

September 16, 2004

To: Georgia Loutenstock
Accreditation Specialist
Utah State Office of Education

From: Al Church, Ed. D.
Principal/CEO
AMES Charter High School

RE: Candidacy Visit
Northwest Association of Accredited Schools

On behalf of our Board of Trustees, staff, students, and parents, we are proud to present AMES, the Academy for Math, Engineering and Science, for consideration as a candidate in NAAS, the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools.

In order to present our program for your review and evaluation, we have prepared a packet of information that describes some of the unique features of AMES as well as those that align with the standards set forth by NAAS.

A. Early College High School:

AMES is the first Utah high school to align with the essential elements of the Early College High School Initiative. Funded in part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and a grant from the Utah legislature, the AMES planning process included extensive involvement of partners that include the University of Utah, Salt Lake and Granite districts, the Utah State Office of Education, and several community partners.

The overall Utah initiative, supporting the opening of 5 similarly aligned high schools, is coordinated by the Utah Partnership for Education, Inc., an arm of the Utah State Department of Community Development and the Governor's Office.

Currently AMES serves 375 students, grades 9-11, and is in its second year of operation as a public charter high school, chartered by the Utah State Board of Education. AMES will be presenting a revised charter to the newly appointed state charter school board in October, 2004. AMES will add another 9th grade class in the Fall, 05, completing our 9-12 configuration. We will cap enrollment at 400 students, anticipating, as the school's population levels of having 100 students per grade level.

AMES is governed by a 7 member board of trustees appointed to three year terms by the Governor. Board of trustee membership represents the University of Utah, Salt Lake and Granite Districts, and local business and civic leaders. In addition, the AMES PTSA president serves on the board as an ex-officio member.

To better inform you about AMES we have enclosed demographic profile (SY 03-04), student publications, and parent newsletters. To further provide background information about the Early College High School Initiative we have enclosed several informational articles, published by Jobs for the Future, the technical support intermediary for the national Early

College High School Initiative, which represents a collaboration of several foundations in addition to the Gates Foundation. These founding partners include the Carnegie, Kellogg, Ford, and Woodrow Wilson Foundations.

Other articles for your reference describe additional essential components of AMES representing the charter school and small learning community movements.

B. Mission Statement:

The Academy for Math, Engineering, and Science, was established for the purpose of providing a choice for students who have a particular interest in math, science, and/or engineering. Our specific purpose is to prepare a diverse student body for early college entrance by focusing on the following:

Rigor:

- High expectations for all students
- An essential, focused curriculum
- Engaged community and educational partners
- Current technologies in support of student achievement.

Relevance:

- Instruction centered on problem and project based learning
- Community connected learning opportunities for all students
- Creative choice for all students.

Relationships:

- A culture conducive to parent involvement
- A diverse student body where mutual respect and tolerance are celebrated
- A staff who cultivate and encourage self-directed learning, self assessment, and self esteem.

C. Desired Results for Student Learning

As an early college high, AMES intends each of its students be college ready by the end of 10th grade. College readiness can best be summarized by the following principles for student learning:

1. Core Communication and Quantitative Skills:

- The foundational areas of writing, reading, speaking, listening, quantitative analysis and use of information technology are demonstrated by the ability to:
- a. express ideas, beliefs, opinion, and facts to others in various written formats
 - b. comprehend, interpret, and analyze written text in reading
 - c. communicate effectively one-to-one, small group, and large group settings
 - d. perform quantitative functions and analyses
 - e. use information technology for academic, personal, and professional needs.

These foundational skills are introduced in specific courses and extended and developed throughout the curriculum.

2. Critical Thinking:

Critical thinking is a sophisticated cognitive process which involves the careful examination of ideas and information from multiple perspectives in order to develop ideas that are unique, useful, and worthy of further elaboration. This is demonstrated by:

- a. solving challenging problems
- b. analyzing complex issues and making informed decisions
- c. synthesizing information to arrive at reasoned conclusions.
- d. evaluating the logic, relevance, and validity of data
- e. using knowledge and understanding to raise and explore new questions.

3. Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness

Intellectual depth, breadth, and adaptiveness is the ability to examine, organize, and apply disciplinary way of knowing to specific issues. This is demonstrated by knowledge in a core area, an ability to compare and contrast knowledge in various curriculum areas, and by demonstrating the essential questions required of several core areas.

4. Integration and Application of Knowledge

Integration of knowledge is demonstrated when students articulate and apply concepts from more than one area of study to a community, professional, personal, or academic activity. Application occurs when students participate in experiences that enable them to link their intellectual development to their own goals and that of society.

5. Understanding Society and Culture

Understanding society and culture is the ability to place one's own cultural traditions in a broader human context. Students demonstrate this understanding by writing, actions, and speech which indicate a knowledge and appreciation of a diversity in traditions, history, and values.

6. Values and Ethics

AMES seeks to foster the development of a sense of aesthetics, values, and ethical standards. Students are expected to make informed and ethical decisions in their personal, academic, and professional endeavors.

D. NAAS Standards

I. Educational Program:

All course offerings for AMES students, instructed by AMES staff, University of Utah adjunct staff, or Cottonwood High School staff, conform with the standards and objectives of the Utah Core Curricula.

(Insert)

II. Student Personnel Services:

AMES employs the services of a certified counselor 20 hours per week. The counselor is assisted by a counselor intern from the University of Utah's Department of Educational Psychology, school counseling program, 10-15 hours per week. Both comprehensive guidance and responsive services are provided.

In addition, each instructional staff member is assigned an advisory group of approximately 20 students who meet regularly in a home room environment. The purpose of advisory is to offer mentor and other supportive activities for both the advisory student in individual and small group settings.

Students requiring special education services are supported by a full-time paraeducator, a contract speech and language pathologist, and contract services through the Granite School District. Students health needs are met by a registered school nurse who serves AMES students exclusively with health related issues. AMES also employs an internship coordinator who conducts a wide variety of campus seminars, off campus field trips, and required 11th grade internships. She is a certified work-based learning coordinator. Three of the AMES staff have their ELS endorsements.

AMES students also have available to them the services of the Community Counseling Center which provides specialized counseling and self-esteem related programs throughout the school year.

AMES also contracts with various community agencies to provide specialized services including physical and occupational therapy for those students who require additional support.

AMES also contracts with the counseling staff at Cottonwood High School for services it otherwise cannot provide within the AMES program; this includes, but is not limited to, issues around scheduling courses, occasional responsive services, and access to career center resources and CHS sponsored guest speakers and seminars.

IV. Library Media Program:

AMES students and staff have access to the Library Media Center at Cottonwood High School. The Big Six Utah Core Curriculum is taught as part of the AMES Language Arts classes.

VII. and IX; Preparation of Personnel and Administration:

AMES employs the services of 14 full-time certified instructors, 1 part-time certified teacher (German), and 2 clinical/adjunct instructors from the University of Utah (chemistry and calculus). One is a tenured professor.

Of the instructional staff, seven have masters degrees; one a juris doctoris. Three are currently enrolled in the USOE ARL (alternative route to licensure) program. Resumes of the instructional staff are enclosed in this packet.

Instructional support staff include a computer lab manager who holds a technical (2 year) degree in computer science and has taught at the technical college level. The para-educator holds a bachelors degree in psychology. The current office administrator has an MBA. The MESA tutor is a retired certified secondary math teacher.

The principal of AMES holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of Utah, as well as endorsements in social studies, reading, and ESL. In this role he also serves as chief executive officer for AMES, a separate independent LEA and as such assumes the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent of a small school district.