

**AMERICAN HERITAGE CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION**

**Project Manager:** James R. Dalton **Grant Administrator:** Tiffnee Hurst

1736 S. 35<sup>th</sup> West, Idaho Falls, ID 83402

[www.AmericanHeritageCharterSchool.com](http://www.AmericanHeritageCharterSchool.com)

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## **I. Introduction**

American Heritage Charter School (“AHCS”) is a fully accredited and successful, public charter school located in rural Idaho. We currently serve 334 students in grades K-12. Our mission is to create patriotic and educated leaders. We provide all students with a rigorous education, helping them develop good character and habits for success, and inspiring them to work hard and fulfil the American dream, regardless of their circumstances. We believe in James Madison's statement, “The advancement and diffusion of knowledge is the only guardian of true liberty.” Our mission drives our strategic planning, curriculum design, programming, and operational decisions, but our mission goes well beyond what we do inside the classroom – we believe our mission is our country's future.

AHCS draws inspiration from the agricultural heritage and work ethic of the farmers and ranchers who settled eastern Idaho. When AHCS opened its doors in 2013, it brought vitality back to the dilapidated but historic New Sweden School house, nearly a century after the building was first used as a school. The dichotomy of AHCS’s innovative education program, housed in a near century-old school house, parallels our approach of building educational innovation on a foundation of the old-fashioned, American values that made the country a beacon of liberty, equality, and hope.

AHCS seeks approximately \$1.25 million over five years to implement its charter expansion project. The grant will fund and facilitate a dramatic increase in capacity with an expansion of core programs, to enhance the lives of more students, including rural and underserved student populations. The expansion plans begin with the end in mind: we want to graduate more college-ready, entrepreneurial, and career-oriented students who will have taken advantage of dual credit, AP, career-technical, and other advanced opportunities. To do this, we

will first increase K-6 enrollment, one grade each year, to accommodate the ongoing demand for our elementary programs. Specifically, we will double our student population in grades 2 through 6 during the grant period. Concurrently, we will increase marketing efforts to recruit, retain, and organically grow our emerging middle and high school population. We will also enhance and expand our mastery and project-based learning environment in core subjects, integrating a new and rigorous business and entrepreneurship program to inspire the next generation of American innovators and entrepreneurs. Finally, we will open the door for our students to access local and regional college, career-technical, business, and other community resources and to provide dynamic and thought-provoking expeditionary and experiential learning opportunities that take students beyond content knowledge and help develop cognitive skills and habits that will lead to lifelong learning and productivity.

## **II. The American Heritage Educational Program**

Rigor is at the core of the American Heritage educational program, and growth and achievement are propelled by inspiring students with an integrated character education program that teaches Cowboy Ethics,<sup>1</sup> “Great Expectations,”<sup>2</sup> and other American values like hard work, self-discipline, self-reliance, perseverance, service, community, courtesy, honesty, entrepreneurship, justice, tolerance, and fairness. Our academic foundation is E.D. Hirsch’s Core Knowledge curriculum,<sup>3</sup> emphasizing a classic liberal arts education to foster an appreciation for the great literature, music, art, and the diverse people of our world. Our Unique American

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<sup>1</sup> Cowboy Ethics: What Wall Street Can Learn from The Code Of The West, James P. Owen (Stoecklein 2005).

<sup>2</sup> See Great Expectations, <http://www.greatexpectations.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> See Core Knowledge, at <https://www.coreknowledge.org/>.

Heritage sequence strives to increase student knowledge of and appreciation for American history and the cultural context that binds us together and unites us in our rich diversity as a nation. Every AHCS elementary student receives PE, art and music instruction. Every 4<sup>th</sup> grader is required to learn to play a stringed instrument, typically the violin or cello, and to participate in our stringed orchestra. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond, many students continue to take orchestra as an elective, providing a truly enriching opportunity that would otherwise be out of reach for many socio-economically disadvantaged families.

In the upper grades, AHCS builds on the Core Knowledge foundation with a rigorous curriculum delivered in a mastery and project-based learning environment. Every student has a mentor, access to a computer, and actively participates in directing their own learning. Students move ahead when they demonstrate mastery of content and key cognitive skills. Math, science, English and history are delivered in a blended learning environment, using a digital learning management system and dynamic content licensed by the Idaho Digital Learning Academy. As a part of the charter expansion, in 2018-2019, AHCS will transition to the Summit Learning platform, to accelerate implementation of its competency-based education program. Students don't earn credit based on seat time and completing homework. Rather, they advance according to an individualized learning plan, based on their mastery of the subject.

The culture at AHCS breaks down barriers to learning. Teachers and students work together in a professional and mutually supportive environment, where students feel safe to learn, express themselves, and work collaboratively without fear of judgment. Teachers maintain high expectations for behavior and achievement, celebrate student success, and use student struggles to drive intervention and personalized learning. Students and staff adhere to a strict code of conduct, including a dress code.

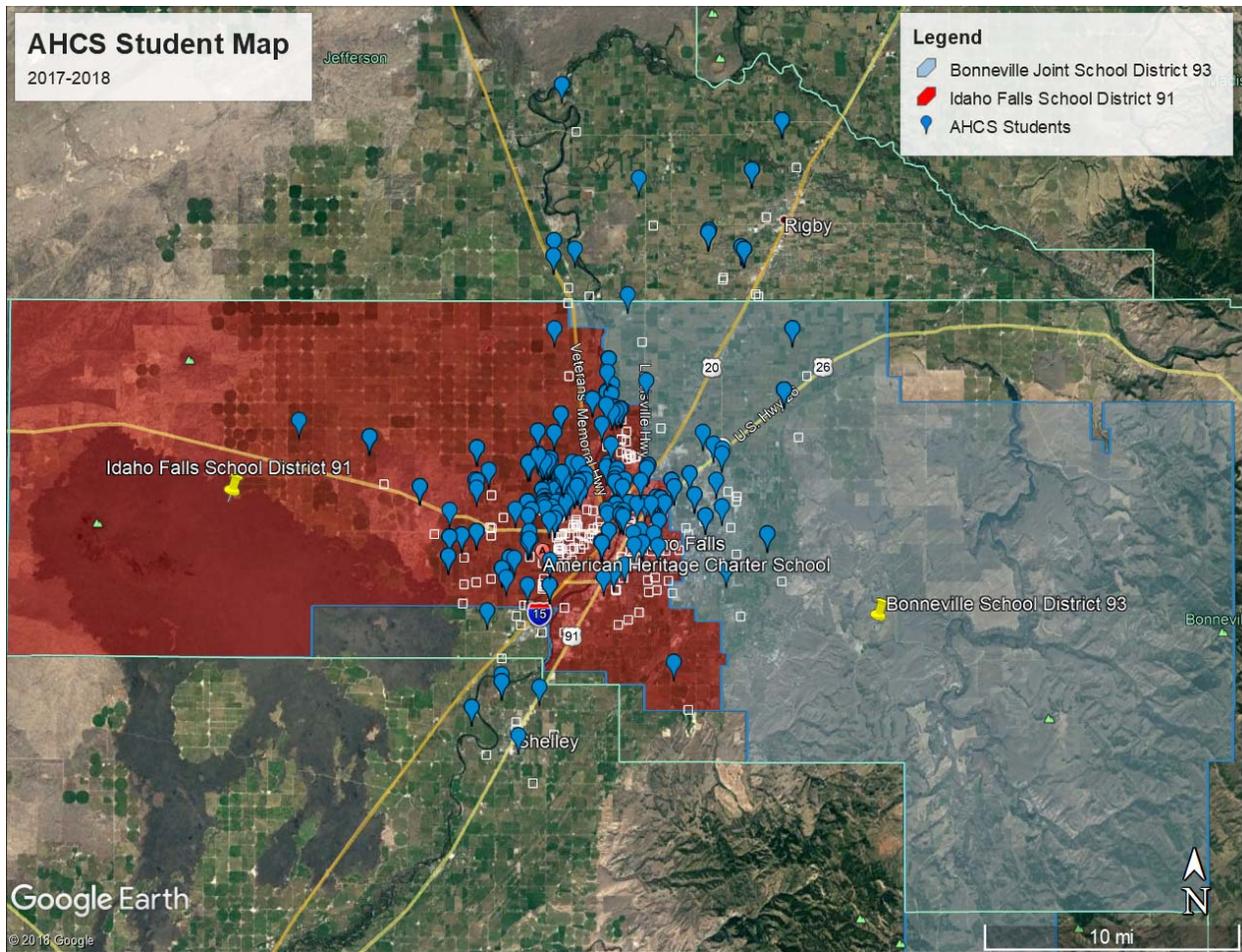
A key part of the AHCS culture derives from our emphasis on character and patriotic values. AHCS students learn about American history through memorization and recitation of historically significant speeches, verse and song, and the study of American heroes, including our Founding Fathers and Mothers and other American visionaries and innovators. AHCS believes that the future leaders of this country can't simply be well educated -- they must also know our history and value American ideals. Yet, AHCS doesn't simply teach history, we strive to help our students make history by emphasizing civic service, community, and leadership. We also strive to help AHCS students understand how to access the American Dream by providing age appropriate instruction in personal financial management, entrepreneurship, and career exploration in all grades.

### **III. Competitive Preference Priorities**

#### **A. Competitive Preference Priority 1: Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to High-Quality Educational Choice.**

AHCS offers a high-quality educational choice to high-need and traditionally underserved students. AHCS enrollment is determined by a random, equitable selection process (a lottery), as prescribed by Idaho law, but AHCS desires to reach additional underserved populations to provide opportunity to all students. Increasing the diversity of our student body will enrich the social, cultural, and educational experience for everyone.

AHCS's primary target population is students living in rural Idaho. Situated in an unincorporated part of Bonneville County and surrounded by farmland, AHCS meets the eligibility criteria and requirements of the Small Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) and is considered a rural local educational agency. Approximately 40% of current AHCS students live in unincorporated, agricultural areas, or in neighboring small rural communities.



*FIGURE 1. The AHCS Primary Attendance area is coterminous with the Skyline High School attendance area of Idaho Falls District 91 (in red). 60% of AHCS students reside within District 91, with 40% residing in rural areas.*

Many rural students come from socio-economically disadvantaged families. About 10% of current AHCS students have applied for and qualify for free and reduced lunch, compared to approximately 42% for the district schools in our primary attendance area.<sup>4</sup> In 2016, the median

<sup>4</sup> The AHCS primary attendance area is coterminous with the Skyline High School service area. Skyline High School has a 42.22% rate of free and reduced lunch. The nearest district elementary, Westside, has is 34.4% free and reduced participation rate. Other area high schools, including Hillcrest (21.8%), Bonneville (36.75%), Compass Academy (28.48%), and Idaho Falls

household income for the AHCS Primary Attendance area was just \$47,823, below the Idaho median income of \$49,174 and well below the U.S. median income of \$59,039.<sup>5</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2016 Community Survey, 16.2% of individuals living within the AHCS primary attendance area are below the Federal poverty level.<sup>6</sup>

AHCS provides a high-quality educational choice to students with disabilities and special needs. Approximately 10% of current AHCS students qualify for and receive services or accommodations provided under the IDEA Part B and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Our schoolwide percentage of students with special needs is nearly equivalent to the local Idaho Falls School District 91. Since its opening, AHCS has grown its special education population each year, and it continues to engage in “child find” activities to ensure that children in need are identified and provided a free and appropriate education.

Finally, AHCS provides an exceptional educational choice for minority students. Approximately 5% of current AHCS students are non-white, ethnic minorities, including

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(26.28%) have lower free and reduced rates. See Idaho State Department of Education, Free and Reduced Lunch by District, at <https://apps.sde.idaho.gov/CnpEligibility/Report>.

<sup>5</sup> Compare “2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates [for ZIP 83402],” U.S. Census Bureau, available at <https://factfinder.census.gov/> with “Income and Poverty in the United States: 2016,” Table 1, Report Number: P60-259, Jessica L. Semega, Kayla R. Fontenot, and Melissa A. Kollar, U.S. Census Bureau (September 2017), available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/income-poverty/p60-259.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Id.

Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, Asian, and African-American.<sup>7</sup>

Using grant proceeds, AHCS will expand outreach to families of rural and economically disadvantaged students, students with special needs, and minority students to increase their participation in the enrollment lottery. These marketing and outreach efforts will start with producing high quality and informative printed and online material, in English and Spanish, for distribution via social media, web sites, and to various public accommodations throughout the primary attendance areas and beyond. These materials will help underserved families understand what the unique educational opportunities at AHCS. Targeted radio and newspaper advertisements will help provide general community awareness of AHCS. Further, public presentations and networking with community leaders, social groups, civic and community associations, and public service agencies will open doors to access underserved populations.

**B. Competitive Preference Priority 2: Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early College High School.**

AHCS, with the help of this expansion project, plans to graduate more college-ready, entrepreneurial, and career-oriented students who will have taken advantage of low cost dual credit, AP, career-technical, and other advanced opportunities. Through the Idaho State Department of Education “Advanced Opportunities” program, AHCS currently allows middle school students to get a jump start on their high school classes and gives high school students opportunities to earn college credit and take career technical classes at no cost to the student. The primary vehicle for these early college opportunities has been the Idaho Digital Learning

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<sup>7</sup> About 13.9% of the residents in the primary attendance area are non-white, ethnic minorities.

See “Idaho Falls School District 91, ID (1601530), DP1 General Demographic Characteristics,”

Proximityone.com, at [http://proximityone.com/acs/dpid/dp1\\_1601530.htm](http://proximityone.com/acs/dpid/dp1_1601530.htm)

Academy. Through 2018, six percent (6%) of AHCS high school students have participated in a dual credit or AP course. One of these students has overcome special needs and will graduate with six college credits earned through dual credit courses.

AHCS believes many students and their families don't participate in Advanced Opportunities because of relatively minor barriers that can be overcome with information and a little facilitation. For example, an area student previously enrolled at Idaho State University reported that after applying for and getting accepted to college, she dropped out on the first day after she drove to campus, became lost, and could not find a parking space. She had done the hard things to get into college, but it was a relatively minor obstacle that frustrated her and led her to give up, at least for a time. AHCS wants to increase involvement in Advanced Opportunities by educating students and families on the opportunity and the process, removing barriers and facilitating access to early college and career-technical opportunities.

AHCS will use grant proceeds to hire an Advanced Opportunities Coordinator to market and facilitate student participation in advanced opportunities. This Coordinator will help aggregate resources, build networks, and develop an Advanced Opportunity program to inform parents and students, remove barriers to participation, and facilitate the enrollment process for all students. The Coordinator will develop personal education plans for each student, and collaboratively create a roadmap to help students navigate the transition from middle-school, to high school, to early college.

AHCS will also purchase 15-passenger vans to transport students to the local College of Eastern Idaho, Idaho State University, and partnering area high schools to take advantage of additional opportunities to take college classes and earn career technical certifications while still in high school. Additionally, AHCS will allocate resources to incentivize AHCS teachers,

through stipends, to become endorsed to teach dual credit and/or AP courses on site, in a less intimidating and convenient environment. These measures, along with AHCS's existing program, will facilitate greater dual credit, early college, and career-technical participation.

AHCS encourages middle school students, starting in summer after 6<sup>th</sup> grade, to take summer and overload high school courses, onsite and through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy ("IDLA"). These courses are above and beyond their regular full class schedule and allow them to earn early high school credits. This opens the door for some students to graduate early and receive Idaho's Early Graduation Scholarship, which awards roughly \$1,500 for each student graduating at least one full year early.<sup>8</sup> In 2017-2018, 92% of our eighth-grade students earned at least one high school credit towards graduation. Eighteen percent (18%) of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will have earned at least three high school credits before entering high school.

Finally, AHCS has implemented mastery-based education in grades 7 through 12, allowing advanced students to move at their own pace and encouraging self-directed learning. Current math and history courses are designed to allow advanced students to rapidly progress through the coursework, earn credit, and advance to the next subject upon demonstrating mastery. This program also creates opportunities for students to earn more credits towards graduation than they otherwise could, based on seat-time alone. For example, an AHCS eighth-grade student completed two years' worth of high school mathematics, earning four credits towards graduation, by moving at his/her own pace and showing mastery of concepts units at an accelerated pace. The same student took other overload high school courses through IDLA and will enter the 9<sup>th</sup> grade with eight high school credits. Twenty-five percent (25%) of current

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<sup>8</sup> See "Early Graduation Scholarship" at <https://nextsteps.idaho.gov/program/early-graduation-scholarship/>.

eight grade students will have completed credit in a high school algebra class. If given the chance, many students will move faster than traditional classrooms allow. AHCS will use grant proceeds to fund mastery-training stipends to help teachers better facilitate student-directed learning, encouraging more students to advance towards early college opportunities.

With grant support, the AHCS Advanced Opportunities Coordinator will help remove barriers and open the door to greater participation in dual credit, AP, career-technical, and other advanced opportunities. The purchase of two vans will also help AHCS get students onto local college campuses and into early college classes, as well as increasing access to area career-technical resources. Engaging mastery training teachers will accelerate the successful implementation of our program, and lead to more students becoming college and career ready.

**C. Competitive Preference Priority 3: Single School Operators.**

AHCS was founded by a group of local parents. Its Founders (developers) and its governing Board only operate a single charter school, American Heritage Charter School No. 482, located at 1736 S 35 W, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402. See Appendix E, Letter from Idaho Public Charter School Commission (verifying that AHCS operates only one charter school).

**IV. Project Components & Application Requirements**

**A. Roles and Responsibilities of the Eligible Applicant, Partner Organization, and Charter Management Organizations**

**1. Charter Authorizer**

AHCS is authorized by the Idaho Public Charter School Commission (“IPCSC”), a subdivision of the Idaho State Board of Education. “The Public Charter School Commission’s mission is to ensure PCSC-authorized public charter schools’ compliance with Idaho statute, protecting student and public interests by balancing high standards of accountability with respect

for the autonomy of public charter schools.<sup>9</sup>

## **2. Governance and Administration**

AHCS is governed by a local, seven-member board of directors, primarily comprised of parents of current students. The board is charged with oversight and management of the school, consistent with the terms of the AHCS Performance Certificate issued by the IPCSC, and in accordance with state, federal, and local law. The board has authority and responsibility for the academic, financial, and organizational performance of AHCS. The board also has authority and responsibility for policy and operational decisions.

The AHCS Board Executive Director leads a management team that oversees day-to-day operations of the school. The Head Administrator is responsible for oversight of curricular activities and academic programs, with specific grade-level responsibilities delegated to one elementary and one secondary Principal. The K-5 Principal also presently serves as the Federal Programs and Special Education Director for all grades. A part-time school counselor and an Information Technology Director round out the school administration. In supporting, but critical roles, AHCS employs a business manager/clerk, a school secretary, an Academic Coach, two school nutrition specialists, and several aids and paraprofessionals.

## **3. Partner Organizations & Charter Management Organizations.**

AHCS is not affiliated with any outside charter management organization. Beginning in 2018-2019, AHCS will partner with the Summit Learning Organization,<sup>10</sup> as a part of its Mastery and Project-Based Learning expansion. Summit Learning provides free support, tools and professional development, including a dynamic, digital learning management system, and

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<sup>9</sup> See Idaho Public Charter School Commission, at <https://chartercommission.idaho.gov/>.

<sup>10</sup> See Summit Learning, at [www.summitlearning.org](http://www.summitlearning.org).

research-based content, curriculum, and assessments aligned with Common Core Standards. AHCS will be required to adopt Summit's grading policies, with 30% based on student mastery of content knowledge and 70% based on mastery of defined competencies centered around cognitive skills and habits for success. AHCS will also modify its class schedule to set aside time for project-based learning, personalized learning time, and regular mentor meetings between teachers and students. Additionally, Summit requires that AHCS adopt NWEA MAP testing to benchmark student progress. Summit will provide ongoing mentoring and support, but will not be involved in school management, including operational decisions and policy-making.

#### **4. Project Personnel**

All AHCS staff will be involved, to some degree, in implementing the expansion project. However, the AHCS Board has designated its Executive Director to be the overall Project Manager and asked the Federal Programs Director to be the Grant Administrator. The Board Chairperson will also play an active role in ensuring faithful implementation of the charter expansion project and providing oversight on the use of grant funds. The Head Administrator will provide a supporting, oversight role. The resumes of the four key project personnel are included in Appendix B of the grant packet.

a) Project Manager: James Dalton (Executive Director & Interim Business Manager). Mr. Dalton will oversee and direct the implementation of the charter expansion project. He will also provide business oversight and documentation for grant procurement, expenditures, accounting, and record-keeping. Mr. Dalton will direct all marketing and public relations efforts attending this charter expansion project. Mr. Dalton is an attorney, former business executive, a parent of AHCS students, and one of the principal Founders of the school. He has been a founder of two Idaho charter schools, served on their boards of directors, and

provided pro bono legal services to various charter schools. Mr. Dalton joined the staff of AHCS in January 2018.

Mr. Dalton has served as a federal prosecutor, a federal judicial law clerk on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, an associate attorney in one of the world's largest law firms, and a speech writer to a former Idaho Governor. He spent six years as General Manager and General Counsel to a group of companies where he managed a portfolio of assets and operating companies with more than 100 employees. Mr. Dalton was responsible for business operations, budget and P&L, property management, human resources, risk management, compliance, training, and safety for a variety of legal entities and business activities. He also administered related nonprofit and private foundations, including charitable grant administration. Mr. Dalton graduated magna cum laude with a juris doctorate from the J. Reuben Clark Law School. He has five children who all attend AHCS.

b) Grant Administrator: Tiffnee Hurst (Elementary Principal, Federal Programs and Special Education Director). Mrs. Hurst will be responsible for grant administration, compliance, reporting, and project fidelity. She will also oversee implementation of the K-6 expansion, mentoring, training, and benchmark test coordination. She is an experienced educator with 18 years' experience, first teaching elementary for 13 years, and subsequently moving into Special Education and school administration. She joined AHCS in 2013, during its first year of operation and is largely responsible for the faithful implementation of its charter objectives, building out its academic programs, establishing core procedures, and providing instructional leadership that was instrumental in attaining K-12 accreditation and charter renewal. She serves as the K-5 Principal, Federal Programs Director and provides Administrative oversight of the Special Education department. She currently oversees the

school's strategic planning and school improvement process. Mrs. Hurst is a key proponent of using data to drive improvement strategies. She strives to build a purposeful community at AHCS and works to realize the AHCS mission of creating patriotic, educated leaders. Mrs. Hurst graduated from Idaho State University with her Bachelor's in Elementary Education, obtained two Master's Degrees in Educational Administration and Instructional Technology, and has achieved two Educational Specialist's Degrees: Director of Special Education and Superintendence. She is the mother of four children, all of whom attend AHCS.

c) Oversight and Accountability: Deby Infanger (Board Chairman). Mrs. Infanger will actively monitor project activities, expenditures, and acquisitions to ensure compliance with charter expansion goals and objectives. She will be required to be a second approval on all expenditures, which must also receive board approval. Mrs. Infanger is a founder of two Idaho charter schools, and she was primarily responsible for securing the initial charter approval for both. She has been Chairperson of the Board and a board member for two schools. She taught for a private religious educational system for 11 years and was a substitute teacher in public schools for more than 10 years. She volunteered in a traditional school district for 22 years, serving on various curriculum committees, hiring committees, and on the Parent-Teacher Association. Mrs. Infanger and her husband have owned and managed a successful State Farm Insurance Agency for nearly 40 years. She was a licensed realtor for 10 years, and started and operated her own windshield repair and residential construction companies. She more recently started a commercial storage facility and the New Sweden Corn Maze, an Agri-Tourism business located near AHCS. Mrs. Infanger has a bachelor's degree in business management from Western Governor's University. She previously attended Boise State University and Brigham Young University in Jerusalem. Mrs. Infanger is the inspiration and steward of the

school's mission and is a tireless supporter and volunteer of school activities.

d) **Oversight and Support:** Gayle DeSmet (Head Administrator). Mrs. DeSmet is one of the Founders of AHCS and the source of the school's academic rigor. She is a retired Principal with more than 40 years' experience in education. Mrs. DeSmet is a part-time member of the management team, focusing her efforts on training and supervising the two ACHS principals, providing feedback and executive support on teacher evaluations, student discipline, and curricular and programmatic decisions. Mrs. DeSmet has a bachelor's degree in business, a master's in business technology education, and an Education Specialist degree.

e) **Other Staff.** Additional personnel who will play important, but supporting roles in implementing the Charter expansion include the following:

**Shawn Rose** (Secondary Principal). Mr. Rose is the AHCS Secondary principal and math teacher. He has a bachelor's degree in kinesiology from Boise State University and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Idaho State University. Mr. Rose has been instrumental in leading the AHCS Secondary program into its current mastery-based learning environment. Since 2015, he has been responsible for the school's Advanced Opportunities program. He will be responsible for training teachers and implementing the Summit Learning expansion, addition of expeditionary and experiential learning Activities. He will also supervise the new Advanced Opportunities Coordinator and the new Business teacher. Mr. Rose will also assist Mr. Dalton on marketing and public relations components of this project.

**Lisa Dalton** (Information Technology Director). Miss Dalton oversees and manages the school's I/T resources, including managing the school's networks and technology, including computers for all staff and students. Miss Dalton has a bachelor's degree in business management and worked as an I/T Specialist in the aerospace industry in Southern California,

before moving to Idaho. She will assist and train new teachers and students as a part of the mastery program expansion, and she will manage infrastructure improvements necessary to double K-6 enrollment, including the WI-FI expansion.

**B. Quality Controls between the Eligible Applicant and the Authorized Public  
Chartering Agency**

AHCS's authorizer, the IPCSC, is a subdivision of the Idaho State Board of Education and oversees compliance with Idaho's charter school law and terms of AHCS's performance certificate. The IPCSC provides constructive oversight and plays a critical role in holding AHCS accountable by monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on progress on key metrics and targets set forth in our Performance Framework. The IPCSC formally reviews and reports on school performance at least annually.<sup>11</sup> It has developed a performance framework that establishes academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics for evaluation of our school. The performance framework addresses student academic proficiency, student academic growth, post-secondary readiness, and board performance and stewardship.

Evaluation of AHCS under the performance framework is the primary basis on which most charter renewal or non-renewal decisions are based. Academic criteria focus on quantitative academic outcomes, but school performance is evaluated in the context of our own community and student populations.<sup>12</sup> Secondary indicators include the operational and financial criteria. Operational criteria focus on whether the school is operating in compliance with federal and state law, authorizer requirements, and the provisions of the Performance Certificate. The financial criteria treat the short- and long-term financial health of the school.

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<sup>11</sup> See American Heritage Charter School Performance Certificate, included in Addendum G/

<sup>12</sup> Id.

During the authorizer's most recent evaluation of AHCS, we earned Honors designation in each area, including Academic, Operational, and Financial sections. See AHCS Performance Certificate for 2017-2022, included in Appendix G.

### **C. Parent and Community Involvement**

Parents play an active and very important role in shaping and guiding AHCS. Parents originally convened to create and petition our authorizer to charter AHCS. Parents have served on the governing board from the first day: the Board Chair is a grandparent, and the Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer are parents of AHCS students. The president of the Parent-Faculty Association ("PFA") has a seat on the Board as well. Parents lead the PFA, volunteer in the classrooms, participate in school committees and fundraisers, and provide important feedback on school programs. The current Executive Director to the Board, is both a founder of AHCS and a parent of five children attending the school. Parents play a critical role, volunteering their time and talents to help make our school a place where students can succeed.

The PFA offers a formal structure for parents to be involved in many areas of school operations and support. The PFA is open to all AHCS parents and faculty. The PFA works tirelessly to support curricular and extra-curricular activities through planning, fundraising, supervision, and execution of school activities. They identify and raise awareness on a variety of issues confronting the school, serving as a key part of the school community. PFA meetings are held at least monthly and all parents are welcome to attend and participate.

Parents and students participate in school governance in a variety of other areas, **including participating** in open house and parent-teacher conferences, school surveys and committees, and social media and digital platforms. AHCS maintains an active web site and social media presence on Facebook, which creates an interactive, digital platform for discussion

and sharing information. Similarly, AHCS uses a group texting platform through Remind.com to promote mass communication with parents. School surveys are frequently disseminated in paper and electronic forms, providing valuable insight and feedback to the administration and board on school strategic planning, school improvement, and operational decisions. Parents and students also participate in various standing and *ad hoc* school committees, including our Wellness, Facilities, and Safety Committee.

Community involvement is also an important part of the AHCS governing philosophy. From its founding, the Idaho Falls community has been instrumental in shaping and guiding school design and implementation. Early public meetings were held to discuss charter plans, potential curriculum, and potential facility locations. The founders included lawyers, accountants, realtors, educators, local business leaders, and interested parents, grandparents, and residents. The founders engaged local elected officials, garnering their support. Local media companies, popular radio stations, and billboard companies provided in-kind support. Feedback from the public directly impacted design decisions, including the inclusion of physical education, requiring stringed orchestra, adopting a strict dress code, and incorporation of service activities instead of holiday parties, among other operational matters. Once the historic New Sweden building was acquired and restoration began, AHCS reached out to alumni of the New Sweden School and neighboring residents to compile historical and other information and create a culture of shared ownership in the new occupant of the historic building.

Finally, parent and community involvement has direct impact in shaping school policy at monthly, public meetings of the AHCS Board, where parents, staff, students, and community members can be heard on all matters concerning AHCS operations.

#### **D. Planned Activities and Expenditures of Funds**

## **1. Scope and Project Purpose**

AHCS seeks approximately \$1.25 million over five years to implement its charter expansion project, nicknamed “Liberty and Justice for All.” The AHCS charter expansion project ultimately seeks to dramatically increase enrollment to offer the highest quality educational choice to more students and their families. Doubling K-6 capacity will provide enriching educational opportunity, consistent with the AHCS mission, and increase the likelihood that additional high need children will be selected for enrollment through the AHCS enrollment lottery. Increased enrollment carries with it the need to purchase curriculum, supplies, and equipment to meet the additional demand. Further, enhanced marketing efforts and larger K-6 enrollment will help AHCS recruit and organically grow its middle and high school populations to include more underserved students. Increasing capacity and enrollment are means to achieve greater access to and participation in early college and advanced opportunities like dual credit, AP, and career-technical coursework. Concurrently, AHCS will enhance and expand its mastery and project-based learning program to facilitate content mastery and accelerate the development of cognitive skills and habits that will lead to success in college, careers, and beyond. Expanding the mastery program into more grades will allow motivated or advanced learners to achieve according to their own potential and not based on seat time alone. The addition of a focused business and entrepreneurship program, including complementary career-technical education, will round out the AHCS curricular program in the context of its mission. Expanding access to high quality instruction in business, leadership, marketing, finance and banking, economics, law and ethics, and entrepreneurship will equip more students to understand and access the American dream, particularly for economically underprivileged students. Finally, allocating resources and focusing efforts on providing expeditionary and experiential learning

opportunities will provide exciting and inspiring opportunities for students to learn outside of the classroom and may reach students who are not naturally disposed to learning in the sterile, traditional academic learning environment.

## 2. Activities Roadmap

AHCS requests \$1.25 million in grant support to expend over 5 years, as follows:

### AHCS CHARTER EXPANSION BUDGET SUMMARY

| Account                      | Budget Category   | YEAR                |                     |                     |                     |                     | TOTAL                 |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
|                              |                   | 1                   | 2                   | 3                   | 4                   | 5                   |                       |
| 1                            | Personnel         | \$35,878.00         | \$47,956.25         | \$58,175.00         | \$58,790.00         | \$61,380.00         | \$262,179.25          |
| 2                            | Fringe Benefits   | \$6,834.51          | \$9,723.31          | \$12,081.04         | \$12,347.57         | \$12,838.90         | \$53,825.34           |
| 3                            | Travel            | \$5,950.00          | \$2,400.00          | \$15,420.00         | \$15,420.00         | \$15,420.00         | \$54,610.00           |
| 4                            | Equipment         | \$105,535.00        | \$71,168.00         | \$17,052.00         | \$17,333.00         | \$17,052.00         | \$228,140.00          |
| 5                            | Supplies          | \$41,492.29         | \$64,908.90         | \$97,371.90         | \$98,087.90         | \$91,652.90         | \$393,513.89          |
| 6                            | Contractual       | \$9,910.00          | \$20,050.00         | \$15,100.00         | \$14,870.00         | \$16,150.00         | \$76,080.00           |
| 7                            | Construction      | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00                |
| 8                            | Other             | \$41,991.00         | \$28,638.20         | \$26,387.80         | \$24,737.40         | \$27,087.00         | \$148,841.40          |
| 10                           | Indirect Costs*   | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00              | \$0.00                |
| 11                           | Training Stipends | \$2,400.00          | \$5,100.00          | \$8,400.00          | \$8,400.00          | \$8,400.00          | \$32,700.00           |
| <b>Total</b>                 |                   | <b>\$249,990.80</b> | <b>\$249,944.66</b> | <b>\$249,987.74</b> | <b>\$249,985.87</b> | <b>\$249,980.80</b> | <b>\$1,249,889.88</b> |
| 9 TOTAL Direct Costs (1-8)   |                   | \$247,590.80        | \$244,844.66        | \$241,587.74        | \$241,585.87        | \$241,580.80        | \$1,217,189.88        |
| <b>12 TOTAL Costs (9-11)</b> |                   | <b>\$249,990.80</b> | <b>\$249,944.66</b> | <b>\$249,987.74</b> | <b>\$249,985.87</b> | <b>\$249,980.80</b> | <b>\$1,249,889.88</b> |

a) Year 1. AHCS plans to expend \$249,990 in the first year:

**2nd Grade Expansion.** First year implementation will require doubling the capacity of the second grade using existing facilities. Mrs. Hurst will lead this expansion activity. AHCS has previously doubled capacity in kindergarten and first grade, on a temporary basis, to accommodate demand and to attempt to allow greater diversity into the early elementary grades. This expansion will allow that increase in capacity to become permanent as the current kindergarten and first grade students move into first and second grade. Concurrently, AHCS will enroll an additional 24 kindergarten students, maintaining a Kindergarten grade level size of 48. Mrs. Hurst will oversee the training and mentoring of a new second grade teacher. In

addition, Mrs. Hurst and Mr. Dalton will undertake to purchase another set of second grade curricula, including student materials, desks, chairs, and associated teaching and supporting infrastructure (e.g., projector, computers and charging cart, smart board, teacher supplies, etc.). Similarly, AHCS will expend funds to enlarge general accommodations to account for an increasing student population, including things like PE equipment, lunch tables, playground equipment additions, and reconfiguring storage space. AHCS will use grant proceeds to provide training for staff, including mentors for new staff and associated mentor stipends. AHCS will also undertake a more aggressive marketing campaign to reach more potential students, including traditionally underserved populations.

**New Business and Entrepreneurism Program.** AHCS is hiring a new business teacher, who will help design and implement a robust business sequence at the high school level. Mr. Dalton will oversee this objective, with the help of the secondary principal, Mr. Rose. Grant proceeds will be used to outfit a business classroom with computers, printers, and related teaching equipment. A stipend for the Business teacher to coordinate AHCS expansion into DECA is also provided. Curricular activities will include implementing a required business internship or similar experiential learning opportunity for juniors and seniors, with the capstone senior project involving an entrepreneurial objective.

**Expanding Mastery and Project-Based Learning.** With the institution of Summit Learning to facilitate delivery of its mastery curriculum, AHCS will use MAP testing, provided by NWEA, to benchmark, monitor, and evaluate student achievement and assess mastery efficacy. Mrs. Hurst will lead on this activity, with the help of Mr. Rose. Regular collaboration and training, required and/or provided by Summit, will require additional substitute teacher expenses. A stipend for a Mastery Teacher Trainer will incentivize one teacher to play a lead

role in successfully transitioning teachers to mastery-based instruction. AHCS will introduce mastery learning on a limited basis in grades K-5, using Brainpop and similar applications.

**Increased Advanced Opportunities.** AHCS will expend grant funds to hire an Advanced Opportunity Coordinator to plan, organize, and facilitate increased access to dual credit, AP, career-technical and other advanced opportunities for grades 7 through 12. Mr. Dalton will lead on this activity. The Coordinator will work to remove barriers that keep students from taking advantage of early college and dual credit opportunities. AHCS will also offer teacher stipends to incentivize secondary teachers to become endorsed to teach dual credit and AP courses. AHCS will also purchase two 15-passenger vans to facilitate transportation of high school students to the College of Eastern Idaho, Idaho State University, and other career-technical resources. The Coordinator will network with the area colleges and universities to build a pipeline of opportunity for AHCS students, including experiential learning opportunities. To ensure access for all students, AHCS will purchase “WI-FI Hotspots” that can be checked out and used by students who don’t have home Internet access, to be able to connect to online content for Advanced Opportunities.

b) Year 2. AHCS plans to expend \$249,944 in the second year:

**3rd Grade Expansion.** Second year implementation will require doubling the capacity of the third grade, with some space reconfiguration. Mrs. Hurst will lead this expansion activity. The new 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher will receive training and mentoring, and Mrs. Hurst and Mr. Dalton will undertake to purchase another set of third grade curricula, including student materials, desks, chairs, and associated teaching and supporting infrastructure (e.g., projector, computers and charging cart, smart board, teacher supplies, etc.). AHCS will again expend funds to enlarge general accommodations to account for an increasing student population, including things like

musical instruments, PE equipment, cafeteria resources, and reconfiguring classroom space. A major addition of playground equipment will be needed to accommodate the organic student growth. With the additional students, AHCS will also hire a part-time Art and Music paraprofessional to facilitate the larger art and music programs. AHCS will use grant proceeds to provide training for staff, including mentors for new staff and associated mentor stipends. An I/T stipend will be awarded to account for a significant increase in I/T infrastructure and device management. Targeted marketing to reach underserved students and encourage their participation in the enrollment lottery will continue.

**Business and Entrepreneurism Program.** Grant proceeds will be used to add additional computers to the business classroom, with the goal of providing a full lab experience by year 3. The stipend for the Business teacher to coordinate DECA is continued.

**Mastery and Project-Based Learning.** AHCS will continue using MAP testing each year during the grant period. Additionally, blended learning resources like Brainpop will continue, with the additional purchase of handheld computing devices to be used by students as needed for rotational, blended learning opportunities. Collaboration and training will continue to require substitute teacher expenses. A stipend for a Mastery Teacher Trainer will continue.

**Advanced Opportunities.** AHCS will continue to employ the Advanced Opportunity Coordinator and use the 15-passenger vans to facilitate student participation in advanced opportunities. The “WI-FI Hotspots” will continue to be a resource for disadvantaged students. The vans will also be used to take students on expeditionary learning activities for career exploration, college visitation, and business networking, among others.

c) Year 3. AHCS plans to expend \$249,987 in the third year:

**4th Grade Expansion.** In the third year AHCS will double the capacity of the fourth

grade, with space reconfiguration. Mrs. Hurst will lead this expansion activity. AHCS will enroll another additional 24 kindergarten students, maintaining the organic growth pattern. The new teacher will receive training and mentoring, and Mrs. Hurst and Mr. Dalton will undertake to purchase another set of fourth grade curricula, including FOSS science kits for 4<sup>th</sup> grade. They will also purchase student materials, desks, chairs, and associated teaching and supporting infrastructure (e.g., projector, computers and charging cart, smart board, teacher supplies, etc.). AHCS will again expend funds to enlarge general accommodations to account for an increasing student population, including musical instruments, PE equipment, cafeteria resources, additional playground equipment, and reconfiguring classroom space. A major purchase of additional stringed instruments will be required to accommodate a double-sized fourth grade orchestra class. A WI-FI expansion will be necessary, based on the increased student population. AHCS will also employ an additional part-time recess duty/security staff to help monitor the additional students at recess and lunch. AHCS will use grant proceeds to provide training for staff, including mentors and associated mentor stipends. A new stipend for a Cowboy Ethics trainer is added to help maintain the Cowboy Ethics culture in the growing population of teachers. More aggressive marketing will seek to reach underserved students and encourage their participation in the enrollment lottery will continue. AHCS will continue the I/T stipend, and with anticipated growth in K-5 and 9-12, AHCS will add a stipend for a Middle School lead teacher to assist with student discipline and other responsibilities for grades 6-8.

**Business and Entrepreneurism Program.** Grant proceeds will be used to add additional computers to the business program, focused on 2-in-1 laptops. The stipend for the Business teacher to coordinate DECA is continued.

**Mastery and Project-Based Learning.** AHCS will continue using MAP testing, blended

learning resources like Brainpop, and additional purchases of handheld computing devices. Collaboration and training will continue to require substitute teacher expenses. The stipend for a Mastery Teacher Trainer will continue.

**Advanced Opportunities.** AHCS will continue to employ the Advanced Opportunity Coordinator, use the 15-passenger vans for advanced opportunities and expeditionary learning, and provide “WI-FI Hotspots” to disadvantaged students.

d) Year 4. AHCS plans to expend \$249,985 in the fourth year:

**5th Grade Expansion.** Fifth grade is doubled in year four, requiring AHCS to either purchase or construct (using non-grant funds) another classroom, to be determined. Mrs. Hurst will lead this expansion activity, but Mr. Dalton will direct any facilities expansion. AHCS will maintain the organic growth pattern previously established. New teachers will receive training and mentoring and AHCS will purchase a fifth-grade set of curricula, including FOSS science kits and LEGO robotics kits. Student materials, desks, chairs, and associated teaching and supporting infrastructure (e.g., projector, computers and charging cart, smart board, teacher supplies, etc.) will also be purchased. AHCS will again expend funds to enlarge general accommodations to account for an increasing student population, including musical instruments, PE equipment, cafeteria resources, and reconfiguring classroom space. A major purchase of additional stringed instruments will be required to accommodate a double-sized sixth grade orchestra class. A WI-FI expansion will again be necessary for additional classroom space secured by AHCS using non-grant funds. AHCS will continue employing the part-time recess duty/security staff and will use grant proceeds to provide staff training and associated training and mentor stipends. Aggressive marketing will continue. AHCS will continue the I/T stipend and the stipend for a Middle School lead teacher.

**Business and Entrepreneurism Program.** Grant proceeds will be used to add additional computers to the business program, focused on All-in-One desktops. The stipend for DECA will continue.

**Mastery and Project-Based Learning.** AHCS will continue using MAP testing, blended learning resources like Brainpop, and additional purchases of handheld computing devices. Collaboration and training will continue to require substitute teacher expenses. The stipend for a Mastery Teacher Trainer will continue.

Increased Advanced Opportunities. AHCS will continue to employ the Advanced Opportunity Coordinator, use the 15-passenger vans for advanced opportunities and expeditionary learning, and provide “WI-FI Hotspots” to disadvantaged students.

e) Year 5. AHCS plans to expend \$249,980 in the final grant year:

**6th Grade Expansion.** AHCS will double sixth grade in year five, creating a larger pipeline of students to feed 7<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond. AHCS will need to either purchase or construct (using non-grant funds) another classroom, to be determined. AHCS is presently investigating construction of another building with multiple classrooms, which will not require grant funds. Mrs. Hurst will lead this expansion activity, but Mr. Dalton will again direct any facilities expansion. AHCS will maintain the organic growth pattern previously established. New teachers will receive training and mentoring and AHCS will purchase a sixth-grade set of curricula, including FOSS science kits and LEGO robotics kits. Student materials, desks, chairs, and associated teaching and supporting infrastructure (e.g., projector, computers and charging cart, smart board, teacher supplies, etc.) will also be purchased. AHCS will again expend funds to enlarge general accommodations to account for an increasing student population, including musical instruments, PE equipment, cafeteria resources, and reconfiguring classroom space.

Another major purchase of additional stringed instruments will be required to accommodate a double-sized fifth grade orchestra class. A Wi-Fi expansion will again be necessary for additional classroom spaced secured by AHCS using non-grant funds. AHCS will continue employing an additional part-time recess duty/security staff to help monitor the additional students at recess and lunch. AHCS will use grant proceeds to provide training for staff, including mentors for new staff and associated mentor stipends. Aggressive marketing will continue. AHCS will continue the I/T stipend and the stipend for a Middle School lead teacher.

**Business and Entrepreneurism Program.** Grant proceeds will be used to add additional computers to the business program, focused on All-in-One desktops. The stipend for DECA will continue.

**Mastery and Project-Based Learning.** AHCS will continue using MAP testing, blended learning resources like Brainpop, and additional purchases of handheld computing devices. Collaboration and training will continue to require substitute teacher expenses. The stipend for a Mastery Teacher Trainer will continue.

**Advanced Opportunities.** AHCS will continue to employ the Advanced Opportunity Coordinator, use the 15-passenger vans for advanced opportunities and expeditionary learning, and provide “WI-FI Hotspots” to disadvantaged students.

f) General Expense Items.

AHCS will annually expend approximately \$29,000 in grant funds to provide for project and grant administration and benefits, and travel to the Grant Conference in Washington, D.C. Among the AHCS grant priorities, AHCS will spend 62% towards doubling the K-6 capacity and increasing enrollment at the secondary grades; 14% towards increasing early college, dual credit, and advanced opportunities; 11% towards expanding the mastery and project-based learning and

business/entrepreneurship program; and 12% on project and grant administration and required travel to the grant conference. All fringe benefit expenses associated with personnel or stipend expenses include the employer portion of FICA/SSD taxes and employer costs associated with Idaho’s Public Employee Retirement System (“PERSI”).

| <b>AHCS Grant Expenditures by Priority</b>             |                        |             |
|--|------------------------|-------------|
| Double K-6 Capacity and Increase Enrollment            | \$ 791,369.26          | 64%         |
| Increase Advanced Opportunities                        | \$ 169,579.33          | 14%         |
| Grant Administration                                   | \$ 130,970.00          | 11%         |
| Create Business, Entrepreneurism and CTE Opportunities | \$ 82,426.19           | 7%          |
| Expand Mastery & Project-Based Learning                | \$ 70,480.11           | 6%          |
|  | <b>\$ 1,244,824.89</b> | <b>100%</b> |

*FIGURE 2. Grant expenditures by AHCS Priority.*

### **3. Objective Metrics by Project Priority**

AHCS will measure success, in part, on achievement of the following metrics:

- a) Double K-6 Capacity and Increase Enrollment
  - (1) Double capacity in grades 2 through 6, one grade per year;
  - (2) Improve 6th and 8th grade retention rates to 75% during the grant period;
  - (3) Increase the average graduating senior class size by 40%;
  - (4) 5% annual growth in the number of lottery applications for K-12; and
  - (5) Increase lottery applications from underserved populations to 40%.
- b) Increase Advanced Opportunities
  - (1) 75% of seniors will earn at least 1 college credit or career certification;
  - (2) 75% of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Graders will earn at least 2 high school credits;

- (3) 75% of high school students will complete an advanced opportunity;
  - (4) 20% of incoming 7th graders will take a summer IDLA course; and
  - (5) 40% of advancing 7th Graders will earn at least 1 high school credit.
- c) Expand Mastery & Project-Based Learning
- (1) 100% implementation of the Summit Learning Platform for grades 7-12;
  - (2) 100% of core & 50% of elective classes allow advancement upon mastery;
  - (3) 90% of students participate in MAP testing;
  - (4) 80% of teachers annually complete mastery professional development; and
  - (5) 100% of students have regular mentor meetings.
- d) Create Business, Entrepreneurism and CTE Opportunities
- (1) 100% of seniors will have completed a business internship/experiential learning opportunity;
  - (2) 75% of seniors will have completed AHCS Business Sequence;
  - (3) 80% of Students will successfully completed the Financial Peace Course;
  - (4) 80% of 2-6 Grade students will meet keyboarding benchmarks (2-15 wpm, 3-20 wpm, 4-20 wpm, 5/6-28 wpm, with 90% accuracy); and
  - (5) 90% of K-5 students will have completed units in Internet safety, Netiquette, and Basic Computing by 5th grade
- e) Add Expeditionary & Experiential Learning
- (1) 80% participation (7-12) in expeditionary/experiential opportunities;
  - (2) 100% of 8-12 students have personal education plans, reviewed annually;
  - (3) 50% of teachers will become qualified to drive 15-passenger vans; and
  - (4) 75% of 6-12 teachers lead expeditionary/experiential project each year.

#### **4. Management Plan**

Mr. Dalton will oversee management of the project, with the help of Mrs. Hurst and Mr. Rose, as noted above. Mrs. Infanger, Mrs. DeSmet, and the AHCS Board will provide general oversight. All purchase requisitions will originate with Mrs. Hurst, as the Federal Programs Director, who will confirm that the expense is allowable under the grant, consistent with AHCS policies and procedures concerning Federal grant expenditures. Purchase orders will be approved by Mr. Dalton and Mrs. Infanger, or by two separate Board designees. AHCS will comply with AHCS policies and procedures concerning procurement using federal funds, which are consistent with state and federal law. AHCS will secure multiple bids for each purchase, in accordance with required purchasing procedures, based on the amount of the purchase. Mr. Dalton will be responsible to ensure federal procurement procedures are followed faithfully. Mr. Dalton, with the help of the AHCS secretary, will compile, file and maintain all plans, requisitions, purchase orders, invoices, receipts, RFPs, bids, and contracts for record-keeping and audit purposes. Equipment purchased using federal grant proceeds with a value more than \$5,000 will be inventoried, annually inspected, maintained, and a current inventory list maintained in the business office. Mrs. Hurst will prepare annual and final reporting submissions.

#### **5. Post-Grant Period Continuation Plan**

AHCS has designed its proposed grant expenditures to emphasize up front and one-time costs. Additional, ongoing payroll expenses, like teacher salaries, are intentionally not included in the AHCS grant budget to ensure that AHCS can maintain core programs after the grant period concludes. AHCS has planned to use grant funds to pay certain stipends and fringe benefits associated with grant implementation, amounting to a maximum estimated annual expense of \$81,107. One third of that amount relates to project and grant administration, which

will terminate upon conclusion of the grant period. The remaining \$45,000 in annual stipends and benefits largely relate to training, mentor, mastery, and Advanced Opportunities stipends, which will be sustained out of AHCS's ongoing general state support revenues. AHCS calculates that the additional enrollment organically generated by the expansion, and the likelihood of expansion due to increased recruitment and retention efforts, will ensure that AHCS receives sufficient state funding to maintain stipends for lead teacher, mastery trainer, mentors, Advanced Opportunities Coordinator, I/T, DECA, Cowboy Ethics and Great Expectations Trainers, and related benefit expenses. We conservatively project growth of 180 students over the grant period, with a commensurate increase in state support units (nearly 7), resulting in adequate capacity to carry on the programmatic and training stipends after the grant period. Likewise, AHCS will have sufficient attendance to absorb other ongoing expenses (e.g., van maintenance, WI-FI hotspots fees, and MAP testing costs).

#### **E. Effective Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Strategies**

AHCS students thrive when parents, families, staff, and the community are engaged and demonstrate their support for school activities. Proactive and frequent communication and a coherent engagement strategy is essential to AHCS student success. AHCS relies on and employs effective engagement strategies, including direct and mass communication, onsite workshops and orientations, fostering volunteer opportunities, promoting a strong parent-teacher association, and community outreach and partnerships.

##### **1. Communication**

Two-way, meaningful communication between the school and home is the core strategy for parent and community engagement. AHCS staff meet parents face-to-face at the Fall back-to-school night, the Spring open house, at bi-annual parent-teacher conferences, and at *ad hoc*

parent meetings throughout the year. Teachers also communicate through direct phone calls and email to parents, including weekly individual calls or emails concerning struggling students.

AHCS leverages social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to inform constituents of upcoming events and important information, and receives significant feedback through the same channels. Individual and mass communication through text message, using services like Remind.com also promotes active engagement. Surveys provide another method for communicating and receiving feedback about school policies, decisions, and activities: AHCS regularly uses online surveys to solicit parent, student, and other stakeholder opinions.

One-way communication is also an important engagement strategy. ACHS teachers use mass mailings, newsletters, and Internet Blogs to provide general information to parents.

Individual student achievement is reported through quarterly report cards in grades K-6 and through regular progress reports (every 2 to 3 weeks) in grades 7-12. In addition, AHCS communicates policies, expectations, and calendar dates through the publication of our student handbook, policies, and calendars on our Web site<sup>13</sup> and through events posted on Facebook.<sup>14</sup> Hard copies of the handbook and calendars are also given to parents at registration.

Our Student Information System (PowerSchool) allows parents to access student achievement and attendance information. Our digital learning management system (currently Agilix Buzz but transitioning to Summit Learning in 2018-2019) allows students and parents of middle and secondary students to view and access class curriculum, assignments, assessments, grades, and progress in core subjects and some electives.

## **2. Workshops and Orientations**

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<sup>13</sup> See [www.AmericanHeritageCharterSchool.com](http://www.AmericanHeritageCharterSchool.com).

<sup>14</sup> See [www.facebook.com/AmericanHeritageCharterSchool/](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanHeritageCharterSchool/).

When parents are involved in their student’s learning process, the student’s learning increases.<sup>15</sup> “Parents can reinforce what students are learning if schools will simply provide them with information, materials, and guidance that will enable them to function as teacher aides in their own homes.<sup>16</sup> AHCS believes that it is a partner and resource for parents in helping them raise, teach, and prepare their children for productive lives after graduation. As in any partnership, communication and information form the basis of good decision-making and good relationships. Student success depends on keeping parents informed of student progress and giving them information and tools to help their children at home. AHCS offers workshops and orientations for parents to become informed and to understand the concepts their students are learning in the classroom. Some workshops and orientations are regularly scheduled and included in school-wide events, such as at Registration, Back-to-School Night, Open House, and the Title I Parent Night. Others are scheduled as needed, including training workshops regarding parent use of PowerSchool and the digital Learning Management System, as well as AHCS curriculum (Core Knowledge, Shurley English, Math in Focus, and FOSS Science), math and reading intervention strategies, Reflex Math, Study Island, Senior Projects, College and Career Planning, and other topics. In these workshops, parents are shown how to access information and use tools to engage students at home. Other workshops offered gave parents the opportunity to explore and learn about our computer programs and our Shurley English Curriculum.

The Back-to-School night provides an effective orientation for new parents to actively learn about the unique AHCS mission to create patriotic, educated leaders, our unique American Heritage curriculum, as well as the behavioral expectations of the AHCS programs. Parents visit

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<sup>15</sup> See Professional Learning Communities at Work, Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker (1998)

<sup>16</sup> Id.

their children's classroom and learn about classroom procedures and expectations.

### **3. Volunteer Opportunities**

AHCS relies on parent involvement through volunteer opportunities. In addition to financial and in-kind contributions, over the last five years, AHCS parents (and grandparents) have donated thousands of hours of time to support classroom, school, and extra-curricular activities. Maintenance and furnishing of our buildings, and some grounds-keeping projects were almost entirely completed by volunteers. Volunteers provide tutoring, reading assistance, and after-school club supervision nearly every day. Volunteers help individual teachers with classroom fundraisers for field trips and special learning activities. Community business leaders volunteer time to present Junior Achievement in grades K-5, helping instill an appreciation for business and personal finance among our elementary students. Other parents and community leaders present volunteer assemblies and workshops for our students, including one grandparent who is a world champion, professional rodeo athlete. He and his daughter presented on several Cowboy Ethics ("Ride for the Brand," "If you Make a Promise, keep it," "Finish what you start," and "Some things aren't for sale") in the context of a demonstration of trick roping, team roping, and cattle branding. One parent who is a local artist, has donated an average of 40 hours per month since 2013 to present an Art Masterpiece Program that teaches K-12 students about famous artists and their techniques, and then gives them a hands-on opportunity to try out the technique in a well-conceived project.

Another AHCS gem is our library, which was almost exclusively the brainchild and work-product of parent volunteers. A handful of mothers and fathers, with staff support, spearheaded the acquisition of more than 10,000 books, shelves, and supplies, which they organized, labeled, and set out for student use. The same volunteers donate approximately 20

hours per week to staff the library. It is a warm and welcoming place and has led to a culture of reading among all our students.

The Parent-Faculty Association and an organized group of parents coordinate several sports clubs (cross-country, skiing, basketball, and soccer), as well as Robotics club, Lego Club, chess club, and a popular princess club. These opportunities engage parents in an experiential learning environment, developing skills and creating memories that will enrich students' lives.

#### **4. Community**

AHCS also engages the local community, both in public outreach and student driven community service projects. Students at AHCS glean (pick) potatoes every year to donate to the local food bank – it's hard and dirty work. They collect non-perishable food items and gifts during the holiday season to give to those in need. They send "Valentine" cards to local businesses to recognize them for supporting local schools and community needs. They sent gift boxes to service men and women, serving our country around the world. They have conceived and led several service projects benefiting Senior Centers, Veterans organizations, and community parks. The Choir club performed the National Anthem at the dedication of a new park. AHCS staff and students lead through service, and that community collaboration enhances the quality of life in the local community.

Juniors and Seniors also participate in job shadowing, networking, and internship opportunities with area businesses. Students gain knowledge and experience in career exploration and they build networks of support for themselves and the school. One student's efforts with a local business resulted in that business coming to campus to present on their career field. Another student's activities with a small engine repair shop led to a summer job offer. Another student job shadowed a local publishing company and was asked to write an article for a

local magazine, giving him his first published work. This inspired him finish a novel he had been writing, which he has now self-published. These experiences are not unique.

#### **F. Transportation Needs of Students**

AHCS provides transportation to students residing within its primary attendance area. AHCS contracts with the local School District 91 to provide transportation to and from school and for school activities. Using grant proceeds, AHCS will supplement its transportation services with the acquisition of two vans to transport students to the local community college and area resources for dual credit, AP, and career-technical opportunities, and expeditionary learning.

#### **G. Supporting All Enrolled Students to Promote Retention**

AHCS supports all enrolled students to promote retention through our three-tiered Response to Intervention Plan (“RTI”). The three-tiered RTI plan focuses on nurturing, developing, and sustaining our students’ personal, behavioral, and social skills.

##### **1. Tier 1: Universal Supports**

Our Tier 1 level of support provides all students with research-based, school-wide practices to promote a positive school culture. AHCS fosters a culture of respect that guides and honors students. Teachers, students, and staff model appropriate behaviors and reinforce the “Eight Expectations for Living” found in *Great Expectation*, our character development program. *Great Expectations* emphasizes research-based strategies for learning and behavior management, fostering a positive school environment.

As described above, AHCS teaches the principles found in Owen’s Cowboy Ethics. This content emphasizes nonacademic competencies to instill a sense of character and work-ethic. Each month, students learn and discuss one of the cowboy ethics: 1) Live each day with courage, 2) Take pride in your work, 3) Always finish what you start, 4) Do what has to be done, 5) Be

tough, but fair, 6) When you make a promise, keep it, 7) Ride for the Brand, 8) Talk less and say more, 9) Remember that some things aren't for sale, and 10) Know where to draw the line.

AHCS teachers use research-based instructional strategies to engage students. Our curriculum includes Core Knowledge Language Arts and Reading Series, Shurley English, Math in Focus, and FOSS Science. AHCS Teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities to evaluate student data to drive instruction and intervention.

At the middle and secondary grades, AHCS's Mastery Program provides individualized learning plans and support for all students. Students take responsibility for their learning, in a self-directed environment, where teachers facilitate learning and focus on small group instruction and intervention for students who struggle or fall behind pace. Teaching kids how to learn and to take ownership of their own education empowers students and prepares them for future college, career, and lifelong learning. Students in the mastery program can work at their own pace and path. This student-driven, competency-based program aligns with Idaho's State Content Standards, with added focus on American history, culture, and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the Mastery Program ensures that each student has a Personalized Education Plan, a mentor, and an academic coach to help steer them towards their career and college aspirations. The academic coach is focused on helping students meeting academic and career goals. The Academic Coach helps each student create a Personalized Education Plan (PEP). The PEP gives each student a roadmap for college and career readiness, including a timeline of suggested courses and activities to get them to graduation and beyond. The Academic Coach also works with teachers to ensure that students are making progress and are on track toward achieving their PEP.

The Advanced Opportunities Coordinator will help students take advantage of Advanced

Placement, dual credit, and other college and career-technical opportunities. The coordinator will facilitate student inquiry and investigation of early college options, help students identify opportunities, and provide information to remove barriers to successful participation. The Coordinator might help students creating college entrance portfolios, complete college admissions processes, and identify and select college majors and/or career training or certification opportunities.

Students in the mastery program are also assigned a mentor, who has weekly, one-on-one meetings with the student. The mentor will help monitor student progress, follow up on student goals, and help resolve student and parent concerns. The mentor's goals are to help the student develop habits for success and to take ownership of their own future.

Finally, AHCS employs a school counselor who is a universal support for all students. The counselor helps students on an individual basis with social, emotional, and academic supports. The counselor also provides whole group instruction to assist teachers in developing students' social, emotional, and academic skills.

## **2. Tier 2: Secondary Supports**

In addition to the universal supports, AHCS provides targeted support to low-performing students through small group, research-based instruction. These include our school-wide Title I Program, our K-3 Literacy Intervention Program, and established EL program procedures for any student who may need English Language supports.

a) Title I Program. Beginning in the fall of 2018, AHCS will be a Schoolwide Title I program. Building on the success of our prior targeted-assist program, AHCS will now be able to more nimbly provide academic support whenever need arises. Interventions include pushing into classrooms as well small group pull outs, as appropriate. The Title I staff, and teachers

work collaboratively, in close communication with parents to monitor student progress.

b) **K-3 Literacy Program.** AHCS provides focused reading instruction to all K-3 grade students who receive a score of basic and below basic on the Idaho Reading Inventory Assessment. AHCS staff provides two and a half hours of additional reading instruction each week. Students scoring basic on the reading assessment receive an additional seventy-five minutes of instruction each week. Students participating in the Literacy Program are regularly monitored, and student performance data determines when can exited the program.

### **3. Tier 3: Intensive Supports**

When universal and secondary supports aren't successful, or if students experience significant mental or social-emotional problems, the RTI team meets and identifies individualized strategies to supplement the student's existing interventions. The team includes parents/guardians and considers additional supports, including evaluating the student for special education, conducting a functional behavioral assessment, implementing a positive behavior support plan, and writing an individualized education program to address student needs.

### **4. Child Nutrition Program**

AHCS participates in the Child Nutrition Program and provides Free and Reduced Lunches to all qualifying students.

## **H. High Degree of Autonomy over Budget and Operations**

AHCS, through its Board, has a high degree of autonomy over budget, operations, and personnel decisions, within the bounds of law. As the charter authorizer, the IPCSC provides oversight and evaluates the School's outcomes according to our Performance Certificate and Framework, rather than establishing the process by which the school achieves the outcomes

sought.<sup>17</sup>

## **I. Recruiting and Enrolling Students**

AHCS enrollment is determined by a random, enrollment lottery, and AHCS is committed to ensure that all students have a fair and equal opportunity to attend. To ensure this objective, AHCS markets itself, its programs, and the enrollment lottery in a variety of ways, including the newspaper, local radio advertisements, Web sites, Social media, flyers and posters distributed at public accommodations in the primary attendance area, and word of mouth, including communications to existing parents, vendors, and business partners.

In addition, AHCS hosts a Spring open house, during the open enrollment period, for prospective students and their parents or guardians to tour and learn about the school. Invitations to the open house are widely distributed to parents and students, through our website, Facebook, fliers, newsletters, radio advertisements, and individual networking activities, including speaking directly with community members of Hispanic or Latino heritage. AHCS also provides personal tours of the facilities upon request.

Interested parents/guardians are required to complete and apply for the lottery, which can be done online or in paper format, and in both English and Spanish. The application follows regulatory requirements, requesting basic nondiscriminatory information including biographical information; last school attended, and contact information. Completed applications must be submitted by the last Friday in March to be included in the lottery. If more applications are received than seats available, the lottery is held in a public meeting the first Saturday in April. Students not selected for open seats are placed on a wait list in the order drawn. Wait list students are admitted when seats become available during the year. AHCS does not discriminate

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<sup>17</sup> See American Heritage Charter School Performance Certificate, included in Appendix G.

on any basis prohibited by law and it actively seeks to expand and recruit a diverse student body.

**J. Free and Appropriate Education for all Eligible Children with Disabilities**

AHCS offers a free and appropriate education for all eligible children with disabilities. AHCS has adopted policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The Idaho Special Education Manual has been adopted by AHCS and identifies procedures and requirements for providing a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities.

The Special Education Director at AHCS, the Executive Director, and the Head Administrator ensure compliance with all state and federal regulations concerning special education. All public schools in Idaho are evaluated annually to ensure compliance, and AHCS is in full compliance.<sup>18</sup>

AHCS conducts “child find” activities, including benchmark testing all students three times a year, as well as acting on teacher and parent referrals. AHCS adheres to established laws and procedure in conducting referral meetings, conducting assessments, and providing required procedural safeguards. When a student is deemed eligible for an IEP, AHCS drafts an IEP that is reviewed by the IEP team, including parents, general education teacher(s), special education teacher, administrator, and other contributors, including speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, school counselor, or other service providers. The team develops goals and accommodations that will promote student learning, which are annually reviewed to ensure placement in the least restrictive environment. The AHCS special education teacher provides support to the general education teachers and staff, to facilitate implementation of the IEP and help students achieve meaningful growth. The special education teacher also

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix G (Letter from Idaho State Department of Education, dated July 7, 2017).

provides small group instruction as provided in student IEPs.

Students with disabilities may also receive accommodations at school through a 504 plan, developed by a team including parents and the student, if appropriate. The 504 plan provides students with necessary accommodations and supports to remove barriers to equal access for students with disabilities.

### **1. Other High Need Students**

As AHCS enrollment grows, it will grow its supplemental services for students with special needs, including low performing students, ELL students, and homeless or unaccompanied youth. Our primary goal is to ensure that all students, particularly low-achieving students, receive assistance in math and reading to help them demonstrate proficiency on State academic achievement tests. As a schoolwide Title school, low performing students, including rural and economically disadvantaged, will receive regular intervention when they fall behind.

AHCS has established ELL procedures that it will implement as needed to accommodate ELL students who might enroll at AHCS. As with AHCS's other programs, it will endeavor to give the same access to technology and computers to ELL students and will use, to the extent possible, dynamic, digital ELL content and curricula to meet ELL student needs.

Finally, if AHCS determines that an existing or putative student meets the definition of a homeless student or unaccompanied youth under the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act, it will adhere to its established law, policies, and procedures to give such students equal opportunity to meet state academic achievement standards and equal access to the educational and other services they need to ensure that they have equal opportunity.

### **K. Description of how AHCS meets the Definition of a Charter School**

AHCS meets the definition of a Charter School as found under section 4310(2) of the

Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA). American Heritage Charter School No. 482 is a free K-12 public charter school and local educational agency in the State of Idaho. It offers parents an educational choice for their students. AHCS is a public school, as defined by Idaho Code § 33-5202A, and operates under public supervision and direction of the Idaho State Department of Education and the IPCSC, which is overseen by Idaho State Board of Education. AHCS complies with all State and Federal Civil Rights and Anti-discrimination laws, and is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions, policies, employment practices, and all other operations. AHCS complies with the same Federal and State Audit requirements as do other elementary and secondary schools in the State of Idaho including audits in the areas of Federal Programs, Assessment, and Financial. AHCS also meets all applicable Federal, State, and local health and safety requirements and operates in accordance with State Laws.

As previously described in section IV.B above, AHCS is authorized by the IPCSC and held accountable to perform under a written performance contract, which establishes academic, financial, and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics to guide the evaluation and renewal of the charter.<sup>19</sup> The AHCS educational objectives are set forth in our school's charter, and include providing a safe learning environment, a rigorous education, a focus on Patriotic values, and creating a culture of respect.<sup>20</sup>

AHCS is open to all students in grades K-12, with preference given to those students residing within the primary attendance area within Idaho Falls School District 91. AHCS admits students based on a lottery, consistent with section 4303(c)(3)(A), when there are more

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<sup>19</sup> See Idaho Charter Commission Performance Report for American Heritage Charter School, included in Appendix G.

<sup>20</sup> See American Heritage Charter School Charter, included in Appendix G.

applicants than can be accommodated. Once a student is enrolled at AHCS, that student will be able to attend in subsequent years.

**L. Compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972**

N/A. AHCS does not provide any single-sex education programs.

**M. Waivers**

N/A. No waivers are being sought.

**N. Complete Logic Model**

See Appendix G, containing the AHCS Logic Model.

**O. Independently Audited Financial Statement**

AHCS has included its most recent independent financial audit.<sup>21</sup>

**V. Additional Application Requirements**

**A. Status a Separate School**

AHCS is treated as a Separate School by its Authorizer and the State of Idaho.<sup>22</sup> The school located at 1736 S 35 W, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402 and the Idaho State Department of Education deems AHCS a Local Education Agency, assigned district number 482.

**B. Student Assessment Results**

**1. Idaho Reading Indicator Test**

AHCS assesses students in the fall and spring for literacy, using the state-required Idaho Reading Indicator Test (IRI). The IRI is given to all kindergarten through third grade public school students and is used as an early reading screener. The IRI requires kindergarten students

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<sup>21</sup> See 2017 AHCS Financial Audit, included with Appendix F.

<sup>22</sup> See Letter from the Idaho Public Charter School Commission, dated Apr. 2, 2018, included in Appendix E (confirming separate school status).

to identify letter names and sounds and progresses through third grade, where students are expected to read fluently.<sup>23</sup> Since our school opened in 2013, AHCS has participated in the IRI. FIGURE 3 below displays AHCS IRI data for kindergarten through third grade. Overall, 78% of AHCS students were proficient on the IRI in 2013, 89% in 2014, 88% in 2015, and 87% in 2016.

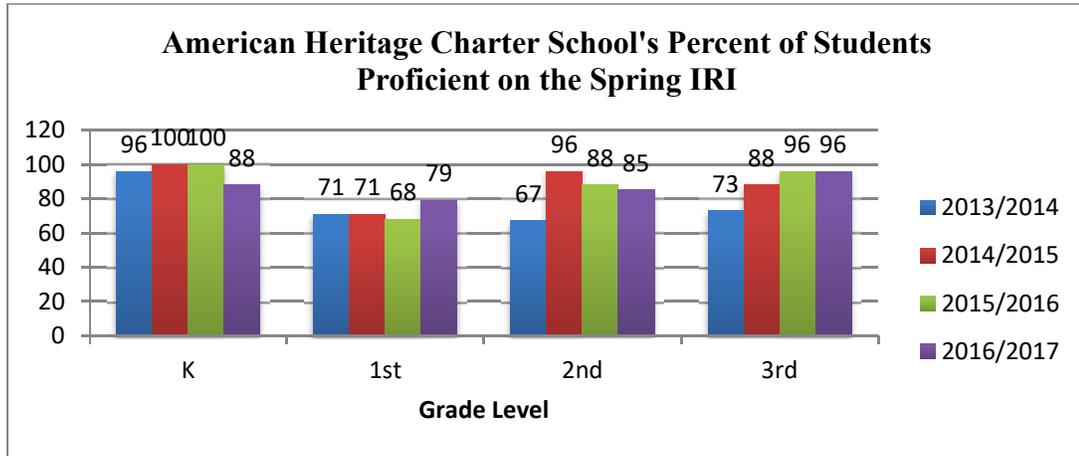
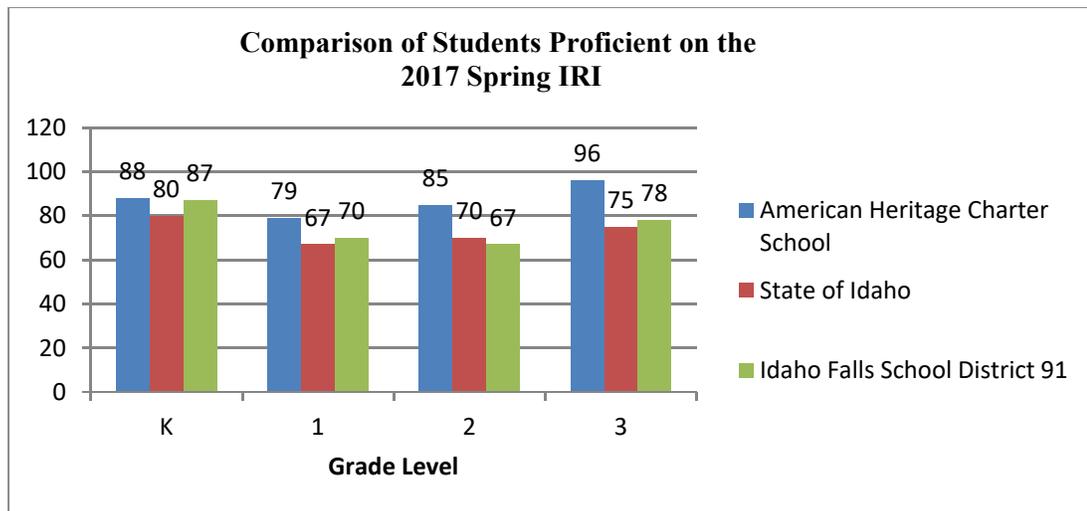


FIGURE 3. Comparison of proficient students on the IRI for 2013-16.

As depicted in FIGURE 4 below, AHCS students have consistently outperformed their peers in local District 91 and the state average on the IRI.



<sup>23</sup> See Idaho Reading Indicator, Idaho State Department of Education, at

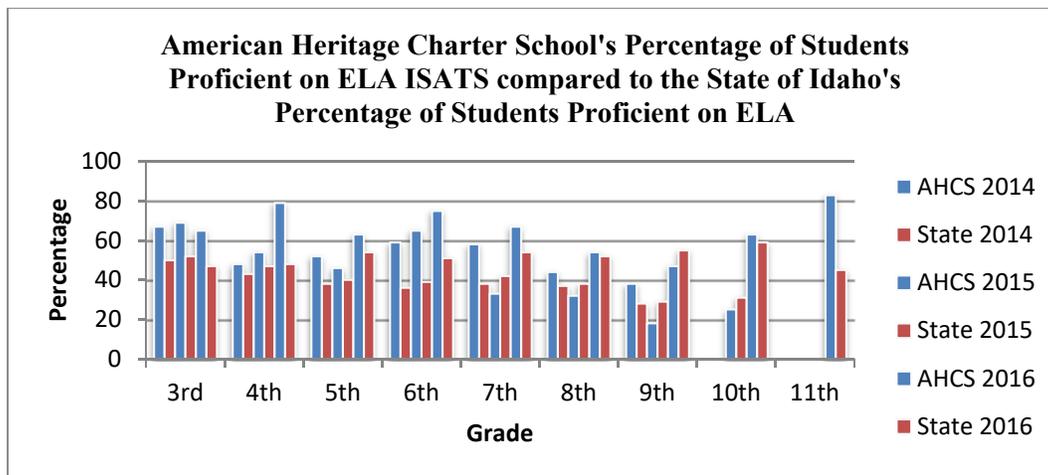
<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/iri>.

*FIGURE 4. Comparison of students proficient on the IRI.<sup>24</sup>*

**2. Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)**

a) English Language Arts (ELA). AHCS participates in the required Idaho Standards Achievement Test (“ISAT”) in English Language Arts (“ELA”). The ELA ISAT is for students in third through tenth grade and measures student knowledge and competency in reading, writing, listening, and research. In elementary, the test focuses on reading proficiency, where for middle and high school, the focus expands to include writing for content.<sup>25</sup>

FIGURE 5 below shows the most recent AHCS ISAT ELA scores, compared to Idaho state averages. Data for the 2013 is not available, because the state set new benchmarks for each grade level. The data shows AHCS outpacing the state average in most grades every year.



*FIGURE 5. Percentage of Students Proficient on ELA ISAT compared to State.*

<sup>24</sup> Student assessment results for each subgroup described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA was not reported due to the number of students in each subgroup is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information.

<sup>25</sup> See ISAT English Language Arts/Literacy, Idaho State Department of Education, at

<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/isat-ela/>.

As seen in FIGURE 6 below, for 2016, AHCS’s proficiency rate exceeded both Idaho Falls School District 91 and the State average.

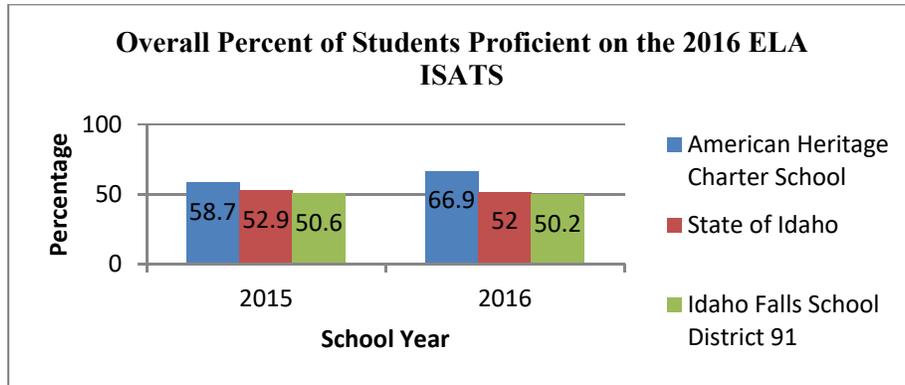


FIGURE 6. Comparison of Students Proficient on the 2016 ELA ISAT<sup>26</sup>

(1) **Economically Disadvantaged Students.** As shown in FIGURE 7 below, 40% of AHCS Economically Disadvantaged Students were proficient on the ELA ISAT for 2016, equal to the State and above local District 91 for the same subgroup.

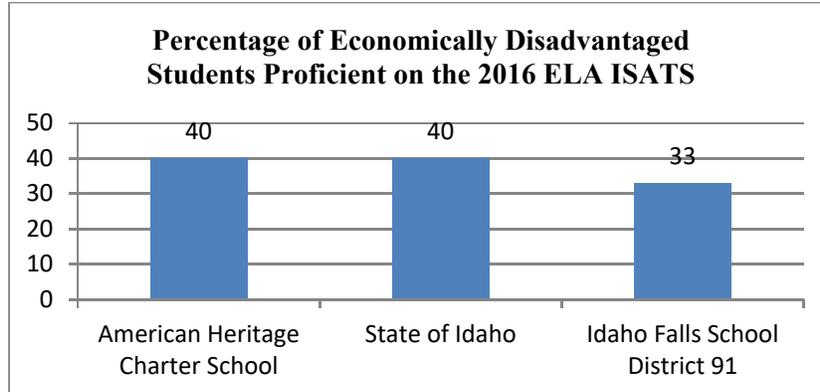
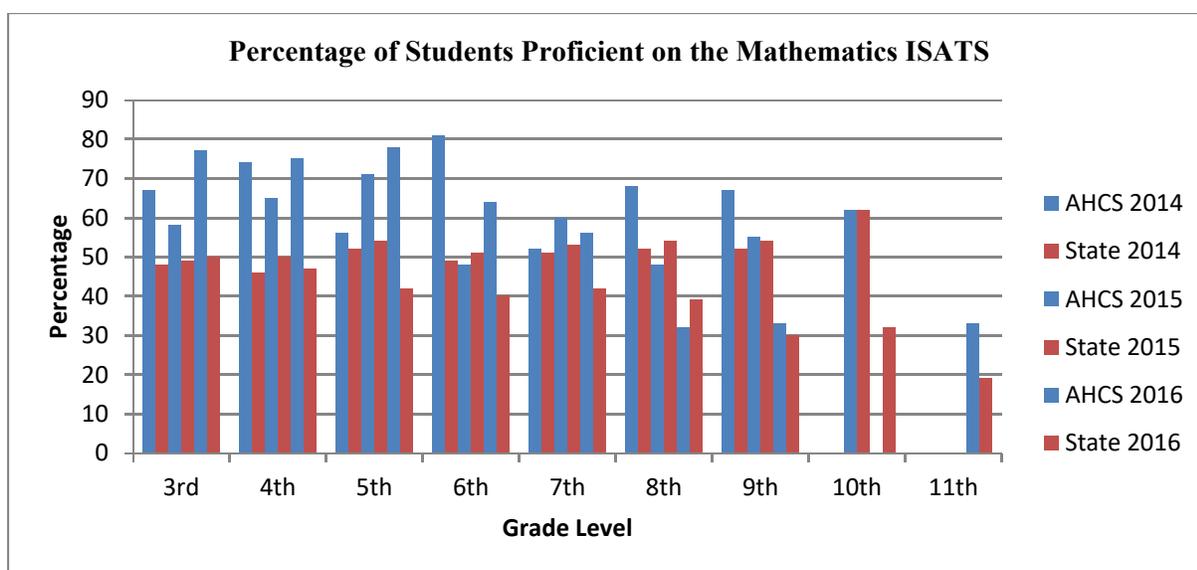


FIGURE 7. Comparison of Economically Disadvantaged Students Percentage

<sup>26</sup> Student assessment results for each subgroup described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA was not reported due to the number of students in each subgroup is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information.

*of Proficiency on Idaho's ELA ISAT.*<sup>27</sup>

b) Mathematics. AHCS also administers the state-required Mathematics ISAT, given to all students in third through tenth grade. The Mathematics ISAT tests student ability to perform mathematical problems at varying degrees of difficulty.<sup>28</sup> FIGURE 8 below displays AHCS's math proficiency rates compared to the statewide average for the 2014, 2015, and 2016 school years. There is no data for 2013. AHCS has exceeded the State's proficiency average in almost every grade level for the past three years.



*FIGURE 8. Percentage of Students Proficient on the Mathematics ISAT.*

Similarly, as shown in FIGURE 9 below, AHCS's overall scores were above local District 91 and the State overall percentage for each of the last three years.

<sup>27</sup> Major Racial, Students with Disabilities, and Limited English Student assessment results for each subgroup described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA was not reported due to the number of students in each subgroup is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information.

<sup>28</sup> See ISAT Mathematics Assessment, Idaho State Department of Education,

<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/isat-math/>.

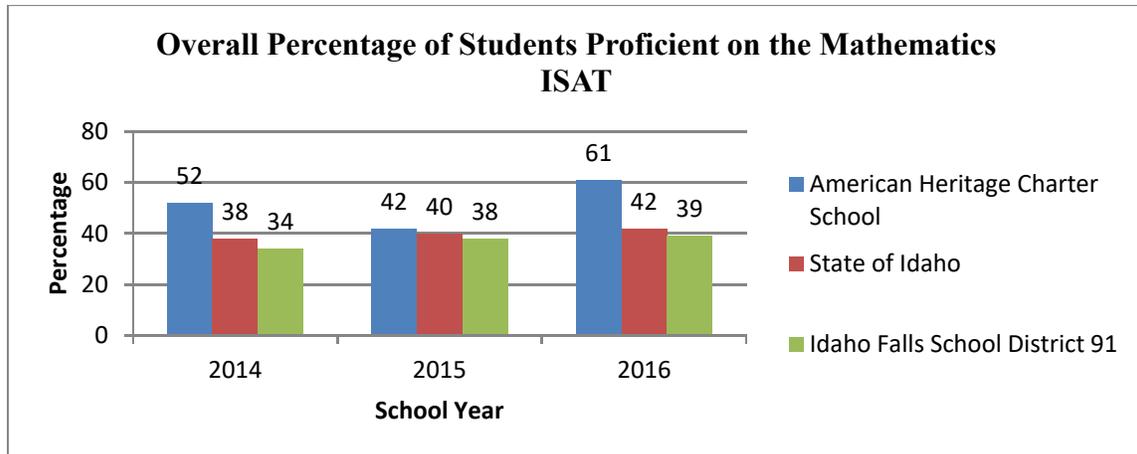


FIGURE 9. Percentage of Students Proficient on the 2016 Mathematics ISAT

### 3. Mathematics ISAT (Subgroups)

- a) Economically Disadvantaged Students. Sixty-seven percent of AHCS

Economically Disadvantaged Students were proficient on the Mathematics ISAT during the 2016 school year. This exceeded the State percentage and local District 91 for the same subgroup. See FIGURE 10 below<sup>29</sup>

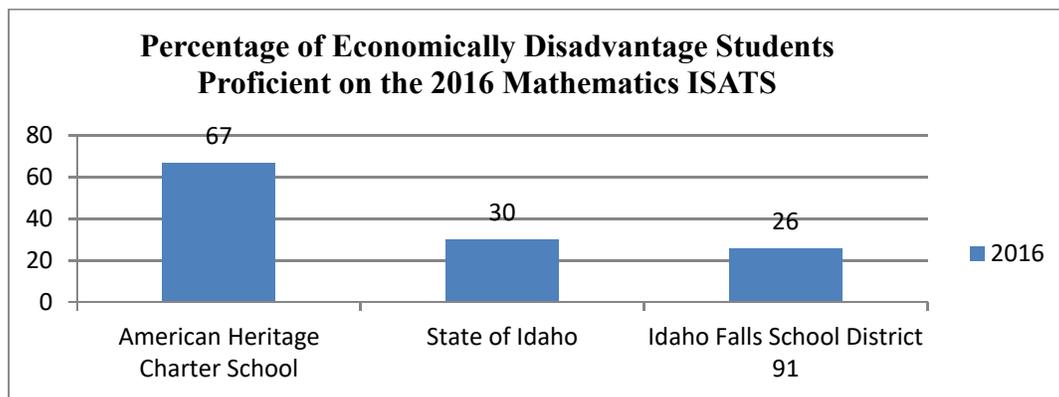


FIGURE 10. Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students Proficient on the 2016 Mathematics ISAT.

<sup>29</sup> Major Racial, Students with Disabilities, and Limited English. Student assessment results for each subgroup described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA was not reported due to the number of students in each subgroup is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information.

**C. Attendance and Student Retention Rates**

AHCS's Average Daily Attendance (ADA) for the 2016/2017 school year was 98%. AHCS's student retention rate for the 2016/2017 school year was 87%. A four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is not yet applicable, as AHCS will have its first graduating class during the 2017-2018 school year.

**D. Significant Compliance and Management Issues**

N/A. AHCS has not had any significant compliance and management issues within the last three years. On its most recent Annual Performance Report (2017), the IPCSC designated AHCS with honor's ranking for academic performance, operational outcomes, and financial outcomes.