

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Helix High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7323 University Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City La Mesa State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 91942-0592

County San Diego County

Telephone (619) 644-1940 Fax (619) 462-9257

Web site/URL https://www.helixcharter.net E-mail kosborn@helixcharter.net

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* Mrs. Mary Beth Kastan E-mail Mkastan@guhdsd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Grossmont Union High School District Tel. (619) 644-8000

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. Matthew Guarnotta
(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, leave blank.*

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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	321	323	644
10	330	289	619
11	251	335	586
12 or higher	294	318	612
Total Students	1196	1265	2461

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5.1 % Asian
 - 11.6 % Black or African American
 - 44.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.9 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 25.5 % White
 - 11.8 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 4%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	95
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	100
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	2461
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Khmer, Arabic, Russian, Turkish, Gujarati, Chinese-Taiwanese, Albanian, Tigrinya, Somali, Amharic

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
112 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %
 Total number students who qualify: 1404

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 10 %
248 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. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>29</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>1</u> Deafness	<u>7</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>87</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>141</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>12</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>36</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>6</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>2</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>12</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	6
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	93
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	44
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	20

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 23:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	93%	97%	95%	95%	94%

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 2021.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	519
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	47%
Enrolled in a community college	39%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	4%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	7%

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.

As a charter school, our mission is to provide a comprehensive education that prepares all students to graduate college-ready and equipped to reach their personal and academic potential. In a college preparatory environment, our vision is to close the achievement gap through effective collaboration and innovative practices.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15XLtu9Y1hZePtw_iv5Rtt470SZzKVi3o/view?ts=624eff08

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

Helix Charter High School (HCHS) is a free, public charter school and enrollment is chosen through a public random lottery if applications exceed the available seats. Enrollment preference in the case of a public random drawing shall be as follows: (1) siblings of students admitted to or attending HCHS; (2) pupils who reside within the former attendance area of Helix High School (historical boundary prior to conversion to charter); (3) children of employees of HCHS; (4) Students who make a two-year commitment to be in the HCHS Bagpipe program; and (5) students who reside in the Grossmont Union High School District boundaries and all other student applicants.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Established in 1952, Helix High School has served the local community well for 70 years and has a strong tradition of excellence in many areas, including academics, arts, and athletics. In an effort to add to this tradition of excellence and to more effectively meet the needs of our students and community, Helix High School became the first traditional comprehensive high school in California to convert to being a charter school in 1998.

The 2021-2022 school year marks Helix Charter High School's 24th year as a charter school, its 22th year as a directly funded charter, and its 15th year as a nonprofit public benefit corporation with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and its own employer of record.

Helix Charter High School (“HCHS”) serves a wonderfully diverse school community of approximately 2,500 students. As a conversion charter school, we are proud to serve students from our original attendance boundaries (approximately 70 percent of our students) and students from the greater San Diego County region (approximately 30 percent of our students). Approximately two hundred faculty and staff provide our students with powerful learning experiences that help students gain the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights that enable them to make connections that transform their relationship to self, others, and the world.

HCHS staff are committed to effective collaboration and innovation to ensure that all students are prepared for the opportunity to attend college, should they so choose. As such, HCHS boasts a rigorous curriculum, as well as a comprehensive student support system that makes it possible for students to push themselves toward higher goals and aspirations. In order to graduate from HCHS, all students must meet the challenging University of California and California State University A-G course requirements, which include all of the courses needed to be eligible to apply to attend a public college or university in California.

Students are also able to select Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, as well as courses offered through our community college Dual Enrollment Program. Dual enrollment courses allow our students to take college courses on the HCHS campus, fulfilling high school graduation requirements while also earning actual college credits. There are over 1,800 dual enrollment course requests and 50 courses planned in our schedule for next school year. Moreover, students also have access to Career and Technical Education (“CTE”) programs that provide opportunities for career exploration in areas such as computer science, sports medicine, business/entrepreneurship, education, and biotech.

HCHS recognizes that challenging all students with high academic expectations is not enough. It is equally important to offer students an extensive student support system to help students meet these high college preparatory expectations. HCHS focuses attention and support on struggling students and underserved student populations that traditional school systems too often sell short or ignore. As such, HCHS has dedicated tremendous resources in time, energy, and money to make sure that an effective pyramid of interventions is in place to ensure that all students can meet HCHS’s extensive college preparatory graduation requirements.

The HCHS pyramid of intervention starts with all students being assigned to a grade level team consisting of a principal, counselor, academic advisor, and administrative assistant. The grade level teams serve and support students for their entire time in high school. Approximately 50 paraprofessional tutors serve every student wanting or needing academic support before school, after school, and throughout the school day. Our academic support program serves approximately 50 percent of our student body. Moreover, four full-time school social workers serve students needing more intense social-emotional support in our Wellness Center.

HCHS is committed to reviewing and refining this multi-tiered system of supports and services as the academic and social-emotional needs of our students evolve.

Furthermore, HCHS recognizes that teaching and learning do not only occur within the four walls of our classrooms. HCHS provides our students with extensive extra-curricular and co-curricular programs. Helix's

athletic program is one of the largest and most successful programs in Southern California. The program offers numerous boys' and girls' sports at the freshman, junior varsity, and varsity levels. The Performing Arts Department is an award-winning program that provides many co-curricular performing opportunities in dance, drama-theater, instrumental music, speech-debate, and vocal music. There are also numerous clubs and organizations that meet students' interests and passions. All of these extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities are intended to connect students to HCHS, as students who feel connected to their school tend to perform better academically. As such, HCHS promotes the importance of a well-rounded education and encourages students to learn and succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

Through constant reflection and self-evaluation, HCHS pursues continuous improvements in our Educational Program in an effort to improve and transform the lives of our students. The success of our students can be attributed to the continued innovative and collaborative efforts of the entire HCHS Community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:

At Helix Charter High School our main purpose is to provide students with powerful learning experiences that help them gain the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and insights that enable our students to make connections that transform their relationship to self, others, and the world!

Helix values and prioritizes collaboration and innovation as key components of teaching and learning success. As such, the school has developed a school calendar and bell schedule that supports teacher collaboration and growth. The school calendar has eight staff development days. Staff development days are designed to support teacher's growth and development as instructors. In addition, teachers assigned to Course Level Teams (CLTs) are provided two 45-minute common planning blocks per week to meet to develop common curriculum and instruction. Teacher collaboration is focused on setting student learning goals, refining curriculum and instruction, and collecting and reflecting on student learning evidence.

CLTs use a variety of methods to examine formative and summative student achievement data. In addition to reviewing student achievement results on standardized test scores, CLTs use NWEA assessment results in math and English to measure student progress and refine and adapt curriculum and instruction. Course Level Teams design local formative and summative assessments and routinely review student performance results to inform curriculum and instructional practices.

During the COVID pandemic and remote learning, teachers collaborated and supported each other to quickly change gears to provide high quality instruction through digital platforms. Course information, syllabi, and modules were standardized and teachers maximized the use of Canvas, our school's Learning Management System (LMS), and digital apps to provide a variety of learning experiences for students. Now that school has resumed in-person operations, teachers have been able to select the best instructional and assessment tools whether digital or in person. Our robust use of technology and Canvas LMS has allowed us to continue serving students when absent from class.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The English department at Helix, through a thoughtfully developed, college preparatory curriculum, helps to build on students' academic literacy and critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Additionally, we work to engage students daily with a robust, rigorous, and challenging curriculum coupled with appropriate support. We believe that all students are capable of graduating with the academic and critical literacy skills necessary for success in college and the workplace. In order to encourage students to meet and exceed California Common Core State Standards, the Helix English department has similar types of tasks throughout the student's English classes. Even though the required length or difficulty of formal assessments may vary, each student will be held to similar standards. For example, the performance standards for our written formal assessments reads, "Students will write four coherent and focused essays of varying lengths that convey a well-defined purpose. The writing demonstrates the student's awareness of the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed. All writing assessments must earn a 70% or higher. Students will have opportunities to revise their work to meet competency."

Of course, a challenging curriculum, we feel, needs to be coupled with a supportive environment: tutorials, academic support classes, writing labs, and instructional scaffolds are in place to support students towards success. In order to provide an equitable experience for our students, each Course Level Team has the same grade weights and required assessments. At Helix, we work closely with our Special Education department and our English Learners department. Currently, in grades 9-11 we offer co-taught classes. The general education English teacher and the special education teacher work closely to plan and implement instruction that meets the needs of all students. In addition, 9th grade and newcomer English Learners (ELs) are placed

in a yearlong, double-dose, college prep English 1/2C class, which has an emphasis on language development and improving reading comprehension and writing skills. In addition, during 9th grade, students are also enrolled in a high school success course called Helix First. In Helix First, students build upon and develop their literacy skills by using Achieve 3000. Additionally, our 9th and 11th students participate in our One Book, One Helix program. Students read a book in the summer and then in their English, social science, and/or support classes work with the text.

CLTs meet weekly to discuss best practices, calibrate, and plan. We are committed to creating learning experiences that expose students to a wide range of voices and topics with rigor and relevance in order to prepare them for college and/or beyond. CLTs are encouraged to reflect on and - as appropriate - revise text choices to meet the needs of our changing students. Students should have windows (to see others), mirrors (to see themselves), and sliding glass doors (experiences to enter into) (Sims Bishop).

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Helix is committed to providing a rich mathematics learning experience for our students ensuring that our graduates leave with a deep understanding of math concepts, a willingness to problem solve, and the stamina and procedural skills necessary to solve real world problems.

All ninth grade students begin in Algebra 1. College Prep students will take Algebra 1 during all four quarters of 9th grade. Students in the Honors Pathway will complete Algebra 1 during the first two quarters before transitioning to Geometry during the second two quarters of ninth grade. It is important to note that all students in the college prep pathway have the opportunity to move to the Honors Pathway during semester two of 9th grade and many students do so. Any students who exhibit the desire to move to the Honors Pathway are given the opportunity to do so.

The majority of students are enrolled in Geometry and Algebra 2 in 10th and 11th grades. Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 are required to graduate, so all of our students will take these courses at a minimum. We use Illustrative Mathematic as our core curriculum for these courses.

Illustrative Math (IM) presents problems that require students to use real world problem solving and literacy skills in order to be successful. Collaboration is utilized in all of our courses as a daily part of the learning process. Students are grouped together and learn to be part of a working team. Our Special Education students are mainstreamed into our courses where we have multiple co-taught classes for each subject. These co-taught classes are a strength of our math program because students feel the benefit of having an additional teacher in the room. In addition to IM, teachers use many other online platforms including Khan, Delta Math, and Desmos to supplement student learning.

Students in the honors track progress at an accelerated rate and thus are given the opportunity to advance to our upper division offerings as early as their sophomore or junior year. Upper division courses include Pre-Calculus, Data Science, Statistics 1C, A.P. Statistics, AB/BC Calculus, and Math 281 (third semester calculus). Most of our 12th grade students choose to take one of these math courses. Math 281 is offered through our dual enrollment program with the local community college. The course is taught here on campus by a Helix math teacher and is open to students that took AB/BC Calculus as juniors.

All of our courses are part of a Course Level Team where courses are aligned so that students are being taught the same curriculum and taking the same common assessments. Teams meet regularly and coordinate so well that it is fair to say that if a student moves from Teacher A to Teacher B this transition will be effortless. This is true for every course we offer as we pride ourselves on the collaboration and working relationship of our CLTs for each of our courses.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Helix provides pathways for all students to access higher levels of science education. Students might start in a college preparatory program but can easily transition to either an honors or CTE pathway. The science department follows the guidelines of a four-course model proposed by the Science Framework by the

California Department of Education. Using storylines and introducing the complex, three domains of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), Helix prepares students to become scientific problem solvers in our global environment.

Students are required to complete two years of science, one life (Biology or Biotech) and one physical science (Physics or Chemistry) course. However, we encourage students to take a third and fourth year of science. After reviewing our student transcripts and college acceptances, it is clear that most of our students are completing three to four years of science. Providing students with this freedom has allowed them to select the third and/or fourth course of their choice. This flexibility allows students to follow their passions and provides the ability to offer elective courses in anatomy/physiology and oceanography.

The three choice pathways that we offer are CTE biotechnology, college preparatory, or Honors/AP. In the college preparatory path, students start in earth science, and move through biology, chemistry, and physics, following a traditional 4-course model. The Honors/AP path has students starting in 9th grade Honors Biology and then proceed to Honors Chemistry and typically AP Physics, AP Environmental Science or AP Biology. The CTE biotechnology pathway starts with tech for biology in 9th grade and is followed by CTE Biotechnology $\frac{1}{2}$ and the capstone Biotechnology $\frac{3}{4}$ course. This capstone course provides opportunities for students to apply skills while preparing lab materials for other classes and other schools. We also offer dual enrollment community college courses in Chemistry 120, Biotechnology $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Helix offers numerous opportunities for students to examine the past through various lenses while traversing the California State Standards. All ninth grade students engage in one of three social science offerings: Advanced Placement Human Geography, and Introduction to Social Science taught either from a regional or ethnic studies perspective. Tenth grade students can choose from World History, Advanced Placement European History, dual enrollment college 137 History of East Asia or 155 Modern History of Women in World Civilizations, or World History through an economic lens, which is designed to be an introductory course for the Business/Entrepreneurship CTE Pathway. All 11th grade students can select from US History, Advanced Placement United States History, dual enrollment 119 U.S. History: Chicano/Chinana Perspectives, or 181 U.S. History: Black Perspectives. All 12th grade students take Government or dual enrollment 121 U.S. Government & Politics or 124 Comparative Government & Politics.

The Social Science department is currently reframing its curriculum to utilize the Inquiry Design Method to facilitate the C3 (College, Career, and Civic Life) Inquiry Arc and incorporate more diverse perspectives. There is a concerted effort to place the cognitive load onto the student, using the process of inquiry to better engage with the past. Students learn how to analyze documents and other stimuli in order to construct historical arguments, focusing on the skills of historical analysis: corroboration, sourcing, contextualization, and causal reasoning.

Our unique bell schedule allows for PLCs to meet as a whole department and in course level teams numerous times each month. Our teams look at formative and summative data, from traditional assessments as well as more authentic student-created artifacts and performance tasks. Discussions regarding evidence of student learning better inform pedagogical practice. Technology is leveraged throughout the curriculum, not solely in delivering content and greater access to information and diverse perspectives, but in granting students the opportunity to create evidence of their learning through presentation tools, and other forms of digital expression.

1f. For secondary schools:

As a charter school, our mission is to provide a comprehensive education that prepares all students to graduate college-ready and equipped to reach their personal and academic potential. We recognize the need to provide students opportunities to explore careers, which require college degrees and others that do not require college degrees.

In 9th grade, all students do a unit of study on private and public universities and colleges throughout the

nation. Teams of students research a particular college, then develop, and share presentations at the annual College Fair to all 11th grade students. In addition, all 9th grade students go on a field trip to the University of California San Diego and San Diego State University.

Throughout students' four years at Helix, they have access to numerous dual enrollment community college courses in the various disciplines and CTE pathways on campus. These courses give students the opportunity to experience college curriculum and explore CTE community college courses and certification programs. Dual enrollment courses act as an on ramp to college for our students.

Moreover, in 11th grade all students are given the opportunity to attend our College for Me (C4ME) program. Counselors teach students all aspects of exploring, choosing, and applying to colleges in the C4ME program. The culminating activity of the C4ME program is a six-day tour of approximately fifteen colleges and universities throughout the entire state of California during the students' Spring Break.

During 12th grade, all students have the opportunity to attend Club College every Wednesday after school for several hours. Multiple counselors and academic advisors are available every Wednesday afternoon to assist students with filling out their college applications and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). During each summer, all graduating seniors who have been accepted to a college are provided counseling services to ensure the students receive the support they need to follow through with acceptance letters, financial aid and scholarship requirements, and preparing to actually attend college.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Helix offers a comprehensive Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) program where students may fulfill their UC/CSU VAPA requirement while simultaneously completing other UC/CSU A-G requirements as well. We offer courses in the following areas: art, digital art, choral music, dance, guitar, piano, instrumental music, theater, and speech and debate. All grade levels may enroll VAPA courses, many of which are co-curricular. In our standards-based VAPA courses students connect, collaborate, create, present, perform, and engage in the learning process of their respective art. Much of the curriculum is project-based learning, and reflective in nature. Through the reflective process, students connect their experiences in the arts to other course work, their own lives, and the community around them. Helix's Visual and Performing Arts courses allow students to develop a sense of voice and gain critical thinking skills through this type of creative process.

The goal of the Helix Physical Education Program is to create a strong foundation for a lifetime of health and fitness through participation in physical activity. All ninth grade students participate in the following team sports: football, basketball, and softball. Students also participate in the individual sports of tennis, pickleball, frisbee golf, and swimming. The emphasis of the swimming unit is water safety. Students are taught the basic rules and skills of each sport. Students are taught and experience the basic concepts of human anatomy, exercise physiology, flexibility and cardiovascular fitness by participating in weight training, yoga, walking and jogging activities. In addition, all students complete the State mandated Sexual Education Training as well as FitnessGram Testing.

All students may enroll in one of our three language programs; Spanish, French or American Sign Language. Our Spanish program also offers a Heritage learner option for students with previous Spanish experience such as speaking Spanish at home or attending an immersion program in elementary/middle school. Students develop their skills in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a communicative approach to language instruction. Students also learn cross-cultural lessons including history, art and current events. Students can elect to take dual-enrollment college courses for all three languages as a part of their high school LOTE (Languages Other Than English) program in partnership with Grossmont Community College. Students are required to take at least two levels of the same language to meet our graduation requirements.

The Helix Computer and Technology department offers Exploring Computer Science (ECS) to all 9th grade students. ECS is a 9-week course that introduces students to the basic concepts of computer use, coding, the role that computers play in society, and helps students develop their computational thinking skills. Students in grades 9-12 interested in a more indepth exploration of computer science concepts are able to take AP Computer Science Principles (APCSP). This course is centered around Five (5) Big Ideas (Creative Development, Data, Algorithms and Programming, Computing Systems and Networks and the Impact of Computing). Students in grades 10-12 seeking a more advanced level of programming are encouraged to take Video Game Design and/or AP Computer Science A (APCSA). These courses introduce students to the object oriented programming paradigm using the Java and C# languages. Concepts such as classes, objects, inheritance, polymorphism, and code re-usability are covered using a project-based learning approach. Both AP Computer Science classes are year long courses as our block schedule allows students to meet every other day for the full year working with Amazon's Future Engineering program.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Students struggling in school and performing below grade level are supported by a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) called the Helix Pyramid of Interventions. The Helix Pyramid of Interventions is designed to meet the social-emotional and academic support needs of our struggling students. Interventions begin with every student being assigned to a grade level support team consisting of a principal, counselor, school social worker, and academic advisor. Incoming 9th grade students' math and literacy skills are assessed using Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments. The grade level team uses the assessment results to develop an appropriate schedule for each student. Students scoring below grade level are invited to participate in a summer transition program focused on supporting the students' successful transition to high school. The goal of this two-week program is to build connections with academic support staff and to help students learn about the Helix culture. Getting to know the students prior to the start of school is key to providing effective behavior and academic support at the beginning of the school year.

All 9th grade students are assigned to an academic support class. Paraprofessionals, serving as Academic Coaches, tutor and mentor students in units adjusted for ratio and frequency based on student academic needs. Struggling students are required to stay in academic support classes as necessary over the remaining time at Helix.

All staff can refer students with academic or social-emotional concerns to their grade level team for more support. Grade level support teams assess students to determine the appropriate level of support and services needed. The team can call Student Intervention Team (SIT), 504, or Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to develop support plans. The team may refer students to our onsite Wellness Center to be served by a school social worker. Early intervention is key.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

All students are expected to challenge themselves with college prep courses. Students must meet the UC-CSU A-G college admissions requirements and challenge at least one AP or college level course. Levels of course rigor included honors level math and English in 9th and 10th grade, AP courses for grades 9-12, articulated college courses for grade 10-12, and on campus dual enrollment community college courses. All students taking honors or college level courses can enroll in an Academic Support class to get tutoring help during the school day.

Helix has a long tradition of offering Advanced Placement courses that are open to all students. The 4x4 block schedule allows flexibility for students to take multiple year long AP courses. We are the only high school in our district that offers Calculus BC. Students can double up in math during any one school year, we have the largest number of students taking and passing the BC Calculus test. As a result, we now have a full section of Math 281 (third year college calculus).

The ability for students to take two courses in the same subject because the 4x4 block schedule affords students the opportunity to take 8 classes instead of six allows students to take a 5th year of a course in the 4 core subjects. In order to support students performing above grade level students may attend academic support before school or after school. Students have access to teacher led tutorials for 45 minutes, four days a week. Moreover, students may also enroll in an academic support class during the school day.

3c. Special education:

Helix's vision for supporting students with disabilities is to include them in the general education environment to the fullest extent possible to receive rigorous, differentiated instruction alongside their peers. We support students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment through well-established and successful co-teaching partnerships. These co-teachers collaborate to differentiate instruction and implement instructional strategies that are tailored to students' individual strengths and unique needs.

Special education and general education teachers collaborate weekly in course level teams. Special education teachers participate in these course level team meetings to help support instructional strategies and lesson plan development in the general education environment. Students working on a diploma who require skills that are more foundational are able to receive Specialized Academic Instruction classes in Writing Fundamentals and Math Fundamentals.

Study skills classes are offered to students with disabilities to provide small group instruction on executive functioning, self-advocacy, self-determination and motivation skills. All of which are skills identified to support successful transition into adult life. Tutorial interventions are offered after school in each course and special education teachers support this intervention by providing intensive individualized or small group instruction to students who require extra support and assistance to master the content in their general education classes.

A typical study skills class maintains a 5:1 academic coach (tutors) to student ratio. The academic coaches are specifically trained to provide support to students with disabilities. There is also a special education teacher facilitating the implementation of IEPs in this environment.

Students with more extensive support needs are also included in the general education environment and participate in a modified curriculum in the general education setting to the fullest extent possible. Additionally, Helix has a well-established peer mentor program in which students without disabilities are working in the special day classes to assist students with academic and social skills. This program has resulted in many general education peer mentors entering the teaching profession as a result of their participation.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Over the past several years, Helix has worked with guidance from the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) Multilingual Education for Global Achievement (MEGA) department, as well as professors from San Diego State University's Dual Language and English Learner Education department to redesign our English Learner (EL) program to be more inclusive and equitable in order to more effectively meet the needs of our English Learner students. One of the many ways that we have done this is by aligning our program with the principles of the California English Learner Roadmap.

At Helix, EL students have access to the full curriculum with necessary language and academic supports. EL students are enrolled in an academic support class in which they not only receive designated ELD (English Language Development) instruction from the full-time ELD teacher and program coordinator, but assistance with all of their coursework by two full-time multilingual academic coaches. Students are also supported in their classes by bilingual peer tutors who have been trained to work closely with and help English learners.

In addition, 9th grade and newcomer ELs are placed in a yearlong, double-dose, college prep English 1/2C class, which has an emphasis on language development and improving reading comprehension and writing skills. Some of the programs that we use in the ELD program include Achieve3000, iLit, NewsELA, Edge,

and No Red Ink.

The counselors at Helix work closely with the EL coordinator to strategically place ELs in classes with highly skilled teachers who excel at using effective instructional strategies for EL students. The EL Coordinator acts as an advocate for all EL students. The EL coordinator provides all teachers an EL-at-a-Glance form for each EL student with an overview of the student's strengths, challenges, language and academic background, and recommended strategies and accommodations.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:

Enrolling students identified as homeless or foster care are immediately referred to the school social worker who provides a multi-dimensional needs and strengths assessment to determine the student's academic, personal and family needs. Counselors assess all student's academic progress. For homeless and foster youth enrolling after their sophomore year, they also assess for the most accessible path to graduation and which requirements over the state graduation requirements need to be waived for the student to successfully graduate.

School supplies are offered to all homeless and foster youth at the beginning of the school year and additional supplies can be purchased as needed throughout the year as classes change. Many teachers maintain a stock of supplies that students will need for projects in order to not place a financial burden on families. This includes school-provided wi-fi hotspots in conjunction with the Grade Level Team (GLT) and Technology team when students do not have access to that in their home environment.

Transportation is provided to all homeless or foster youth more than 2 miles from campus to maximize their attendance. This is in the form of monthly passes to the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System. Assistance is also provided with understanding and navigating the bus routes and timetables.

Homeless and Foster Youth who are struggling academically are enrolled in our academic support classes, and encouraged and supported to attend after school enrichment programs and sports, including arranging for payment for on-campus physicals when they are offered, as well as paying for any uniform or equipment costs and campus-based sports health insurance when the family does not have other insurance (these families are also provided with connecting with more comprehensive health insurance)

Foster and homeless youth are referred to tutoring through a partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Helix continues to place the academic needs and social-emotional needs of our students at the forefront of our efforts. We have staffed our Wellness Center with four full-time Social Workers and interns from our partnerships with San Diego State University and Community Youth Services to further support student needs. Our Wellness Center provides both individualized and group counseling on a daily basis.

In addition to the Wellness Center, Helix has invested in staff development to improve student engagement in the classroom. One specific example is the training staff to implement “No Backpack Days” which are days at the beginning of each term to build camaraderie, trust, and connection between students and staff instead of jumping directly into the curriculum. We have found these days to be extremely beneficial in connecting our incoming 9th graders to school, as many of them have never been on a large campus prior to attending Helix. Additional professional development has focused on improving staff’s technical skills in instruction as well as purposeful engagement of students in lessons. These purposeful engagement lessons are designed to build confidence and capacity of students within the classroom setting.

During COVID remote learning, all classified staff working from home were assigned a caseload of students. They were to email, call, and check-in weekly to ensure that each student was not falling through the cracks. Grade Level Teams also followed up with zoom family meetings or home visits when students were not engaged, and in-person supports were developed to allow those students to be on campus for help. Additionally, drop-in Zoom tutorials were offered between 7:00 AM-7:00 PM. Having these virtual opportunities helped keep students connected and engaged. Additionally, some examples of enrichment programs that were offered to students via Zoom included Yoga, Doodling/Drawing, Tap Dancing, and Dungeons & Dragons. These enrichment opportunities were developed and offered to keep students engaged in extracurricular and clubs they may have missed as a result of distance learning.

As we returned to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year, a concerted effort was made to re-engage students. In June and July, over fifty summer camp programs were offered to reconnect returning students and connect new students to Helix. Programs offered ranged from those in the visual and performing arts, athletics, academic enrichment, maker lab, and various clubs. These programs also assisted our staff with the transition from remote learning to being back on campus.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The goal of the Helix Family First program is to provide families with the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge to support them in navigating the high school landscape with their students. Helix Staff and specialists from the community present on a variety of topics. The program has been actively meeting on Thursday evenings at 6:00 PM for 10 years. We typically offer two events a month in the fall and early spring, then tapering off to one event in April and May.

Our move to virtual presentations during the pandemic actually boosted parent and family participation in the program, and we hope to continue using this method of presenting as we move forward. Using Zoom has also allowed us to record these presentations and post them for future access under the parent tab on our website. Each year we offer events on College and Financial Aid, Mental Health, the NCAA, English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC), Technology 101, and Graduation Bling & Requirements.

Family First Nights have been a great way to welcome new freshman families, introduce them to all of the support services on campus, and encourage them to be active partners throughout their students’ high school experience.

Helix has an outstanding community of diverse organizations, business, and community partners. The focus and mission of Helix continues to be supporting students and our extended Helix family. As such, community partnerships continue to be geared around programs supporting students in educational, arts,

social/emotional health and community programs.

Educational partnerships have been developed and continue to grow through our Career Technical Education (CTE) programs in Business, Sports Medicine, Education, and Biotechnology. Each program has built relationships with industry partners that participate in Advisory Board meetings, learning experiences, guest speakers, field trips, internships, and curriculum development.

Arts partnerships have been developed through collaboratives with music and dance professionals working directly with our students through workshop models. Students have the experience of playing/performing alongside industry professionals to expand their skills and knowledge.

Social/emotional health and learning continues to be an ongoing focus in which significant resources are dedicated. In many cases, Helix has found that partnering with community experts in specific fields has not only helped our students but also increased the capacity of our staff to better support students. Mending Matters, San Diego Community Youth Services and others are routinely connected to our Student Support Department.

Our strategy is to first identify the needs of our students and their families and then determine a plan of action to support those students. In many cases, this requires us to seek outside services that are more equipped to help.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Helix's approach to professional development is both teacher-centered and teacher driven. We have a system of shared leadership on campus that empowers teachers and gives them a voice. Teachers are given opportunities not only to grow in their instructional practice but also to give feedback on those very opportunities.

In addition to our academic departments which are led by elected department chair people, our staff is also organized into Course Level Teams (CLTs) and each team has an elected CLT leader. These leaders hold weekly meetings with teams addressing their team's specific needs as well as work on the annual goals as outlined in their CLT Work Plan. Another teacher leader group is the team of six teachers on special assignment (TOSAs) who each have a single period release in which they manage the school's Annual Professional Learning (APL) system and meet with administrators weekly to collaboratively create and refine the school's annual professional development plan. The goal of the APL process is to create a culture of observation, collaboration, and reflection that supports teachers as they grow in their practice. In the APL program, TOSAs work with teachers as they engage in a three-year cycle that includes classroom observations, reflective conversations and collaboration around instructional goals related to the California Standards for Teaching Practice (CSTPs).

TOSAs, CLT leaders and any other interested staff also attend monthly Restructuring Meetings in which teacher input and feedback regarding professional development plans is solicited. Teacher feedback from these meetings inform decisions related to the ongoing professional development plans collaboratively developed by the administration and TOSAs.

At Helix, teacher initiative is valued, acknowledged, incorporated into the school's decisionmaking process. During distance and hybrid learning, administrators worked closely with TOSAs to develop a school bell schedule. All staff were able to give feedback as the schedules were developed and these schedules clearly show that teacher input was utilized. The schedules included ample prep time for teachers to adjust to the unique constraints of distance learning, but also supported teachers by giving them time and opportunity to give students the support they needed. This year, we have focused on learning more about equity issues affecting high schools in our nation. We have formed an Equity Team of twenty teachers, staff, administrators, and community members to study issues of equity impacting our school. This work will be used to inform our professional development plan for the next several years.

4. School Leadership:

Helix employs a broad based approach to planning and shared decision-making. This approach provides leadership opportunities that foster stakeholder commitment. HCHS has a well-established culture of ongoing improvement as attested to by our many initiatives in academics, student support, and creating and maintaining a safe and supportive school culture.

The Restructuring Committee (RC) is an advisory body that provides input and recommendations related to school policies and practices. RC is composed of CLT leaders, administrators, and interested staff. RC meets monthly to review CLT work plans, discuss ideas and initiatives for school improvement, and to provide input on the school's strategic plan. In addition, task forces are created to develop plans for school improvement and report back to the RC. This body also oversees the school's accreditation efforts.

Department Chairs (DC) are elected representatives of each department. DCs work collaboratively with the administration to oversee and implement the Educational Program of the school. Their duties include curriculum development and refinement, assisting administration with hiring and allocating teaching assignments, ordering and procuring instructional materials and supplies, managing department budgets, and coordinating the work of CLTs within their departments.

The Department Chair Council (DCC) is an advisory body, composed of the Department Chairs, that assists the administration with the operations of the school. DCC meets monthly to address operational issues and discuss school-wide culture, initiatives, and provide input on the school's strategic plan.

The Professional Development Committee consisting of a team of six Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) from multiple disciplines and three members of the administrative team work collaboratively with the to develop and implement the schoolwide professional development plan. TOSAs have been specifically trained to support the growth and development of their peers. TOSAs solicit input and feedback regarding professional development efforts from members of RC and DCC bodies.

The Administrative team is led by the Executive Director and includes the Grade Level Principals, Special Education Director, Manager School Safety and Security, Manager School Facilities, Director of Data Systems and IT, and Chief Business Officer.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Helix is committed to addressing the diverse needs and backgrounds of all students. In addition to our work in narrowing the achievement gap, Helix works hard to make sure that equity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity are central to our student and staff experience.

Clubs on the Helix campus welcome and celebrate the experiences of our diverse student body. There are active clubs for Chicano, Black, Muslim, Asian and Pacific Islander, Neurodiverse, and LGBTQI+ students. Many of these clubs meet weekly and provide familiarity and comfort at school for our students. Clubs also serve as liaisons between the student body and the staff and administration. For example, students from the Muslim Student Association recently presented at an all staff meeting about how teachers could best support students who are fasting for Ramadan. Two years ago, a delegation from our LGBTQI+ club, presented to an all staff meeting about the importance of pronouns and helping staff make their classrooms more comfortable for non-binary students. These presentations allow students to practice advocating for themselves and their potentially vulnerable peers and educate staff about the needs of our diverse student body.

Over the last ten years, Helix has endeavored to diversify texts and perspectives throughout the curriculum. Literature of Hip Hop centers black voices for our senior English students and other classes across subject areas have received professional development time to ensure that diverse perspectives are recognized in our courses. Helix has also partnered with a local community college to offer more diverse and culturally responsive courses on our campus. Current culturally relevant offerings, each of which offer college credit for the student, include U.S. History: Black Perspectives, U.S. History:Native American Perspectives, U.S. History:Chicana/o Perspectives, History of East Asia, Modern History of Women in World Civilizations, and Chicano/a Literature.

Finally, last year, Helix began a formal equity audit in partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education. As part of this process, a group of twenty staff members has had ten staff development meetings involving equity and diversity training and an examination of student and staff attitudes towards diversity and equity on campus. We designed and administered a campus-wide equity survey that gave us valuable data on areas of growth for our campus and, in light of that data, are in the process of developing a 36 hour equity training that will eventually include every teacher on campus and enable us to reshape our curriculum and campus in ways that make every student feel more safe and more valued.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In an effort to identify a more flexible and effective schedule that would allow us to better meet the needs of our students, our staff began exploring various alternative educational reform models. Our goal was to identify a schedule that provided students the opportunity to focus on fewer subjects for longer amounts of time to support student mastery of their learning. We also wanted a schedule that allowed students the opportunity to take concurrent support classes and provided teachers more time to prepare and collaborate.

With these objectives in mind, our staff focused on implementing the Copernican Plan, 4x4 block schedule. In the 4x4 block schedule, students have the opportunity to take three or four 90-minute classes a day each term, and there are two terms each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The 4x4 block schedule allows students to take up to eight total classes for the year instead of the typical six. The two extra periods afford students the opportunity to take extra elective classes, concurrent academic support classes, and remediate failed classes during the year rather than in summer school.

On the 4x4 block schedule, teachers teach three periods per day and have a 90-minute preparation period. Teachers teach approximately 90 students rather than the typical 175 students. Having fewer students and longer preparation periods provide teachers the time to more thoroughly review their students' work and assessments as well as more time to plan and design curriculum and instruction. In addition, the longer preparation period affords teachers the opportunity to observe their colleagues while still having time to prepare for the following day.

The alternative 4x4 block schedule has been the key to improving the collaboration and innovation efforts of our staff. The schedule allows staff to think about how to use time more creatively and effectively. One of the most important innovations Helix has implemented is research based, double-dosed Algebra IC and Algebra IIC. All students take these courses daily for 90-minutes for the entire year. The students receive approximately 40 additional instructional minutes daily in their Algebra classes compared to students in a traditional six period schedule. The additional time allows teachers to slow down, assess, reteach, and reassess difficult and important algebraic concepts. For students who still struggle in spite of the extra instructional time, the extra 4th period enables these students to take a concurrent academic math support class. Failure rates in Algebra IC and IIC have dropped dramatically due to the implementation of double-dosed Algebra and the concurrent math support classes.

The 4x4 block has reduced failure rates across all disciplines, which has freed up teachers to teach more elective courses and has afforded students the opportunity to take more elective, community college dual enrollment courses, and a 5th year of a course in the 4 core subjects.