

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Scott Wilbur

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

Official School Name Accelerated Achievement Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1151 Buena Vista Road

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

Hollister CA 95023-3329
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County San Benito County

Telephone (831) 636-4460

Fax (831) 634-4960

Web site/URL

https://sites.google.com/hesd.org/aa

a _____

E-mail swilbur@hesd.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Diego Ochoa

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail Diego.Ochoa@hesd.org

District Name Hollister School District Tel. (831) 630-6300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Stephen Kain

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	26	25	51
5	16	15	31
6	15	15	30
7	11	20	31
8	18	12	30
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	86	87	173

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 64 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 27 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 10%

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

N/A

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	137
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3%
6 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100%
Total number students who qualify: 173

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
1 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 29:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

The Accelerated Achievement Academy (AAA) embraces thought provoking curriculum and rigorous learning that grows all AAA students into thoughtful collaborators, persuasive communicators, and ethical leaders.

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

Application to the AAA is open to all students. Third, fourth, and fifth grade applicants generally earn 3’s and 4’s on their standards based report cards. Middle school applicants have an overall GPA between 3.0-4.0. Student applicants generally have CAASPP scores in the “Meeting or Exceeding Standard” range and a history of excellent attendance and citizenship with minimal school discipline issues.

Admittance to AAA is based on a review of a completed application packet with the personal essay, state standard scores, report cards, discipline and attendance records, student recommendation forms, and interview results.

AAA students are required to complete community service hours (15 hours for grades 4th-5th and 20 hours for grades 6th-8th).

PART III – SUMMARY

The Accelerated Achievement Academy (AAA) is an extraordinary learning environment for students and a committed family and community partner. Located in beautiful Hollister California, AAA is 40 minutes east of the Monterrey Peninsula and less than an hour from Silicon Valley. Hollister is a growing residential community with 37,000 people that celebrates its small town feel and rich diversity.

The Accelerated Achievement Academy started as a one class magnet program in 2007. AAA added one class a year and grew to 130 students in fourth through eighth grades. In 2017 AAA was directed to double its enrollment to meet increased student demand. Starting in 2018, AAA will add one class a year until it serves 300 students 4th through 8th grade. All students are welcome to apply to AAA.

Today the Accelerated Achievement Academy is one of the highest achieving schools in California! Fourth and fifth graders are the 14th highest performing students in the state and the middle school is the 6th highest achieving school in California (www.aaa.hesd.org). AAA earned a California Distinguished School Award in 2013. The Educational Results Partnership used nationally normed student assessment data to recognize AAA as a top performing California Honor Roll STAR School in 2016-17 and 2017-18. AAA is currently ranked the number one “Niche Standout Middle School” in California!

The Accelerated Achievement Academy is not resting on rankings, recognition, or awards. Teachers are using evidence-based professional development and instructional practices to grow AAA students even more!

AAA teachers embrace Project Based Learning (PBL) school-wide and are pushing students for deeper and more complex understandings of the world and their place in it. Project Based Learning unleashes a contagious, creative energy among students and teachers that is transformative. Each project engages and empowers students to solve real-world problems. Students work together on projects over an extended period of time (from a week up to a semester) that demands active learning and answering complex questions. In a PBL project AAA teachers are Socratic coaches that inspire students to own their learning and make original solutions by asking questions and challenging usual answers. An authentic and meaningful PBL project demands research, deep content knowledge, critical thinking, tough decisions, creativity, and engaging communication skills. Last summer a sixth grade PBL project become more than an abstract paper and pencil solution. Hollister’s Mayor asked AAA students to present their Youth Recreation Center PBL Projects to the City Council and some of their project programs and facility design were included in plans for a new Hollister Youth Recreation Center.

To challenge students academically does not mean assigning more homework. The Accelerated Achievement Academy staff read John Hattie’s effect size learning achievement research and came to believe homework should not be more than 90 minutes a day. AAA homework reviews what was taught in the school day and includes daily reading. There are a few assigned projects (example: Science Fair Project) that can take more that 90 minutes a day; but if homework is taking longer than 90 minutes nightly, parents are asked to contact their teacher. We want AAA students to join sport teams, dance, volunteer, create, play and enjoy family time.

AAA has implemented another best practice gleaned from Hattie’s research. Parent academic conferences are student led. Students articulate their learning strengths and challenges to build an academic plan to improve their performance with their teacher and family.

The Accelerated Achievement Academy embraces growing bright and high achieving students into kind and compassionate people. We are building relational skills to raise the social and emotional capacity of every student. Our entire school trained with the Flippen Group's Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH) to strengthen student connections to each other and their teachers in each classroom. Flippen's progressive program builds Social Contracts (agreement of behavior) that are used daily inside and outside AAA classrooms.

This year AAA is striving to be even better partners with families and the community. AAA is working

closely with the Parents Club to send students to world class learning centers and cultural institutions to expand their horizons. AAA 4th graders tour the State Capitol and visit the University of California Santa Cruz. Fifth graders visit the California Academy of Science (San Francisco) and The Exploratorium (San Francisco) on different days and tour Stanford University. AAA 6th Graders spend five days at the Mount Hermon Science Camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains and visit California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Seventh Graders go to Los Angeles to see the Museum of Tolerance, The Getty Villa Museum (Malibu), and tour The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). AAA 8th Graders visit the Steinbeck Museum in Salinas, go to the Great America Amusement Park, tour University of California Berkeley (Cal), and Santa Clara University. AAA is also building strong partnerships with local businesses and San Benito High School.

The future of AAA is bright. Students, families, teachers and the community are all committed to making advanced students grow even more and making AAA the best school in the world!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

All AAA students and teachers have the necessary textbooks and curriculum to master English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core learning expectations. Fourth and fifth grade AAA educators teach California Common Core ELA Content Standards with Benchmark Education’s Benchmark Advance (adopted 2017). Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade educators teach California Common Core ELA Content Standards with Houghton Mifflin’s Harcourt California Collections (adopted 2017). ELA curriculum is analyzed on a regular basis to provide the supplemental materials AAA students need to reach proficiency and beyond. AAA students read and discuss additional novels, short stories and information text.

AAA teachers teach narrative, informational, explanatory, opinion, and argumentative writing genres. AAA students write everyday, complete unit writing assessments, and finish three district genre ELA summative writing assessments. AAA teachers use ELA standard assessments to determine how well students are learning. Assessment results identify the students who need to be retaught which standard. Students are retaught the standards in small or whole group interventions and then reassessed. AAA teachers agree to reteach/enrich the standard until proficiency is reached. AAA students write so often because each student has a Chromebook and teachers are very good at integrating technology and Google Apps into ELA lessons.

AAA students are performing exceedingly well on state (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress CAASPP) ELA exams. In 2018, 96% of all AAA students scored advanced or proficient on the ELA CAASPP assessment. Four years of AAA assessment data analysis revealed significantly increased ELA student achievement from elementary to middle school.

The Accelerated Achievement Academy is not resting on rankings, recognition, or awards. All AAA teachers read Schmoker’s “How We Teach” section of his book Focus. They are concentrating on building ELA lessons with clear learning objectives, strong direct instruction, frequent checks for understanding, and using data to guide what to teach and inform gradual release. AAA teachers also use Project Based Learning (PBL) to engage and empower students to solve real world problems. This intense inquiry process demands that students use ELA Common Core Standards to solve complex problems and build deeper understandings of the world and their place in it.

1b. Mathematics:

All AAA students and teachers have the necessary textbooks and curriculum to master Math Common Core learning expectations. Fourth and fifth grade AAA educators teach California Common Core Math Content Standards with McGraw Hill’s My Math (adopted 2013). Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade educators teach California Common Core Math Content Standards with McGraw-Hill California Math (adopted 2013). Math curriculum is analyzed on a regular basis to provide the supplemental materials AAA students need to reach proficiency and beyond.

AAA students are performing exceedingly well on state CAASPP Math exams. In 2018, 89% of all AAA students scored advanced or proficient on the Math CAASPP assessment. In 2018, the Hollister School District scored 34% advanced or proficient and the state scored 39%. Evaluating four years of AAA assessment data revealed significant student Math achievement increases from elementary to middle school.

AAA Math achievement has grown because all teachers make Math formative assessments to inform learning goals, pacing, and reteaching. AAA teachers have built consensus on formative assessment format, timing, error analysis, and pacing to ensure school wide best practices and growth over time. Teachers build three to four question formative assessments after teaching one to two math standards, and questions are written to CAASPP claim level one, two, and three. Teachers identify students who need to be taught the standard in a different way (whole or small group) and provide the intervention. AAA teachers agree that

they will reteach/ enrich the standard until 100% proficiency is reached.

All AAA Math lessons are designed with clear learning objectives, timed teacher led instruction and frequent checks for understanding to make sure students are learning the objective.

1c. Science:

All AAA students and teachers have the necessary textbooks and curriculum to master Science Common Core learning expectations. Fourth and fifth grade AAA educators teach California Common Core Science Standards with MacMillan McGraw-Hill's California Science (adopted 2008). Sixth, seventh and eighth grade educators teach California Common Core Science Standards with Glencoe Science's California (adopted 2006).

AAA Science curriculum is analyzed on a regular basis to provide any supplemental materials. AAA students need to reach Science proficiency and higher. This year, AAA's school site council (SSC) approved funds to purchase the Mystery Science Online Science program for 4th and 5th grades and Green Ninja Science for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Teachers lobbied to subscribe to these online Science programs because they are Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core aligned, multimedia rich and easily accessible with one-to-one student Chromebooks.

Elementary and middle school AAA teachers attended a two day Hollister School District Science Training. The summer staff development made attendees teacher leaders on Next Generation Science Standards and the new elementary and middle school CAASPP Science tests. This summer, all AAA teachers will work together to teach grade level Common Core Science standards, make pacing guides and common assessments, and decide how to best familiarize students with CASSPP Science testing activities and questions.

AAA maintains a full Science lab on campus for hands-on experiments for all grades. A vast of collection of legacy science materials and equipment was collected and updated with new lab materials purchased from Lab Aides. Lab Aides publishes Science Common Core curriculum developed by research-based institutions specializing in hands on labs. Labs are designed to be intriguing and make answers a discovery and not a given. Students use scientific processes, have to draw conclusions, and analyze other student results to make final conclusions.

AAA teachers use Science labs and Next Generation Science Standard unit exams to determine how well students are learning. Depending on assessment performance, students are retaught Science Standards in small group or whole class interventions before being reassessed again. AAA teachers will reteach standards until they are mastered.

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

All AAA students and teachers have the necessary textbooks and curriculum to master Social Science Common Core learning expectations. Fourth and fifth grade AAA educators teach California Common Core Social Science Standards with MacMillan McGraw-Hill's California (adopted 2007). Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade educators teach California Common Core Social Science Standards with Glencoe's California Series (adopted 2006).

AAA Social Science curriculum is analyzed on a regular basis to provide supplemental materials AAA students need to reach Social Science proficiency and higher. AAA middle school teachers attended multiple Hollister School District Social Science Trainings that linked writing and Common Core Standards.

AAA teachers use Project Based Learning, Social Science Standard exams and writing assignments to assess student Social Science learning. Student performance decides when intervention is for small groups or a whole class because AAA teachers reteach standards until assessments prove they are mastered.

AAA teachers teach narrative, informational, explanatory, opinion, and argumentative writing genres using

Social Science and ELA curriculum. AAA students write everyday and complete three district genre summative writing assessments that mesh ELA and Social Science subject matter. AAA students can write so often because each student has a Chromebook, and teachers are very good at integrating technology and Google Apps into ELA and Social Science lessons.

AAA grade levels are self-contained so classroom teachers can teach all subjects. This is a major advantage for teaching Social Science curriculum because teachers are flexible with instruction times and integrate subjects in cross-curricular units. AAA teachers increase instructional time anytime it is apparent that students need more instructional time to master a Social Science concept. Our staff expertly infuses Science Common Core Standards into English Language Arts units, Project Based Learning and each writing assignment.

1e. For secondary schools:

N/A

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

N/A

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Accelerated Achievement Academy has a rich non-core curriculum deeply rooted in the Arts, Physical Education, technology/ media, and Capturing Kids Hearts. AAA also offers extra-curricular activities, like writing for the school newspaper (The Gator Republic), serving on Student Leadership, playing in the school band, and joining after school sports teams.

Arts

AAA fosters many artistic learning opportunities for every student throughout the year. AAA's Parent Club sponsors three Family Paint Nights a year. Our sixth grade students perform a play for AAA families every year. Our 4th grade students have bimonthly art units taught by a retired district teacher that include Origami, painting with water colors, and poetry. AAA stages a yearly Talent Show that showcases student singing, playing instruments, comedy, dancing, and short plays.

Each year, AAA partners with the San Benito County Arts Council. The council and AAA funds are pooled to purchase high-quality and diverse art programs and assemblies that promote accessibility, equity, cultural diversity, and student artistic expression across all grade levels. Each year, AAA has the Artists in the Schools Program in Dance (Hip Hop and Zumba) and another with the world famous El Teatro Campesino.

Zumba Artist in the Schools classes brake down original Zumba choreography into student-friendly steps, movements, and routines. Our Zumba dancing helps develop healthy lifestyles by incorporating fitness and fun. Zumba classes build leadership, respect, teamwork, confidence, self-esteem, muscle memory, creativity, and coordination.

Hip Hop is built on the belief that everyone is empowered to express themselves creatively and positively, no matter their size, shape, or ability. Students learn choreography and discover confidence in moving to music and exploring their own movements in locking, breaking, and popping. The ultimate goal of Hip Hop at AAA is for students to have fun and express themselves in movement.

El Teatro Campesino has partnered with AAA for three years. Teaching artists come to the seventh grade AAA classroom for a 12-week residency that makes the Spanish Conquest of Mexico come alive. Weekly sessions connect AAA students directly with historic record keeping techniques (codex), Aztec drumming, Spanish Guitar and student-made character puppets. The residency carefully interweaves art and world history in a culminating performance of Luis Valdez's play, "La Conquista de Mexico."

Physical education (PE)

AAA Physical Education Teachers provide a consistent, high-quality PE instructional program that facilitates student learning and achievement at each grade level. PE is an essential part of AAA's non-core curriculum because it enriches so many parts of student lives.

High-quality AAA PE instruction contributes to student good health, develops fundamental and advanced motor skills, improves students' self-confidence, and provides opportunities for increased levels of physical fitness that are associated with high academic achievement.

Mastering fundamental movement skill facilitates fine motor acquisition, promotes healthy competition (sportsmanship), enjoyable physical activity, and a healthy outlet for pent up energy. Physical activity acquired during childhood and adolescence is more likely to be maintained throughout life and provides incalculable physical, mental, and social benefits.

PE teachers help student learning by providing AAA with release time for core teachers to collaborate, analyze data, build lessons, share best practices, adjust instructional pacing, and provide student intervention.

Capturing Kids Hearts

The primary focus of Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) is developing healthy relationships between all school staff and every student. CKH is an immersive and participatory experience for all grade level teachers and students that makes each classroom self-managing and decreases discipline issues by building Social Contracts.

A Social Contract is a student agreement of acceptable behavior. The primary questions teachers and students consider when developing a Social Contract are: "How do you want me to treat you? How do you want to treat each other? How do you think I want to be treated? and How will we handle violations of the contract?" Social Contracted agreements decrease disruptive outbursts and thoughtlessness by reinforcing classroom rapport, teamwork, student empathy, diversity, and fairness because students take responsibility for themselves.

When students break the Social Contract they are asked Four Questions in a calm, firm and fair way. The Four Questions are: "What are you doing? What are you supposed to be doing? Are you doing it? and What are you going to do about it?" Students are not scolded into change, but reminded of their agreements. If the challenge persists, then a student chooses consequences over the chance to solve the problem and they earn the logical consequences.

3. Special Populations:

Multiyear analysis of state and district testing data in 2017 showed clear AAA strength in English Language Arts and relative weakness in Math. These scores were consistent for all AAA students with no statistical differences by gender, ethnicity, or home language. ELA scores for all students were 97% proficient or advanced and Math was 84% (13% lower than ELA). This is not uncommon in California, and to be fair, AAA scores are twice the state average. Still a performance lag of this size shows imbalanced achievement. So together we focused on improving Math achievement and shrinking AAA's Math performance lag by making and using original formative assessment results to inform and adjust instruction to meet student learning needs.

It took a while to learn how to make exam questions and build formative assessment consensus at every grade level. We eventually decided AAA formative assessments are three to five questions written like state released assessment questions, so students could translate standards taught in class into the questions they will see during state testing. Teachers agreed to teach the next standard when 80% of the class could pass two of the three question formative assessments. Outside of daily Math instruction, teachers pulled the students, who could not pass the formative assessment, into small groups to reteach and reassess. This is easier to do at AAA because grade levels are self-contained and teachers can adjust instruction to fit individual learning needs when data reveals gaps.

AAA's 2018 Math improvement plan worked well. In 2018, AAA state standard Math scores grew 5% to 89% proficient and advanced and the achievement gap with ELA shrunk to 7%. This is still too large a gap and shows our students need more work in Math. So, AAA's 2019 school improvement plan is focused again on improving Math scores and closing the Math performance lag to 4% or better.

To continue improving Math performance this year, we are calendaring and making more formative assessments for every standard. We studied John Hattie's meta-research and read together Schmoker's "How We Teach"(pg. 50-89) to reflect on best lesson planning, teaching, and learning practices. Specifically, we want to become experts on designing gradual release Math lesson plans and delivering I do, we do, and you do daily lessons. AAA teachers will continue building formative assessments and use results to target the challenging standards needing to be retaught and reassessed.

Early assessment results look very promising with more consistent formative testing and stronger instructional plans seeming to make the difference. When AAA meets its Math improvement goals, teachers will focus on new state Science assessments next. In June, teachers will reflect on all student state testing results and make new AAA school improvement goals for 2020.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Accelerated Achievement Academy (AAA) has an extraordinary school culture that serves each student, teacher, and family by name and by need. Our culture values kindness, diversity, enrichment, and high achievement. AAA is united in believing students deserve the very best educators have to offer everyday, and the school operates with an open door policy.

AAA's school climate grows bright and high-achieving students into kind and compassionate people. AAA values building strong relationships to raise the social and emotional capacity of every student. Teachers and support staff train with the Flippen Group in Capturing Kids Hearts (CKH). CKH strengthens school climate by forging better student connections to each other and their teachers. CKH Social Contracts (social agreements) rule all behavior choices inside and outside AAA classrooms. When students break the Social Contract, they are asked Four Questions in a calm, firm, and fair way to remind them of their agreements. If the challenge persists, then students do something to help or serve others on campus during their free time. Students make their own service plan that ranges from cleaning to volunteering in classrooms, the library, PE, cafeteria, helping individual students, our custodian, or office staff. When the service is performed, everything is over and the transgression is in the past.

Each teacher is a valued member of AAA's Professional Learning Community (PLC). AAA teachers and administration use assessment data and student social emotional needs to make curriculum, instruction, classroom management, extra curricular activities and school wide decisions together. A flat decision making structure speaks to AAA valuing the best ideas over positional authority. AAA teachers are valued because they make student centered decisions and they know team decisions will be supported because they are PLC amalgamations that best serve student needs. Each year AAA's culture becomes more collaborative and each teacher feels the important contributions of everyone.

AAA does not believe advancing student achievement means assigning more homework. AAA's school culture values well roundedness and won't assign more than 90 minutes of homework so students can play on school sport teams, learn music in the school band, join service organizations, participate in religious groups, be with family and enjoy the myriad of activities this beautiful community offers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

To grow student achievement, AAA staff researched the factors that stimulate academic success. A significant factor was increasing family and community involvement. So AAA's staff committed to being better partners by growing mutual trust, increasing communication, including parent input in school decisions, and volunteering in the community.

One of the best ways AAA grows mutual trust is by inviting parent participation in student-centered classrooms. The more time AAA parents spend on campus, the greater the mutual respect grows because it is impossible to hide great instruction, fair, firm, and consistent care and genuine interest in building student relationships. Many AAA parents are classroom volunteers, Academy Parent Club members, and field trip drivers/ chaperones.

AAA also seeks family participation in school governance and decision-making on the School Site Council (SSC). Parents and educators are equally represented on the SSC and together decide how to spend Title One funds and approve the AAA Single Plan for Student Achievement. The SSC works with the principal to build the school budget and advises how to invest school resources to advance student achievement.

AAA increased communication by harnessing new technologies. A new and improved website is a one-stop shop for everything AAA. Calendars, handouts, rules, email addresses, phone numbers, district resources, and event information are available 24/7. Prerecorded phone messages to families popularize weekly events, share important reminders, and highlight new website information. All phone messages are

texted to families complete with active web links to referenced information. Absent students generate a 9:00 AM robocall to parents to make sure they were absent.

Innovation in AAA communication has even changed parent conferences. Parent academic conferences at AAA are student run. Students review strengths and challenges with parents and their teacher before they make improvement plans and set future goals together. Any team member can call a follow up conference if the old challenges remain or the need to make new student goals become apparent.

AAA partners with the community non-profit San Benito County Arts Council. The council and AAA pool funds to purchase high-quality and diverse art programs and assemblies that promote accessibility, equity, cultural diversity and student artistic expression across all grade levels.

AAA students and families volunteer in our community 15 to 20 hours a year. AAA community ambassadors volunteer in food banks, city clean ups, old age homes, city parades, and volunteer organizations, like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church groups, and local youth sport teams.

3. Professional Development:

The Accelerated Achievement Academy's (AAA) professional development is a unique synthesis of district and site-determined training. District training, designed to mastering state academic standards and support healthy school cultures, meshes seamlessly with AAA's site professional development in Project Based Learning and collaborative study on effectively teaching and best instructional practices.

The Hollister School District is committed to providing teachers with high quality staff development. District-wide professional development days serve teachers on non-student days and during release time. Curriculum staff development is focused on mastering Common Core State Standards, evaluating state assessment data, and integrating technology into state Common Core content standards. District-wide administrators and teachers have trained in Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) and building Professional Learning Communities. CKH is a program that focuses on building a positive school climate and establishing student-centered classrooms that support student emotional and relational needs. In a Professional Learning Community (PLC), colleagues work together to answer three crucial questions. "What do we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? and How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?" PLCs' ensure that all students learn by building schools into collaborative cultures that focus relentlessly on achievement and maintaining good results.

AAA embraced schoolwide Project Based Learning (PBL) in 2017. PBL is a teaching method where students gain knowledge by working for an extended period of time investigating and answering an authentic, engaging, and complex question. Using site and district funding, all AAA staff trained with the Buck Institute to learn how to build two challenging PBL units from scratch that made students complex problem solvers. The Buck Institute training taught AAA's teachers how to empower students to research and demonstrate their knowledge and make reasoned conclusions in front of a public audience. AAA PBL units emphasize small group inquiry, students making final conclusions and teachers becoming learning coaches.

On-site professional development AAA teachers studied John Hattie's meta-research and read Schmoker's "How We Teach" to learn together the best learning practices, reflect on effective teaching, and build better lesson plans. AAA teachers are experts at designing gradual release lesson plans for every subject and deliver I do, we do, and you do daily lessons. AAA teachers have been trained in advanced questioning techniques and daily push students for deeper and more complex understandings of the world and their place in it.

4. School Leadership:

The Accelerated Achievement Academy's Leadership Team consists of the principal and all six teachers. The team collaboratively makes important governance and curricular decisions and coordinates student-

learning initiatives. The leadership team's guiding philosophy is collaborative learning, so each decision makes the team more thoughtful, empowered, and wise. The leadership team employs a Social Contract to guide collaboration and a continuous learning/ improvement process called the Deming Cycle to evaluate team decisions.

The leadership Social Contract is a team agreement of acceptable behavior. The primary questions the Social Contract answers is: "How do you want to be treated and how do you want to treat each other? How do you think I want to be treated?" The leadership team's Social Contract embraces teamwork, empathy, diversity, fairness, and positive intentions. The Social Contract makes each member accountable to each other and builds mutual trust. It makes AAA's leadership team a flat organization that values learning, the best decisions and results over positional power or past mistakes.

The AAA leadership team employs a quality control process, called the Deming Cycle, to evaluate its collaborative decisions. The Deming Cycle consists of a Plan, Do, Check, and Act process for continuous improvement and learning. The team makes an action plan (Plan) to solve a challenge or improve service. They implement the plan (DO) in controlled and thoughtful steps. The leadership team evaluates data (Check) to see how the plan is working, and if the intended results are happening. The team takes action (Act) based on results/data to standardize or improve the plan. The Deming Cycle then starts over again and repeats as many times as needed to ensure decisions meet desired outcomes.

The leadership team embraces a collaboration philosophy with parents too. AAA seeks family participation in school governance and decision-making on the School Site Council (SSC). Parents and educators are equally represented on the SSC and together decide how to spend Title One funds and approves the AAA Single Plan for Student Achievement. The SSC works with the principal to build the school budget and advises how to invest resources to advance student achievement.

The essential nature of AAA's leadership team cannot be overstated. The team actively shapes AAA's formative assessments, Capturing Kids Hearts implementation, Project Based Learning, student led conferences, Professional Learning Community decisions, lesson planning, collaboration time, staff development directions, technology use and budget investments.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Project Based Learning (PBL) is the practice most instrumental to the Accelerated Achievement Academy's academic success. PBL is a teaching method where students gain knowledge by working for an extended period of time investigating and answering an authentic, engaging, and complex questions. PBL stimulates student thinking about their learning (while they are learning), inspires student and teacher metacognition, and challenges traditional assumptions about what students are capable of.

AAA staff learned with the Buck Institute how to build challenging PBL units that inspires student critical thinking and real world problem solving. PBL units empower students to research, build reasoned conclusions, and demonstrate their new understandings in front of an audience. PBL units emphasize small group inquiry, students making their own conclusions, and teachers acting as learning coaches.

PBL brought many benefits to AAA. It actively engages students and encourages creativity. It revitalized AAA classroom culture by enabling collaboration, discovery, ownership, and lasting learning. The experience of questioning, making mistakes, and pursuing questions in an organized, guided process made PBL another way to learn at AAA. It empowered students to evaluate their own learning, adjust research, and consider newly discovered perspectives before determining final results.

PBL units changed the way AAA teachers planned and monitored student learning. PBL units are structured with detailed guidelines and scheduled due dates that are adjustable to extend discovery or shortened to get closure. This means AAA teachers had to monitor each student in the act of learning. What they discovered challenged their assumptions of what individual students were capable of. The unintended consequence of PBL at AAA is it inspired more rigorous and active everyday learning across all subjects.

AAA PBL units challenge students to do their best because they present their final product in public. The excitement and pressure of presenting their learning and solving a real-world challenge in front of family and friends prepares AAA students for higher education. At the college and graduate levels critical thinking is everything; and the demands of PBL learning makes students go beyond rote memorization to pose questions, propose reasoned solutions, test them, and propose new ones based what they discover. Ultimately, this might be the greatest benefit of PBL at AAA, because every student knows how to research and champion a position or solution by leveraging persuasive arguments that challenge other points of view. This empowers AAA students to be problem solvers and begin planning how to make their communities better.