California Department of Education

Charter Schools Division

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Attachment 16

# California State Board of Education-Authorized Charter District 2024 Academic Memorandum Form

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This document contains Academic Memorandum Form responses from Pioneer Union Elementary School District (Charter #00D1). Responses from the charter district have been provided, as is, and have not been edited by the California Department of Education (CDE) for capitalization, punctuation, or spelling.

## Pioneer Union Elementary School District 2024 Academic Memorandum Form

### Section 1. Charter District Information

#### General Information

Provide the following information as it pertains to the charter district.

| **Prompt** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Charter District Name | Pioneer Union Elementary School District |
| District Address | 1888 Mustangs Drive |
| City | Hanford |
| ZIP Code | 93230 |
| County | Kings |
| Website Address | puesd.net |
| County District School (CDS) Code | 16-63990-0000000 |
| Charter Number | 00D1 |
| Current Charter Term Start Date | 6/30/2019 |
| Current Charter Term End Date | 6/30/2027 |
| Grade Levels Served | TK-8 |
| 2023–24 Enrollment | 1637 |
| Instruction Type | Classroom-based |

**District Description:**

The Pioneer Elementary Charter School District serves transitional through eighth grade students in a growing community in northwest Hanford, California (population ~50,000). Located in Kings County, Hanford is the county seat and maintains a small-town feel with big-city services. The district, established in 1870, reflects the diverse local population, including farm workers, professionals, military personnel, and business owners. Its student demographics include 29.2% White, 57.3% Hispanic, 3% African American, 2.6% Asian, and 1.3% Filipino. In 1993, Pioneer Union Elementary became the first charter school district in California. Since then, it has seen increased enrollment, improved test scores, and expanded programs. Throughout the history of the charter each of its schools have been recognized, some several times, as California Distinguished schools. Additionally, schools within the district have been recognized with the following awards: Title I Academic Achievement Award School, Award for Character and Civic Education from the Bonner center, Kreman School of Education and Human Development, California State University Fresno, California Honor Roll presented by Educational Results Partnership (ERP) and the Campaign for Business and Education Excellence (CBEE). Pioneer fosters a secure, engaging learning environment with diverse academic and extracurricular opportunities, including reading labs, technology integration, experimental science, arts, music, and athletics. Strong collaboration among parents, teachers, and administrators ensures high expectations and student success. Guided by its motto, “A learning community dedicated to excellence,” the district emphasizes communication, information literacy, responsible decision-making, and lifelong learning. Charter status has enabled flexibility in programs and staffing, integration of technology, and continued innovation to meet evolving educational needs.

#### Charter Schools within the Charter District

Provide information regarding the first charter school.

| **Prompt** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Charter School Name | Pioneer Elementary School |
| County District School (CDS) Code | 16-63990-6010557 |
| Charter School Address | 8810 14th Avenue |
| City | Hanford |
| ZIP Code | 93230 |
| Grade Levels Served | TK-5 |
| 2023–24 Enrollment | 501 |
| Instruction Type | Classroom-based |

Provide information regarding the second charter school.

| **Prompt** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Charter School Name | Frontier Elementary School |
| County District School (CDS) Code | 16-63990-0116699 |
| Charter School Address | 1854 N. Mustang Drive |
| City | Hanford |
| ZIP Code | 93230 |
| Grade Levels Served | TK-5 |
| 2023–24 Enrollment | 577 |
| Instruction Type | Classroom-based |

Provide information regarding the third charter school.

| **Prompt** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Charter School Name | Pioneer Middle School |
| County District School (CDS) Code | 16-63990-6110233 |
| Charter School Address | 101 W. Pioneer Way |
| City | Hanford |
| ZIP Code | 93230 |
| Grade Levels Served | 6-8 |
| 2023–24 Enrollment | 558 |
| Instruction Type | Classroom-based |

##### Demographic Information

Provide the following information as a percentage of the charter district’s total student population. Provide the information as it is reported on the 2024 California School Dashboard.

###### 2024 Student Group Information

| **Prompt** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- |
| English Learners | 7.9 |
| Foster Youth | 0.3 |
| Homeless | 0.2 |
| Socioeconomically Disadvantaged | 44.3 |
| Students with Disabilities | 8 |

###### 2024 Race/Ethnicity Information

| **Prompt** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- |
| African American | 2.8 |
| American Indian | 0.6 |
| Asian | 2.6 |
| Filipino | 2.7 |
| Hispanic | 57.3 |
| Pacific Islander | 0.4 |
| Two or More Races | 4.4 |
| White | 29.2 |

### Section 2. California School Dashboard Data Overview

#### California School Dashboard

For each California School Dashboard indicator below, provide the percentage of the charter district’s total student population and color regarding the charter district’s 2024 academic performance. For English Language Arts and Mathematics, indicate if the charter district is above or below distance from standard.

###### 2024 Performance Levels: Percentage and Colors

| **Prompt** | **Percentage** | **Color** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Chronic Absenteeism | 9.6 | Green |
| Suspension Rate | 2.8 | Yellow |
| English Learner Progress | 45.7 | Yellow |
| Graduation Rate | [No Response] | No Performance Color |
| College/Career | [No Response] | No Performance Color |

###### 2024 Performance Levels: Color and Distance from Standard

| **Prompt** | **Color** | **Above or Below Standard** | **Distance From Standard** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English Language Arts | Green | 10.6 | Above standard |
| Mathematics | Yellow | 23 | Below standard |

#### California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress

Provide the percentage of students that met or exceeded the standard for California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) English language arts/literacy and mathematics test results:

| **Prompt** | **Percentage** |
| --- | --- |
| English Language Arts | 55.7 |
| Mathematics | 41.5 |

### Section 3. Areas of Greatest Progress and Need

Provide a narrative response to each of the below questions.

1. Based on California School Dashboard (Dashboard) data, identify the charter district’s areas of greatest progress.

The CAASPP shows that the District’s actions in response to learning loss experienced from the COVID-19 pandemic are having positive effects. In comparing the 2023 to the 2024 CAASPP performance: - Seven of nine student groups made positive growth in distance from standard. Of the two that did not, Asian students performed 21.1 above standard, and Two or More Races maintained performance. - The District performance in ELA is 10.6 points above standard, an increase of 7.2 points Students with Disabilities increased performance in ELA by 8.7 points. English Learners increased performance in ELA by 29.1 points. Socioeconomically Disadvantaged students increased performance in ELA by 6.5 points. African American students increased performance in ELA by 24.8 points. - In Mathematics, English Learners and African American students increased performance, increasing by 12.1 points and 25.5 points respectively. - Chronic Absentee rate decreased 3 percentage points from 12.6 % to 9.6%. Of particular note, chronic absentee rates among foster youth was reduced by 33.3% with no foster youth being chronically absent in 2024. CAASPP Longitudinal Results Longitudinal results of the CAASPP show steady growth over time, increasing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard in ELA ten percentage points from 2015-2019, and five percentage points during the same period for mathematics. Subsequently, the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted student achievement and resulted in learning loss that was evident upon the return to in-person instruction. The District post-pandemic performance reflects the trend statewide in that students achievement has improved since the return to in-person instruction in 2020 but has not rebounded to the pre-pandemic levels experienced in 2019. The District has experienced slow growth, overtime in the post-pandemic era, growing from 54% to 55.7% of students meeting or exceeding standard in ELA and 32% to 41.5% in Mathematics from 2021 to 2024 which outpaces state-wide performance.

1. What internal assessments (not CAASPP) are being used to demonstrate the charter district’s areas of greatest progress? Are any of these assessments on the approved verified data list? If so, which ones?

The District created standards-based benchmark assessments for grades TK-8 based on the pacing guides for each grade level. The District-built assessments focused on the priority standards on the CAASPP assessment and model the rigor and structure after the computer adaptive test portion of the State test. Even though these assessments are not on the state-approved and verified data list, they are most meaningful and relevant to the instruction happening in the classroom and indicate areas of student strength and areas for needed intervention based on the State standards that have been taught. Additionally, grades K-3 give the Fountas and Pinnell oral reading level assessment to all students. 4th and 5th grade assess students’ oral reading fluency for students who did not score at or above grade level on the previous year’s CAASPP assessment to target students who need additional support. To assess foundational reading skills in the primary grade levels, TK-1st grade use Heggerty phonemic awareness assessments and CORE phonics assessments.

1. Based on Dashboard data, identify the charter district’s areas of greatest need. Include references to student groups.

Chronic Absentee Rates While the District has reduced chronic absentee rates from 12.6% chronically absent in 2023 to 9.6% in 2024. The District would like to see continued improvement in this metric considering the pre-pandemic rate in 2019 was 6%. The following student groups will be a focus of the District’s efforts to improve school attendance as they have greater chronic absentee rates: Asian (16.3% C. Absent), African American (12.0% C. Absent), Socio-economically Disadvantaged (11.3% C. Absent), and English Language Learners (10.5% C. Absent). Of these four student groups, three show a gap in academic performance. Mathematics While the District’s performance in mathematics exceeds six of the nine elementary school districts in the County of Kings and that of the State, it is the academic area that has a greater number of subgroups performing having a perfomance level of Red or Orange on the Dashboard. The following student groups will be a focus of the District’s efforts to improve performance in mathematics: hispanic (Orange), two-or more races (Orange), socio-economically disadvantaged (Red), students with disabilities (Red).

1. How is the charter district addressing these areas of need? Include references to student groups.

Chronic Absentee Rates The Charter District has made remarkable strides in reducing chronic absentee rates following the return to in-person instruction. The chronic absentee rate was significantly reduced from 30.4% in 2022 to 12.6% in 2023, representing a 17.8% decrease, and further declined to 9.6% in 2024. Despite these achievements, the District remains focused on closing the gap to the pre-pandemic rate of 6% in 2019. To continue progress, the District is concentrating efforts on student groups with the highest chronic absentee rates, specifically Asian students (16.3% chronically absent), African American students (12.0%), socio-economically disadvantaged students (11.3%), and English Language Learners (10.5%). Recognizing that three of these groups also face academic performance gaps, the District is integrating attendance improvement strategies with academic support initiatives. These efforts include targeted interventions, increased access to support services, relevant family engagement, and addressing systemic barriers such as transportation and access to technology. By prioritizing these student groups, the District aims to ensure equitable access to education and to foster improvements in both attendance and academic outcomes. Mathematics The Charter District is addressing its areas of need in mathematics by implementing data-informed strategies to improve outcomes for all student groups, with a focus on those student groups demonstrating the greatest needs. Recognizing the overall performance decline of 4.9 points on the Dashboard and a yellow performance level, the District has committed to a deeper analysis of its mathematics data. This includes examining individual claims and targets for all student groups to identify specific areas for improvement. Professional development in mathematics instruction will play a central role in these efforts. The District is emphasizing the new mathematics frameworks as the foundation of this training, ensuring educators are equipped with updated methodologies and best practices. While all schools will benefit from this professional development, priority will be given to the middle school, where students are performing 34.1 points below standard, indicating the most significant need. The professional development will include targeted strategies to support student groups most in need, specifically Hispanic students, students identifying as two or more races, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. By tailoring instruction to address the unique challenges faced by these groups, the District aims to close achievement gaps and foster equitable growth in mathematics proficiency.

### Section 4. Summary of Performance on Measurable Pupil Outcomes

Provide a narrative response to the below question.

1. Identify the Measurable Pupil Outcomes in Element 2 of the charter petition. Summarize the performance for each outcome.

English Learner Progress Indicator--45.7% of English Learners maintained progress toward English proficiency on the 2024 English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI), with a Dashboard performance of Yellow. This was a small decrease from 46.8% in 2023.

Making Progress Toward Engliush Proficiency = 45.7% Status = Yellow

ELA

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GROUP | DISTANCE FROM STANDARD | STATUS |
| All students | 10.6 Points Above | Green |
| African American | 4.2 Points Below | Green |
| Asian | 21.1 Points Above | Green |
| Filipino | 29 Points Above | No Color |
| Hispanic | 1.7 Points Below | Green |
| White | 33.5 Points Above | Green |
| 2 or More Races | 22.6 Points Above | Green |
| Foster | 93.1 Points Below | No Color |
| Homeless | Not a Numerically Significant Subgroup | N/A |
| EL | 29.1 Points Below | Yellow |
| Long-Term EL | 86.5 points Below | No Color |

MATHEMATICS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GROUP | DISTANCE FROM STANDARD | STATUS |
| All students | 23 Points Below | Yellow |
| African American | 62.4 Points Below | Yellow |
| Asian | 38.4 Points Above | Blue |
| Filipino | 3.2 Points Above | No Color |
| Hispanic | 36 Points Below | Orange |
| White | 3.7 Points Above | Green |
| 2 or More Races | 38.4 Points Below | Orange |
| Foster | 152.8 Points Below | No Color |
| Homeless | Not a Numerically Significant Subgroup | N/A |
| EL | 57.8 Points Below | Yellow |
| Long-Term EL | 127.5 Points Below | No Color |

The 2024 California Dashboard results highlight significant areas of success for students and demonstrate the benefits of the Charter District in comparison to surrounding elementary school districts in Kings County. Among the nine elementary school districts in the county, the Charter District achieved commendable rankings across key performance metrics:

- English Language Arts (ELA): Ranked 3rd in highest performance.

- Mathematics: Ranked 3rd in highest performance.

- English Learner Progress Indicator (ELPI): Ranked 3rd for making progress toward English proficiency among English learners.

- Chronic Absenteeism: Ranked 4th for the lowest rates of absenteeism.

- Suspension Rates: Ranked 3rd for the lowest suspension rates.

The Charter District demonstrated strong growth in several areas, including English Language Arts, where it continued to close the achievement gap for English Learners while maintaining its suspension rates and reducing chronic absenteeism. The district also maintained its progress toward English language proficiency for English Learners, showcasing a strong commitment to fostering equitable outcomes. While the Charter District made growth in mathematics in 2023 of nine points from standard, in 2024 the District lost some of those gains declining four and nine-tenths points and indicating an area for continued focus and strategic intervention. Overall, the 2024 Dashboard results underscore the Charter District's effectiveness in delivering quality education and maintaining consistent progress across multiple key performance areas. These achievements affirm the district's commitment to supporting student success, equitable outcomes, and addressing areas for improvement to ensure sustained growth in the future.

### Section 5. Local Control and Accountability Plan Progress

Provide a narrative response to each of the below questions.

1. Provide a summary of progress made in meeting the charter district’s 2023–24 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals.

LCAP Goal 1:State Priorities 1, Basic (Conditions of Learning); Priority 2, State Standards; and Priority 7, Course Access. 2024 Dashboard Results: Priority 1 = Standard Met Priority 2 = Standard Met Priority 7 = Standard Met LCAP Goal 2: State Priorities 4 and 8.

The District has shown progress in meeting Goal 2 showing overall growth, over time, since the COVID 19 pandemic demonstrating progress and a recovery from the learning loss that resulted from the pandemic. ELA - The District has a performance level of Green on the California Dashboard with a distance from standard being 10.6 points above standard. Five of the seven student groups with a performance color experienced an improvement in distance from standard standard in ELA. Since the return to in-person instruction in 2021, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard grew from 54% to 55.7%. In 2024:

- Subgroups such as All Students, African American, Hispanic, White, and English Learners demonstrated positive growth in ELA.

- Asian, Filipino, and Two or More Races students continue to perform above standard but showed declines from 2023.

- Foster Youth and Long-Term ELs remain the most underperforming groups, requiring targeted interventions to close the achievement gap.

Math - Since the return to in-person instruction in 2021, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard grew from 32% to 41.52%. The 2024 data shows:

- Notable improvements for African American students and English Learners, indicating success in targeted interventions.

- Asian students continue to perform well above the standard, maintaining steady progress.

- Performance gaps remain for Foster Youth, Long-Term ELs, and Two or More Races. Although the district has not yet returned to pre-COVID levels of performance in Goal 2, it has shown growth overtime in the metric of the goal. LCAP Goal 3 –Priority 3, Parent and Family Engagement.

2024 Dashboard Results: Priority 3 = Standard Met LCAP Goal 4 – State Priority 5, Pupil Engagement; State Priority 6, School Climate. 2024 Dashboard Results:

-The District has decreased the chronic absentee rate three percentage points from 12.6% in 2023 to 9.6% in 2024, moving from a Dashboard performance of Yellow to Green.

- The District had a suspension rate of 2.9% in 2023 and 2.8% in 2024. The Dashboard performance for suspension rates was Orange in 2023 and improved to Yellow in 2024.

1. Provide a summary of the charter district’s 2024–25 LCAP mid-year update that describes what the charter district is doing to increase community input.

The mid-year LCAP update was presented to the Board of Trustees in a public meeting on January 22, 2025 to review the progress the District is making on its 2024-25 LCAP goals and metrics. This information is available to the public to inform them of the LCAP and provide current information for upcoming LCAP engagement activities.

- Metrics for Goal 1 addressing State Priorities 1, 2, and 7 indicate the district is meeting four of the five metrics related to this goal.

- Goal 2 addressing State Priorities 4 and 8 shows progress for all students and all significant subgroups in meeting the ELA metric for the Dashboard. Two of the four significant subgroups demonstrate progress on meeting the math metric for the Dashboard. For the remaining metrics, the District met three of the five measurable metrics. One metric cannot be reported on at this time as the data is collected in the spring of each school year.

- Goal 3 addresses Priority 3 (Parental Involvement). The District has historically experienced substantial parental involvement. The District continues efforts to increase parental involvement/community input through the school site councils, ELAC/DELAC, district parent advisory council, back to school night, parent/teacher conferences, surveys, open house, SST’s, 504, and IEP meetings.

- The District also holds many community events to build a sense of connectedness. These events include movie nights, fall carnival band and music events, open house, athletic events, and student performances. At many of these events the schools host food trucks, book sales, and other activities sponsored by our parent clubs. Such events effectively encourage parents to spend more time at the school site and give them greater opportunities to engage with staff and other parents. This has the effect of promoting dialogue and input, leading to an enhanced sense of connectedness.

- Goal 4, which addresses Priority 5 and 6, shows progress for all students and six of the nine significant subgroups on Chronic Absenteeism rates for the Dashboard. All students and four of the five significant subgroups demonstrate progress on suspension rates for the Dashboard for Pioneer District. For the remaining metrics, the District met three of the four metrics. One metric cannot be reported on at this time as the data is collected in the spring of each school year.

### Section 6. Differentiated Assistance

1. Does the charter district qualify for Differentiated Assistance?

No

If yes, provide a narrative response to each of the below questions.

1. Under which student groups and state priorities did the charter district meet the eligibility criteria for Differentiated Assistance (DA) in both the prior and current year?

[No Response]

1. Identify the support provider the charter district will be working with for technical assistance with DA.

[No Response]

1. What improvement strategies and actions has the charter district selected to address its identified student groups and state priorities?

[No Response]

### Section 7. Acknowledgment, Certification, and Submission

Initial each of the below statements to confirm that you have read and understand following:

#### Acknowledgment

I understand and acknowledge that the CDE will present this information to the California State Board of Education (SBE) as a part of its annual information memoranda regarding the academic progress of charter districts authorized by the SBE. This information will be made publicly available and/or provide the information to other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

PVL

#### Certification

I hereby certify that I am a full-time paid employee of the charter district who has direct knowledge of the information contained herein and am authorized to submit this information to the CDE. I certify that I have provided only true and correct information about the charter district.

PVL

###### Contact Information

| **Prompt** | **Response** |
| --- | --- |
| Full Legal Name | Paul van Loon |
| Job Title | Superintendent |
| Email Address | vanloonp@puesd.net |
| Phone Number | 559-585-2400 |