

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT

**ACCREDITING COMMISSION FOR SCHOOLS,
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FOR**

Acalanes Center for Independent Study

**1963 Tice Valley Boulevard
Walnut Creek, California 94595**

Acalanes Union High School District

February 27 - March 1, 2023

Visiting Committee Members

Michael Murphy, Ed.D., Chair
Assistant Principal, Newark Memorial High School

Kim Stiffler, Ed.D.
Tamiscal Principal and Special Projects

NOTE: The visiting committee report format now includes the ratings on the accreditation status factors and the rationale integrated throughout the report. Please bold and underline the ratings. Use the Accreditation Status Worksheet.

- **Highly Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a high degree of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
 - **Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a satisfactory level of impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
 - **Somewhat Effective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had a limited impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
 - **Ineffective:** The results of the self-study and the visit provide evidence that this factor has had little or no impact on student learning, the school's program, and the school's operation.
-

Preface

Comment on the school's self-study process with respect to the expected outcomes of the self-study.

1. **The involvement and collaboration of all staff and other stakeholders to support student achievement.**
2. **The clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile and academic standards (*note the selected schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile examined by the school*).**
3. **The gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement.**
4. **The assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning in relation to schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile, academic standards, and ACS WASC/CDE criteria**
5. **The alignment of a schoolwide action plan/SPSA to the school's areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA.**

School's self-study process with respect to the expected outcomes of the self-study

It was clearly evident that the development of the Self-Study was a collaborative process overseen by representatives from each stakeholder group. Throughout its development, student achievement data was the primary focus when reviewing and analyzing student-centered pedagogical practices. Since the last Mid-Cycle, staff led efforts to transform the school's educational pedagogy. As instructional practices evolved, stakeholders developing the WASC carefully articulated these revisions and changes into the Self-Study. Similarly, school vision and mission statements evolve through this organic experience.

School-wide Learner Outcomes

Graduates of ACIS will be self-directed learners who take responsibility for reaching their personal and academic goals. Upon graduation, ACIS students are able to:

1. A range of skills that foster empathy, citizenship, and independence
2. A core academic mastery of content and skills in a variety of disciplines and standards

Clarification and measurement of what all students should know, understand, and be able to do through school-wide learner outcomes and academic standards

Input from students, parents, and site employees were conducted through dialogue, meetings, and other feedback systems provided guidance into stakeholder expectations for student success and the development of the Student Learner Outcomes (SLO's) that the school perceives is measurable. SLO's are the expectations for all students at Acalanes Center for Independent Study (ACIS). These expectations are measured through use of academic success, critical thinking, and communication.

Gathering and analyzing of data about students and student achievement

The WASC Team worked with colleagues to examine a variety of data from multiple sources, including the school's Student Information System (SIS), SBAC data and grades, teacher assessments, parent and student feedback, professional development, and student success rates to determine current levels of achievement.

Assessment of the entire school program and its impact on student learning

Quantitative and qualitative data reveal that FOL and home groups addressed the following facets of the school-wide program:

- Monitoring LCAP alignment to school-wide action plan
- Ensuring triangulation between LCAP, SPSA, mission statement, and school-wide critical areas for follow up
- Identifying potential action items that may emerge as a result of this analysis

Alignment of long-range action plan to the school's areas of need; the development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan

Due to district-wide initiatives around common assessment practices, the school anticipates a cycle of frequent assessment, reflection, and realignment of goals that will allow staff to build capacity that meets the needs of its ever changing, high needs student population. The School's Action Plan is created with an internal monitoring tool that embeds self-reflection; it is reviewed and monitored regularly to assess progress on meeting school-wide academic and SLO goals.

The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study reflects a thorough, accurate description and analysis of what currently exists at the school, as well as aligned schoolwide prioritized areas of strength and growth.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS has done a solid job of including faculty and staff in the self-study process. The VC confirmed through discussions with stakeholders that sufficient participation across all stakeholder groups occurred. It was clear that student and parent perspectives were included in the development of the SPSA, LCAP, and WASC.

Chapter 1: Progress Report

- Synthesize any significant developments since the last full visit and their impact on student learning.
- Briefly describe the action plan/SPSA implementation process and how the school monitors progress.
- Summarize the school's progress on the action plan/SPSA that incorporated all schoolwide growth areas from the last full self-study and all intervening visits.
- Explain why growth areas for follow-up are not in the current schoolwide action plan/SPSA.
- Analyze how the use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data are driving school improvement to better ensure high achievement for all students.

School's Major Changes and Follow-Up Process

Since the last Mid-Cycle, ACIS has experienced a myriad of positive developments that are student-centered. Additional personnel, coupled with new course offerings, have allowed faculty to better address students both academically and social-emotionally. Further, the District's recently implemented initiative, greater time for school and district-wide collaboration, ensures that staff have time to plan curriculum while developing common practices for evaluating student work for mastery. The new bell schedule, aligned with other neighboring comprehensive high schools within Acalanes UHSD, affords these opportunities for students.

Administration and staff continue to work together fiercely to address identified student needs. Specifically, these groups, with the support of veteran staff, seek to build capacity among stakeholders and improve student achievement while seeking new, innovative ways to move ACIS forward; it is the consensus of the current Visiting Committee that this is achievable as ACIS' stakeholders are student-centered in their decision-making. It is clear that this mission is the focal point for faculty, staff and administration. It is easily observed during Focus Group interviews and classroom observations that students are engaged, and they feel positive about the school environment. Similarly, the number of parents that demonstrate interest in learning more about how they may support their child(ren) continues to increase.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Acalanes Center for Independent Study High School is to provide opportunities for students with diverse educational interests and needs to meet their academic goals through a compassionately structured program featuring independent and small group learning.

The SLO's outline the student dispositions that demonstrate understanding of these revisions. Several Focus Groups cited that continued acknowledgement of cultural proficiency will enrich this process. Further, weekly scheduled collaboration opportunities consisting of departmental, grade-level, and PLC meetings allow time for faculty to plan, coordinate, and execute refinements to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Results from various data are used to evaluate student achievement, social-emotional level, and stakeholder engagement.

Critical Areas of Follow-up from 2021 Report

ACIS' revised action plan from 2021 includes two goals:

Goal #1: Seek to Expand the School's Use of Data to Include Academic Measures that More Fully Reflect the Progress of All Students

ACIS is in year two of its district's newest curricular initiative of developing common formative assessments, starting in 9th grade core classes. Since its teachers became salaried employees, the faculty has enjoyed inclusion in professional development and weekly collaboration time with colleagues from other sister high schools. Specifically, ACIS teachers are required to teach far more subjects and preps than colleagues at other sites. Their participation in collaborative teams varies depending on subject and course. Although this initiative is in its infancy, ACIS faculty have benefitted tremendously; through district oversight, their instructional and assessment practices are more aligned with colleagues from other sites. The VC applauds the District's willingness to invest in data driven instruction as well as its insistence in building capacity within its faculty. ACIS is to be commended for its eagerness to follow this initiative with fidelity. During its first day of visiting the site, the VC witnessed that this goal has become part of the school culture.

Goal #2: Expand the Range of Metrics Used to Measure School Climate

Upon reviewing its SPSA, ACIS ensures that these metrics are regularly administered and reviewed for efficacy.

The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): **Effective**

Narrative Rationale:

It was clear to the VC that there is ongoing systemic improvement that is built into the school's culture. This process clearly included school administration, faculty, and staff who have addressed the prior accreditation's findings through the process of data driven school improvement and the allocation of resources to ensure that program improvement and student-support initiatives continue. The school closely reviewed findings from the previous visit, and progress made on achievement of their critical areas of need, as well as historical student achievement data to inform the process and drive school improvement. The school reviews data on an ongoing basis, continually updates its action plan, and shares the results with stakeholders.

Chapter 2: School and Student Profile and Supporting Data

- Succinctly describe the school location, type of school, grades served, demographics, major school programs, and other relevant school information.
- Include the school's vision, mission, schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile and 2-3 identified major student learner needs.
- Include the CDE CA School Dashboard School Performance Overview data for the school in the report along with other relevant local measures from the school profile as applicable

ACIS is the smallest of five high schools in Acalanes Union High School District. It is located in Walnut Creek, the northeast suburbs of East Bay, nestled in the hills of Canyon, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and Walnut Creek. The school is the only alternative high school in the district and serves grades 9-12 students within the district's comprehensive high schools. The district is noted as one of the highest achieving districts in California, maintaining its reputation for ensuring students reach the 96th percentile among CollegeBoard's Advanced Placement results. Residences within the district boast reputations for their high quality schools, and upper class neighborhoods that have consistently passed 4 bond measures and 7 parcel taxes, ensuring that the district finances exceed the state base revenue limit.

The school currently enrolls 100 students. The ethnic makeup consists of White, 70%; Hispanic, 8%, and Multiracial, 13%. Of the student body, 52% of students are identified as requiring special education services and 28% have 504 plans that require accommodations. Enrolled students are afforded the opportunity to participate in activities, athletics, and clubs with their residential schools. Similarly, based on interest and/or need, students are able to take courses at their residential high school or participate in concurrent enrollment at DVC, the local community college. ACIS houses a Counseling Enriched Program; it is currently at full capacity, housing 15% of the student population. All stakeholder groups consistently cited the need for intensive therapeutic counseling or therapy for students. The majority of students transferred from their local residential schools within the district, often citing the greater need for support in mental health and counseling. Currently, staffing consists of one administrator, 10 faculty, one school psychologist, one MFT, a part-time academic counselor, and three classified support staff.

Progress on 2021 Critical Areas for Improvement Report

During its 2021 Mid-Cycle Visit, the Visiting Committee required that ACIS develop an Action Plan that would address the following two recommendations:

- Seek to expand the school's use of data to include academic measures that more fully reflect the progress of all students
- Expand the range of metrics used to measure school climate.

During the visit, it was clearly evident that ACIS staff and administration addressed the recommendations identified above. Another observation shared by the VC was that after reviewing the recommendations, the academic and professional atmosphere among faculty share a positive, student-centered approach to learning and decision-making. This was evident throughout the visit when walking through classrooms, Focus Group interviews, and individual interactions with stakeholders on campus. The remainder of this report will demonstrate this continuing effort to ensure that the following is a recurring element throughout: ACIS faculty and staff provide a safe, nurturing environment for its high needs population while enlisting student-centered pedagogical practices. Students often arrive socially-emotionally fractured;

through initial delicate interaction, approachability, and moral support, students develop confidence and self-advocacy skills. Parents and students emphatically praise school administration, faculty, and staff for their proven ability to reach students at their level of need.

ACIS stakeholders are fiercely loyal in ensuring that they maintain a collaborative, nurturing academic and social-emotional learning environment, one that encompasses FAMILY. The VC repeatedly witnessed impassioned stakeholders break into tears when describing their positive, emotional ties to the school community.

The VC recognizes the significant growth and continued positive change made by faculty and staff. Stakeholders recognize that through their efforts, ACIS remains at the forefront of effective schools that impact student lives. It was also frequently reported that they realize that there is much work to continue; however the school atmosphere shares a belief system that provides a foundation where the process of change may be collaboratively addressed. As such, the current Self-Study serves as the organizational vision and pedagogical shift in addressing change through the lens of ensuring that best practices support positive student outcomes. ACIS staff ought to be commended for their attitude of supporting students as servant leaders.

The VC recognizes this significant contribution to the school's FAMILY atmosphere, and encourages that it be acknowledged for its seasoned administration and staff who understand best how to rebuild, redevelop, and refine how it may best serve this unique student population. The school puts forth a diligent effort to embrace the prospect of a new, revised shared culture that demonstrates a paradigm shift in practice as it embraces a new demographic. The school's approach to implementing independent study is a worthy model from which other schools would benefit to learn.

Progress on California School Dashboard and Other Relevant Local Measures

Due to the COVID pandemic, very little relevant data is available. Acalanes UHSD is in its first year of implementation of common departmental assessments and benchmarks. Due to its infancy, limited data is available for analysis.

Chapter 3: Quality of the School's Program

Based on the school's self-study and visiting committee findings:

- For each category of criteria, summarize the findings about the school's effectiveness in addressing each of the *criterion and all the indicators within each category*; include supporting evidence as appropriate.
- Rate the effectiveness of each criterion and complete the narrative rationale for the rating
 - Highlight the areas of strength
 - Highlight the growth areas for continuous improvement
 - List important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these findings, strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement.

Note: When writing the summary for each criterion, use the indicators as a guide to ensure that all important aspects of each criterion are addressed (see the *ACS WASC/CDE Accreditation Status Determination Worksheet*).

CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

A1. Vision and Purpose Criterion

To what extent a) does the school have a clearly stated vision and mission (purpose) based on its student needs, current educational research, including equity, diversity, and inclusion, the district Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP), and the belief that all students can achieve at high academic levels?

To what extent is the school's purpose, supported by the governing board and the district LCAP, further defined by schoolwide learner outcomes and the academic standards?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A1.1. Vision – Mission – Schoolwide Learner Outcomes – Profile: The school has established a clear, coherent vision and mission (purpose) of what students should know and demonstrate; it is based upon high-quality standards and is congruent with research, practices, the student/community profile data, a belief that all students can learn and be college and career ready, and aligned with district goals for students.

A1.2. Development/Refinement of Vision, Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes: There are effective processes in place to ensure involvement of all stakeholders in the development and periodic refinement of the vision, mission, and schoolwide learner outcomes.

A1.3. Understanding of Vision, Mission, Schoolwide Learner Outcomes, District LCAP: Students, parents, and other members of the school and business community demonstrate understanding of and commitment to the vision, mission, the schoolwide learner outcomes, and the district LCAP.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS' mission honors the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion, while preparing students for the constantly changing world. Their mission statement emphasizes the school-parent partnership's commitment to empower and engage all students for lifelong success. The School-wide Learning Outcomes are rooted in the school community's desire to help students foster empathy, citizenship, and independence. Eagle expectations are promoted and introduced to students. Systems of intervention are in place, and staff and student buy-in is well received. Mission Statement, SLOs and Eagle Expectations are posted in classrooms throughout the school and in hallways.

Representatives from each stakeholder group reviewed a variety of student data to determine barriers and needs of students. There are clear effective processes involving stakeholders in development and refinement of the mission and school-wide learner outcomes by students at the beginning of the school year. ACIS' SLO's were re-visited and discussed by staff, students and administration. These expectations were shared with the school community and are posted on the school website.

Discussions with parents indicated they are provided a myriad of opportunities to stay connected to the school, through both formal and informal means. Parents are supportive and feel the community is inclusive with an approach to personalized learning that sets ACIS apart from other school. ACIS fosters student safety and belonging while highlighting each student's uniqueness. Parents could not emphasize enough how grateful they are to have ACIS as an option for their child's education.

Vision and Purpose that supports high achievement for all students. Defining of the school's vision and purpose through schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile and academic standards.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

VC verifies that the mission of the school supports a high level of standards and school-wide learner outcomes, as evident through the policies and fiscal oversight of the governing board decision-making process that includes stakeholder involvement. The school's purpose, mission and SLO's are based on the needs of the students that are continuously reiterated and taught. All stakeholders support the mission and SLO's which are focused on student success.

A2. Governance Criterion

To what extent does the governing board a) have policies and bylaws and the school's purpose is aligned with them to support the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness standards based on data-driven instructional decisions for the school?

To what extent does the governing board delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?

To what extent does the governing board monitor results regularly and approve the schoolwide action plan/SPSA and its relationship to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A2.1. Understanding the Role of the Governing Board and District Administration: The school community understands the governing authority's role, including how stakeholders can be involved.

A2.2. Relationship between Governing Board and School: The school's stakeholders understand the relationship between the governing board's decisions, expectations, and initiatives that guide the work of the school.

A2.3. Uniform Complaint Procedures: The school leadership understands and utilizes the Uniform Complaint Procedures from the district.

Visiting Committee Comments

District Board Policies and procedures are clear and support the school's model of instruction. In discussion with District and Board leadership, there is clear support for the school and its mission. The school has an elected student Board Representative who presents information on a

regular basis. The Assistant Superintendent was comfortable discussing site challenges and successes. Furthermore, there is clear communication in expectations; this was reinforced through staff perspective-they can clearly identify their collective goals and how they will carry out these expectations.

District and Board leadership voiced full confidence in the ability of the school's administrative and staff team. The VC heard several times that ACIS is a leader in implementation of innovative programs (e.g. Future Ready and Counseling Enriched Program) and that the district highly values the leadership of staff and administration in overseeing the implementation of these improved processes.

Uniform Complaint Procedures are in place and may be found on the district website, ACIS' website and in classrooms. Procedures are updated annually. The VC, through discussions with parents, understands there is a high degree of communication between staff and parents in support of individual student academic and social-emotional growth.

Governance that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

Through discussion with the district leadership team, it is clear that policies and by-laws are in place to support student achievement. District administration is leading new educational initiatives in collaborative teams and PD's focused on assessment at the site level; the eventual goal is to review and develop district-wide common assessments. Staff have demonstrated a willingness to implement these new initiatives. Due to the small school site, they eagerly collaborate with departments at other sites, depending on course offerings.

A3. Leadership: Data-Informed Decision-Making and Continuous School Improvement Criterion

To what extent based on multiple sources of data, does the school leadership, parent/community, and staff make decisions and initiate activities that focus on all students achieving the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness standards?

To what extent do the school leadership and staff annually monitor and refine the schoolwide action plan/SPSA and make recommendations to modify the LCAP as needed?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A3.1. Broad-Based and Collaborative: The school's broad-based, inclusive collaborative planning process is a continuous improvement cycle that a) assesses data to determine student needs, b) collaboratively determines and implements strategies and actions and c) monitors results and impact on student success.

A3.2. School Action Plan/SPSA Correlated to Student Learning: The school's schoolwide action plan/SPSA is directly correlated to and driven by the analysis of student achievement data and other data and aligned with district LCAP.

A3.3. Collective Accountability to Support Learning: The school leadership and staff demonstrate shared decision-making, responsibility, and self-reflection on actions and accountability for implementing practices, programs, actions, and services that support student learning.

A3.4. Internal Communication and Planning: The school has effective existing structures for internal communication, planning, and resolving differences.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS is broad-based and provides multiple opportunities for the involvement, input, and collaboration of all educational partners including staff, students, parents, and the community. There is a process of annual data collection and use of that data to evaluate, plan, and drive goals and strategies. As needs are identified and goals are set, this also allows staff to identify and prioritize staff development. Through the continuous cycle of monitoring and collaborating with each stakeholder group, the school develops its school Action Plan and SPSA which are aligned with the LCAP plan, district goals, and its WASC reporting and action plan. The Site Council provides input into the School Action Plan. The alignment of the various plans and input from various stakeholders in the decision-making process and accountability provides for greater, consistent focus, allowing the school to move in a common direction together and eliminates disconnect and misunderstanding. The practice of making decisions grounded in data ensures a productive structure to facilitate open honest input and discussion.

It is clear that ACIS staff and administration value and demonstrate the importance of shared accountability. Throughout the Report as well as the VC's meetings with each Focus Group, there is evidence of shared accountability and responsibility. Collaborative teams examine data and develop annual goals, student common assessments, and identify academic needs.

ACIS faculty and staff meet weekly to discuss upcoming events, current challenges, updates on existing issues, problem-solving, form action plans and next steps.

Leadership: *Data-Informed Decision-Making and Continuous School Improvement* that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

Interviews with staff members indicate that the school uses data in many ways to support individual students. Teachers gather a variety of data and use it to guide individual student learning as well as to plan and implement student intervention practices. Staff also reported that they meet in collaborative course-alike groups to discuss plans to increase student outcomes and share best practices. The VC commends all school personnel for their dedication to student success.

A4. Staff: Qualified and Professional Development Criterion

To what extent does a qualified staff and leadership facilitate achievement of the student academic standards and the schoolwide learner outcomes through a system of preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development?

To what extent is there a systematic approach to continuous improvement through professional development based on student performance data, student needs, and research?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A4.1. Qualifications and Preparation of Staff: The school has confidence in district and school procedures to ensure that leadership and staff are qualified based on staff background, training, and preparation. The processes to assign staff members and provide appropriate orientation for all assignments maximizes the expertise of the staff members in relation to impact on quality student

learning.

A4.2. Professional Development and Learning: The school effectively supports professional development/learning with time, personnel, material, and fiscal resources to facilitate all students achieving the academic, college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes.

A4.3. Measurable Effect of Professional Development on Student Learning: There are effective processes in place to assess the measurable effect of professional development on teacher practice and the impact it has on student performance

A4.4. Supervision and Evaluation: The school implements effective supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff.

A4.5. Communication and Understanding of School Policies and Procedures: The school implements a clear system to communicate administrator and faculty written policies, procedures, and handbooks that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS faculty are fully credentialed in their curricular areas. Additionally, seasoned veterans mentor new staff on policies, procedures, and classroom practices. Furthermore, the district provides professional development in an effort to invest in continuous improvement processes.

Staff regularly meet to review progress on metrics pertaining to the alignment of instruction and assessment. Student performance is evaluated in terms of both engagement and performance. These metrics are reviewed and continually refined to determine pragmatic practices that may be utilized school-wide. Teachers are regularly evaluated by administration. Evaluative practices are consistent with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The District provides strong professional development that is often faculty-led. The school states that all staff members are encouraged to participate in PD's to support student achievement and in areas of cultural proficiency, technology and pedagogy. Staff report that through training and follow-up, positive changes in school culture have been observed. The VC observed a positive culture in each classroom and space on campus.

Staff: *Qualified and Professional Development that supports high achievement for all students.*

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

The District provides strong professional development. Staff participate with fidelity, specifically in the development and analysis of common formative assessments, instructional technology training, intervention systems, student achievement, mental health, and areas of cultural proficiency. All new and returning staff are provided yearly updated policies and procedures.

A5. Resources Criterion

To what extent are the human, material, physical, and financial resources sufficient and utilized effectively and appropriately in accordance with the legal intent of the program(s) and LCAP to support students in accomplishing the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness standards?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

A5.1. Resource Allocation Decisions: The school leadership and staff are involved in the resource allocation decisions. There is a relationship between the decisions about resource allocations, the district's LCAP and the school action plan/SPSA, the school's vision, mission, the schoolwide learner outcomes, major student learner needs, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness standards.

A5.2. Practices: There are district processes and practices in place for developing an annual budget, conducting an annual audit, and at all times conducting quality business and accounting practices.

A5.3. Facilities Conducive to Learning: The school's facilities are safe, functional, well-maintained, and adequate to meet the students' learning needs and support the educational program (i.e., accomplish the vision, mission, and the schoolwide learner outcomes).

A5.4. Instructional Materials and Equipment: The policies and procedures for acquiring and maintaining adequate instructional materials and equipment, such as textbooks, other printed materials, instructional technology, manipulatives, and laboratory materials are effective.

A5.5. Resources for Personnel: Resources are available and used to enable the hiring, nurturing, and ongoing professional development of a well-qualified staff for all programs.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS' Resource Allocation is based on the needs identified in the LCAP. Additional funds have been provided directly to the site to use with site discretion. The decisions about allocation are a result of feedback from various committees that include all educational partners and stakeholders. Specific department and teacher needs are also taken into account.

The annual budget is primarily developed at the district level and includes the district finance committee to formulate the amount of expenditures expected for the year. Sites are responsible for developing their SPSA through their Site Council. The budget, reimbursements, and expenditures are reviewed and audited annually by the school board and through an internal audit process.

The campus is safe, functional, and very well maintained. Students report the school is safe, clean and free of cliques, bullying and harassment. Funding permitting, the school desires to offer more electives, and this was particularly voiced by students. Staff reports that they have the materials and supplies required to effectively provide instruction for all students. There are several checks and balances that provide accountability. Budgets are developed at the district level with stakeholder involvement. As the district finance committee and other staff develop a budget for expenditures, Leadership and staff develop the SPSA and LCAP budget to report specific site needs. The district budget is completed and adopted at the board meeting, and it periodically undergoes ongoing audits.

Discussion with District leadership confirmed that the budget is based upon the needs of the school, and every effort is made to provide all materials and supplies essential to its program. Discussion indicated that the district and site are consistently focused on improvement of student outcomes and that all budget decisions support that goal. Staff at ACIS is well qualified to meet the needs of its diverse population of students.

Resources that support high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

The school ensures that resources are available to all students. The campus is safe, clean, and supports the learning needs of all students. ACIS is a small, tight-knit community. Its student population requires greater, more specialized mental health and counseling supports. As such, it's unique school community would greatly benefit from more intensive time with qualified counseling staff.

CATEGORY A: ORGANIZATION: VISION AND PURPOSE, GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND RESOURCES

Areas of Strength for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources:

- The ACIS staff is an area of strength for the school, district, and community
- Staff members are all highly qualified, experienced, engaged and eager to continue to grow as professionals through training and collaboration
- AUHSD and ACIS invest in the development of their staff, curriculum, and programs through scheduled professional development days during the summer, additional staff pull-out days during the school-year and by providing opportunities for staff to attend conferences and training seminars to improve and develop the educational atmosphere for students
- The AUHSD school board and district-level leadership are invested and engaged in the success of all school sites, especially ACIS
- There is a high level of communication and cohesion among stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, district and site administration and board members

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Organization: Vision and Purpose, Governance, Leadership, Staff, and Resources:

- ACIS connects with all stakeholders through the SPSA and WASC review process, the expansion for a site advisory to have a more continuous scheduled discussion and review of the ACIS programming
- Consider formalizing teacher leadership to support the implementation of collaborative teams, common assessments, intervention systems, and instructional practices

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- Interviews with Focus Groups
- LCAP
- SPSA
- Professional development offerings
- CBA and Board Policies
- Mission and Vision, SLO's

CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM

B1. Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students participate in a rigorous, relevant, and coherent standards-based curriculum that supports the achievement of the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness standards in order to meet graduation requirements?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

B1.1. Current Educational Research and Thinking: The school provides an effective, rigorous, relevant and coherent curriculum based on current educational research and thinking that supports the academic standards.

B1.2. Academic and College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Each Area: The school has defined academic and college- and career-readiness indicators or standards for each subject area, course, and/or program that meet or exceed graduation requirements.

B1.3. Congruence with Student Learner Outcomes and Standards: There is congruence between the actual concepts and skills taught, the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and the college- and career-readiness indicators or standards.

B1.4. Integration Among Disciplines: There is integration and alignment among academic and career technical disciplines at the school.

B1.5. Community Resources and Articulation and Follow-up Studies: The school engages with community partners and resources, articulates regularly with feeder schools, local colleges and universities, and technical schools. The school uses follow-up studies of graduates and others to learn about the effectiveness of the curricular program. .

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS courses are standards-based and aligned to the California State Standards. The school uses district courses of study and provides collaboration time and professional development to support successful implementation of common academic standards. ACIS (and AUHSD) course offerings include core academic classes in addition to college prep electives.

Students have access to A-G course offerings and AP classes both at ACIS and/or at one of the comprehensive school sites in AUHSD. Courses are offered both in person and via an online format through Stride Learning (Fuel Ed). Flexible schedules also provide opportunities for students to enroll in local community college courses or pursue jobs and internships. ACIS recently added new elective courses. For example, Future Ready now fulfills the state requirement of advisory time and for providing interventions and curriculum in the area of life-skills. This multi-faceted approach supports students in achieving their post-high school college and career goals.

The AUHSD course catalog lists graduation and college eligibility requirements, in addition to course pathways, to reach these outcomes. ACIS has access to this coursework both at ACIS (greater limited scope) and more broadly at one of the larger district schools, if desired. ACIS offers a wide range of course offerings including Career Tech Ed, art, world language, and other interdisciplinary options.

ACIS teachers collaborate weekly or bi-monthly with teachers in course-specific teams across the district to support the successful implementation of curriculum, courses of study and grading components. Students have access to career tech education and other electives at their larger residential district schools. ACIS approaches courses and curriculum in ways that support their

student learning outcomes (SLO's): *Upon graduation, ACIS students are able to demonstrate 1. A range of skills that foster empathy, citizenship, and independence; and 2. A core academic master of content and skills in a variety of disciplines and standards.*

ACIS collaborates and articulates with the local community college and with other schools in the district to provide access to college level courses, AP offerings and other elective courses. ACIS provides flexible scheduling options as well as in person and online courses. Flexible scheduling also provides students opportunities to pursue internships or other passions outside of school. ACIS recently adjusted their bell schedule to maximize access to courses at other district schools.

Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS provides students access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum and the flexibility to access it in a variety of ways.

B2. Equity and Access to Curriculum Criterion

To what extent do all students have equal access to the school's entire program and are provided assistance with a personal learning plan to meet the requirements of graduation and are prepared for the pursuit of their academic, personal, and career goals?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

B2.1. Variety of Programs — Full Range of Choices: All students are able to make appropriate choices and pursue a full range of realistic college and career and/or other educational options. The school provides for career exploration, preparation for postsecondary education, and career technical options for all students.

B2.2. Accessibility of All Students to Curriculum, including Real World Experiences: A rigorous, relevant, and coherent curriculum that includes real world applications is accessible to all students through all courses/programs offered. Course enrollment patterns reflect the diversity of the school's students.

B2.3. Student-Parent-Staff Collaboration: Parents, students, and staff collaborate in developing and monitoring a student's personal learning plan, including college and career and/or other educational goals.

B2.4. Post High School Transitions: The school implements strategies and programs to facilitate transitions to college, career, and other postsecondary high school options and regularly evaluates their effectiveness.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS provides students access to the core graduation outcomes and college-prep coursework on site via both in person and online options. Students also have access to other college and career courses, including career tech electives and AP courses at other district schools, and college courses at the local community college. Additionally, ACIS and AUHSD recently aligned and calibrated graduation requirements to 220 credits district-wide; it is expected that this will significantly increase the percentage of college eligible ACIS students.

The demographics of ACIS has become increasingly more diverse; there has been a rise in students who identify as Hispanic (8%) and Multi-Racial (13%). There is a disproportionately high percentage of special education students at ACIS (52%). Courses of study and grading components are reflected on by course-specific teams made up of members from across the district. Most recently, Human Social Development and Ethnic Studies courses were developed and implemented at the district level. ACIS recently expanded its art offerings and added introduction to engineering as well as AP Calculus on site.

ACIS hosts informational sessions for staff and parent education events with information about the school and independent study practices. Families collaborate with the school around academic planning. Parents describe the school as an “open book”, and they feel they have multiple access points to engage with the school around their children’s learning and post-high school plan. Staff are very responsive to the individual needs of students and their families.

Students and families have access to an adult education transition specialist and a part-time academic counselor to discuss their post secondary goals and pathways. Individual 4-year plans are created and monitored. Every ACIS student meets with the counselor annually to review their schedule and personal academic plan, and students in special education have transition goals written into their IEP’s.

***Equity and Access to Curriculum* that supports high achievement for all students.**

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

Students have access to a wide range of resources and coursework to prepare them for diploma and post high school options, including college and career.

CATEGORY B: CURRICULUM

Areas of Strength for Curriculum:

- ACIS students have access to core graduation outcomes and rigorous and robust college-prep coursework via both in-person and online options. Students have flexible schedules allowing them to co-enroll in the local community college and/or electives and AP classes at a comprehensive school.
- ACIS teachers regularly collaborate in course-alike teams with other district teachers to evaluate curriculum and grading practices
- Students and families have access to ACIS staff to help with college and career planning and progress towards diploma
- Graduation outcomes are now aligned with the rest of the district, which will increase college eligibility upon graduation
- The flexible schedule affords students the opportunity to pursue jobs, internships and classes at the local community college, should they choose
- There is a strong collaboration among special education and general education staff in the areas of curriculum adaptation for individual students
- Special education students can access core academic content, as all push-out into the general education setting, while receiving the support they need to be successful

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Curriculum:

- Improve A-G college readiness among ACIS graduates; recent alignment of graduation requirements across the district will help
- Apply learning from seminar professional development days to implement culturally-diverse teaching practices, including examining materials and diversifying curriculum
- Explore more opportunities for cross-curricular, interdisciplinary collaboration within ACIS. For example, reinforce common skills across content areas, anchored in SLO's, common core, and essential standards.

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- Bell schedules
- AUHSD course catalog
- AUHSD courses of study & grading components
- ACIS course offerings
- ACIS bell schedule
- Fuel Ed course offerings
- Focus group conversations
- Classroom visits

CATEGORY C. LEARNING AND TEACHING

C1. Student Engagement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences Criterion

To what extent are all students involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences in an equity-centered learning environment to achieve the schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness standards?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

C1.1. Results of Student Observations and Examining Work: All students are involved in challenging and relevant work as evidenced by observations of students working and the examination of student work.

C1.2. Student Understanding of Learning Expectations: All students understand the standards/expected performance levels for each area of study in order to demonstrate learning and college and career readiness.

Visiting Committee Comments

Students at ACIS are actively involved and engaged in relevant learning experiences. Students may access A-G coursework online via Fuel Ed or through more traditional in-person settings with small class sizes. All courses, online and in person, have pacing guides and timelines that are communicated through Canvas.

ACIS teachers are aligning their canvas pages for a more consistent student experience. All curricular materials are available online for parents and students. Teachers frequently evaluate and update their course resources and examine their instructional practices to allow students to access core content, particularly using technology tools. Additionally, teachers use rubrics to communicate expectations for students and provide exemplars of student work as models. Teachers collaborate to identify core essential standards and place careful thought into what should be addressed during class time versus what should be assigned for independent work at home.

Student Engagement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS's programs are rigorous, relevant, and prepare students for post-high school pathways. Teachers work together to provide and communicate high standards and expectations for students, while creating alternative ways to meet and demonstrate learning, when appropriate.

C2. Student-Centered Instruction through a Variety of Strategies and Resources Criterion

To what extent do all teachers use a variety of strategies and resources to create an equity-centered learning environment, including technology and experiences beyond the textbook and the classroom, to actively engage students, emphasize creative and critical thinking skills and applications?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

C2.1. Teachers as Facilitators of Learning: Teachers facilitate learning as coaches and are current in the instructional content taught and research-based instructional methodologies including differentiation and the integrated use of technology.

C2.2. Creative and Critical Thinking: All students demonstrate creative and critical thinking within a variety of instructional settings, using a variety of materials, resources, and technology beyond the textbook.

C2.3. Application of Learning: All students demonstrate that they can apply acquired knowledge and skills at higher levels and depths of knowledge to extend learning opportunities.

C2.4. Career Preparedness and Real World Experiences: All students have access to and are engaged in career preparation activities.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS teachers use a variety of instructional strategies. Some of the strategies observed include flipped instruction, use of graphic organizers, one-on-one check-ins with students, classroom discussion, questioning strategies, etc. All ACIS students are required to enroll in a new elective, Future Ready, where the teacher designs and delivers curriculum to support skills beyond the classroom such as financial literacy, completing a weekly organizer, and field trips to the post office.

ACIS teachers frequently customize and personalize curriculum and lessons for students based on individual need and interest. This is due to the collaborative effort among general education and special education staff. Additionally, ACIS's schedule offers a high level of student intervention and support for students, including virtual office hours on Mondays, auditing additional classes for a repeat of content, additional time on campus teachers and staff, and remediation opportunities through Fuel Ed. Teachers also formally and informally discuss student support strategies in timely and responsive ways.

ACIS uses a variety of technology tools to help students access content, curriculum, flipped videos, remote zoom and google meet sessions. All students have access to one-to-one technology, and a common learning management system, Canvas, to access and submit their coursework. The science and engineering classroom has new technology and equipment complete with 3-D printing and gaming systems to support relevant 21st century learning. ACIS staff engage in professional learning that teachers find relevant, including collaborating in course-alike teams around common assessments and curriculum. Teachers attend summer professional learning institutes to support equity, assessment, and instructional practices.

Again, students have access to and are engaged in college and career preparatory courses and curriculum, and teachers employ a range of instructional strategies to personalize the learning environment for students. Teachers prioritize both content and social-emotional elements of learning while prioritizing a positive school climate and culture through strong relationships with students. Students who were neither engaged nor attended school at their residential high schools are finding success at ACIS, and students and parents attribute much of this to the dedicated staff.

Student-Centered Instruction through a Variety of Strategies and Resources that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS students are engaged in rigorous and relevant learning experiences, and teachers/staff are provided the resources and professional development support to help all students demonstrate success. ACIS teachers are equipped to go above and beyond to personalize learning experiences for students while maintaining rigor and high standards.

CATEGORY C: LEARNING AND TEACHING

Areas of Strength for Learning and Teaching:

- ACIS offers rigorous, relevant and engaging curriculum and instruction
- Teachers personalize the learning experience for students while focusing on common essential standards and offering a robust intervention system and flexible schedule
- Relevant professional learning is offered and required for staff, aligned to district priorities
- The school is working on common expectations aligned to standards and common use of Canvas to provide clarity and more consistent student experiences
- There is strong collaboration internally among ACIS general education and special education staff as well as externally among comprehensive high schools around common assessments and grading practices

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Learning and Teaching:

- Deepen on-site collaboration and professional development around instructional practices in conjunction with common assessments and grading practices
- Draw more explicit connections between equitable professional development, classroom practice, and student success
- Implement culturally-diverse curriculum and deepen the culture around equity and inclusion with a more diverse student population

Important evidence from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- AUHSD course catalog
- AUHSD courses of study & grading components
- Teacher canvas pages
- Fuel Ed pacing guide
- Summer professional development workshops
- Bell schedules and office hours
- ACIS instructional practices/rubrics/organizer examples
- Focus group conversations
- Classroom visits

CATEGORY D. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

D1. Reporting and Accountability Process Criterion

To what extent do the school leadership and instructional staff use effective and equitable assessment processes to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to the school staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders?

To what extent does the analysis of data guide the school's programs and processes, the allocation and usage of resources, and form the basis for the development of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA aligned with the LCAP?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

D1.1. Professionally Acceptable Assessment Process: The school leadership and instructional staff use effective and equitable assessment processes to collect, disaggregate, analyze, and report student performance data to all stakeholders.

D1.2. Basis for Determination of Performance Levels: The school leadership and instructional staff have agreed upon the basis for students' grades, growth, and performance levels to ensure consistency across and within grade levels and content areas.

D1.3. Monitoring of Student Growth: The school has an effective system to determine and monitor all students' growth and progress toward meeting the schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness indicators or standards.

D1.4. Assessment of Program Areas: In partnership with district leadership, the school leadership and instructional staff periodically assess programs and expectations, including graduation requirements, credits, course completion, and homework and grading policies, to ensure student needs are met through a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum.

D1.5. Schoolwide Modifications Based on Assessment Results: The school uses assessment results to make changes in the school program, professional development activities, and resource allocations demonstrating a results-driven continuous school improvement process.

Visiting Committee Comments

School leadership and staff evaluate student progress and proficiency in a variety of ways. For example, they submit weekly ADA reports that document work completion for independent study and use this as a weekly snapshot of student progress towards standards. They similarly develop, implement, and evaluate departmental common assessments and their results. Student progress is valued through a variety of metrics; these are evaluated weekly among staff.

ACIS teachers work collaboratively with district teachers to develop and implement common assessments in the four core subject areas, beginning at ninth grade. This practice also provides opportunities for district staff to examine curriculum and core standards both taught and assessed.

Staff analyze grade data across student subgroups quarterly and also use standardized test scores to monitor student progress in key areas. Teachers use Canvas and Illuminate for quizzes and tests which can quickly analyze student performance data while evaluating their own teaching and assessment practices. Teachers are examining and aligning their grading practices and assessment criteria through the use of rubrics.

ACIS leadership collaborates with the district office around the evaluation of its programs and practices. For example, faculty recently aligned and elevated graduation outcomes to ensure

alignment with other district schools. This created structures and support for more highly qualified teachers. The District also systematized opportunities for meaningful collaboration around curriculum, common assessments and grading practices across the district.

The District and school created common bell schedules to foster deeper levels of collaboration across the district. ACIS faculty can join other colleagues at larger comprehensive schools for subject-specific dialogue regarding alignment of curriculum and assessments. Professional development is aligned to distinct initiatives and provides a menu of opportunities for professional growth. Teachers and staff feel they have the resources they need to best serve their students. ACIS also modified its schedule to assign Mondays as an intervention day for students, including virtual office hours and staff meetings.

Using Assessment to Analyze and Report Student Progress that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS is working with the District to develop common assessments to more effectively track and monitor student progress towards mastery of identified standards. ACIS uses student data to examine structures and services and has implemented changes to support stronger collaboration and student intervention.

D2. Using Student Assessment Strategies to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom Criterion

To what extent do teachers employ a variety of appropriate assessment strategies to evaluate student learning?

To what extent do students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

D2.1. Demonstration of Student Achievement Teachers use the analysis of formative and summative assessments to guide, modify, and adjust curricular and instructional approaches.

D2.2. Teacher and Student Feedback: Teachers provide timely, specific and descriptive feedback in order to support students in achieving learning goals, academic standards, college- and career-readiness standards, and schoolwide learner outcomes. Teachers also use student feedback and dialogue to monitor progress and learn about the degree to which learning experiences are understood and relevant in preparing students for college, career, and life

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS uses a variety of ways to monitor student learning, including frequent informal check-ins with students and weekly plans. The small class sizes and emphasis on personalization allows teachers and students to interact and engage in both formal and informal ways. All ACIS staff profoundly exhibit a willingness to go above and beyond to support students and ensure their successes. ACIS staff examine assessment results in Canvas and Illuminate and may adjust their lessons or assessments in response to student performance data. Weekly ADA reports provide staff an opportunity to frequently monitor student progress in an independent study environment.

Staff hold weekly meetings and discuss student progress in both formal and informal ways. Staff frequently pop into other colleagues' classrooms to discuss student progress or adjust curriculum/lessons. Staff incorporate student ideas and feedback into their curriculum, as evident with Future Ready and Ethnic Studies. Academic support teachers (Future Ready, Skills class, and CEP staff) track and monitor student progress using weekly organizers and learning plans. They also discuss their current classes, assessments and grades.

Using Student Assessment Strategies to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS uses a variety of formal and informal means to monitor student progress and learning.

CATEGORY D: ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Areas of Strength for Assessment and Accountability:

- ACIS staff assess students in a variety of formal and informal ways and use the data to reflect on this practice
- ACIS faculty participates in the development of district-wide common assessments with similar teams and is beginning to implement these at the ninth grade level
- Future Ready, Skills class, and CEP staff track and monitor student progress using weekly organizers and learning plans; Students are actively engaged in the process which supports awareness and accountability
- Student assignments and work are all available online via Canvas which promotes accessibility and transparency and provides timely feedback to students

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for Assessment and Accountability:

- Continue developing and implementing common formative assessments and responses to assessment data
- Continue to norm Canvas pages, grading and classroom policies across subject areas
- Use racial/ethnic and special education subgroup data to reflect upon and inform practice to help narrow gaps
- Formalize collaborative structures at ACIS and actions in response to student data, prioritizing Tier I instructional strategies

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- ACIS website
- ACIS ADA form
- Summative assessments
- Future ready weekly organizer and student tracker
- Canvas pages
- Staff meeting calendar
- Post graduation plan
- Site and district professional development agenda
- Bell schedule
- Classroom visits
- Focus group conversations

CATEGORY E. SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

E1. Parent and Community Engagement Criterion

To what extent does the school leadership employ a wide range of culturally sensitive strategies to encourage family, and community involvement, especially with the learning/teaching process?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

E1.1. Parent Engagement: The school implements strategies and processes for the regular involvement of all stakeholder support groups in the learning and teaching process for all students.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS employs many ways to involve parents and community members in the student learning process. Parents are encouraged to engage and connect with others within the school community. Special education staff extend extra effort to reach out and partner with parents of incoming students who have Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) to ensure they are connected and to form a good working relationship between staff and parents. An annual art show is held each spring and affords the opportunity for school connectedness and pride.

Parent and Community Engagement that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

Parents and community members are afforded multiple avenues to be involved in supporting student achievement. ACIS boasts strong parental support which has the capability of providing financial support to enhance student learning and the overall student body experience. The school makes communication with parents a priority and employs several methods to keep parents informed.

E2. School Culture and Environment Criterion

To what extent does the school leadership focus on continuous school improvement by providing a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning and develops a culture that is characterized by trust, professionalism, equity, and high expectations for all students?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

E2.1. Safe, Clean, and Orderly Environment: The school has existing policies and regulations and uses its resources to ensure a safe, clean, and orderly place that nurtures learning, including internet safety and Uniform Complaint Procedures.

E2.2. High Expectations/Concern for Students: The school culture demonstrates caring, concern, and high expectations for students in an environment that honors individual differences, social emotional needs, and is conducive to learning.

E2.3. Atmosphere of Trust, Respect, and Professionalism: The entire school community has an atmosphere of trust, respect, equity, and professionalism.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS hosts the newest, innovative facilities, including instructional technology. The school campus is clean and orderly; it is clear that school and personal pride are inculcated within the school culture. School administration incorporates Disney managerial philosophy in the way it engages stakeholders and maintains its campus environment. As a result, the campus retains a park-like setting that is inviting and safe. Resources are cleverly allocated to ensure this campus and classroom lifestyle. Students describe the school as safe, inclusive and free from cliques, bullying and harassment. They feel seen, heard, supported, and cared for.

Students who matriculate to ACIS primarily come due to mental and physical health challenges, a need for an alternative learning environment, smaller class sizes and/or flexible scheduling. One part-time school psychologist, one MFT, and one part-time counselor assist students with mental health support. During the Parent Focus Group interview, all parents shared similar reasons why their children transitioned to ACIS. They are emphatically supportive of the school environment and the support that their children receive. Furthermore, the description of the school as a “godsend” for children was emphatically articulated so much that attendance data reveal that student positive attendance has dramatically shifted. Students are encouraged to develop opportunities for peer interaction outside of the classroom through clubs, a student wellness center, and extracurricular activities such as dances. It is expected that these will help to reinforce student motivation and campus pride once the student leadership course regains enrollment. Similarly, Future Ready, a life skills course, is also instructed by a staff member that gauges student need week-to-week. Interaction is used to identify potential needs for students who demonstrate academic and social-emotional at-risk tendencies. Staff meet weekly to discuss student challenges and to develop pathways for student success.

ACIS believes that it is vital to have mutual trust and respect as well as professionalism between students, staff and administration to create a positive school environment. In 2022, they created the Nest as a student wellness and study space to support students and their interests and needs. Although MTSS is not explicit, it was clear through interviews and observations, that these practices are innately engendered within daily interactions and lessons. Respect, responsibility, integrity, and kind heartedness appear to be at the core of their philosophical foundation. Students like and respect their faculty and staff. They consistently find ways to live up to their expectations using the core values articulated above.

School Culture and Environment that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

School staff prioritize students getting connected through engagement centered around peer engagement, developing positive interpersonal relationships and fostering a strong culture of school pride. Since the return from distance learning due to the COVID pandemic, staff recognizes that connectedness has grown exponentially according to student survey results and qualitative feedback from faculty, staff, and parents..

E3. Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Student Support Criterion

To what extent do all students receive appropriate academic, social-emotional and multi-tiered support to help ensure student learning, college and career readiness and success?

To what extent do students with special talents and/or needs have access to an equitable system of personal support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and in the community?

INDICATORS: Use the following indicators as a guide to ensure all key aspects of the criterion are addressed. Add any additional reflections based on the criterion.

E3.1. Academic Support Strategies for Students: School leadership develop and implement strategies and personalized, multi-tiered support approaches to meet academic student needs.

E3.2. Multi-Tiered Support Strategies for Students: School leadership develop and implement alternative instructional options and personalized, multi-tiered approaches to student support focused on learning and social emotional needs of students.

E3.3. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Impact on Student Learning and Well-Being: The school leadership and staff assess the effectiveness of the multi-tiered support system and its impact in student success and achievement.

E3.4. Co-Curricular Activities: The school ensures that there is a high level of student involvement in curricular and co-curricular activities that link to schoolwide learner outcomes, academic standards, and college- and career-readiness standards.

E3.5. Student Voice: Students deepen their sense of self and make personal and community connections that are meaningful and relevant and allow students to become advocates for their own needs and supports.

Visiting Committee Comments

ACIS counselors and mental health providers work closely with teachers to monitor students and meet with them to provide assistance. The school provides academic and social-emotional support to students. There is special emphasis placed on narrowing gaps among the general education and special education population. Counselors and faculty maintain an open-door policy for students who are struggling with personal, health, and/or family issues. They meet weekly to discuss students in need of support. Students can be referred to counselors, parents, or teachers for more significant support. Onsite support is provided whenever possible through these supports but when necessary, students and parents are referred to outside counseling support.

Special Education case managers, along with counselors, regularly monitor students with IEPs and based on the needs of each individual student, place them in appropriate classes as well as provide academic support.

ACIS recognizes the importance between academic success and participation in extracurricular activities. They believe students do better academically when they are connected to the school community outside of the classroom through clubs, sports, and activities. ACIS has more than five clubs that support and reinforce the core values of integrity, responsibility, engagement, kindness, and respect in all areas of life. Students are highly encouraged to participate in extracurriculars and athletics that are offered at their residential comprehensive schools. In addition to preparing students academically, the staff believes that the development of communication skills, self-advocacy, and dependability round out the learning process to create more well-rounded citizens. Students feel they have grown in their ability to communicate and self-advocate as a result of attending ACIS. This truly is a school where ALL students belong, and the students will be the first to tell you that!

During the Student Focus Group interview, each student respectively shared similar stories for why they enrolled at ACIS. At their previous schools of residence, students felt that they were treated as liabilities for having mental health issues, they were discounted for neither being part of athletic teams nor selected popular cliques. Once students transferred to ACIS, they unanimously acknowledged that they felt like they connected with the school within two days. They shared that they felt they were finally seen, they mattered, and that if they were genuinely in crisis, they were confident that they would be heard, as they now feel validated that ALL ACIS staff care about their needs and safety. Bullying does not occur at ACIS. As receivers of this treatment at previous schools, they are more attentive to others' needs.

Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Student Support that supports high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

ACIS allocates additional resources and efforts into adding support for student social-emotional needs. The wellness and study space, Eagles' Nest, as well as the addition of an MFT, were provided to increase support. Future Ready and Leadership courses are pivotal in that they continue to identify meaningful ways to engage and support student academic and social-emotional needs.

CATEGORY E: SCHOOL CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Areas of Strength for School Culture and Support for Student Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Growth:

- ACIS schedule and programming are areas of strength, as there is an entire day dedicated to student intervention and support, along with flexible scheduling options of in-person small class sizes, online classes, and in-person classes at comprehensive sites
- The small, tight family culture that makes the campus feel very warm and welcoming to all students and families. Relationships are prioritized and seen as essential for the teaching and learning environment.
- There is a level of trust and positive rapport that has been developed between all stakeholders as they all work toward the shared student-centered objectives and goals.
- Continued development of student activities for student engagement opportunities, such as a school yearbook, mascot, spirit wear, Esports team, student clubs, senior breakfast, and the ACIS ball
- Across the school landscape, from the front office to administration, to the classroom and mental health team, ALL ACIS staff offer a safe, welcoming environment for students
- There are robust social-emotional support services that support student learning, with highly qualified and dedicated staff

Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement for School Culture and Support for Student Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Growth:

- There have been great strides to develop student engagement activities and this process should continue to develop additional activities that are offered on a consistent basis
- With the expanding student population, ACIS should explore expanding elective offerings for students

Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and growth areas for continuous improvement include the following:

- Establishment of Eagles' Nest for addressing student social-emotional and academic needs
- School-wide weekly meetings to address at-risk students with extra support
- Campus clubs and other student-centered activities
- Clearly defined student behavioral and attitudinal expectations
- High parent and community involvement
- Focus group meetings
- Classroom visits

Chapter 4: Synthesis of School-wide Strengths and Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

School-wide Strengths

The purpose of identifying school-wide strengths is to provide input and support for the school to use these strengths in their continuous improvement to ensure high quality student learning and well-being. Synthesize school-wide areas of strengths and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*

The visiting committee identified the following specific schoolwide strengths and their rationale for the identification: **Include a Who, What, and Why for each schoolwide strength.**

Synthesis of School-wide areas of strength:

1. ACIS students have access to core graduation outcomes and rigorous and robust college-prep coursework via both in-person and online options. Students have flexible schedules allowing them to co-enroll in the local community college and/or electives and AP classes at a comprehensive school.
2. Students and families have access to ACIS staff to help with college and career planning and progress towards diploma.
3. ACIS teachers regularly collaborate in course-alike teams with other district teachers to evaluate curriculum and grading practices.
4. Teachers personalize the learning experience for students while focusing on common essential standards and offering a robust intervention system and flexible schedule.
5. There is strong collaboration internally among ACIS general education and special education staff as well as externally among comprehensive high schools around common assessments and grading practices. Special education students can access core academic content, as all push-out into the general education setting, while receiving the support they need to be successful.
6. Future Ready, Skills class, and CEP staff track and monitor student progress using weekly organizers and learning plans; Students are actively engaged in the process which supports awareness and accountability.
7. The small, tight family culture that makes the campus feel very warm and welcoming to all students and families. Relationships are prioritized and seen as essential for the teaching and learning environment.
8. There is a level of trust and positive rapport that has been developed between all stakeholders as they all work toward the shared student-centered objectives and goals.
9. Across the school landscape, from the front office to administration, to the classroom and mental health team, ALL ACIS staff offer a safe, welcoming environment for students.
10. There are robust social-emotional support services that support student learning, with highly qualified and dedicated staff.

School-wide Growth Areas for Continuous Improvement

The purpose of supporting the school's identified growth areas for continuous improvement and sharing additional growth areas is to ensure the school's continuous improvement for student learning and well-being encompasses the greatest student and school needs.

Synthesize school-wide growth areas for continuous growth and list numerically. *Be sure that these can be documented by other sections of the report.*

- Ensure that all Growth Areas have a “who,” “what,” and a “why” in relation to the impact on student learning

- **Confirm areas already identified by the school in the action plan sections**
- **Confirm areas to be strengthened within the already identified areas**
- **Identify any additional areas to be added to the action plan that have been identified by the visiting committee. *This includes areas related to student achievement and other profile data, the school program and operation, and the action plan.***

The visiting committee concurs with the school's identified growth areas for continuous improvement that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan. The school's growth areas for continuous improvement are explained below: **Include a Who, What and Why for each growth area for continuous improvement.**

In addition, the visiting committee has identified additional concrete, specific growth areas that need to be addressed: **Include a Who, What and Why for each growth area for continuous improvement. (Note: Show the relationship to what the school has already identified, if possible.)**

Synthesis of School-wide Critical Areas for Follow-Up

The visiting committee concurs with the school's identified growth areas for continuous improvement that are outlined in the schoolwide action plan.

The three major areas of growth fall under the following three categories:

1. The Acalanes Center for Independent Study will implement curricular, instructional, and support strategies to ensure high-level English Language Arts performance and college and career readiness for all students.
2. The Acalanes Center for Independent Study will implement curricular, instructional, and support strategies to ensure high-level math performance and college and career readiness for all students.
3. The Acalanes Center for Independent Study will implement curricular, instructional, and support strategies to increase student connectedness, reduce student stress, and improve student resilience.

In addition, the visiting committee has identified additional concrete, specific growth areas that need to be addressed.

1. Elevate teachers as leaders on campus to support the implementation of collaborative teams, common assessments, intervention systems, interdisciplinary alignment, and instructional practices.
2. Implement culturally-relevant curriculum and deepen the culture around equity and inclusivity.
3. Continue to norm best practices for student success including Canvas pages, grading and classroom policies across subject areas to provide a consistent experience for students.
4. Formalize collaborative structures at ACIS through the implementation of common formative assessments and actions in response to student data, prioritizing instructional strategies.

Chapter 5: Ongoing School Improvement

- Include a brief summary of the schoolwide action plan
- Evaluate the school improvement issues:
 - The effectiveness of the action plan to enhance student learning and support the identified major student learner needs
 - The level of commitment to accomplish the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide
 - The alignment of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA to the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
 - The soundness of the follow-up process for implementing and monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.

ACIS has identified three school-wide action plan goals that are aligned to the District's LCAP to address their identified critical areas of follow-up. In an effort to improve student achievement and engagement, OHS identified the following:

1. The Acalanes Center for Independent Study will implement curricular, instructional, and support strategies to ensure high-level English Language Arts performance and college and career readiness for all students.
2. The Acalanes Center for Independent Study will implement curricular, instructional, and support strategies to ensure high-level math performance and college and career readiness for all students.
3. The Acalanes Center for Independent Study will implement curricular, instructional, and support strategies to increase student connectedness, reduce student stress, and improve student resilience.

Adequacy of the school-wide action plan in addressing the identified critical areas for follow-up

The school-wide action plan is adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up. By maintaining and improving student academic performance and targeted interventions ACIS will continue to address California Dashboard Indicators. ACIS' plan supports students in their social-emotional and academic needs. It is expected that continued collaborative work with other sites will ensure that ACIS addresses learning gaps and pedagogical differences.

Existing factors that will support school improvement

Existing factors that will support school improvement include a veteran staff that has successfully adapted and evolved through challenges in recent years, while maintaining a culture of success on campus. Another factor that will support school improvement is an active parent base that is very involved with student achievement and rallying the community to support the school site. The district office has also voiced a willingness to support the dedicated site administration to maintain their current success and provide resources for continued improvement.

Impediments to improvement that the school will need to overcome

The impediments to improvement include the lack of full-time counseling to monitor academic progress and social-emotional needs with this student population. Additionally, students would benefit from a wider range of elective offerings at ACIS. With fewer FTEs available, ACIS will struggle to maintain the amount of program and resource offerings desired by families.

Soundness of the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishment of the school-wide action plan

The school bases its follow-up on collaboration and professional development activities. Although painstaking effort has been made to refine their current practice for a continued improvement model, formalized processes and anticipated expectations are still to be cemented as District-level initiatives are presented. The VC agrees that continued follow-up, oversight, and collaboration, and reflection of appropriate practices will ensure that these systematic practices will become institutionalized.

Acceptable progress by all students toward clearly defined schoolwide learner outcomes/graduate profile (major student learner needs), academic standards, and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

All students have made as much progress as typically preferred or exceeded; all stakeholders recognize the need for continual improvement to ensure students are prepared with the necessary critical and creative thinking, communication skills, and other competencies to be successful in the 21st century. Leadership and staff are keenly aware that this progress should continue and demonstrate they are prepared and have the appropriate resources necessary to make further progress.

The alignment of a long-range schoolwide action plan to the school's areas of greatest need to support high achievement for all students.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Effective

Narrative Rationale:

It was apparent that staff at all levels of the organization spend time evaluating and analyzing appropriate data/information related to individual student need; Much time is spent collaboratively analyzing program supports that are needed for student support. A focus on student achievement is paramount, and there are clear action items to focus on student achievement and social-emotional needs. The VC confirmed that the Action Plan appropriately targets identified growth needs and includes measurable and specific action items and timelines associated with each item supporting the three goals.

The capacity to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan/SPSA.

Visiting Committee Rating (select one): Highly Effective

Narrative Rationale:

The VC observed that the school-wide action plan was developed collaboratively and all stakeholders were in support of the action items. This ensures that the school has the capacity to fully implement the school-wide action plan which includes reflection and refinement of strategies used to increase student engagement. The Action Plan is focused on ensuring the academic success of students, and has related strategies, outcomes and areas of responsibility to implement the action plan. The process of monitoring and implementing the plan includes both formative and summative evaluation as well as collaboration. The school recognizes the importance of continuing to move forward in this direction.

Accreditation Status Factors Summary

Accreditation Status Factors	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
The involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in the self-study that addresses the self-study outcomes.	X			
The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and drive school improvement.		X		
Vision and Purpose (A1)	X			
Governance (A2)	X			
Leadership: Data-Informed Decision-Making and Continuous School Improvement (A3)	X			
Staff: Qualified and Professional Development (A4)	X			
Resources (A5)	X			
Rigorous and Relevant Standards-Based Curriculum (B1)	X			
Equity and Access to the Curriculum (B2)		X		
Student Engagement in Challenging and Relevant Learning Experiences (C1)	X			
Student-Centered Instruction through a Variety of Strategies and Resources (C2)		X		
Reporting and Accountability Processes (D1)		X		
Using Student Assessment Strategies to Monitor and Modify Learning in the Classroom (D2)		X		
Parent and Community Engagement (E1)	X			
School Culture and Environment (E2)	X			
Personal, Social-Emotional, and Academic Student Support (E3)	X			
Acceptable progress by all students		X		
Alignment of a schoolwide action plan/SPSA to the school's areas of greatest need		X		
Capacity to monitor and implement the schoolwide action plan/SPSA	X			