education Agency’s [Effective Schools Framework](#) (ESF) are noted with an “*”.

Measure 3.D. Does the school governing body support, promote and monitor student outcomes?
<p><i>Meets Standard</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The charter school board of directors implements policies and practices focused on ensuring student achievement and well-being with the following elements fully developed and functioning effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear job description(s) for school leadership that prioritize(s) instructional leadership and achievement outcomes for students* • Ongoing support and coaching opportunities for school leader* • Monitoring of student outcomes, consistent with the charter contract, through use of dashboards or other tools to review student academic performance data and other measures of student outcomes • Allocation of sufficient resources to support the achievement of the goals in the charter contract
<p><i>Approaches Standard</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The school materially implements policies and practices focused on ensuring student achievement and well-being; however, one or more of the above elements is developing or in need of improvement.</p>
<p><i>Does Not Meet Standard</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The school failed to implement the program in the manner described above; the failure(s) were material and significant to the viability of the school.</p>



ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES RENEWAL SCENARIO

BACKGROUND:

It is currently November 2026.

San Mateo Independent School District (SMISD) released a Call for Quality Schools in 2020 seeking a middle school program focused on college readiness to turnaround a failing middle school in the district. The Academy of Health Sciences (AHS) responded to that call in January 2021 (after also having submitted a proposal the previous year but being denied).

SMISD conducted a rigorous new school application review process that culminated in the SMISD board of directors approving AHS at its May 2021 board meeting. AHS and SMISD executed the charter contract in July 2021 and the school began serving students in August 2022. The school is in the final year of its 5-year charter contract and the board of SMISD will make a decision regarding contract renewal at its meeting in January 2027.

Since AHS opened, the district contracted with a second new operating partner to operate one of the district's two other middle schools. This OP is implementing an arts and environmental sustainability focused program to support college and career readiness for students. This school began operating in August 2023, one year after AHS opened. The other district operated middle school has been and continues to be high performing, earning a state letter grade of A or B in each of the last 4 years.

Program Highlights

The following information summarizes the AHS program as outlined in its original application and the charter contract:

- The **mission** of Academy of Health Sciences Charter School (AHS) is to provide a supportive learning environment focused on academic achievement in preparation for college, careers, and lives of service in the health sciences.
- AHS has defined the following **key design elements** and states that “each key design element is core to the proposed design and critical to its success.”
 - Culture of Collective Efficacy: Establishing a culture of collective efficacy, growth, and leadership for students, families, and staff.
 - Positive School Culture: Establishment of a healthy community and safe, supportive learning environments for all students.
 - College and Career Readiness: A TEKS-based college and career ready curriculum based on the health sciences and STEAM priorities.
 - Middle School Preparation Starting in Grade 5: A New Beginning for Academic Excellence.
 - Data and Student-Driven Instruction: Evidence-based tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) supports for all students.
 - Effective Teaching Strategies: Thoughtful planning and delivery of engaging, culturally relevant, and effective pedagogy.
 - Extended and Enhanced Learning: A longer school day and year provides access to enhanced educational experiences, including a summer bridge program.

TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES

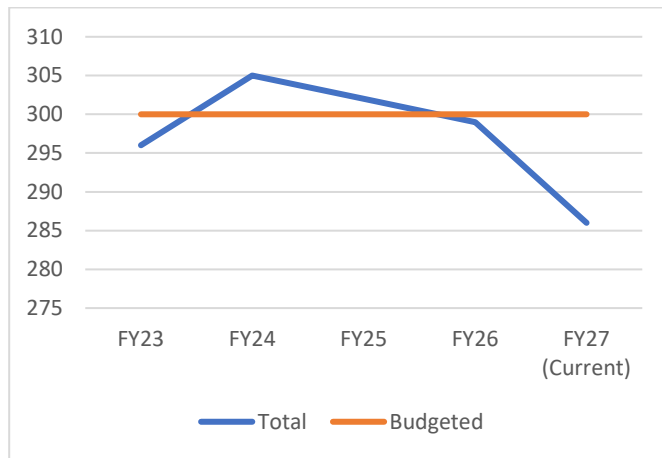
- **November 2020:** San Mateo ISD releases Call for Quality School (CQS) seeking a middle school focused on career and college readiness.
- **January 2021:** Academy of Health Sciences (AHS) submits new school application in response to CQS.
- **February 2021-May 2021:** SMISD Office of Innovation conducts a comprehensive application evaluation process including due diligence and a capacity interview. The CIO makes a positive recommendation to the superintendent for school approval.
- **May 2021:** SMISD board of directors approves new school application for AHS, authorizing the Superintendent to execute a charter contract.
- **July 2021:** Charter contract between AHS and SMISD executed.
- **August 2021- August 22:** SMISD staff conducts ongoing oversight and support to AHS during the pre-opening year.
- **June 2022:** District conducts Ready-to-Open meeting with AHS. The school meets all requirements and is given the green light to open.
- **August 2022:** AHS opens doors to approximately 300 students grades 5-8. (See enrollment data and demographics.)
- **October 2022:** First site visit conducted by district authorizing team, including attendance at operator board meeting. Start-up was going relatively smoothly.
- **April 2023:** Spring site visit conducted by district authorizing team, including attendance at operator board meeting.
- **August 2023:** First year state academic data released, and Annual Campus Evaluation Report completed for AHS.
- **September 2023:** District issues Notice of Concern to AHS for two issues:
 - Academic Performance: Rubric not created nor data available for Mission-Specific Goal.
 - Student Enrollment: Recruitment efforts have led to low enrollment of students with disabilities and students who are eligible for free/reduced price lunch.
- **October 2023:** Corrective Action Plan submitted by AHS. Notice of Concern closed.
- **August 2024:** Second year state academic data released, and Annual Campus Evaluation Report completed for AHS highlighting improvements in performance, completion of rubric and availability of corresponding data for 8th grade projects, and progress in terms of enrollment demographics, though percentage of SpEd students and student eligible for FRL remain below district averages.
- **August 2025:** Third year state academic data released, and Annual Campus Evaluation Report completed for AHS.
- **November 2025 – February 2026:** Executive Director Tanya St. Elizabeth takes an extended leave for personal reasons.
- **July 2026:** Three AHS board members resign. Board conducting ongoing outreach and recruitment activities.
- **August 2026:** Fourth year state academic data released, and Annual Campus Evaluation Report completed for AHS.
- **September 2026:** District completes and provides AHS with preliminary Renewal Evaluation Report.
- **October 2026:** AHS submits Renewal Application.
- **October 2026:** Tanya St. Elizabeth submits her letter of resignation effective at the end of the school year.
- **November 2026:** Authorizing team conducts AHS Renewal Site Visit.
- **January 2027:** SMISD Board of Directors scheduled to take action on AHS renewal recommendation from Superintendent.



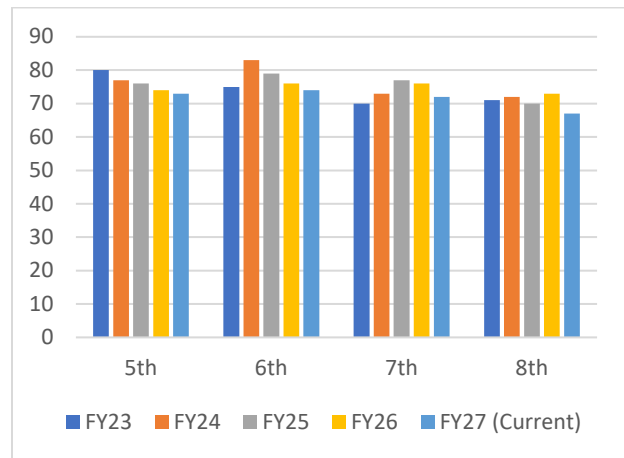
ENROLLMENT & DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic Data						
	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	Current	District Average
ELIGIBLE FOR FREE/REDUCED PRICE LUNCH	76.7%	78.6%	86.5%	83.2%	85.1%	89.9%
SPECIAL EDUCATION	9.8%	13.8%	16.2%	16.5%	17.3%	20.6%
ENGLISH LEARNERS	13.5%	17.1%	16.4%	17.3%	18.1%	15.2%

Total Enrollment



Enrollment Per Grade



Enrollment Per Grade by Cohort

Grade	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 (Current)
5th	80	77	76	74	73
6th	75	83	79	76	74
7th	70	73	77	76	72
8th	71	72	70	73	67
Total	296	305	302	299	286
Budgeted	300	300	300	300	300



ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	Texas Accountability Letter Rating			"Closing the Gaps"		
	AHS	OP ¹	DOMS	AHS	OP	DOMS
2022-23	D (69)	F (58)*	B (84)	D (68)	F (57)*	B (86)
2023-24	C (78)	C (72)	A (90)	C (78)	C (73)	B (88)
2024-25	B (83)	C (79)	A (91)	B (80)	C (78)	A (90)
2025-26	C (73)	B (83)	B (88)	C (71)	B (81)	A (90)
AVG	C (75.8)	C (78.0)**	B (88.3)	C (74.3)	C (77.3)**	B (88.5)

DOMS=District Operated Middle School

¹ 2nd charter school opened by the district in 2023 with an external operating partner.

*School was district operated through 2022-23. The OP took over in Fall 2023.

** Averages ratings for three years school has been run by OP.

Workplace and Communication Skills	Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26
Number of 8th grade students who achieve a score of at least 4 out of 5 on their graduation project as	No Data	49	53	62
Total Number of 8 th Graders	71	72	70	73
Percentage of 8th grade students who achieve a score of at least 4 out of 5 on their graduation project as	No Data	68.1%	75.7%	84.9%



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Revenues and Expenditures	Year 1 YE Actuals	Year 2 YE Actuals	Year 3 YE Actuals	Year 4 YE Actuals	Year 5 Budget (current year)
Total Revenues	\$3,584,426	\$3,684,588	\$3,693,426	\$3,655,426	\$3,705,426
Total Expenditures	\$3,492,665	\$3,677,445	\$3,586,965	\$3,778,699	\$3,599,645
Surplus (Deficit)	\$91,761	\$7,143	\$106,461	(\$123,273)	\$105,781
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$91,761	\$98,904	\$205,365	\$82,092	\$187,873
Unrestricted Net Assets as Percentage of Expenditures	2.63%	2.69%	5.73%	2.17%	5.22%

Balance Sheet	Year 1 YE Actuals	Year 2 YE Actuals	Year 3 YE Actuals	Year 4 YE Actuals
Assets				
Cash	\$87,264	106,932	91,697	83,250
Receivables	67,230	81,505	128,255	114,633
Prop & Equip - Net of Depreciation	965,081	902,462	855,582	780,006
Total Assets	1,119,575	1,090,899	1,075,534	977,889
Liabilities and Net Assets				
Accounts Payable	116,056	159,937	146,064	186,436
Long-Term Debt	911,758	832,058	724,105	709,361
Total Liabilities	1,027,814	991,995	870,169	895,797
Net Assets	91,761	98,904	205,365	82,092
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,119,575	1,090,899	1,075,534	977,889



SAN MATEO ISD

ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE DATA GATHERING AND REPORT

APPROACH:

To complete the Organizational Performance section of the Renewal Campus Evaluation Report, SMISD Office of Innovation (OOI) staff reviewed available data from the following: AHS renewal application, board meeting minutes and packets, school annual reports, and OOI internal records of the school's timely compliance with reporting requirements. Additionally, OOI staff completed a renewal site visit, which provided additional qualitative data as described further below.

SITE VISIT METHODOLOGY:

During the 1.5-day renewal site visit conducted on November 14-15, 2026, SMISD OOI staff sought to verify implementation of the school's material terms, in addition to other performance requirements detailed in the charter contract and Campus Evaluation Framework, through classroom and board meeting observations, interviews with stakeholders within the charter community, and required documentation from the charter school.

The site visit team completed a combination of four individual and three focus group interviews with key school leaders, members of the teaching staff, and upper-class students who had attended the school for at least three consecutive years.

The team also conducted 18 classroom observations over the course of the renewal site visit, each ranging from 15-20 minutes in length.



INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

RE: FALL 2026 RENEWAL SITE VISIT FINDINGS FOR ACADEMY OF HEALTH SCIENCE
("AHS") (SELECT FINDINGS)

INDICATOR 1: EDUCATION PROGRAM

1.A. MATERIAL TERMS OF THE CHARTER CONTRACT

Measure 1.A.	
Is the school implementing the material terms of the education program as defined in the application?	
<p>AHS's original charter application described the school's mission as follows:</p> <p><i>"The mission of Academy of Health Sciences Charter School (AHS) is to provide a supportive learning environment focused on academic achievement in preparation for college, careers, and lives of service in the health sciences."</i></p> <p>The following key design elements were proposed as core to the school design and critical to its success.</p>	
Key Design Element	Qualitative Evidence from Renewal Site Visit
<p>Culture of Collective Efficacy: Establishing a culture of collective efficacy, growth, and leadership for students, families, and staff. The leadership team, instructional coaches, staff, and teachers will be provided with the training, tools, and the time necessary to establish, track, and meet clear and specific achievement goals. Their collaboration and commitment will ensure the design, implementation, and regular evaluation of a variety of research-based processes to help students overcome various academic, social, and emotional challenges, particularly those students who may be experiencing or have experienced trauma.</p>	<p>School leaders shared job descriptions for the many leadership and coordinator positions assigned to manage the various academic and operational needs of the school. In the focus group interviews, teachers and leaders were familiar with the distinct areas of responsibility for each administrator, supervisor, counselors, interventionists and support staff.</p> <p>According to interviewed teachers, during the principal's absence earlier this year, AHS began supplementing internal PD offerings by contracting with external experts to provide support to help teachers use both quantitative and qualitative data to inform their instructional decisions. In the focus group, teachers explained that they meet as a content area PLC and in half-day professional development at least once a month with the ICT and RTI staff to review data on student progress and to share observations of student performance in order to revise and refine instructional strategies.</p>

<p>Positive School Culture: Establishment of a healthy community and safe, supportive learning environments for all students. AHS will establish a culture through authentic relationship building that supports personal and mutual respect, equity, and efficacy aimed at building critical hope to transform trajectories of continued poverty into opportunity for success. The culturally-relevant learning environment will provide students of every race, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status an opportunity to thrive while learning from the differences in others.</p>	<p>AHS leaders provide training to staff to ensure the environment is free from harassment and discrimination. School leaders provided a calendar of professional development conducted prior to the school opening this fall which lists sessions on classroom management, discipline and safety, as well as training on harassment. One assistant principal is the school's Dignity for All Students (DASA) coordinator and reports that all teachers have received training in DASA. The student handbook includes a paragraph defining bullying and outlining school expectations in keeping with DASA requirements.</p> <p>While hallways were boisterous during passing time, monitors were in position to ensure student energy remained within acceptable levels. School leaders reported they are investigating options to ensure their students are safe during their travel to and from school. One strategy recently initiated is to invite the San Mateo Police officers assigned to the nearby public transit stop to visit the school and meet the students, in the hopes of building positive relationships between the police, the school, and its students.</p>
<p>College and Career Readiness: A TEKS-based college and career ready curriculum based on the Health Sciences and STEAM priorities. AHS will creatively integrate multiple aspects of college and career readiness into the TEKS-based curriculum beginning in grade 5. Students will learn how to develop good study habits and understand the high academic expectations needed to prepare them for high school and post-graduation. Communication and workplace skills will be reflected throughout the education plan and will be scaffolded in a manner that ensures students have a solid foundation for their career choice and the ability to generate personal and professional goals.</p>	<p>School staff share a common understanding that the school's mission is to prepare students for careers in the healthcare industry. Work-based learning and attention to both the "hard" and "soft" skills needed for success in the workplace were mentioned by teachers and administrators as central to the school's academic program. Some students reported that minimal STEM curriculum is happening in their other classes with the exception of their typical math class and using computers in their other classes for research, presentations and writing. Teachers interviewed confirmed that this is a priority area of development for the school's instructional coaches. All students take an art class each year for at least one semester; however, teachers and students indicated that arts are not integrated in any way in other subject areas.</p> <p>The school continues to develop and leverage partnerships with local health sciences companies and organizations to provide "real-life" learning experiences for students including field trips, guest speakers, and job shadowing experiences. A number of employees from these organizations volunteer to help evaluate 8th grade students' culminating projects.</p>

<p>Middle School Preparation Starting in Grade 5: A New Beginning for Academic Excellence. After deep and thorough analysis of current achievement data, the applicant group realized a unique opportunity existed in our target community to open a school with grade 5. Grade 5 will focus on critical social, emotional, and academic transitions from elementary to middle school through a nurturing approach based on building authentic relationships that set the foundation for the achievement of high expectations.</p>	
<p>Data and Student-Driven Instruction: Evidence-based tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) supports for all students. To diminish the historic power of low expectations based on unaddressed behavioral needs and an inadequate assessment of true academic potential, the school will implement an effective process of collecting and analyzing valid and individualized data based on strengths and areas of growth to drive planning and decision-making. This will ensure that when applicable, all students will have access to equitable behavioral and academic interventions; they will be supported in various ways and intensities based on their evolving needs.</p>	<p>As described in the renewal application, the school uses a collection of formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments to monitor student learning and track student progress. School leaders reported that all entering students take the Achieve 3000 literacy assessment to identify a Lexile (reading) level that is shared with teachers to inform their instructional decisions. Content area PLCs collaborate on the development of interim and summative assessments using past state test items as resources. In their focus group, leaders reported that response to intervention (RTI) teachers and ICTs monitor the progress of students during and following intervention activities.</p>
<p>Effective Teaching Strategies: Thoughtful planning and delivery of engaging, culturally relevant, and effective pedagogy. Teachers will elicit high levels of engagement, creativity, commitment, and intellectual processing necessary for success in future health sciences careers. The AHS leadership team will provide robust professional development workshops that focus on guided and deliberate practice of effective pedagogical strategies that reflect dimensions 1-9 of the Thoughtful Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Framework (Silver, 2016) and optimize learning of the TEKS with 21st Century Skills, Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework (Fisher & Frey, 2013), Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain (Hammond, 2014) and Expeditionary Learning Student Engagement Protocols (2014).</p>	<p>School leaders explained they introduced teachers to “explicit direct instruction” (EDI) as a recommended instructional approach during summer professional development. The site visit team observed many teachers providing direct instruction by presenting information, but there were few instances observed where students had opportunities to demonstrate their understanding, a key element of the EDI model.</p>

Extended and Enhanced Learning: A longer school day and year provides access to enhanced educational experiences, including a summer bridge program.

Instructional time of at least 300 more hours than the conventional district calendar is one of the strongest predictors of higher achievement (Fryer, 2011). AHS will work with partnering organizations to provide a rigorous after school enrichment program. In addition, summer programming will provide students with a safe, structured, and fun learning environment that will ensure students and their families remain engaged with the school, maintain the high level of academic growth established during the school, and build excitement and investment in the school's mission and every student's future goals.

The school's instructional calendars confirm the school's extended calendar for students in all grade levels.

School leaders reported that all students are required to attend a four-week summer program to work on enrichment, credit recovery, internships, summer school or to retake examinations. Review of curricular documents on-site (including scope and sequence, unit, and lesson plans) for the summer bridge program lacked detailed objectives and/or content related to health sciences. Attendance data reviewed during the renewal visit was insufficient to confirm that all students participate.

1.C. EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT

Measure 1.C.

Is the school implementing practices that support effective instruction and assessment focused on student achievement?

- As described in school documents and during the focus group with school leaders, teachers prepare lesson plans in collaboration with their subject area colleagues during daily professional learning community (PLC) time. Lesson plans are submitted electronically and reviewed by school leaders assigned to the subject area prior to their delivery to ensure consistent quality across classrooms.
- The lesson plans provided to the renewal site visit team varied slightly in format, but generally included the learning goal, lesson agenda, and instructional steps to implement the lesson. Most of the plans included lists of accommodations for students with IEPs, or general modifications in anticipation of student misconceptions. Few of the lesson plans described learning activities that involved complex materials or higher order, conceptual understanding.
- Most observed lessons required students to complete practice problems, fill in worksheets, or copy notes from the screen. Students did not often display active engagement with the concepts in the lesson by asking questions or volunteering ideas.
- Classrooms were orderly and well managed and generally free from disruption. Across the 18 classes observed during the visit, students were polite and obedient and attentive to the assigned task. To build workplace competencies beyond academics, AHS designates one student “ambassador” per classroom to greet visitors as an opportunity to practice handshakes, introductions, eye contact, and conversation skills.
- Teachers keep families informed about students’ strengths and weakness using the eSchool portal where class assignments and student grades are listed, as described in the renewal application and in focus group interviews. Some teachers interviewed during the site visit reported they use the Remind app to inform families and students about due dates and special assignments. Teachers can send compliments and concerns to individuals without exposing teachers’ private contact information.
- According to the renewal application, AHS assesses family satisfaction by analyzing enrollment and retention trends as well as soliciting input at school events and at one-on-one meetings. Over the last three years of the charter term, subsequent to a letter of concern from the SMISD CSO, leaders have invested particular effort into outreach efforts to two student subgroups (students with disabilities and those eligible for FRPL).
- The school has a formal process for teacher evaluation based on the Danielson Framework. Leaders and teachers interviewed on site consistently outlined the methods to be used for teacher observation, which include three informal and three formal observations that provide written feedback to improve instruction. A majority of teachers reported that this feedback is clear and actionable, and helpful to improving their pedagogy.

3.A. Governance Commitment to Student Academic Achievement and Well-Being

Measure 3.A.

Is the school complying with governance requirements?

- Evidence of all required documentation was provided and easily accessible. When board members were interviewed, they could point to provisions within their bylaws, reference related laws, and describe the ways in which they adhere to said policies.
- Documentation of meetings was provided and followed Texas Open Meetings Act.
- All board members provided signed conflict of interest statements and a review of the board minutes demonstrated that the board was acting in compliance with TEC §12.1054.
- The budget has had a \$18,000 line item annually dedicated to board training. All board members are up to date on their board trainings and documentation was provided.
- In reviewing the board roster and historical information, the board was in compliance and alignment with their bylaws in terms of composition, board terms, and election procedures.

3.D. Governance Commitment to Student Academic Achievement and Well-Being

Measure 3.D.

Does the school governing body support, promote and monitor student outcomes?

- Job descriptions were readily available and clear. Not only were administrators aware of leadership positions, but faculty were familiar with administrative positions. Each description was unique to the role and individual. A review of meeting minutes found that these JDs were reviewed at least annually and refined with new hires. They were also used as the basis for personnel discussions, when necessary, and as the basis for evaluations, when appropriate.
- Job descriptions were structured in such a way that student outcomes were a main focus of prioritization. An emphasis on effective growth, absolute performance, and a focus on data were all highlighted within the prescriptions. Annually, each administrator is asked to use these expectations as baseline for formatting their individualized professional development plans and goals. We did observe that while a requirement, this practice was not consistent year over year. The most recent PD plan for Ms. St Elizabeth was from 2024.
- In reviewing the school's budget, line items were found for board training and staff PD. Nothing could be directly attributed to school leader PD or coaching. When asked about this, two board members said that Ms. St Elizabeth determined her own PD plans and asked for board approval for costs. They shared that this occurred each year and was a part of their annual evaluation discussions. The review team could not find evidence of such costs or proof of participation.
- The board uses school created "dashboards" to track, monitor, and discuss student performance. These excels are clearly aligned to school wide goals, performance metrics, and the accountability goals. The documents are updated on a quarterly basis for an associated board review and discussion. While progress is tracked, no evidence was found of robust board review or follow up when issues arise. An example- in the first quarter of 2023 it was noted that the board was seeking additional data regarding seventh grade math performance. The item was found on any subsequent agendas, nor was the board given any updated data. When the board discussed their process for reviewing data, their answers were appropriate, yet broad, and lacked depth and an ability to implement targeted responses.
- In a review of school-based budgets and interviews with the board, it was found that AHS is spending 50% of its budget on direct classroom costs. This number has remained consistent year over year.