Application for T-STEM Designation - New/Provisional

2016-2017

Contents

Texas Education Agency
Application for T-STEM Designation
Statutory Authority: Texas Education Code §39.235

Overview of Designation

In order to operate as a Texas Education Agency (TEA)-approved Texas - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (T-STEM) Academy, a district must seek and receive T-STEM designation from TEA. In order to receive the T-STEM designation, a school must exhibit key traits from the T-STEM Academy Design Blueprint included in this application. The intent of this designation is to ensure that districts operating T-STEM Academies: integrate all the key characteristics of well-researched and well-designed STEM education while serving students who may not have otherwise considered the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.

Benefits of Designation

Recognition as an Approved T-STEM Academy:
Schools designated by TEA as state-approved T-STEM Academies will receive various forms of media recognition including, but not limited to: identification on TEA's website as a state-approved T-STEM Academy and recognition in press releases.

Participation in T-STEM Convenings:
Special events hosted by TEA for T-STEM Academy administrators and principals to provide input on policies and procedures that impact T-STEM Academies.

Membership in the T-STEM Network:
Frequently opportunities are provided for principals, teachers, and students in designated T-STEM Academies through the T-STEM network to share best practices through conferences and technical assistance sessions. Membership in the T-STEM Network allows T-STEM Academies to access online exemplars, professional development, and webinars.

Access to Professional Development and Technical Assistance:
Designated T-STEM academies will have access to high-quality technical assistance which includes advice and information from a Leadership Coach who has successfully facilitated the design and implementation of the majority of T-STEM Academies operating in Texas.

Strength of T-STEM Model:

- Through the designation process, TEA will recognize those T-STEM Academies that effectively incorporate T-STEM Design Blueprint elements. The designation process will enable districts and their partners to engage in the research and planning necessary to ensure that their T-STEM Academies are set up in the most effective way possible.
- The T-STEM Blueprint provides a framework for T-STEM Academies to access college and career opportunities that support post secondary success.

Questions about Completing the Application

Who can fill out a T-STEM Academy designation application?

Any district or charter school campus may apply to be designated as a T-STEM Academy. Potential applicants are encouraged to carefully review the T-STEM Design Blueprint to determine readiness for implementation of the model.

Will have to fill out the same application each year?

No. New designation applicants and those T-STEM Academies that are provisionally designated will complete the comprehensive form. T-STEM Academies that are fully designated must complete the abbreviated T-STEM designation application yearly. The abbreviated renewal application will require a designated T-STEM Academy to provide updates regarding changes in the design and operation of the Academy. However, the primary focus of the annual renewal will be to gather evidence on the Academy's progress along the T-STEM Academy Design Blueprint continuum.

Will this application be required for T-STEM Academy grantees in the future?

Yes. In future funding cycles, completion of this application will be a program requirement for T-STEM Academy grant recipients.

Who can I contact for help filling out this application?

- **New applicants** may contact the T-STEM Program Manager at tstem@tea.state.tx.us.
- **2016-2017 designated T-STEM Academies** may contact their current T-STEM coach.

Application Information

General Information:

- A district or charter must submit a separate application with the required attachments on behalf of each proposed T-STEM Academy.
- The application must be submitted via the online system by **5:00pm, March 4th, 2016**
- A campus must be designated prior to the beginning of the school year in order to operate as a T-STEM Academy for that year. T-STEM Academy approval is valid for a maximum of one year. T-STEM Academy designated must be applied for each year via the TEA T-STEM designation process.

Timeline & Process:

- March 4th, 2016: Applications are due to TEA in order to open a campus as a designated T-STEM Academy during the 2016-2017 school year.
- June 2016: Districts submitting applications by March 4th, 2016 will be notified of the selection or non-selection of the campus as a designated T-STEM Academy on or about June 2016. Applications submitted prior to the March 4th, 2016 deadline may be approved prior to June 2016.
- The district will receive a notification letter of selection or non-selection for each campus it proposes to operate as a T-STEM Academy.

Required Attachments:

- **Official signature:** Official signature of a district or charter official authorized by the local board to bind the applicant organization in a legally binding contractual agreement.

Required Supporting Documents:

- The Academy must have current versions of the following documents on file.
- Each applicant is required to provide an assurance that each of the supporting documents is current for the 2016-2017 school year, signed by all parties, and provides detailed information regarding the specific assurance.
  - **Dual Credit MOU**
  - **Professional Development Plan**
  - **Business/Industry Agreement**
  - **2016-2017 Master Schedule**

Questions:

T-STEM Program Manager
tstem@tea.state.tx.us

Required T-STEM Academy Design Program Elements

The following design elements are the minimum requried components that must be demonstrated through this application in order to be designated as a T-STEM Academy:

- The T-STEM Academy must serve grades 9 through 12 and may serve grades 6, 7, and 8.
- A campus must be designated prior to the beginning of the school year in order to operate as a T-STEM Academy for that year. T-STEM Academy approval is valid for a maximum of one year. T-STEM Academy designated must be applied for each year via the TEA T-STEM designation process.

I. Mission Driven Leadership:

- The Academy's mission statement and planned advisory board must reflect the mission and vision of the T STEM Initiative.
- The Academy must use program review and formative evaluation to achieve its mission and goals.
- The Academy must promote leadership development and collaboration within the Academy and T-STEM Network.
- For Academies that include 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, leadership teams from the middle school and high school must collaborate on a regular basis.

II. Academy Culture and Design:

- The T-STEM culture must foster positive student identities through meaningful adult and peer relationships.
- All students graduating from the Academy must be prepared for postsecondary coursework and careers in the STEM fields through the integration of the Governor's economic workforce clusters and AchieveTexas STEM cluster into the curriculum.
- The Academy must support all students to graduate high school with four years of math, four years of science, four years of STEM electives, an Endorsement (with a primary focus on STEM endorsements), and a Performance Acknowledgement for a Distinguished Level of Achievement.

III. Student Access, Success,and Persistence:

- The Academy must have a clear plan for student support and success to achieve persistence rates above 70%.
- The Academy must instill the expectation that students expand their participation and leadership in STEM activities outside the classroom and provide the opportunity to do so.

IV. Teacher Selection,Development, and Retention:

- The Academy faculty must possess extensive subject knowledge and integrate project based learning (PBL) and STEM pedagogy into the classroom.
- The Academy must adopt and implement a plan for sustained professional development.

Required T-STEM Academy Design Program Elements cont.

V. Curriculum.Instruction.and Assessment:

- The Academy must align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to provide students with rigorous STEM focused instruction.
- The Academy must deliver Innovative STEM programs that are well-defined, embed critical thinking and problem solving, foster innovation and invention, and are aligned to state and/or national standards, and industry expectations.
- The Academy must integrate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics throughout the curriculum.
- The Academy must continually monitor student progress through assessments and data collection.
- The Academy must promote STEM literacy and prepare students with 21st Century skills.
- The Academy must support three years of STEM electives at middle school and four years of STEM electives at high school.

VI .Strategic Alliances:

- The Academy must promote family involvement in student success.
- The Academy must integrate business partnerships into the curriculum and student learning experience.
- The Academy must partner with IHEs and college/career-preparation entities to ensure that students graduate with college credits and prepared for postsecondary success.

VII. Sustainability and Advancement:

- The Academy must have a plan for continuous improvement and growth.
- The Academy must adopt and implement a plan for sustained professional development.

Scoring of the Application

- Each applicant will be reviewed by T-STEM subject-matter experts from across the state.
- New applicants will be reviewed based on the proposed plan and a follow up with the applicant, if necessary.
- Each applicant will receive a notification letter from TEA indicating which designation category it has been assigned: Designated, Provisionally Designated, or Denied.
- The T-STEM Academy Design Blueprint has been consolidated in the application to highlight priorities for the planning period of designation. Applicants should focus on the benchmarks presented in answering the questions.

PART 1: CONTACTS

1.1 T-STEM Academy

T-STEM Academy Name	Raul Yzaguirre School for Success K-12
County District Campus Number	101806001
Mailing Address - Line 1	2950 Broadway
Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City	Houston
Mailing Zip Code	77017

1.2 School District

School District name	Raul Yzaguirre School for Success
Mailing Address - Line 1	2950 Broadway
Mailing Address - Line 2	
Mailing City	Houston
Mailing Zip Code	77017

1.3 Education Service Center Region

04

1.4 Person Completing this Application

First Name	Alma
Initial	
Last Name	Perez-Silva
Title	Director of Education K-12, Principal
Phone	(713) 640-3700
Email	perezsilva@tejanocenter.org

1.5 Academy Principal/Director

First Name	Alma
Initial	
Last Name	Perez-Silva
Title	Director of Education K-12, Principal
Phone	(713) 640-3700
Email	perezsilva@tejanocenter.org

1.6 Superintendent

First Name	Adriana
Initial	
Last Name	Tamez
Phone	(713) 370-3789
Email	adrianatamez@tejanocenter.org

1.7 T-STEM Academy Partner Information

IHE Partner	Houston Community College
STEM Business Community Industry Partner	Baylor College of Medicine

---

1.8 Authorized School District or Charter Official

First Name	Manuel
Initial	
Last Name	Lopez
Title	CEO-President
Phone	(713) 640-3728
Email	ManuelLopez@tejanocenter.org
Signature	(Attached)

PART 2: BACKGROUND

2.0 Is your campus currently designated as an Early College High School (ECHS) through the TEA ECHS designation process? Yes

2.1 First year of Academy Operation 2014

2.2 Years in Operation 2

2.3 Academy Model:
What is the design of the T-STEM Academy requesting designation? Stand-Alone Academy - All students on the campus are enrolled in the T-STEM Academy

---

2.4 Target Population

Grades of students to be served	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	Total Enrollment
2016-2017 projected enrollment	100	100	100	120	100	65	60	645
2015-2016 enrollment (if designated in the 2015-2016 school year)	100	95	115	84	71	53	68	586

PART 3: BENCHMARKS

T-STEM Blueprint Instructions

The T-STEM Academy Design Blueprint consists of seven benchmarks that drive the success of an Academy. Each benchmark highlights program requirements and offers a rubric score of developing, implementing, mature, or role model. T-STEM Academies use this tool to measure growth and progress along the continuum.

All seven benchmarks are included in the application. However, applicants may notice the program requirements are not numbered sequentially. This is because not all program requirements are included in the Designation Application. Applicants are not expected to meet or even consider all program requirements at this stage in the process. Instead, those program requirements that form the building blocks of a successful designated Academy are included in the Designation Application. Focused consideration of those particular program requirements will mean a successful applicant will have a strong foundation as a designated T-STEM Academy. The technical assistance that comes as a result of designation will allow the designated Academy to implement the Blueprint Benchmarks' full program requirements over time.

Benchmarks 1-4, 6 & 7
Applicants should first review the program requirements for each benchmark presented in the body of the application. The questions that follow pertain to those specific requirements (i.e. Benchmark 1 questions pertain to Benchmark 1 program requirements). Applicant responses should reflect a close consideration of the highlighted rubric areas in the context of what the campus has in place currently and could feasibly implement during the first designated year. Applications will be scored on the response's evident understanding of the continuum of growth along the rubric, evidence of existing programs, and feasible plan to move forward for each requirement.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Applicants should review the program requirements presented in each section and rate the campus's existing system in the rubric's check boxes. Applicants are then asked to justify the ratings with evidence, reflection, and a plan to move forward, bearing in mind that with designation comes the tools and assistance necessary to progress along the continuum. Successful applicants will reflect an understanding of Benchmark 5 and are not necessarily expected to have all elements in place before designation.

Benchmark 1: Mission-Driven Leadership

Program Requirements

1.2.C.	Develops and demonstrates support from an advisory board (AB) consisting of representatives from the Academy, school board, district, community, higher education, and STEM businesses to support and guide facility requirements, resource acquisition, curriculum development, internship, externships, and student/community outreach to ensure a successful 6-20 STEM academic and career pipeline.
1.3.A.	Integrates and assesses the level of mission-driven and data-driven decision making evident in the daily work of the Academy.
1.4.A.	For 6-12 campuses, middle school and high school leadership teams regularly collaborate to advance 6-12 alignment and student retention in STEM.

Key Elements for Success

- Job descriptions and roles for design team, leadership team, and advisory board
- Mission is posted and can be articulated by teachers, staff, students, key stakeholders, etc.
- MOUs with T-STEM Centers

	Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
1.2.C.	Advisory Board (AB) established.	AB positions and subcommittees are identified.	AB develops innovative and creative approaches to support Academy mission and vision.	AB addresses major shifts in STEM, educational standards, industry expectations, and analyzes SWOT of Academy, resulting in measurable action items.
1.3.A.	Little or no evidence of data-driven and mission-driven decision making.	Data is used to design student interventions, Annual Action Plan (AAP), and to inform teaching and learning aligned to the mission.	Teachers work interdependently as teams to review data across content areas, develop targeted interventions, and develop common formative assessments.	The Academy's continual analysis of results for improvement is critical to the school's system of interventions and culture of celebration.
1.4.A.	Academy leadership occasionally collaborates with each other (6th - 12th), with T-STEM centers, and T-STEM Coaches.	Academy leaders and staff collaborate with each other (6th - 12th), and with T-STEM Centers and Coaches to integrate STEM teacher preparation, teaching, and learning. *And meets criteria from Developing*	Academy plans with regional T-STEM Center, vertical alignment teams 6th - 12th (at least quarterly), and meets with their T-STEM Coach, virtually or Face-to-Face (at least monthly). *And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	Academy dialogues on a regular, ongoing basis in vertical alignment teams (6th - 12th), with T-STEM Centers and Coaches, and utilizes available T-STEM resources to improve student achievement and teacher preparation. *And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature*

Benchmark 1: Mission-Driven Leadership

- Program Requirement 1.3.A. addresses the use of data to drive design, decision making, and program review in a T-STEM Academy.
- Designated campuses will be expected to meet or exceed “Implementing” on the rubric above (Data is used to design student interventions, Annual Action Plan, and to inform teaching and learning aligned to the mission) by the end of the first designated year.

Describe below how the campus will meet or exceed this expectation.

Mission: At Raul Yzaguirre School for Success we aim to graduate STEM proficient students that are prepared for post-secondary study and capable of competing in the 21st Century workforce. Our teachers will have the resources and knowledge they need to integrate state standards in all content areas and skills of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics across all disciplines.

The effectiveness of the STEM program is dependent upon all members's full participation and vested interest in a data
driven culture. This year our teachers worked both independently and collaboratively as a team to review data in all content areas. The Fall semester consisted of periodic teacher progress conferences that focused on the data driven decision making process. Follow up conferences took place in the Spring semester as needed to make informed data driven decisions. Teachers took time to reflect and developed targeted intervention plans and participated in backwards planning as they generated assessments in our test bank and data system. Our data management system (DMAC) and data discussions are based on the test bank system and TEKS Resource system. All discussions and decisions are strategic and reevaluated at the next teacher progress conference.

After data is reviewed our team identifies areas of need while always keeping our STEM Academy Mission and Annual Action plan in mind. Student performance and need for interventions are planned/aligned after every data review. Intervention effectiveness and frequency is reviewed so that support for teachers and students is available and effective.

Teachers meet weekly by grade level or department to analyze the data and create formative assessments to track student progress using the (SLR Report) Student Learning Report. Data drives instruction and student accountability/ownership of learning. Our school culture has shifted to a school with continuous review of data that is geared towards targeted instruction, interventions, tutorials and incentives. Students participate in goal setting conferences with teachers. Students receive recognition based on progress and improvement to celebrate their success.

Teachers will continue to use Curriculum Maps, Pacing Calendars and STAAR & TSTEM blueprints will be used to to make informed decisions about instructional practices and interventions. The Annual Action Plan will be revised as data is reviewed at the start of
year, middle of year and end of year. With frequent review of data, teacher data discussions, PLC sessions and student conferences, the year will progress with informed teaching and informed data driven best practices. The alignment with the program mission and expectations will be evident by mid-year. Teacher instructional practice will improve and peer collaboration will strengthen instructional practice both vertical and horizontally.

- Program Requirement 1.2.C. details the requirements for an Academy's advisory board (AB).

List the planned AB members and their job title (example: John Smith, School Board Member; Jan Smith, STEM Business Leader, etc.). Detail how this board will support the Academy work.

The members and responsibilities of the STEM Advisory Board are as follows:

Dr. Adriana Tamez, Superintendent of Raul Yzaguirre School for Success
Alma Perez-Silva, Principal, Director of Education K-12
Brian Kastli, Chair of STEM Advisory Board (Math Lead Teacher)
Bincy Varghese, Co-Chair of STEM Advisory Board (Science Lead Teacher)
Sagrario Salcedo, Academic Counselor
Elsworth Lewis, Promotion and implementation of STEM program with 9th-12th grade teachers and Math department.
Jessica Dupas, Promotion and implementation of STEM program with 6th-12th grade teachers and Science department.
Amy Sasser, Promotion and implementation of STEM program with 6th-12th grade teachers and Technology department.
Mark Granados, Information Technology Director

The STEM advisory board for Raul Yzaguirre school for success meets to review the implementation of technology and STEM standards into the curriculum of study for the middle and high school campus. We meet weekly to discuss updates on academic progress and areas of need. A more through meeting takes place monthly to review specifics of STEM program and standards. Our Director of Family and Community Engagement works closely with the Academic Counselor and Principal to seek and provide high quality STEM education for all students and families. The board supports the STEM Program and organizes field-trips, academic fairs and promotes STEM initiatives to increase student
engagement and overall participation. The members are sure to stay true to the mission and alignment of RYSS TSTEM
Program in every initiative. The Advisory Board assists in reviewing the goals, mission and culture of leadership and school as a whole. Transparency and communication is key in implementing STEM initiatives, the Advisory Board and members have a voice and are responsible for promoting, and communicating to departments and all stakeholders that may demonstrate interest or inquire about the program.

Each Advisory Board Member holds meetings with their respective department and communicates STEM initiatives. Each Advisor will also be responsible for monitoring overall department needs, progress and areas of needed improvement.

The Academic Counselor will frequently review student PGPs and their pathways and collaborate with school leadership to make sure all STEM Academy needs are met for students and teachers. The Academic Advisor will partner with the Director of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) to seek industry field opportunities and speakers.
Teachers will meet in PLCs and communicate Advisory Board recommendations and initiatives. The team will then move forward with promoting and effectively implementing STEM curriculum and program initiatives in 6th-12th grades.

Each Team Lead teacher will use DMAC data to monitor and track student and core content area progress. Discussions regarding Capstone and PBL projects will take place in PLCs. Teachers listed above will report back to the TSTEM Advisory Board.

Parents will be informed during monthly parent/student/teacher conference nights. Students will keep track of progress using DMAC Student Learning Report (SLR), online grading system and Naviance. All stakeholders will be surveyed so that their input and recommendations are taken under consideration as our STEM Academy continues to grow.

Program Requirement 1.1.A: Provide the Academy mission statement below.

Mission:

At Raul Yzaguirre School for Success we aim to graduate STEM proficient students that are prepared for post-secondary study and capable of competing in the 21st Century workforce.

Our teachers will have the resources and knowledge they need to integrate state standards in all content areas and skills of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics across all disciplines.

- Program Requirement 1.4.A details the requirements for 6th-12th campuses to collaborate on a regular basis to advance 6th-12th alignment and student retention in STEM.

Describe below how the campus will meet or exceed this expectation. If Academy is 9th-12th write, "Not Applicable".

Teachers will meet in PLCs and communicate Advisory Board recommendations and initiatives. The team will then move forward with promoting and effectively implementing STEM curriculum and program initiatives in 6th-12th grades. Each Team Lead teacher will use DMAC data to monitor and track student and core content area progress. Discussions regarding Capstone and PBL projects will take place in PLCs. Teachers listed above will report back to Advisory Board.

The master schedule will include time for grade level or content area planning on a daily or weekly basis for teachers to collaborate and plan for Project Based Learning projects. Teachers will hold vertical and horizontal meetings on a bi-weekly basis. Teachers meet 2-3 times a week as a grade level team. Twice a month teachers meet in content area department PLCS. Data and STEM program progress will be reviewed and problem solving strategies will be implemented to make sure the Academy addresses areas of need. STEM Centers and coaches will be contacted and used a periodic resources to improve curriculum implementation, assist with student/teacher preparation and overall program achievement. The Academy currently meets monthly with STEM Coach and regional T-STEM center as much as possible to meet the needs of the growing program and professional needs of teachers.

Parents will be informed during monthly parent/student/teacher conference nights. Students will keep track of progress using DMAC Student Learning Report, online grading system and Naviance. All stakeholders will be surveyed so that their input and recommendations are taken under consideration as our STEM Academy grows.
For students retention in STEM students will be informed of the pathways offered as well as the courses beforehand in order to make better informed selections of coursework. Student discussions and interest surveys will be utilized to provide students with data driven decisions as they select classes. It will be evident to students and parents that each class will be conducted by highly qualified and prepared educators in all STEM and core content area courses.

Student opportunities will be provided to K-5th grade students in the area of TSTEM to foster a culture of TSTEM in the lower grades as well. Our K-12 campus has a K-5 fully equipped STEM lab and provides a 3rd-5th grade TSTEM club after school. Our K-5 school automatically feeds to our 6th-12th campus. This promotes and assures student retention within our learning community. Parents have been very receptive to this program. We are currently enrolling students in STEM Summer Camp program with Houston Community College and RYSS 3rd-12th grade students. HCC Faculty and RYSS Faculty will teach this camp coursework to students to expose them to robotics, labs, field trips and all STEM related activities that meet alignment for both HCC STEM Camp and TSTEM Initiatives. Parents must attend a TSTEM Camp Signing event in April to secure June participation. At the end of the summer session parents will be invited to an evening TSTEM presentation event.

Texas Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics

Benchmark 2: T-STEM Academy Culture and Design
Program Requirement: 2.1 Personalization

2.1.A Addresses in AAP and strategic plan the details for remaining small, allowing for personalization and maintaining collaborative learning communities of students.
2.1.B Plans and implements a non-graded student advisory program that is regularly scheduled, noted in the master calendar/schedule, and focuses on personalizing the student experience, (builds relationships with students and parents, develops character, and fosters global literacy).
2.1.C Develops a process for hearing and responding to student voice.

Key Elements for Success	Example Artifacts
• Student IGPs w/ CCRS, Endorsements, and Performance Acknowledgement plans • Master schedule for advisory • Student enrollment	• Opportunities for orientation sharing and team building activities both on- and off-site • Advisory class curriculum • Student goal setting and reflection logs • Teacher mentors assigned to students • Pre- and post-assessments of advisory class goal • Students sit on advisory board and/or have voice in student work products, clubs, competitions, governance, and course offerings • School wide activities to build/share culture • Student ambassadors serving as classroom greeters and/or guide tour groups • Teacher/student ratios, actual class sizes • Surveys documenting students' elective requests

Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
1. District and Academy resources are allocated to ensure teaching staff and facilities remain small.	1. Annual Action Plan and Academy handbook address plan for maintaining personalized, small, learning communities.	1. Students are regularly afforded multiple opportunities to build relationships with staff and peers such as working in academic and/or competitive teams horizontally and vertically.	1. Protocols are developed to ensure students have a clear and documented voice in the Academy (student council, advisory committee to the director, suggestion box, etc.
2. Student advisory is regularly scheduled and focuses on relationships, building school capital, developing and fostering global literacy.	2. Advisory class has written curriculum with goals, expectations, scope, sequence, and pacing guides.	2. Teachers work in teams to develop systemic advisory programs with horizontally and vertically aligned student outcomes.	2. Annual resources are allocated to develop, revise, and sustain advisory program with input from students, teachers, parents, and external partners.
	And meets criteria from Developing	*And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	*And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature*

Benchmark 2: T-STEM Academy Culture and Design

Program Requirement: 2.1 Personalization

2.1.D Arranges for a flexible school day with blocks of time that support student learning (tutorials, collaboration, meetings).

2.1.E Celebrates high quality student work through student exhibits on-site, web-based, and/or in state and national forums.

2.1.F Provides every 6th – 12th student with an individualized STEM-focused high school graduation plan that addresses: four years of math and science; an Endorsement in STEM, Business and Industry, Public Service, or Arts and Humanities; identifies target areas for Performance Acknowledgements; and is at least annually reviewed and revised with the counselor, student, and family.

Example Artifacts

- Honor roll, grade level/school-wide celebrations
- Classroom and building displays
- Number of students participating in student exhibits
- Agendas/signatures for IGP meetings with students and family
- IGP, record folder/portfolio, 6th -16th course plan
- Master schedule, tutoring schedule
- Minutes/action items from site based committees, etc.
- Website showcasing student work
- Documentation of at least annual 6th – 12th IGP meetings with parents and students

Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
1. Academy develops a flexible schedule that supports student success.	1. Schedule is developed with input from teachers, counselors, content coaches, extracurricular and internship/capstone requirements.	1. Teachers work in teams to adjust daily schedule to facilitate interdisciplinary PBL.	1. Schedule is adjusted to meet student needs according to data, student, teacher, and parent voice; intervention and extension plans.
2. Academy regularly schedules for students to share their knowledge and work products.	2. Students participate in panel presentations, debates, academic fairs, webinars, online challenges, competitions, design challenges, etc.	2. Resources are allocated to provide students with opportunities to participate in state and national forums, conferences, and competitions (financial, facilities, staffing, transportation, etc.).	2. Academy establishes protocols with input from key stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness of student participation in competitions, challenges, etc. towards promoting college and career readiness as well as Academy goals.
3. Academy develops IGP for each 6th – 12th student that addresses STEM pathways, THECB College and Career Readiness Standards.	3. Student, counselor, and family regularly review and revise the IGP to address student goals for courses, grades, Endorsements, Performance Acknowledgements, college entrance exams, PSAT/ACT/SAT, career aspirations, etc. *And meets criteria from Developing*	3. Annually reviews and revises IGP according to previously established protocols and timelines. *And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	3. Mentors are assigned to students to develop intervention contracts to address deficiencies or acceleration opportunities in IGP. *And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature*

Benchmark 2: T-STEM Academy Culture and Design
Program Requirement: 2.2 Culture

2.2.A Collaborates with stakeholders to develop a new handbook or modify the existing handbook with clear procedures, policies, and consequences that support the development of a strong T-STEM culture.

2.2.B Involves all stakeholders in developing a culture of respect, responsibility, trust, and meaningful adult and peer relationships throughout the Academy in order to foster positive student identities.

2.2.C Creates a professional learning community environment of collaboration, teaming, and high expectations among administrators, teachers, and stakeholders, with a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student.

Example Artifacts

- Handbook, attendance/discipline goals/data
- Customs and celebrations, modeling lessons for respect, responsibility, trust
- Student, teacher, parent surveys address culture
- Sharing of ideas and strategies and joint problem-solving are widespread.
- School developed common vocabulary for evidence of "good teaching"
- PLC protocols and expectations (meeting times, book studies, goals, results based on interventions, reflections on results – new actions, etc.)
- Collaborative planning of learning and teaching activities
- Widespread teamwork involving teachers and support staff
- Peer walkthroughs, lesson evaluations, and critical friends reflections

Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
1. Handbook is developed to address student, parent expectations and a culture of respect, responsibility and trust.	1. Handbook addresses key tenets of cultural beliefs of Academy (student ability and achievement, efficacy and effort, power, distributed leadership, cultural sensitivity, proactive and reflective practice, etc.).	1. Handbook is developed with input from key stakeholders with clear policies, procedures, and consequences (attendance, discipline, student contracts, teacher extended days, etc.).	1. There is a high degree of commitment to school-wide professional values and a strong sense of cohesion and consistency of approach, with protocols to analyze, build, and assess effectiveness of culture.
2. Professional Learning Community (PLC) is developed which supports staff devoting effort, energy, time, and resources into incorporating valuable new strategies into their practice.	2. An inquiry-based continuous improvement orientation to practice is pervasive, with data informing practice and learning widely shared.	2. Staff regularly and consistently plans together, collaborates and shares ideas through meetings, website resources, teaming, team teaching etc., and garners input from external experts.	2. A desire to do the best for *all* students pervades the school as evidenced by protocols for regular and deep school-wide dialogue about good teaching, assessment, learning, projects, and successes of individual students.
	And meets criteria from Developing	*And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	*And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature*

Benchmark 2: T-STEM Academy Culture and Design

- Applicants should consider the program requirements listed above as they pertain to a student's individualized learning experience.

Describe the campus's efforts to support students to reach this goal. This description should include plans for: an advisory period, a positive school culture, enhanced relationships with parents, and responding to student voice.

During the 2015 Fall semester RYSS personalized the master schedule to provide support in certain areas based on students needs. After reviewing data, the master schedule was modified to allow for teachers and students to meet every
day during the school day in the areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts.

The campus experienced a change in classroom assignments, redesigning of classrooms into STEM labs and computer labs. Additional equipment and supplies were purchased to upgrade current STEM labs. Our partnership with our IHE consisted of innovative programs; student and parent information nights, shared professors and we are currently working on innovative pathways for students both on and off campus for the summer and Fall of 2016. This year our students continued to participate in dual credit courses with the Houston Community College (HCC) System. Our goal continues to be to promote and provide students with the preparation and opportunity to take dual credit and AP courses in all core content areas and to provide dual-credit options. We held a
summer camp class which enabled our campus to reach college credit and preparation for the post-secondary work in STEM fields. We will hold similar classes this summer and build the STEM program even more as we align the class to HB5 pathways and student interest. TSI Prep courses will be provided this summer by HCC Faculty. TSI Cousework was provided this year to students to build students in preparation for Dual Credit requirements.

Each month our campus holds parent/student/teacher nights. Teams meet in PLC sessions, plan the evening events and collaborate to communicate student progress and renewed expectations. During our conference nights parents are provided with their child's progress report and Student Learning Report (SLR). The monthly conferences have enhanced
relationships with parents and parental involvement. Parents are far more informed about student progress, campus and teacher expectations and often make suggestions or requests that aid our campus. Monthly PTO Meetings reminds parents of school events and academic expectations.

This year our students are encouraged to track their own learning, share their thoughts and celebrate student voice. Our
students have demonstrated interest in voicing concerns, needs and wants. The Student Council along with the Student Advisory Group has shed light on areas of academic need and work with our TSTEM teachers to make sure changes are made as we meet with our school leadership team. Students are advocating for themselves and make suggestions to leadership and teachers. By providing students with a voice, we as educators and leaders are able to prepare our students for college and post-secondary individual graduation plans. Our Advisory Board plays a role in this decision making process. Student ambassadors will participate in this year's STEM Camp to prepare to serve as ambassadors for our TSTEM Academy and K-12 campus.

Applicants should consider the program requirements listed in the "Benchmark 2 Program Requirements" link above as they pertain to postsecondary college and career success.

- 6th-12th STEM-focused high school graduation plan: IGP with Endorsement, Performance Acknowledgement, and Distinguished Achievement.
- 6th-12th STEM career and college exploration, and college readiness preparation with students and parents to include college transition plan.
- Collaboration with IHE.
- All students should graduate with 12-30 hours college credit and be prepared for postsecondary coursework in STEM fields.

RYSS is prepared to provide students in grades 6th-12th with a STEM-focused high school graduation plan based on their interest and career pathway selection. The students' Individual Graduation Plans with Endorsements will be reviewed with parents and students. Achievement will be the norm of our school culture and expectations. Students who are to graduate from RYSS will review and revise their plans on a routine basis to make sure they remain on track to complete the STEM Academy Program with strong Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and overall success.

Much of the student progress and tracking will take place during the Advisory period, the plans and implementation process will be reviewed. Then personalized conferences will take place to provide the students with information, opportunities to voice their concerns and ownership of learning/planning.

After reviewing their plans and 6th-12th STEM career and college exploration parents will participate in information sessions and STEM night events. The college readiness preparation with students and parents to include college transition plan will take place at this time. RYSS will continue collaboration with IHE the Houston Community College System and Business partners.

It is the goal of RYSS to graduate all students with 12+ hours college credit and be prepared for rigorous post-secondary coursework in STEM fields. We are communicating with BCM team to provide intern and shadowing opportunities for our students as they seek additional information and field experience in STEM career paths.

Student Performance Acknowledgement and Distinguished Student events will take place to memorialize student achievement in all academic areas and STEM program. Students will assist in the designing of STEM Academy customs, celebrations and presentations. Students will have voice as this recognition program and initiative is developed and implemented. Collaborative planning will take place with the STEM Advisory Board, Lead Teachers, Student Leaders/Ambassadors, community partnerships and parents.

Our campus received the Advanced Math and Science Grant this year. We are partnering with the Houston Community College Math and Science Department to provide our teachers with STEM related Professional Development and use of college STEM lab facilities. RYSS students along with RYSS faculty will use HCC equipment, facilities and receive instruction from HCC professors during STEM related activities/lessons. This partnership will strenghten our TSTEM program and Dual Credit Program.

- Program requirement 2.2.C. highlights the importance of a strong Professional Learning Community for the success of all students.
- Review at the rubric continuum and tools in Example Artifacts from a successful Academy.

Describe how the campus will use these tools to progress into a "Mature" campus over time. "Staff regularly and consistently plans together, collaborates and shares ideas through meetings, website resources, teaming, team teaching, etc., and garners input from external experts." This description may include inquiry-based approaches, data informed decision making, Professional Learning Communities, collaboration, and integration of technology.

Currently RYSS K-12 stresses the importance of establishing, maintaining and reflecting on PLC practices. Our teachers and leadership meets regularly and consistently plans together, collaborates and shares ideas through meetings, in passing, during lunch, via email, via website resources, team planning, team teaching, and mentoring sessions. PLC sessions take inquiry-based approaches, utilize data to make informed decisions and finalize action plans that will improve instructional practice and delivery.

Lead Teachers have been identified to lead PLCs and content area/department meetings. Lead Teachers report directly to the campus principal to make informed decisions that may impact instruction or coursework offerings.

Professional Learning Communities, collaboration, and integration of technology are expectations of our RYSS STEM Academy. RYSS provides teachers with equipment that supports all website and software systems necessary to implement curriculum and instructional delivery. Teachers share best practices in the area of technology during PLC sessions and PD sessions.

Teachers established non-negotiables in the Fall of 2015 and will review next year's non-negotiables for the 2016 school year. Teachers attend STEM PD and share learning with peers during PLC or PD workshops. Teachers are provided with voice and surveys to improve PLC and PD practices and expectations. PLC norms and expectations will be revisited during the Fall of 2016 to improve PLC practice and purpose and maintain alignment to campus initiatives and curriculum. Our PLC agendas will be timely, focused on data and results driven. Reflections will take place at the end of each PLC session, new steps and actions will take place.

This year our campus purchased approximately 100 Chromebooks and 30 ipads, and other technology devices for classroom use. Our STEM labs and ELAR department use these devices for daily instruction providing students with the technological skills needed for STEM careers. This alignment in instruction assures the integration of technology in all content areas at RYSS.

Texas Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics

Benchmark 3: Student Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention
Program Requirement: 3.1 Recruitment and 3.2 Open Access

3.1.A Develops structures and processes for marketing and recruitment to encourage participation from underserved students and families (transportation or plans for transportation to the school, child care for family events, and translation of all recruitment and marketing materials).
3.1.B Actively partners with feeder middle and/or elementary schools to develop student interest in STEM education and to increase advancement rates from middle school STEM to high school STEM.
3.1.C Develops a systemic recruitment plan that includes students, parents, counselors, teachers, district, and community.
3.2.A Develops an admission policy to include an open access, lottery-based selection process that encourages applications from all students. The application will not be based on state assessment scores, discipline history, teacher recommendation, minimum GPA, or other requirements that would be used to limit selection.
3.2.B Consists of a population that is 50% or greater economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students.

Key Elements for Success	Example Artifacts
• Written admission policy and application with lottery explained	• Recruitment schedule and locations (schools, churches, community centers, etc.) • Brochures and marketing items in English, Spanish, and/or relevant second language • Survey data (community input, enrollment trends, etc.) • STEM feeder school crosswalk recruiting curriculum • Plan to recruit with feeder schools • Documented support efforts (transportation, child care, etc.) • Needs assessment • Number and percentage of students matriculating from middle school STEM to high school STEM

Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
1. Academy details a plan and process for marketing to and recruiting from appropriate communities and feeder schools to reach high need and underrepresented students.	1. Marketing and recruitment plan developed with input from key stakeholders, and targets feeder pattern, community needs, and cultural relevance.	1. Marketing plan highlights Academy's STEM pathways and Endorsements; and industry and higher education partners. Recruitment efforts include Academy staff, students, and parents. At least 80% of 8th grade MS STEM students matriculate to HS STEM Academy.	1. Students and staff from Academy collaborate with feeder schools to develop, deliver, and monitor recruitment results from STEM crosswalk engagement lessons conducted at the feeder middle schools. At least 90% of 8th grade MS STEM students matriculate to HS STEM Academy.
2. Academy has at least 50% economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students, via an open, lottery based admission policy, where the application *does not* include requirements that might deter students such as STAAR, grades, teacher recommendation, discipline, or attendance.	2. Clearly communicated admission policy that indicates target enrollment goals and implements support processes structures such as transportation, child care, etc. to meet goals. *And meets criteria from Developing*	2. Academy tracks enrollment data and indicates some increases in recruitment/enrollment rates. *And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	2. Academy employs a needs assessment to analyze demographic trends to ensure equitable access and recruitment of greater than 50% economically disadvantaged and underrepresented students and sustains a full complement of students at each grade level. *And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature*

Texas Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics

Benchmark 3: Student Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention

Program Requirement: 3.3 Student Support and Retention

3.3.A Develops and implements systemic, tiered strategies for student support and retention (outreach, early intervention strategies, mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other supports for academic and socio-emotional growth).

3.3.B Hosts 5th – 6th and 8th – 9th orientation session(s) and summer bridge program(s) to facilitate successful student transitions and retention into a STEM-focused, college preparatory, project-based learning environment.

3.3.C Provides all students with opportunities and the expectation to assume roles of responsibility within the classroom, Academy, and community.

3.3.D Supports and monitors 6th – 12th student participation in STEM activities both within and outside the classroom to ensure that all students engage in STEM clubs, STEM competitions, and STEM field experiences.

3.3.E Hosts parent seminars to develop deep understanding and commitment to the rigor of college readiness and the high expectations of a STEM Academy.

Example Artifacts

- Student, parent, staff contracts
- Student retention and persistence plan
- Orientation and bridge agendas
- Exit interviews
- IGPs Minutes from persistence meetings, retention/attrition data
- Program adjustments due to student and community voice
- Copies of trainings and participation of parents/community
- Satisfaction/interest surveys from students, parents, community, staff, etc.
- Lists of clubs, service learning projects, STEM activities, STEM field experiences, and planned competitions

Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
1. Academy develops a strategic plan for student retention and persistence, and maintains persistence rates above 70%.	1. Student persistence rates range between between 70-80% and the strategic plan addresses research-based supports such as annual IGP review, parental involvement, tiered interventions, and cultural relevance.	1. Student persistence rates range between 81-90%, and the strategic plan includes yearly metrics, analysis of why students leave, and a plan to identify and prevent at-risk students from leaving.	1. Campus engages in ongoing dialogue to address persistence data (lack of course credit, leaving the Academy) and uses data to ensure persistence rates above 90%.
2. Academy develops student orientation/summer bridge program(s), student clubs, and plans for external STEM activities and competitions.	2. The orientation/summer bridge program sets priorities and includes a timeline with skills, tools, and resources for students to successfully transition to a STEM environment.	2. The orientation/summer bridge program is implemented as planned and continually refined annually, with a complete scope and sequence and supporting materials.	2. The orientation/summer bridge program monitors initial student success, identifies struggling students early on, and ensures those students have additional support.
3. Students can select from a small number of leadership opportunities available.	3. The staff encourages students to select leadership opportunities.	3. The staff monitors student involvement in leadership and STEM activities, clubs, and competitions; and develops interventions for students who have minimally participated.	3. Student leadership is evidenced in nearly every non-classroom related initiative or event and at least 90% of students participate in leadership and/or STEM activities, clubs and competitions.
4. Academy creates STEM Academy orientation for parents and stakeholders.	4. Opportunities exist for parents and stakeholders to participate in service learning, and/or attend student presentations.	4. At least bi-annual opportunities exist for parents and stakeholders to participate in STEM activities.	4. Annual parent and stakeholder participation goals are developed and monitored for continued improvement.
	And meets criteria from Developing	*And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	*And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature*

Benchmark 3: Student Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention

- Review Program Requirement 3.1.A/B/C and 3.2.A/B.

Describe the Academy's open-access admission policy, the marketing, and recruitment plan to parents, students, and the community; and partnering with feeder schools to increase advancement rates in STEM from elementary to middle to high school.

Our academy is K-12. We have an open enrollment policy for all zoned students. We market ourselves within our surrounding community. Our campus has a partnership with a PK Head Start Program, this program is a direct feeder school to our campus if and when students meet our zoned enrollment criteria. Our parents and students make recommendations and assist with our marketing process. Spring Round-up events take place in April to recruit during health fair events, weekend parent meetings and during parent nights. We partner with our K-12 campus to recruit and retain our RYSS students. Students are provided with a tour of our campus, labs and library. Parents and students are encouraged to make recommendations to family and neighbors that may be interested in a small charter school environment where our teacher student ratio is at maximum 18:1.

Last month our campus opened a 0-2 Center to serve parents and children ages 0-2 years old. Parents can attend parenting classes with 0-2 children in a safe and educational environment. This group of parents and children will be informed about our TSTEM program and highly encouraged to pursue enrollment in our K-12 school. We currently have 25+ parents and children enrolled in our 0-2 program. The alignment in 0-grade 12 will aid in our efforts to increase retention rates on our campus and TSTEM program.

RYSS takes pride in having 79% of our students returning year after year. We want to increase this rate to 90-100% within the next year. We continue to meet individually with students and parents to conduct exit surveys/interviews to improve on our academic and service areas. We are growing our athletics program, extracurricular opportunities, course offerings with our IHE, and parent classes. These opportunities are causing a change in our retention rate. Parents are enrolling in ESL, GED and general technology use classes that take place during or after school.

- STEM Academies host orientation, summer bridge, and college preparatory seminars for parent and students; encourage student leadership, monitor student participation in STEM activities, clubs, competitions and field experiences; and develop intervention plans for students who minimally participate.
- STEM Academies maintain persistence rates above 70%, with a goal of at least 90%

Describe the campus plan to progress to "Mature" on the continuum for Program Requirement 3.3 Student Support and Retention (review the "Benchmark 3 Program Requirements" link at the top of this page).

RYSS STEM Academies will host orientation, 5th grade summer bridge, 8th grade summer bridge and college preparatory seminars for parent and students during the 2016 summer season. RYSS will continue to encourage student leadership, monitor student participation in STEM activities, STEM related clubs, competitions and field experiences. RYSS will develop intervention plans for students who minimally participate or do not demonstrate a strong desire in STEM related activities. RYSS Staff will bring awareness and motivate both students and parents of STEM Academy expectations. The RYSS STEM Academy will strive to maintain persistence rates above 70% in the STEM Academy Program. RYSS aims to meet the goal of at least 90% by the second or third year of implementation and maturity.

RYSS and HCC will work together to provide TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Exam Prep classes during the summer session to increase enrollment in Dual Credit coursework. HCC Faculty will provide direct instruction and co-teaching opportunities at RYSS.

Students will participate in HCC STEM Summer Camp with RYSS and HCC instructors. Parents will be invited to participate in this event. Students will present end of course projects in July.

Benchmark 4: Teacher Selection, Development, and Retention

4.1.E.	Provides opportunities for ongoing professional development to improve teachers' content knowledge, technology embedded instruction, integrative STEM pedagogy, college and career readiness standards, instructional strategies for ensuring a successful P-20 pipeline, and leadership capacity.
4.2.A.	Develops a Professional Development (PD) plan for a sustained professional development model of continuous learning based on student results, teacher development, and the short- and long-term goals of the Academy.
4.2.B.	Adopts a systemic professional development model of continuous learning that addresses prioritized needs as informed and evaluated by multiple sets of quantitative and qualitative data (student assessment data, instructional/classroom evaluations, technological developments, workforce demands, demographic changes, and community/societal expectations and needs).
4.2.C.	Sustains a PLC by instituting job-embedded ongoing opportunities for continuous learning, peer coaching/mentoring, STEM externships, and participation in STEM teacher and leader cadres for teachers and administrators (research-based practices, content competence, new instructional strategies, technology integration, reflective inquiry, and student artifact analysis).
4.3.C.	Adopts and implements a plan for new teachers to include orientation, induction, acculturation, mentoring, professional development, and administrative support.
4.3.D.	Designs or employs innovative programs to support the recruitment and selection of highly qualified STEM teachers.

Key Elements for Success

- Master schedule with common planning time
- Teacher turnover rate
- Teacher mentoring program
- Written recruitment plan

	Developing	Implementing	Mature	Role Model
4.1.E	Academy has authority to hire "best" qualified for goals of the Academy and STEM blueprint requirements.	Develops a written plan for creative recruiting to ensure high qualified, effective teachers.	Develops annual needs assessment and actively implements a teacher recruitment and placement program.	Resources are allocated for recruitment of best qualified candidates, with the Academy partnering with teacher preparation programs such as UTeach, to recruit highly qualified teachers for Academy needs.
4.2.A. 4.2.B.	Develops PD plan with clear pedagogy expectations, aligned with mission goals, teacher needs, and student needs	Academy regularly uses diverse assessment tools/processes, enhanced media, adult learning theories, professional reflection time, problem-solving protocols, and self-paced learning with computer and human interaction for support, coaching, mentoring, and collegial interaction.	Needs assessment and PD plan address teacher and student retention to include teacher, student, and parent voice in decision-making process.	Meaningful partnerships with external organizations ensure progressive expectations for educators' application of content knowledge, curriculum design, and delivery.
4.2.C.	Develops a PLC plan that identifies ways in which teachers will work in collaborative teams to build shared knowledge and formative/summative data.	Teachers collaboratively develop 6th - 12th common essential student outcomes which reflect their efforts to build shared knowledge regarding best practice, (STEM integration, college and career readiness, 21st century skills,).	Teachers collaboratively clarify the criteria they use to judge quality of student work and criteria is consistently applied horizontally and vertically.	Teachers participate in externships and mentorships with higher education and industry. PLC plan is annually monitored, evaluated, and revised for effective practice.
4.3.C	Develops an Orientation plan aligned to Academy mission and vision, and teacher enculturation.	Induction plan addresses Academy expectations for instructional skills; interactions with students, parents, and community; classroom management; assessment of learning; technology; professional development; and mentoring.	Induction process is clearly enunciated, consistently practiced, and evaluated and revised for effectiveness.	Each new teacher participates in the induction process, is assigned a mentor teacher, understands the strategic goals of the Academy, and completes a Needs Assessment that identifies areas for individual professional development.
4.3.D.	Common planning time within the school day focuses on PLC collaboration.	Teams develop team-time norms, set goals, and evaluate effective use of team-time for curriculum development, student artifact reflection, parental involvement, etc. *And meets criteria from Developing*	Teams develop common metrics to measure and inform, in order to identify strengths and weakness in their individual practice, and to collaboratively improve their individual and collective efforts to help all students learn. *And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing*	Collaborative school-level planning is judged effective as evidenced by student learning outcomes. *And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing and Mature*

Benchmark 4: Teacher Selection, Development, and Retention

- Review program requirements for benchmark 4 in the link above.

Describe how the Academy will recruit, support, and retain highly qualified teachers. This should include plans for:

- Teacher recruitment and retention plan
- Sustained professional development (PD) plan which incorporates project-based learning and an integrated STEM curriculum into instructional practices based on qualitative and quantitative student data. (A timeline of planned PD will be uploaded in Benchmark 7.)
- A job-embedded Professional Learning Community with common planning times for collaboration.
- New teacher support (new to Academy and/or teaching profession).

To build a great staff the new school needs great teachers, therefore teacher recruitment is very important to RYSS. Over the past semester we have searched for an HR Director with education experience. This change will help us to bring in new talented teachers as well as continue to plan for the future by periodically hosting teacher recruitment events and having a presence at regional teacher job fairs. Once we have committed to a teacher we strive to grow them in their educational practice through mentoring programs and individualized PD plans.

New teachers have the option to choose off campus Professional Development opportunities to attend to grow their craft. This is in addition to the district and campus PD that is housed on campus and supported by the mentor teachers and department team leads.
Progress in teacher development is monitored by the administration as they do classroom observations and conference with the teachers.

Experienced educational consultants were contracted to provide K-12 individualized teacher PD, co-teaching and coaching support. Support was specifically provided to all advanced Math and Science teachers. All content areas were informed of the support and encouraged to request support as needed to meet student instructional needs. Finally, through PLC our teachers receive training and learning from each other as we meet to discuss ideas in instructional craft and grow as a united community of educators.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Example Artifacts: 5.1

- Course syllabi, lesson plans, unit lessons, PBL, scope, sequence, pacing guides
- Lessons include STEM standards, state standards, national standards, college and career readiness standards, 21st century skills
- Benchmark schedule, course passing rates, retention rates
- Student portfolios, IGPs, counseling, advising, college crosswalk, and feedback loop
- Plans for PSAT, Accuplacer, TSI, CTE, interventions, etc.
- Horizontal and vertical alignment of curriculum
- Students graduate with Endorsements & Performance Acknowledgements

In Benchmark 5, all program requirements are scored individually. There are no separate metrics. Assess the level of implementation for the program requirements below according to the standards to the right.		**Developing** Investigate, Research, and Create	**Implementing** Formalize, Revise, and Publish	**Mature** Data-driven evaluation of effectiveness of program requirements	**Role Model** Continually assesses to document successes and challenges with action plans implemented to correct deficiencies in performance
5.1.A.	Aligns curriculum, instruction, and assessment (such as, but not limited to, Texas CCRS, national and state standards, content, context, culture, cognitive level, competencies, skills, processes, 21st century skills, and STEM synthesis).		*Mature*		
5.1.B.	Develops a scope, sequence, and pacing guide for a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum centered on state standards, career and college readiness standards, STEM integration, and industry expectations.		*Implementing*		
5.1.C.	Develops an assessment and intervention plan to address gaps in student achievement and areas for extension.		*Mature*		
5.1.D.	Supports and encourages all students to successfully complete four years of mathematics, four years of science, four years of STEM electives, and at least one Endorsement in STEM, Business and Industry, Public Services, or Arts and Humanities, with a primary focus on a STEM Endorsement; and earn a Distinguished Level of Achievement as well as a Performance Acknowledgement in order to graduate college ready.		*Implementing*		
5.1.E.	Offers dual credit, articulated concurrent enrollment, AP or IB courses that all students will graduate with 12-30 college credit hours.		*Implementing*		
5.1.F.	Establishes curriculum expectations, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms that are reflectively revised to ensure a constancy of mission purpose (aligned resource allocation, integrated STEM curriculum development, teacher professional growth, and student results).		*Implementing*		

5.1 Rigor

- Review the program requirements for Benchmark 5.1 Rigor on the previous page.

Describe how the Academy will progress along the continuum. This should include plans for:

- Alignment of curriculum and instruction as supported by assessment
- Assessment/intervention or acceleration plans for students
- Plan for four tears of math, science, and 12-30 college credit hours (dual credit/AP/IB)
- HS Endorsements available to Academy students

Review and alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment will take place in late April or May of 2016. Core Content area teachers will participate in curriculum review and mapping based on this year's end of year data. Assessment/Intervention and plans for acceleration for students will be created at the start of school and will be revised after the first administration of BOY diagnostic exams. This plan will consist of math, science, and college credit (dual credit/AP coursework).

Our partnership with our IHE consisted of innovative programs; student and parent information nights, shared professors and we are currently working on innovative pathways for students both on and off campus for the summer and Fall of 2016. This year our students continued to participate in dual credit courses with the Houston Community College System. Our goal continues to be to promote and provide students with the preparation and opportunity to take dual credit and AP courses in all core content areas and to provide dual-credit options. We held a summer camp class which enabled our campus to reach college credit and preparation for the post secondary work in STEM fields. We will hold similar classes this summer and build the STEM program even more as we align classes to HB5 pathways and student interest.

HS Endorsements will be available for all Academy students. The students; Individual Graduation Plans with Endorsements will be reviewed with parents and students. Achievement will be the norm of our school culture and expectations. Students who graduate from RYSS will review and revise their plans on a routine basis to make sure they remain on track to complete the STEM Academy Program with strong Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and overall success.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Example Artifacts: 5.2

- Defined engineering coursework (Infinity Project, Project Lead the Way)
- Student journals, student presentations, peer performance assessment rubrics, and peer mentors
- Self-paced learning, student contracts, progress reports, exit interviews, parent/teacher/student conferences
- Lessons include work force clusters, expert practitioners, field-based learning, research of current issues, PBLs, guest speakers, differentiation, intervention and acceleration plans, student choice
- Number of offerings and number of students participating in co-curricular activities, clubs, academic teams, and competitions (UIL, Brain Bowl, Science Olympiad, Model UN, FIRST, BEST, Vex etc.)
- Design conceptual internships, identify STEM opportunities, business partners, scientific organizations, and universities
- IGP w/capstone project (research, annual review, and analysis)

In Benchmark 5, all program requirements are scored individually. There are no separate metrics. Assess the level of implementation for the program requirements below according to the standards to the right.		**Developing** Investigate, Research, and Create	**Implementing** Formalize, Revise, and Publish	**Mature** Data-driven evaluation of effectiveness of program requirements	**Role Model** Continually assesses to document successes and challenges with action plans implemented to correct deficiencies in performance
5.2.A.	Delivers innovative STEM programs that are well-defined, embed critical thinking and problem solving, innovation and invention, and are aligned to state and/or national standards and industry expectations.	*Implementing*			
5.2.B.	Supports and encourages students to complete three years of STEM electives at middle school and four years of STEM electives at high school.	*Implementing*			
5.2.C.	Develops performance-based and project-based assessments aligned to these innovative programs and state/national/industry standards.	*Developing*			
5.2.D.	Develops and implements a plan for supporting accelerated student achievement for students with demonstrated deficiencies or proficiencies in mathematics and science, to promote all students graduating ready for enrollment in credit-bearing postsecondary courses (e.g. Algebra I enrollment by 8th grade).	*Implementing*			
5.2.E.	Incorporates into the curriculum work-based contextual learning with a global perspective.	*Implementing*			
5.2.F.	Participates in extra-curricular academic activities centered on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; i.e. STEM field experiences, clubs, and competitions.	*Implementing*			
5.2.G.	Develops 6th-12th students' portfolios of interest in: STEM capstone projects, STEM internship opportunities, and global STEM college, degree, and career explorations. Requires all high school students to complete an internship, and/or a STEM-related capstone project, presentation, and defense; primarily focused in the state's STEM-related economic development clusters (information and computer technology, energy, petroleum refining and chemical products, advanced technologies and manufacturing, aerospace and defense, biotechnology and life sciences.).	*Developing*			

5.2 STEM-Focused Curriculum

- Review program requirements for Benchmark 5.2 STEM-Focused Curriculum on the previous page.

Describe how the Academy will progress along the continuum. This should include plans for:

- Well-defined STEM programs that are aligned with state, college and career readiness, and industry standards and embed critical thinking and problem solving, and foster innovation and invention
- Three years of STEM electives at middle school and four years of STEM electives at high school. For high schools, list the CATE elective pathways and courses that support each Endorsement offered by the Academy
- Performance and project-based assessments aligned to state, college and career readiness, and industry standards
- Work-based and contextual learning in the curriculum
- STEM-focused extracurricular activities (field experiences, clubs, and competitions)
- STEM-related internships and/or senior capstone projects, presentation, and defense
- Plan for 6th-12th student STEM portfolios

RYSS is dedicated to providing a STEM Program that is aligned with state and college and career readiness standards. Partnerships with business and strategic alliances provide us with the support needed in industry standards and internships/externship opportunities that will embed critical thinking and problem solving knowledge and experience for our students. This in turn will foster innovation and invention of STEM related products from our student learning.
STEM electives at the middle and high school are a must at RYSS. Robotics, forensics, engineering and public service are top interest for our students at RYSS. Our CTE elective pathways provide our students with the opportunity. For high schools, list the CTE elective pathways and courses that support each endorsement offered by the Academy. Implementation of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

STEM COURSES OFFERING OPTIONS:
Concepts of Engineering and Technology (One-Half to One Credit).
Engineering Design and Presentation (One to Two Credits).
Electronics (One to Two Credits).
Engineering Mathematics (One Credit).
Advanced Electronics (Two to Three Credits).
Robotics and Automation (One to Two Credits).
Principles of Technology (One Science Credit).
Engineering Design and Problem Solving (One Science Credit).
Practicum in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (Two to Three Credits).
Principles of Engineering (One Credit).
Digital Electronics (One Credit).
STEM Related Electives

6th 7th 8th COURSE OFFERINGS:
6th STEM LAB 7th STEM LAB 8th STEM SCIENCE LAB
6th Robotics 7th Robotics 8th Robotics
Project Infinity Project Infinity Project Infinity
CTE – Middle School Pathways (elective options)
6th 7th 8th
Exploring Careers CTE Career Portals CTE Data One Touch – Keyboarding
Exploring Careers CTE Career Portals
Middle School Advanced Academic (Pre AP/GT) Course Options (for HS credit)
Biology
Algebra I

RYSS is actively seeking partnerships and networks to provide STEM focused extracurricular activities that will expose students to STEM related experiences. Currently we are in negotiation with our IHE (HCC) to establish a STEM Camp this summer and STEM club that will then hold STEM related competitions with surrounding area STEM Academies.

Our project based and contextual learning in the curriculum will be supported via our PBL and internship opportunities. RYSS teachers and regional STEM Center will provide support and training to address this area and establish a rubric that will challenge and provide our students with the support needed to meet their IGP and career pathway selection.

RYSS currently uses interactive notebooks in every class. Our College Readiness class provides students and teachers with the framework to create student portfolios. Students will continue a similar instructional strategy and will create and generate similar interactive notebooks as STEM Portfolios or establish an online STEM portfolio page. Stem related activities, internships, capstone projects and presentations will be included in all student STEM portfolios. A rubric will be used to set expectations and rigor.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Example Artifacts: 5.3

- Peer observations, mentors, cross-curricular teams
- Walkthroughs, observations, model lessons
- Data informs scaffolding, re-teaching, and extension
- Team planning that defines student products, assessments, rubrics, and standards for cross-curricular and other PBLs, teacher research on STEM field expectations, current issues, and technology.
- Student presentations include digital materials, peer and internal/external expert evaluation
- Academy teachers have mentors at university and industry level that provide input to curriculum development
- Year-at-a-glance checklist documenting course coverage of state standards, 21st century skills, college readiness standards throughout grading period

In Benchmark 5, all program requirements are scored individually. There are no separate metrics. Assess the level of implementation for the program requirements below according to the standards to the right.		**Developing** Investigate, Research, and Create	**Implementing** Formalize, Revise, and Publish	**Mature** Data-driven evaluation of effectiveness of program requirements	**Role Model** Continually assesses to document successes and challenges with action plans implemented to correct deficiencies in performance
5.3.A.	Incorporates data-driven instruction.	*Mature*			
5.3.B.	Creates an environment for shared teacher responsibility and accountability for student learning across programs, content areas, and classrooms.	*Mature*			
5.3.C.	Organizes instructional expectations around problem-based and project-based learning with clearly defined learning outcomes for students and teachers that address state and national performance standards, college and career readiness standards, and industry expectations.	*Implementing*			
5.3.D.	Ensures teachers' use of the aligned scope and sequence and integration across the disciplines.	*Mature*			
5.3.E.	Ensures teachers' use of high-quality curricular materials aligned with state and national standards, college and career readiness standards, and industry standards.	*Implementing*			
5.3.F.	Provides opportunities for students to exercise choice and voice within a relevant and rigorous context.	*Implementing*			

5.3 Instructional Practices

- Review the program requirements for Benchmark 5.3 Instructional Practices on the previous page.

Describe how the academy will progress along the continuum. This should include plans for:

- Data driven instruction
- Shared teacher responsibility and accountability (PLC)
- Project Based Learning (PBL)
- Alignment of scope and sequence with state, CCRS, and industry standards
- Students exercise choice/voice within relevant and rigorous curriculum

The instruction at RYSS continues to improve through the sharing and analysis of data to drive decisions. The teachers lead by administration plan instruction, prepare tutorials, and track progress of goals using our data management system called DMAC. This year we have made an effort to revise our PLC meetings and to provide an actual learning environment for the teachers as we have been rolling out the different initiatives involved in growing as a STEM school. Their is now a structure to the PLC meetings with objectives to be learned and the teachers are improving their craft by participating in them. The teachers are preparing more opportunities for students in the area of project based learning and over the summer teachers are planning to attend a workshop at UTMB over project based learning. Our goal is to create master PBL teachers who can then support the other teachers as they grow and become master PBL teachers in their own right.

RYSS has identified Lead teachers to work along side the Principal and instructional leaders to bring alignment and support to teachers in the area of curriculum as they prepare students for the state exams and the next year. This staff member helps the teachers to make sure that the materials used in the classroom are of high quality and rigor necessary for future success. In her role, she also fosters cross-curricular communication for improved projects and a more seamless educational experience for the students. We have a college and career readiness department that helps teachers implement industry standards and the CCRSs into their curriculum but more work can be done in this area. Students not only have options in the classes they take but also decisions within the class. During projects the students have choices that they make from project methodology to
presentation. This enables students to tailor their learning to their desires, interests, and creativity.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Example Artifacts: 5.4

- Project Based Learning (PBL)
- Systemic expectations for number of presentations per class, documentation of students presenting to internal and external panels
- Design teams, group projects, multiage projects, simulations, robotics teams, green teams
- Project scenarios based on real-world issues (Future City, FIRST, Odyssey of the Mind, etc.)

In Benchmark 5, all program requirements are scored individually. There are no separate metrics. Assess the level of implementation for the program requirements below according to the standards to the right.		**Developing** Investigate, Research, and Create	**Implementing** Formalize, Revise, and Publish	**Mature** Data-driven evaluation of effectiveness of program requirements	**Role Model** Continually assesses to document successes and challenges with action plans implemented to correct deficiencies in performance
5.4.A.	Promotes instructional strategies that challenge students to think critically, innovate and invent to solve real-world, contextual problems.	*Implementing*			
5.4.B.	Exposes students to critical readings in STEM-related fields and requires students to demonstrate their understanding of STEM disciplines in a work-based, contextual environment.	*Developing*			
5.4.C.	Offers standards-based STEM programs that incorporate integrative STEM literacy and innovative instructional tools.	*Developing*			
5.4.D.	Promotes applied and collaborative learning, and provides students with opportunities to present/defend their work to peers, community, industry, and university leaders.	*Implementing*			
5.4.E.	Promotes a rich culture that incorporates a natural use of current technologies to enhance instruction, curriculum, teaching, and learning, and STEM literacy.	*Implementing*			

5.4. STEM Education Integration

- Review the program requirements for Benchmark 5.4. STEM Integration on the previous page.

Describe how the Academy will progress along the continuum. This should include plans for:

- Students apply critical thinking, innovation and invention, to problem-solve real-world scenarios.
- Student exposure to STEM related fields and understanding of STEM disciplines in a work-based, contextual environment
- Students present/defend their learning (PBLs and capstone projects) to external experts
- Use of current technologies to enhance instruction, curriculum, teaching and learning, and STEM literacy

RYSS provides students with the classes College Readiness for 12th grade, College Transitions for 11th grade, and TSI for 10th grade . Students are exposed to STEM related fields and understanding of STEM disciplines. In an effort to keep track and analyze student learning the students must present and defend their learning via PBLs and capstone projects. These opportunities will be planned with our teachers and external experts. Use of the TSTEM Capstone Project Handbook Rubrics is expected so that an alignment of expectations and use of technology is evident as integral part of the student presentation and product process.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Example Artifacts: 5.5

- Academy-developed process in place to identify STEM and content relevant vocabulary and just-in-time literature
- Plan for vertical and horizontal expectations, per grade level, of STEM vocabulary and relevant literature
- Literature- and language-rich environment which includes technical language journals, articles, periodicals, current events newspapers, online resources, webinars, and texts
- STEM-focused strategies and activities such as word walls, student journals, literature circles, mock trials, student forums, debates
- Stakeholder input into selection of STEM instructional materials student goals and reflections (literacy in STEM, 21st century skills, technology, etc.)
- Integrative instruction and instructional materials

In Benchmark 5, all program requirements are scored individually. There are no separate metrics. Assess the level of implementation for the program requirements below according to the standards to the right.		**Developing** Investigate, Research, and Create	**Implementing** Formalize, Revise, and Publish	**Mature** Data-driven evaluation of effectiveness of program requirements	**Role Model** Continually assesses to document successes and challenges with action plans implemented to correct deficiencies in performance
5.5.A.	Promotes technologically proficient and scientifically literate students with highly developed academic vocabulary and STEM technical vocabulary.	*Developing*			
5.5.B.	Graduates 21st century literate students proficient in: English, reading, speaking, writing, numeracy, arts, health, sciences, and world languages; government, civics, history, and geography; environmental science; global awareness; information, communications, and media technology; and financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurship.	*Implementing*			
5.5.C.	Selects appropriate STEM curriculum and culturally relevant instructional materials that foster widespread use of literacy strategies within the STEM curriculum.	*Implementing*			
5.5.D.	Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate the relevancy of the content through reading, writing, speaking, and presenting.	*Implementing*			

5.5. Literacy

- Review the program requirements for Benchmark 5.5 Literacy on the previous page.

Describe how the Academy will progress along the continuum. This should include plans for:

- Technologically and scientifically literate students
- 21st Century skills-literate students
- STEM curriculum and culturally relevant instructional materials
- Academy literacy plan

Literacy is a huge piece in relationship to STEM. STEM programs and the Texas Literacy Initiative will marry resources that encompass student oral delivery or research as well as written research and, findings and elements of discovery. Students will be required to embed online research as well as library based research in their learning of all material.

Integrating STEM and literacy instruction is a priority at RYSS. Some of the major implications for our program at RYSS is teacher preparation, curriculum development and alignment and purposeful assessments. RYSS is prepared and focused on coordinating STEM partnerships among our K-12 school, local STEM agencies, foundations and higher education, and businesses. The benefits of integrating literacy within our STEM program and all disciplinary areas is that real choice and exposure will ensure that our students can read and continue to grow in all subjects that are already defining their future.

We currently use iStation, Accelerated Reader, Naviance and other software and online systems that expose students to technological skills. The STEM Curriculum is and will continue to be culturally relevant to the instructional needs of our program.

Students will be required to create a project based display which will be leveled in rigor from K-12 to be showcased at a campus based literacy fair. Lab based curriculum and literacy foundations will be embedded in the campus curriculum from K-12. These initiatives will be monitored by STEM Advisory, TLI Director and Curriculum Coordinator.

Benchmark 5: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Example Artifacts: 5.6

- Data informs instruction, plan for gaps and extension
- Curriculum aligned with standards, STEM, industry, and higher education
- Formative, diagnostic, and summative assessments, lesson redesign
- Student artifact reflection is used to inform diagnostic tools and processes
- Pre/post tests, cumulative folders, parent conferences, parent portal, student learning logs
- Pre-assessments/ post-assessments, course offerings for interventions, grades, end of course exams, student presentations, narrative assessments, oral assessments, product based assessment
- IGPs, progress reports, student information sheets, home visits, parent conferences, PEIMS info, call logs, counseling schedule/visits
- Student designed projects, project rubrics, peer reviews, panel reviews, adult/expert reviews
- Project lists knowledge and skills, 21st century skills and levels of skill mastery; course syllabus provides list of performance-based assessments; PD for teachers on developing PBLs

In Benchmark 5, all program requirements are scored individually. There are no separate metrics. Assess the level of implementation for the program requirements below according to the standards to the right.		**Developing** Investigate, Research, and Create	**Implementing** Formalize, Revise, and Publish	**Mature** Data-driven evaluation of effectiveness of program requirements	**Role Model** Continually assesses to document successes and challenges with action plans implemented to correct deficiencies in performance
5.6.A.	Uses diagnostic, ongoing, and vertically and horizontally aligned formative and summative assessments for all students to drive instructional decisions.	*Implementing*			
5.6.B.	Uses state and national standards, college and career readiness standards, industry standards, and STEM program requirements to develop common benchmark assessments.	*Implementing*			
5.6.C.	Employs student readiness assessments or diagnostics to identify and address gaps in learning.	*Implementing*			
5.6.D.	Tracks and reports student progress using student information systems.	*Mature*			
5.6.E.	Uses performance-based assessments that allow students to demonstrate their understandings of STEM concepts.	*Mature*			

5.6 Assessments

- Review the program requirements for Benchmark 5.6 Assessments on the previous page.

Describe how the Academy will progress along the continuum. This should include plans for:

- diagnostic, ongoing and vertically and horizontally aligned formative and summative assessments;
- state, college and career readiness, and industry standards alongside STEM program requirements;
- student readiness assessment to address gaps;
- student information systems to track progress; and
- performance based assessments that demonstrate student understanding of STEM concepts

RYSS will continue to review all data on a periodic basis. This spring and summer we will use all diagnostic data and curriculum alignment maps to establish ongoing assessments at the beginning of the year, middle of the year and end of year. The data will be analyzed and used to make informed and effective decisions that are aligned with the STEM Mission and Vision. In an effort to place students in the appropriate coursework interest surveys and needs assessments will take place this spring as we conduct course selections.

Students will keep track of their learning and interests in their portfolios and IGPs. This year our students are encouraged to track their learning, share their thoughts and celebrate student voice. Our students have demonstrated interest in voicing concerns, needs and wants. Students are advocating for themselves and make suggestions to leadership and teachers. By providing students with a voice, we as educators and leaders are able to prepare our students for college and post-secondary individual graduation plans. Our Advisory Board plays a role in this decision making process.

State, CCRSs, and industry standards will be non-negotiable as we continue to build and promote our STEM program and Academy standards. All assessments in our STEM Academy will be aligned with RYSS STEM curriculum and results will reflect student understanding of STEM concepts and learning.

Benchmark 6: Strategic Alliances

Program Requirements

6.2.A.	Identifies and secures key business, industry, and community partners to support STEM Academy efforts (mentorships, service learning projects, etc.).
6.2.C.	Identifies and secures key business and industry partners to provide STEM-related job shadowing, internships, and externships for students and teachers.
6.3.A	Develops a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for dual credit.
6.3.C	Develops partnerships to support a college going culture and to provide STEM graduates access to college support services (college trips, college entrance aid, GEAR UP and P-20 initiatives).
6.1.B	Provides opportunities to educate students/parents on STEM Academy expectations such as parental engagement, college connections, scholarship opportunities, mentorships, etc.

	Developing	**Implementing**	**Mature**	**Role Model**
6.2.A 6.2.C	Initiates a few partnerships with business, community, and industry.	Initial contact made and some support is provided by community business partners. Business and industry relationships are limited to onsite mentoring activities and some minor financial support.	Partnership with business and industry is formalized via established agreements. Outcomes and expectations are concrete and regularly reviewed. Partnership is evident by two-way communication of goals and vision as to what the STEM program provides.	Each major academic area is sponsored by corporate or community partners. Industry representation is a key component of the STEM strategic planning process. Integration of Academy students in business and community activities is visible.
6.3.A 6.3.C	Initial contact made and some support is provided by higher education organizations. Some courses are available to enhance STEM curriculum integration.	Develops Higher Ed connections to facilitate MOUs, crosswalk plans, teacher mentors, and externships.	Partnerships and MOUs with higher education communities are an integral component of Academy delivery model.	College credit is given to STEM students upon completion of academic work sanctioned by accredited colleges. Admission rates for STEM students to IHE exceed the normalized rates for all students within the sponsor school system.
6.1.B	Minimal strategic communications with parents and families.	Regularly scheduled distribution of communications is planned and presented to key stakeholder groups. *And meets criteria from Developing.*	Strategic communications are timely and are developed ad hoc as conditions warrant. Key messages are presented by leadership emphasizing the importance of the communication to the intended audiences, via community town halls, PTO meetings, advisory board meetings, and school board presentations. *And meets criteria from Developing and Implementing.*	Real time communications are evident via communications technologies such as websites, newsletter articles, and media presentations using the community's public service forums, (public television and radio). Leadership is easily accessible and continuously engages partnerships with stakeholders in community and student families. *And meets criteria from Developing, Implementing, and Mature.*

Benchmark 6: Strategic Alliances

- Review the program requirements for Benchmark 6 above.

Describe how these strategic alliances will support the Academy. The description should include details regarding the role of each IHE, business, and/or community partnership; along with parent/family partnerships and communication conventions with the Academy.

In an effort to continue with our STEM Academy we identified key partners that will support our mission and program. We made Initial contact and requested some support from our IHE the Houston Community College and the Baylor College of Medicine. Both contacts provided support as IHE and community business partners. RYSS is currently working to continue building strong strategic business and industry relationships in STEM related fields.

RYSS has established a partnership with a local dentistry agency that provides STEM related speakers, onsite mentoring activities tutoring and some minor and at times major financial support. Outcomes and expectations are concrete and regularly reviewed during our monthly meetings with these partners. Partnership is evident by two-way communication of goals and vision as to what the STEM program provides.

Benchmark 7: Assurances

The following document must be attached in order for the T-STEM Designation application to be submitted.

Official signature: Official signature of a district or charter official authorized by the local board to bind the applicant organization in a legally binding contractual agreement.

View Document

Dual Credit MOU: The district or CMO provides assurance that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an Institution of Higher Education that defines the dual credit agreement is current (for the 2016-2017 school year). The MOU must be signed by all parties and ensure that sufficient detail are included and is on file at the T-STEM Academy. The executed IHE MOU for dual credit must be available for review by TEA upon request.

☑ Assurance Provided

If the T-STEM Academy is only providing AP coursework, list the AP courses that will be taught in the 2016-2017 school year.

Professional Development Plan: The T-STEM Academy applying for designation, provides assurance that a Professional Development Plan detailing the types, frequency, the provider of STEM professional development to be provided during the 2016-2017 school year, and is on file at the T-STEM Academy. The professional development plan must be available for review by TEA upon request.

☑ Assurance Provided

Business Agreement: The T-STEM Academy applying for designation, provides assurance that a minimum of one business agreement is current (for the 2016-2017 school year), signed by all parties, provides sufficient detail regarding the role of each party, (which allows students to participate in internship programs, capstone projects, or conduct field work) and is on file at the T-STEM Academy. The business agreement must be available for review by TEA upon request.

☑ Assurance Provided

2016-2017 Master Schedule: The T-STEM Academy applying for designation, provides assurance that the proposed master schedule, demonstrating a commitment to STEM education, rigorous coursework including Dual Credit, AP, or IB courses, and a vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum is on file at the T-STEM Academy. The 2016-2017 master schedule must be available for review by TEA upon request.

☑ Assurance Provided