



Northern United-Humboldt Charter School Self Study Report

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Humboldt County Office of Education

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I: School Description- 1 page max

- Provide a brief background of the school, a concise description of programs offered, and a description or list of schoolwide strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Include CA Dashboard Summary Data and other important local data.

Key information about Northern United-Humboldt Charter School:

- Northern United-Humboldt Charter School (NU-HCS) is in its seventh year of operation (2024-25) as a countywide benefit, non-classroom based, independent study public charter school, authorized by Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE). Prior to the 2018-19 school year, our students, staff and facilities were a part of Mattole Valley Charter School (MVCS).
- There is an intentional focus on the needs of the student population, which mirror the demographics of Humboldt County as a whole: primarily Caucasian and low socio-economic. In addition, there is heightened awareness and serious schoolwide planning around the fact that Humboldt County is at the top of the list of the counties in California as having alarmingly high Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores.
- Additionally, there is a focus on the distinct challenges that rural schools often face such as: Limited access to advanced coursework, extracurriculars, and technology; transportation barriers, fewer healthcare and mental health services, higher levels of poverty or economic instability and our school works toward mitigating those needs for our students (where possible).
- Northern United - Humboldt Charter School students are educated through personalized learning programs. Within that context, students may participate in cooperative classes, learning centers, supplemental learning projects, distance learning via current technology, community based education and in dual/co-enrollment opportunities with local and distance institutions of higher education. Our school offers several ways to deliver learning:
 - **Home based:** Home based independent study families have access to curriculum that would best serve the student in his/her academic program. A credentialed teacher is assigned to each family and serves along the continuum of academic advisor to teacher. The instructional methodologies used by the caregiver(s) and/or teacher depend on the setting and the needs of the student(s).
 - **Learning Center based:** Students who attend a learning center have access to curriculum that would best serve the student in his/her academic program. A credentialed teacher is assigned to a learning center facility and meets the needs of the students several days a week at the learning center. The instructional strategies utilized vary given the grade and the needs of the students.
 - **Hybrid:** Students who desire a hybrid home-based and learning center program have access to curriculum that would best serve the student in his/her academic program. A credentialed teacher is assigned to a facility and meets the needs of that student while at the learning center and guides the instruction for the time the student is learning at home. The instructional strategies utilized vary given the grade and the needs of the students.
 - **Virtual:** Students who desire a virtual setting for their education may access that through a home based setting or at a learning center. A credentialed teacher is assigned to a learning center facility and meets the

needs of that student while at the learning center and guides them at home. The instructional strategies utilized vary given the grade and the needs of the students.

- Schoolwide strategies that promote equity are: information meetings, newsletters, advertising, attending community events, partnering with community groups, social media and online advertising
- To learn more about our history, mission, core values, and schoolwide learner goals click here: <https://www.nucharters.org/about-us/>

Current Enrollment/Student Demographics

[Dashboard Data](#)

[Demographics](#)

See Northern United-Humboldt Charter School Demographic Data for detailed enrollment and demographic data (ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, foster, homeless, students with disabilities, language proficiency) for each year from 2022-2025.

II: Significant Changes and Developments- 1 page max

- Include a description of any significant changes and/or developments that have had a major impact on the school and/or any specific program changes since the last self-study visit.
- Describe the impact these changes and/or developments have had on the students, school, and/or staff.

The biggest changes for Northern UNited-HUmboldt Charter School over the past three years have been: becoming a community school, separating social/emotional counseling from academic counseling, diversifying our CTE and dual enrollment program.

NU-HCS was selected as a recipient of both the **California Community Schools Planning Grant** and the **Implementation Grant**, positioning the school to more deeply integrate wraparound services, family engagement, and equity-driven initiatives. This has allowed us to hire a community school coordinator and expand our **service learning and civic engagement** opportunities. Some of the events we have hosted have been: leadership groups at ELC and CLC, sports and sports celebration night, Harvest Carnival, food drive, food bags/holiday meals, dental van, volunteering at local senior homes. These events have fostered a stronger sense of responsibility and connection among students while enriching community partnerships. These grants have enabled us to expand our support for the whole child while strengthening relationships with local partners. Additionally, we joined **Cohort IV of the California Engagement Initiative**, aligning our school more closely with statewide frameworks focused on collaboration, continuous improvement, and student-centered design.

As one of the NU-HCS goals is increasing 'prepared' on the dashboard, our counseling department became instrumental in leading the push for increasing knowledge and awareness of these different programs that could help with that. The administration team decided to split duties between an academic counselor and a social/emotional counselor, hoping to lighten the load in a way for both. From the beginning of that transition there were communication issues and a lack of clarity on which staff member would complete important schoolwide tasks. Then, in the middle of the 23/24 school year, our academic counselor left for another position. This caused a great deal of upheaval in the department and left one counselor to take care of all the social/emotional needs of the students, as well as support academic counseling. As such, many of our goals for change and growth were left on pause. For the 24/25 school year, we hired a College and Career Director from within, so this person was already knowledgeable on the ins and outs and specific challenges of our type of school. The College and Career Director was able to take the goals for change off pause and begin moving forward, which is why so many positive changes have been made all in this last school year, which results in positive change for the students and the school, but not a strong data trail to analyze.

In the last three years, we have focused on expanding our CTE and dual enrollment programs, but this has not come without its challenges. Our school does not have a large enough student body to support a diverse number of CTE courses on our own, therefore we got creative with the way in which we looked for CTE classes, and how we engage in CTE conversation with other educational partners in our region. We began talking with our county office and asking if

they might help us network and build a program within the county that would give smaller charters like ours the chance to participate in more diverse CTE programs (similar to what our local larger high schools can offer). Out of this brainstorming group came the idea to share CTE classes with the other non classroom based charters in our county. There are three of those schools here, and so we decided to pool our resources and try to bring a wider variety of courses to our students by sharing enrollment in these classes. The way this works is one entity 'hosts' the class, which means they hire the teacher, prepare the curriculum and have the space for the class on their campus. Then, that school informs the other schools how many 'open' spots they have in the class to enroll outside students. This is a 'first come first served kind' of scenario. Another resource we have utilized is that the county office has hired teachers and established a CTE course, which they then offer to the charters in a similar, 'first come first served' manner. Using these methods, we have been able to expand our CTE program to include: Building Trades, Culinary Arts, Intro to Media Careers, Intro to Music Careers, Programming, and Health Sciences. This is a great plan for diversifying the offerings to our students, but it comes along with its own unique challenges. For example: each school has slightly different calendars; each school has slightly different expectations for data collections, grades, and educational reporting. Therefore, it requires a lot of communication and assistance to help each teacher understand that they may be working with students enrolled in three different schools. We are still working on solidifying the communication piece so that each staff member feels like they have the information they need to run a successful classroom. This includes the CTE teachers as well, who often need things like contact lists for parents and IEPs at a glance provided for them, since if they are not an employee of our school, and they do not have access to our school management system.

III: Engagement of Educational Partners in Continuous School Improvement- 2 paragraph

- **Describe the process for developing, implementing, and monitoring the schoolwide action plan/SPSA and preparing the progress report.**
 - **How were educational partners involved in developing the schoolwide action plan/SPSA?**
 - **How were educational partners involved in implementing and monitoring the schoolwide action plan/SPSA?**
 - **How were educational partners involved in the preparation of the progress report**

Our WASC Action Plan is fully aligned with our LCAP Goals. We use educational partners in the improvement process on an annual basis. NU-HCS actively involves a wide range of educational partners in the schoolwide improvement process, including: teachers and staff, students, parents and guardians, school leadership team, community partners. To ensure broad input and ongoing collaboration, the school used multiple strategies to engage our educational partners:

- **Surveys** (staff, student, parent) to gather feedback on school climate, instructional practices, and priorities.
- **Interviews and Focus groups** to discuss findings from the initial WASC visit and solicit suggestions for improvement.
- **Parent/Community Advisory Council (CAC)**
- **Leadership Team**
- **Staff Meetings** serving as forums for teachers to align instructional strategies to WASC goals.
- **Administrative Meetings**
- **Board Meetings**
- **Student voice** was included through leadership groups, interviews, surveys, and classroom-based discussions.

Educational partners were engaged not just for feedback but also in the *analysis* and *decision-making* processes:

- Faculty and leadership teams analyzed assessment data and perception surveys to identify areas of need.
- Parent and community input helped prioritize improvement areas, particularly in student support and communication.
- Students provided insights that influenced school climate initiatives and equity practices.

IV: Progress on the Implementation of the Schoolwide Action Plan/SPSA- 4 page max
The purpose of this section is to analyze progress on how the school has improved student success and well-being through the implementation of the schoolwide action plan/SPSA since the last visit and to determine how those actions impact student learning and initiatives for continuous school improvement.

- Explain how the identified student learner needs have been addressed in the schoolwide action plan/SPSA.
- Provide a summary of progress on school goals and growth areas for continuous improvement identified in the schoolwide action plan/SPSA. Cite relevant supporting evidence and data.
- Explain how the cited supporting evidence led to your conclusions on progress and impact on student learning.

Note: If any recommended growth areas were not included in the school’s schoolwide action plan/SPSA, indicate why.

Goal 1: Increase student scores on Math and ELA CAASPP tests

[Assessment Data](#)

Northern United-Humboldt Charter has worked tirelessly on this goal. We have tried to infuse the desire to strengthen scores into all of our staff PD and messaging. We have a category for assessments standing on the agendas of both our All Staff meetings and our Leadership meetings monthly. This year, we have switched to using IXL as our in house assessment and research backed intervention system, and we can already see student improvement (as supposed to when we were using STAR Renaissance). The data is easier to synthesize and see improvement and where students still need work. However, this will be the telling year to see whether improvement on IXL equals improvement on CAASPP. Thus far, even though we have strengthened the general attitude around testing, and gotten all the teachers on board with both using IXL regularly and familiarizing themselves and students with CAASPP through interims and practice, we have not seen great growth in students meeting the standard.

We have hit some significant bumps with our intervention program. Mostly, we will hire someone to be the ‘intervention specialist’ and that person is called on to fill another role, thus leaving the intervention program in a state of disarray. We have not been able to fully implement an intervention program that happens with fidelity and therefore we have not seen the schoolwide growth in students moving below their grade level into their grade level standard.

Goal 2: Increase the number of graduates designated as prepared on the College and Career Indicator on the California School Dashboard.

[Growth Toward Prepared Graduation Rates](#)

The combination of our high school graduation requirements (aligned with California’s “a-g” requirements), our high school graduation rates, and our focus on college and career

counseling and exposure continued to be a goal that most students wanted to and proved they could achieve. It is still too soon to predict what the transition of a long-time College and Career Counseling director and new high school leadership could have on these rates moving forward.

Overall, we seem to be moving in a positive direction for more students to hit 'prepared' on the dashboard. We have worked toward training the high school level teachers to better understand that the state no longer views 'meeting high school graduation requirements' as enough when we are looking at how to best prepare our students for the world. We have held workshops and high school staff meetings to review the CCI and to discuss how best to meet these markers.

Teachers and students all have a better understanding of A-G requirements. We have flyers and posters up in all of our learning centers. The College and Career Director and students' primary teachers speak with them about the differences between graduation requirements and graduating college ready. We have expanded some of our class offerings to try to align A-G course offerings with topics students might be more interested in. We are still struggling with both VAPA and Language Other than English (LOTT). We don't have a lot of options for in person LOTT classes, and we have been unable to hire a LOTT teacher. Conversely, we struggle with students completing their VAPA requirements if they are mainly home based independent study, since the arts tend to be very hands-on.

We have added several CTE pathways, and have partnered with both our county office and other local independent study charter schools to make these pathways possible. We have done a lot of 'out of the box' thinking and sharing of resources to gain access to more pathways for our students. We currently have students participating in: Building Trades, Mental and Behavioral Health, Culinary Arts, Health Sciences, Hydroponics, Computer Programming, Intro to Media and Intro to Music Careers.

Northern United-Humboldt Charter has partnered with our local community college, College of the Redwoods (CR), to come up with a more solid support system for students choosing the dual enrollment pathway. We have sent our College and Career Director to Dual Enrollment PD and have worked to meet with students that could benefit from taking college classes by explaining to them how taking a college class in high school could work for them. This has upped interest- more students want to take college courses. However, our partnership with the local college remains tenuous- it is hard to get communications dealt with by them quickly, and our students don't currently see any extra supports when they are on the CR campus. This is leading to students receiving a grade below a 'C' or dropping CR classes entirely.

Overall, NU-HCS can show student growth by the way our seniors are prepared when they are graduating high school. This year, we have students graduating with CTE pathways complete, with 2 or more Dual Enrollment courses, and with A-G completion; as well as an overall increase of students seeking to take these academic pathways. See data here: [Growth toward CCI Prepared](#)

Students seem better equipped to make decisions regarding their own educational choices. We have employed several methods with the students to help them understand that their high school career is a journey, and they need to make that journey work for them. Some of those methods are: slideshow presentations, pamphlets/how to guides, 4 year plans and/or academic planners, one on one time to look at transcripts and discuss opportunities, field trips to local colleges and trade shows, visitors into the classes from both traders and local colleges, flyers and informational emails regarding local programs, employing QR codes for students to learn more. Whether students choose to take and complete high level academic courses, or by focusing on career readiness skills, NU-HCS students are being asked to look at their own transcripts and four year plans and participate in the decision making process. Overall, this is leading to students setting higher expectations for themselves, and looking for ways that they can be more prepared for life after high school.

Goal 3: Strengthen engagement with our educational partners.

NU-HCS has made strong progress in building inclusive, authentic engagement practices aligned with its goal to increase family and community involvement. One of the most impactful efforts has been our two-year participation in the Community Engagement Initiative (CEI), where a team of staff, students, parents, and community partners have worked collaboratively to strengthen shared leadership and co-design opportunities. This CEI team has engaged in training, reflection, and planning sessions designed to build capacity around listening to and acting on the voices of historically underrepresented stakeholders.

Complementing this work, we launched the Community Advisory Council (CAC) to streamline engagement efforts across our LCAP, Community School initiatives, and broader family/community partnerships. The CAC meets four times annually in a hybrid format, and insights gathered from these meetings inform leadership and board-level decisions. This structure has made our planning more transparent, participatory, and responsive to community input.

In addition to planning structures, NU-HCS has hosted events that encourage direct community involvement. Initiatives like “May It Forward”, in which students volunteer in community senior homes, food banks, and local nonprofits, and donation drives have provided meaningful opportunities for students to contribute to the region they live in. Other events we have hosted include: Harvest Carnival, parent/caregiver appreciation night, sports events and a sports banquet, school dances, community yard sales, Bingo night, Talent show, Ice Cream social, Kindness Week, and others. These events allow our school community at large to interact, and bring in parents and other community partners. Our teachers have worked with several other local groups to bring educational experiences to the students, such as: Mad River Hatchery, Beach Clean Up, Cal-Poly Center for the Arts, Friends of the Dunes, Drone club, foster grandparent program, Indian Action Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Blue Lake Rancheria and others.

In 2024/25 our school was awarded the Middle College/Early College Grant of \$250,000. This grant allows us to pay for the College and Career Director's salary, as well as for professional development opportunities. That position does a lot of work with educational partners such as Cal Poly, Humboldt (CPH) and College of the Redwoods (CR) to strengthen our dual and concurrent enrollment program for the students. We have a CCAP agreement with College of the Redwoods for our students to attend their classes, and we are also working to bring some of their courses onto our campus. CR (College of the Redwoods) has had turnover in their staff that oversees Dual Enrollment so our partnership is not as far along as we would like, but we are continually working at it. Additionally, this is the first year that the High School Scholars (HHS) program is being offered at Cal Poly, Humboldt. That program allows high school students with a 3.0 or better to apply to CPH and take classes on their campus in Fall 2025. This will also bring another option to our students for their Language Other than English requirement.

As mentioned above, we work closely with Humboldt County Office of Education and other local charter schools to bring CTE programs, clubs and electives to our students on a wider basis than we would be able to on our own. This partnership has been fruitful in bringing local school staff closer together, and creating more opportunities for us to work together on community events.

We look forward to continuing to build and grow our network of partnerships and bring more educational and social opportunities to our students.

V: Revised Schoolwide Action Plan/SPSA- 1/2 page

- Based on the findings of the current mid-cycle report, further revise the schoolwide action plan/SPSA as needed and include a link to the school's revised schoolwide action plan/SPSA.

Please see our new [NUHCS Revised Schoolwide Action Plan June 2025](#) for updated information on how we will continue to improve and work on our three goals.