

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Jennifer Schmidt-Hutchins
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Fronteras Charter School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2315 N Seward Meridian Parkway
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Wasilla State AK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 99654-6699

County Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Telephone (907) 376-2223 Fax (907) 376-2227

Web site/URL <https://www.matsuk12.us/frc> E-mail Jennifer.Schmidt-Hutchins@matsuk12.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Randy Trani E-mail randy.trani@matsuk12.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District Tel. (907) 746-9200

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Tom Bergey
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

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

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

☐ Urban (city or town)
☒ Suburban
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	47
1	42
2	42
3	39
4	37
5	45
6	22
7	21
8	19
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	314

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 2.9 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 0.6 % Black or African American
 - 21.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 60.1 % White
 - 13.7 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 7%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	316
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Russian, Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %

23 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 5 %
Total number of students served 16

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>1</u> Developmental Delay	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 2 %
Total number of students served: 5

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 12

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	83%	87%	65%	94%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

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

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Preparing students to take their place in a diverse society.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.matsuk12.us>

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

Interested families not affiliated with Fronteras complete and submit an application indicating their desire to enroll their child(ren) at Fronteras. Applications are available after January 15th of each school year and must be submitted by the last Tuesday in April. If by the last Tuesday in April, the number of students who submitted an application for any grade level is equal to or less than the number of openings for any grade level, those students are offered an available spot without the lottery process. If by the last Tuesday in April, the number of students who submitted an application for any grade level is greater than the number of openings for that grade level, those application names participate in our lottery. Student names for the lottery are collected from applications submitted by 3pm the last Tuesday in April. Names drawn after a grade level is full, go on a waitlist for that grade. Names are added to the waitlist in the order they are drawn. Throughout the school year, when a space becomes available in a grade level, the student in the number one space on the corresponding waitlist is called and the parent has 48 hours to accept or decline. If a parent declines, the child's name is removed from the waitlist and the next student name is called and offered the spot. Families who decline when offered, must submit a new application if interested in enrolling the following year. The lottery is open to the public and families are invited to attend. The lottery is witnessed by a Matanuska Susitna Borough School District (MSBSD) representative. Families are notified of the results the following day. Fronteras is proud to have a lottery process that is transparent with consistent practices.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Fronteras Spanish Immersion Charter School is a K-8 public charter school offering a language immersion education in the Mat-Su Borough School District (MSBSD). Our mission is to provide interested MSBSD students and families with a comprehensive and challenging immersion education that encourages a home and school partnership. Fronteras began as a school within a school. The language program was housed inside a local elementary school, and as interest grew, the language program needed to find its own home. Language program teachers and parents got together, wrote the charter, and applied to become a stand alone charter school. Fronteras opened its doors in the fall of 2008 and welcomed 189 students. After six years of operating in leased buildings, Fronteras worked cooperatively with MSBSD leadership, Mat-Su Borough School Board leadership, Mat-Su Borough Assembly leadership, and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, to secure a 30 year loan to construct our new school building in 2015. Fronteras received a Citation from Alaska Legislature in honor of being the first-ever publicly financed, owned, and specifically built charter school in Alaska. Fifteen years later, operating as a stand alone school, Fronteras continues to thrive and grow. Our immersion program focuses on both academic standards and the acquisition of a second language. This makes Fronteras the perfect school for families who are passionate about giving their child(ren) the gift of a second language. In recent years, Fronteras' enrollment includes an increase in Russian and Ukrainian families, who have a desire for their children to acquire a third language. Fronteras is unique, as we are the only language immersion public charter school in our school district. We are a two-way immersion model, meaning the majority of our students come from English only speaking homes. Our students receive instruction in both English and Spanish. Specifically, we do not teach Spanish; we teach IN Spanish. Fronteras prides itself on an academic program that is delivered by highly qualified educators and supported by equally talented instructional tutors. While Fronteras is dedicated to and accountable for providing a challenging academic education, we believe we are responsible for instilling excellent citizenship in our students as well. Fronteras works toward this by implementing two school-wide behavior initiatives: RISE and Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH). RISE is the acronym for Respect, Integrity, Self-discipline, and Engaged. As a school, we encourage everyone to give and show respect to their self and one another; even in times of disagreement. We encourage everyone to have integrity and take ownership for their actions and words, even when no one is looking. We encourage everyone to show self-discipline and do what is necessary for success, and we encourage everyone to be engaged in their work and learning each day. Fronteras staff are charged with modeling the same behavior expectations as well. Each RISE behavior is explicitly taught and repeatedly revisited throughout the school year. A RISE award assembly is held each semester to recognize students who consistently and without prompting, demonstrate the above mentioned behaviors on a daily basis. Simply put, RISE is who they are as an individual. In addition to RISE, Fronteras is committed to being a Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) school. CKH was founded by Flip Flippen in 1990 with the purpose of training and teaching professionals how to build positive, trusting, and productive relationships. MSBSD leadership invited Fronteras to represent district charter schools and participate in a three day training conference in Texas in December, 2012. In the fall of 2013, our entire instructional and front office staff completed a three day CKH training together. We left the training feeling enlightened, rejuvenated, and excited about why we do what we do. Since implementing CKH at Fronteras, our school culture noticeably reflects the positive influences it provides us. Our classrooms are self-managing, staff and students create and operate by social contracts, each school day and each meeting starts with good things and ends with a positive launch, and student and staff needs are gathered and addressed each day. Students are greeted at the school and classroom door each morning, and student names are consistently used. Through community service projects, we are proud that our middle school students see beyond themselves and look for ways they might improve someone else's life. Since implementing CKH, we have helped students recognize that everything in life, both positive and negative, can be traced back to relationships. When you build positive relationships or heal the damaged ones, it's a win. Fronteras is proud to have been recognized as a CKH National Showcase School. Together, we grow from each year's trials as well as triumphs and we value outside program evaluations and suggestions for improvement. As the Phoenix rises out of the ashes, and with the Phoenix as our school mascot, Fronteras continues to evolve and our program continues to grow stronger.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

At Fronteras, language arts is taught in both English and Spanish. English teachers follow the English Language Arts (ELA) district standards, and Spanish teachers follow the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards. Kindergarten and first grade standards focus on letter names and sounds, phonics, vocabulary, repetition, and learning common phrases. Songs, videos, games, repetition, and total physical response (TPR) are incorporated to support instruction and overall student learning. As the school year progresses, first grade focuses on equipping students with a strong foundation in phonics in both English and Spanish, and to have the ability to switch fluently from the unique sounds of the same alphabetical representation. This is particularly challenging with vowels. This focus includes mastering initial syllables, syllable blends, forming words and sentences, and reading fluency. Comprehension continues to increase as students progress through the grades. Second and third grade Spanish Language Arts (SLA) instruction is supported with familiar English vocabulary, for better comprehension and understanding. Various digital resources support overall learning as well. Teacher collaboration is built into schedules to provide time to problem solve and design lessons that ensure individual needs are met. To continue developing phonemic awareness, reading fluency, and vocabulary, fourth and fifth grade teachers utilize various digital and non-digital resources. Instruction is designed to expand writing and comprehension skills in both languages while also integrating the language into Math, Science, and Health curriculums. Students receive sixty minutes of both ELA and SLA instruction each school day. In addition to the ELA standards, middle grades follow a Spanish curriculum designed to continue developing our students' language acquisition and cultural learning experience. Formative assessments are used frequently in all grades to monitor effective instruction and student learning. Summative assessments are utilized to assess understanding after units of study as well as quarter grade evidence. Seventh and eighth-grade students are enrolled in a high school-level Spanish I course with the opportunity to earn a high school credit and enter high school-level Spanish 2 the next school year. Our students receive fifty-five minutes a day of Spanish Language Arts instruction Monday to Friday. Complementary literature resources, including *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, provided by the teacher, have been added to our curriculum to strengthen students' bilingualism, biliteracy, and cultural competence. Our students are also exposed to the poetry genre. They participate in the annual World Language Declamation regional competition where they get involved with other World Language students as future global citizens. Technology is integrated into our program, and each Fronteras student has been assigned an iPad with access to educational apps to continue working on their language acquisition in areas of speaking, listening, reading, writing, and cultural research in Spanish. Our large annual event, the Hispanic Heritage Celebration, includes all students, staff, parents, and community, to reconnect with authentic aspects of the Spanish language and culture. We are committed to making Spanish and Hispanic culture an essential part of our academic journey.

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

Instruction for kindergarten through eighth grade follows the math standards provided by our school district. To instruct the required standards-based curriculum, we use enVision Mathematics en Español. In grades kindergarten through fifth grade, math concepts and vocabulary are introduced in English with instruction occurring in Spanish. Student workbooks are in Spanish as well and used daily to introduce, practice, and master vocabulary and support language acquisition. Kindergarten focuses on providing students with a firm foundation in number sense, learning how numbers correspond to quantities, and putting numbers together and taking them apart. First grade instruction is focused on understanding strategies for addition and subtraction, developing understanding of whole number relationships, place value, and composing and decomposing geometric shapes. Second and third grade instruction focuses on solidifying addition and subtraction, place value, measurement, and introducing various multiplication strategies. In preparing students for middle school math concepts, fourth and fifth grade students focus on algebraic and base ten operations, multiplication, division, factors and multiples, lines and angles, fractions, geometry, and interpreting data. The district approved on-line resource, Moby Max, is used to build student fact fluency

skills as well as to supplement and challenge student learning with individually placed lessons. Assessments in the classroom are completed in Spanish, however students take the state test in English. For this reason, as well as for their ability to transition to an English-only school, Fronteras students are prepared to be proficient with their math skills in both English and Spanish. Fronteras middle school students explore, examine, and express their understanding of middle school mathematical concepts in our target language, Spanish. We use curriculum and supplemental resources to informally and formally assess students' ability to use adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, and procedural fluency to problem solve in both English and Spanish. EnVision by Pearson, MidSchoolMath, and Khan Academy all provide opportunities for our students to build their knowledge through teacher-led, independent, and collaborative activities that promote the development of critical thinking skills and present real-world applications. These programs also help interested students to accelerate their learning and move on to high school courses. Algebra I and Geometry students learn and demonstrate their mathematical abilities via the APEX curriculum and are able to earn high school credit through MSBSD's iTech program. Kindergarten through eighth grade students receive fifty-five minutes of math instruction five days a week. Students performing above or below grade level receive specialized support from our math tutor, in the classroom, as well as in one on one or small group. Math support is offered after school for students needing additional help or for those working on line on high school credit.

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

Fronteras follows MSBSD Science standards and pacing guides for elementary and middle school grades. Primary grade units focus on patterns, observations, and data documentation that includes tracking daylight before and after the winter solstice, phases of the moon, and plant experiments growing beans under varying conditions. Students harvest vegetables at a local farm, partner with high school biology students for a frog dissection lab, grow two types of edible plants from seeds to be taken home in repurposed drink containers, and learn how to incubate and hatch chicks. Formative assessments are often done with BrainPOP Jr. quizzes and partner discussions. Primary grades nurture curiosity, making observations and connections, and hypotheses, as well as exposing students to science vocabulary in both Spanish and English. Second through fifth grades use Mystery Science as the primary curriculum. This program aligns with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and focuses on three units: Physical, Life, and Earth and Space Science. The visual or printed material is modified so it can be taught in either language and the teacher prepares lists of vocabulary in both languages to facilitate comprehension. During instruction, students participate in hands-on activities or small group experiments to practice concepts learned in a lesson and hold discussions to help encourage students' critical thinking skills while the teacher assesses for comprehension. Summative assessments are done in the form of a short quiz. Middle school science is taught daily using a mixture of hands-on experiences, instructional notes, games, and classroom activities. Sixth graders focus on Earth science, seventh graders focus on Life science, and eighth graders focus on Physical science. The students participate in laboratory experiments and class discussions. They also create unit specific projects that reinforce concepts taught. Formative assessments in the classroom include quick surveys, weekly quizzes, and classroom discussions. Middle school summative assessments in science include tests, projects, and lab experiments.

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

At the elementary level, we follow the Alaska Standards Framework and follow the corresponding Blueprint Pacing Guide. Kindergarten through second grades focus on learning about school and community. Third through fifth grades cover the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska state history, and US history. When students enter second grade, they move into multi-grade classrooms. Second and third grade students study the cultural impacts in our community by early settlers and the numerous indigenous groups. Culture, geography, history, and government are some of the themes covered and instructed in both English and Spanish. As students move on to fourth and fifth grade, instruction of the standards is integrated into the Language Arts curriculum through whole units of study. Students receive sixty minutes of Social Studies/History/Geography instruction per day, each week day. During the units of study, we use teacher created materials, historical videos, and we examine primary sources such as historical images from the Library of Congress. Middle grades follow the Social Studies standards and curriculum pacing guide provided by MSBSD. Fronteras middle school students learn about Western Hemisphere, Eastern

Hemisphere, and US Studies from sixth to eighth grade. Our students receive fifty-five minutes a day of Social Studies instruction Monday to Friday. Because we are a Spanish immersion school, Spanish literacy is integrated into the curriculum. The Social Studies textbook is in Spanish and students receive teacher instruction 90% of the time in Spanish. Complementary learning resources provided by the school district, and others provided by the teacher have been added to our curriculum to strengthen students' biliteracy, build their knowledge, confidence, promote critical thinking and class discussion. Technology is also integrated into our program, and each Fronteras middle school student has been assigned an iPad with access to educational apps to complete their assignments, and project research. At Fronteras we believe in offering state-of-the-art education with equity and a variety of opportunities for all of our students' learning styles.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Fronteras Art and Music classes are taught by State of Alaska certified teachers. All students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade receive 47 hours of Music and Art instruction annually, and students in grades sixth through eighth receive 56 hours annually. Lessons are aligned with the State of Alaska and National Visual Arts and Music standards. Teachers collaborate staff wide to design cross curricular Art and Music lessons. Daily, students practice life skills such as decoding, coordination, fine motor development, internal audiation, measuring, community and growth mindset. Music students learn to read and create music while using the Orff approach that combines music, movement, drama, and speech, along with specific instruments and technology to develop and support musical concepts. Sixth through eighth grade students have the opportunity to learn a wind instrument during band. Art lessons support literacy with projects that are connected to books and require students to write about their finished artwork. Students create using a variety of media including paint, clay, batik, oil and chalk pastel, wood, charcoal, marker, and pencil. Students study works of art and music from diverse cultures and are introduced to master and contemporary artists. Schoolwide concerts and talent shows allow students to share their musical growth throughout the school year, and Art students show their work in school, online, and throughout the state. Spanish language acquisition is supported in both Music and Art classes as students sing in Spanish and learn traditional art forms from Spanish speaking countries.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Fronteras kindergarten through fifth grade students receive 47 hours of physical education instruction annually. Students in grades sixth through eighth receive 56 hours annually. Lessons are aligned with State of Alaska physical education and health standards. Instruction supports student growth beginning in the primary years with body awareness and gross motor skills. These skills become more specific as students prepare to participate in team sports. During physical education classes, students work on team building games to develop social emotional learning skills. Kindergarten through eighth grade students participate in indoor and outdoor activities. Special units that support Alaska culture while fostering lifelong learning skills include cross country skiing, ski biking, biking archery, trail hiking, Junior Native Youth Olympics, kick sledding, snowshoeing, and hockey. Students learn physical skills supporting Spanish culture from various Spanish speaking countries including sports such as soccer, baseball, cultural dances, and games all fostering gross motor skills. Other sports units include yoga, gymnastics, rollerblading, basketball, volleyball, and football. Health and nutrition are promoted and taught through physical activity logs that are turned in each month. Students track physical exercise, nutrition, and sleep. Health and nutrition lessons are included in physical education classes and in the general education classrooms.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

Special Note: Spanish reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are integrated into all curriculum areas including Music, Art, and Physical Education. This is addressed in the application's Core Curriculum and Other Curriculum descriptions (1a,b,c,d and 2a,b).

2d. Technology/library/media

Fronteras is a 1:1 school. Every enrolled student has a technology device. Student iPads are used for actions such as research, word processing, intervention support, slideshows, special presentations, test prep, test taking, music creation, class presentations, and online high school credit classes. Teachers use their iPad for actions such as device monitoring, ActivePanel instruction and presentation, test prep, mandated testing, intervention implementation, professional development, attendance, and grading. Should schools need to pivot to remote learning like in 2020 or for snow days, having iPads to take home allows instruction to continue seamlessly. All nine grade levels have designated library time during the week. For younger grades, library time is used for story time and book check out. Upper grades use the library for book check out and unit study and lesson research. Fronteras library volunteers host two Scholastic book fairs each school year. All funds raised during the book fairs are used to replenish lost and damaged books, as well as purchase new Spanish selections and/or staff requested book sets. Fronteras does not have a media center. All student created video productions are done in the classrooms or in tutor offices and shared via our school's YouTube channel. A parent volunteer worked with staff and students to create a recruiting commercial that when complete will be posted to our school's website for interested or curious families.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Fronteras supports kindergarten through eighth grade students who score at or below the tenth percentile with interventions following MSBSD guidelines and based on academic need. Teacher observations and scores from classroom and district assessments help identify low areas of performance. When a student performs below grade level, parents/guardians are notified of the need to adjust how their child receives instruction, their schedule or learning environment, as well as the reasons for the adjustments. Before developing a learning plan, vision and hearing screenings are completed privately or by a district nurse to determine if either may be causing additional issues for the student. Teacher designed and district approved intervention materials are used to provide targeted support in class, while Lexia Core 5 and Moby Max, both district approved programs are utilized in school as well as at home. Online intervention programs keep parents/guardians informed of their child's progress, as they work together at home. Frequent progress monitoring is used to determine the impact of the intervention, and adjustments are made as necessary. In conjunction with the interventions, small group settings, extended deadlines, and modified assignments may be utilized for as long as needed. Our special education teacher schedules time to check in with both the student and general education teachers to identify additional areas of need, and offer suggestions for additional supports. While most students receive interventions in their classroom, our special education teacher also works one-on-one or with small groups as her schedule allows. Parent/guardians have the right to decline out of class support at any time, to avoid their child missing other content instruction. When that occurs, interventions are provided solely in class by the general education teacher or tutor. Fronteras offers before and after school tutoring for students demonstrating difficulty in English language arts, math, and Spanish language arts. For intervention students, this tutoring is in addition to the extra support they receive during their school day.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Our language program makes Fronteras a naturally challenging learning environment for students considered high achieving or talented and gifted by district standards. Students showing proficiency and/or

advanced in any subject area are provided opportunities to expand their skills at an appropriate pace. Instructional tutors provide time in their support schedules to work with high performing students in and out of the classroom. During this additional learning time, and depending on area(s) of strength, curriculum may be individualized and accelerated for each student. When appropriate, high performing students may work at a higher grade level under the guidance of the classroom teacher and tutor. High performing middle school students are encouraged to complete high school Algebra I, Geometry, Spanish I, Spanish II, and/or English I online. Students who demonstrate advanced skills in multiple content areas, may work on material of a higher degree of difficulty, allowing them to show a deeper understanding and apply their knowledge in a more profound way. In addition, students performing above grade level have numerous opportunities to be student leaders in their classrooms as well as mentoring younger students who are in the early stages of acquiring both languages. Whenever possible, students are invited to plan and help teach a topic of interest or do full research on their own and become a resident expert and share their learning with others. The key to offering meaningful and effective instruction to high performers, is having qualified and competent staff. At Fronteras, instructional staff challenge themselves to broaden their abilities to meet the needs of all students, as learning is fluid and some may demonstrate a change in proficiency level; requiring the teacher or tutor to adjust their instructional focus.

3c. Students with disabilities:

When a student has received six weeks of strategic interventions and is not making gains, or is demonstrating significant learning difficulties, the school team requests a meeting with the parent/guardian to share the data indicating that a more structured method of instruction is required. For these types of meetings, our school team consists of general education and special education teachers, school psychologist, principal, and tutors. Our school psychologist leads the meeting and explains the process for a student potentially moving into special education. If the parent/guardian agrees, they sign consent at the end of the meeting. When consent is signed, the school psychologist assesses the student's reading, math, writing, behavior, social emotional, and cognitive abilities. Speech/language and occupational and/or physical therapy concerns are assessed by our district itinerants as well. All of these pieces of data are analyzed to determine if a student qualifies for special education. After all data are collected, a meeting is held with the school team and parents/guardians. When a student qualifies for special education, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is built by our special education teacher with input from parents/guardians and school team members. Student goals and objectives, accommodations, and service minutes are aligned with Federal and Alaska state law and district guidelines. Students on an IEP receive daily intensive instruction specifically designed and customized to their learning needs. Typically, instruction is delivered in small groups or one-on-one with time extended beyond the instruction provided in Tier I and Tier II. When appropriate and depending on severity of need(s), students with an IEP may require a replacement curriculum. An IEP is a fluid document and can be altered at any time per parent request or if a student's performance is at grade level and no longer requires special education services. At Fronteras, when a student exits special education, we continue to check in and monitor progress, and provide support as needed.

3d. English Language Learners:

Content teachers and the ELL teacher meet at the beginning of the year to determine the level of academic language support needed. Regular meetings follow to develop language learning strategies that best differentiate instruction in the general classroom. Modifications and accommodations for individual students are discussed throughout the year as needs arise. Small group reading instruction provides a safe learning environment as students are more likely to participate in discussions by watching peers for clues and verbalizing their responses and questions. In small group settings, teachers provide additional wait time for ELL students to process information, gather thoughts in their native language, and respond when they are ready. The ELL teacher works with the interventionist to provide language learning information and strategies for each ELL student. Some of the programs used collectively, at Fronteras include Corrective Reading, Sonday, Imagine Learning, and Words Their Way. Each program targets phonological awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The ELL teacher, general education teachers, and the ELL parents collaborate to assure clarity in delivering these programs, as well as provide additional tips on what can be done to meet the academic needs at home. The ELL teacher pushes into the classroom as needed to provide language support to individual students. The English Language Acquisition Plan is

updated quarterly to address individual academic needs, language needs, and goals. This document details strategies, accommodations, and goals to be implemented in the classroom to help ELL students be successful. ELL students take an annual English language proficiency assessment, WIDA ACCESS, to help determine the level of language support needed to succeed in all content areas. Other high stakes assessments are taken into consideration as well, such as MAP, AIMSweb, and AK Star. The ELL teacher and classroom teachers collaborate to modify classroom assessments as needed. The same assignment is used, with different expectations. For example, students may write a fictional story, but some ELL students may only need to write two pages instead of three. Flexibility is provided in terms of assessing and grading English grammar and vocabulary usage as well. This can also include giving different assignments altogether, or providing tests with simpler language and definition banks for specific ELL students.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Fronteras staff understand that school is more than reading, writing, and arithmetic. To that end, we ensure our students have numerous opportunities to shine; to be recognized for individual talents and strengths. Music, Art, and Physical Education classes are integral to our school's program. Our music and band concerts include whole group, small group, and solo performances. Student art is showcased during school concerts, student conferences, Kindergarten graduation, and eighth grade promotion. Fronteras student art has been displayed in Juneau, in our state's capitol building, as well as in our school district building. Fronteras award assemblies recognize outstanding citizenship, steady academic growth, improved effort on academics and citizenship, and personal hard won victories. Fronteras' sports include basketball, wrestling, volleyball, track, cross country, archery, and Alaska Junior Native Youth Olympics (JNYO). Our annual talent show provides an opportunity for students to impress with their extra-curricular activities. Traditionally, our first grade students dissect frogs with neighboring high school students, and a more recent opportunity for our middle school students, is to participate in the World Language Declamation competition. Kindergarten through eighth grade students participate in the English and Spanish spelling bees. A student designed Math bee was created for fourth and fifth grade students to show their math proficiency, and our fifth through eighth grade students take part in the Spanish 'adjetivo' challenge each spring. Because it's important for school board and borough assembly members, local politicians, school visitors, and prospective parents to learn about our school from a student's perspective, our Academic Policy Committee (APC) developed the Student Ambassador program. This leadership program requires interested middle school students to apply and interview for an Ambassador position. Ambassador duties include giving school tours, assisting with assemblies, judging academic challenges, designing spirit days, attending district student government meetings and Kindergarten night, completing community service hours, supporting new students, promoting immersion education at local preschools, and emceeding our annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration. In preparation for high school, Fronteras offers high school credit for Spanish I and II, Algebra I and Geometry, and English I for interested middle school students. We are fortunate to have former students hired as staff, and volunteering their time to coach athletics. We are proud of our academic success, our welcoming and positive culture, and for continually seeking opportunities for students to engage with, value, and be proud of their immersion education.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our families play an important and active role at Fronteras. Each family is encouraged to complete 36 hours of volunteer time per school year. Volunteer hours may be completed inside or outside of the building, or off campus chaperoning day or over night trips. Common volunteer opportunities include managing the library, leading intervention groups, presenting in classrooms, coaching, directing traffic, lunch and recess supervision, school maintenance, recycling, maintaining aquarium, managing fundraisers, and summer campus maintenance. Parents, guardians, and other family members may complete volunteer hours by leading after school enrichment clubs as well. Because of the exceptional family involvement at Fronteras, we now offer seven competitive team sports and several competitive academic clubs. School projects throughout the school year rely on parent and community involvement and support. Experts in the field, donations of supplies, and the generous gift of time, have afforded Fronteras students incredible learning experiences. A favorite example is the alfombra de aserrin (sawdust carpet). This project was 140 feet long and used 200 pounds of sawdust. From their studies of Spanish speaking countries, students sketched numerous Latin designs, created cardboard stencils of the designs by hand, dyed the sawdust and used the stencils to create the beautiful alfombra de aserrin. This collaborative project would not have happened without the generous donation of sawdust by a local sawmill operator, the local artist who taught students the natural dyeing technique using fruits and vegetables, the numerous family members who supervised the dyeing process, assisted with set up and clean up, and braved the wintry October weather until the outdoor sawdust carpet was complete. Per Alaska law, charter schools must have an Academic Policy Committee (APC). The Fronteras APC board consists of parents, staff, and interested community members. The APC oversees all aspects of Fronteras, its charter, and ensures that the APC operates in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. The APC works in partnership with the principal as

needed with the establishment and management of policies for the school. In addition to school and APC volunteer opportunities, one of the most significant roles our parents play is offering testimony at school board and borough assembly meetings on issues that directly impact charter schools. Testimony from our parents and school staff have ensured equitable funding for charter schools, avoided a decrease in local education funding, and changed local ordinance allowing charter schools the ability to construct permanent facilities.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Honesty, faith, and trust. These are the principles that define Fronteras' professional culture. We speak honestly to one another. We trust one another's professional judgement. We have faith that during difficult times, we will triumph together. These values do not just happen. They take time, willingness, and dedication to continually monitor and develop. This is who we are as a staff. As the winter darkness tries to invade our positive culture, we bring in opportunities for cooperation and laughter. We create month-long team challenges that focus on acts of kindness. We play games at staff meetings, and we build in time to share personal successes and sorrows which strengthens our working relationships, and reminds us to show grace during the long, cold days of winter. Ownership is a huge aspect of our professional culture as well. Staff have a voice in school decisions, as every decision that is made will impact classrooms, students, colleagues, and our professional growth. In addition, staff generate professional development needs based on assessment data as well as student performance observations. When professional learning needs arise, resources to fund, and the expert to lead is identified, and a training schedule is developed in a timely manner. Certified and classified staff have numerous opportunities for professional development throughout the school year. Staff pursue professional learning through several methods; attending district training off site, hosting district presenters on site, attending state and national conferences, as well as learning from one another during staff meetings. This system offers staff maximum flexibility to continually meet their own professional needs and in turn better serve our students. When immersion and instructional professional development trainings occur, the Fronteras principal participates right alongside staff. Fronteras is a team and we learn and operate together as a team. We hold one another accountable for our actions and we celebrate one another when we are successful. Needs are gathered at weekly staff meetings, and fulfilled as soon as possible. A need is never left unaddressed. As a charter school, we do not have a nurse on staff. To ensure that anyone in need will receive assistance, the entire Fronteras staff completes CPR, First Aid, and AED training every two years to be prepared and stay current. Fronteras prides itself on building and maintaining positive and cooperative relationships with one another, our students, our families, and our stakeholders.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of Fronteras is, "the smartest person in the room; is the room". It is the norm that Fronteras staff are involved in school decisions and work collaboratively on all school initiatives. Leadership is fluid, as there is a vast array of strengths among all staff members. Because of the cohesive and cooperative culture of Fronteras, there is never a shortage of folks "jumping in" to get the job done. Whether it is creating a horizontal alignment of curriculum or developing a new approach to instruction, we have the talent. Our staff works seamlessly cross curricular and cross grade level as the tasks require. Staff appreciates that while the principal is responsible for all that occurs in the school, they have a voice and their thoughts, concerns, and ideas matter. This carries over into our classrooms. Our students have adults all around them that they can approach, ask questions, offer insight, and make suggestions to. Leading by example is what leadership looks like at Fronteras. Operating from a positive place and doing the work together is a common, every-day occurrence. Overseeing the daily operations of the school is the general understanding of the principal's responsibilities, but it is much more than that at Fronteras. It is empowering staff to recognize their strengths, to trust their professional judgement, and to take risks; all things we encourage and hope for our students. Building positive and trusting relationships and keeping staff and students engaged in our school is paramount. Unfortunately, in today's educational world, school safety is becoming more and more crucial. We recognize the connection between students feeling safe and student learning. Ensuring school safety is a responsibility that the entire staff takes ownership of. Staff are trained in both Initial Response Strategies and ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate), both of which train prevention and countering an active shooter event. Because of the honest conversations and

simulated intruder drills, Fronteras students feel safe and cared for. The combination of feeling safe and possessing the knowledge of what to do should an unfortunate event occur, creates a confident and calm learning and working environment for all. Student and staff celebrations are standard practice. We recognize, appreciate, and acknowledge effort, kindness, and personal successes. A key characteristic of the leadership at Fronteras is the open-door policy and being visible and accessible from the beginning of the day until the end.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

By design, our school is culturally responsive. As a language program, we seek educational experiences that support linguistic, cultural, and academic development in English and Spanish, and that help deepen our students' appreciation of their own and other cultures. During content units of study, students have the opportunity to become a resident expert and share their personal experiences and family traditions with peers. When students travel with family, they are encouraged to create a presentation to share upon their return. One of our best attended community activities and school events is our annual Hispanic Heritage Celebration. From September to October, Fronteras students and staff are immersed in the traditions, education, geography, food, and governmental systems of the twenty-two Spanish speaking countries. The day-long community final ceremony showcases each country with songs, dances, speeches, games, artwork, poetry, fashion shows, and skits. Students make the countries come alive for the audience. Built into the program is a traditional dance performed by Fronteras staff. While students simply see their teachers, principal, and tutors doing intricate Latin steps together, staff see an opportunity to show students that even adults have to step out of their comfort zone to learn new things. Parents are a huge part of this production, as they provide class presentations, choreography, cooking lessons, costume sewing, and song accompaniment to name a few. Previously, our local high school JROTC opened our ceremony with the presentation of the American and Alaska flags in full tradition. This year, a staff member and Army veteran, worked with our eighth grade students to learn proper dress and command, flag handling and carrying, and entering and exiting protocols to prepare them to present the flags and open the ceremony. Seeing our students present the flags was incredibly emotional and is still talked about as one of the celebration's highlights. An added bonus and thing of beauty was our teacher who signed, while the Star-Spangled Banner and the Alaska Flag song were sung. In addition to honoring the cultures of 22 Spanish speaking countries, we embrace our families whose native language is not English. Our Russian and Ukraine families eagerly share their home traditions, dress, music, and food in our classrooms as well as through our Art, Music, and Physical Education classes and programs. Songs of many languages are a goal of our music program, as each time our students learn about other countries and cultures, it builds compassion for others, broadens understanding, and strengthens student learning and our school's purpose.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The one practice that is most instrumental in our school's success, is knowing that we are never done. There is always more we can do and there is always room for improvement. We continually evaluate our school culture, the learning environment we offer, and the education our students receive. Identifying short comings and working together to improve is an area in which we excel as a school. The key to our improvement process is having all staff members involved and ground rules in place. Everyone has a voice and all ideas are welcome, and we do not take comments, suggestions, or observations personally. Our improvement cycle is constant. For frequent check-ins to evaluate student performance and instructional effectiveness, we list Glows and Grows. Glows are the things working well, yet still require monitoring; and Grows are the things that need to be modified or removed altogether to benefit student learning or school culture.

Periodically throughout the school year, we schedule longer periods of time to do a deep dive into the effectiveness of the instructional strategies in place. During these deep dives we examine our practices to ensure that we are providing enough instructional minutes in the target language, that the target language standards are appropriate in each grade level, that we are honoring both languages, that instructional fidelity is evident in the classrooms, that the interventions and supports in place for both languages are improving student learning, and what we will do if not. We examine that the work we assign is purposeful, engaging, and moving students forward, and that we are offering experiences that build upon, challenge, and expand student knowledge. With our CKH social contract guiding us and our ground rules in place our collaborative work sessions are productive, positive, and ultimately improve student learning and language acquisition. We work hard to avoid doing the same thing and expecting different results. To that end, we don't know what we don't know. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes dedicated professionals to improve a school's performance. Internal knowledge and discussions as well as external program reviews help us identify program weaknesses, strengths, and specific professional development needs. To maintain improvement and growth, we do not shy away from program evaluations, but instead seek and invite suggestions for improvement.