



Integrated Public Sector Education Services

Case Study Collection
Management and Strategy Consulting
Services

November 2025

ALVAREZ & MARSAL

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Introduction | Representative A&M Education Case Studies

The A&M team brings significant industry knowledge and leadership experience providing management and strategy consulting services to clients in the education ecosystem including early childhood, K-12, higher education and academic medical center / health system sectors.

The case studies selected for the collection serve as exemplar representations of A&M’s experience delivering transformative consulting services to clients and driving sustainable results within the education ecosystem.

Education Sector	Slide
Higher Education and Academic Medical Centers / Health Systems	<u>3</u>
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Select A&M Higher Education and Academic Medical Center /
Health System Qualifications

A&M Higher Education | Summary of A&M Case Studies Mapped to E&I Service Area

	Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
Private University	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Ivy League University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
State University Medical Center	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Philanthropic Organization	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Private University	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Large Community College	✓		✓	✓	✓			
State Higher Education Services Agency	✓	✓	✓	✓				
County Community College District	✓		✓		✓			
Historically Black College and University			✓	✓			✓	
Nonprofit	✓		✓			✓		
Private University	✓		✓	✓				
Medical College	✓		✓	✓				
University System	✓	✓	✓					
Public College	✓		✓				✓	
Large Global Foundation			✓	✓			✓	
State University System	✓		✓					
Nonprofit		✓	✓					
Texan University System	✓		✓					
Tier One Research University System	✓		✓					
Top Texan University System	✓		✓					
Largest US College System	✓		✓				✓	✓

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A&M Higher Education | Summary of A&M Case Studies Mapped to E&I Service Area, Cont.

	Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
State University	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Ivy League University	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Ivy League Academic Health System	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Ivy League Academic Medical Center	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Ivy League University	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ivy League University	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	

Private University

M&A Strategy



BACKGROUND ...

- A small \$23.0MM college located in the Northeast had faced significant financial challenges characterized by approximately \$15.0MM in deferred maintenance expenses, declining enrollment, decreasing cash flow and looming substantial debt obligations as student demographics shifted after the pandemic. The Client had multiple merger and acquisition (M&A) opportunities available, as well as options to expand enrollment and revenue, but was unsure of their viability. A&M was engaged to build a report that would be presented at the Client’s annual board retreat to help identify the best path forward to sustain the future of the institution.



APPROACH ...

- A&M thoroughly evaluated the Client’s financial health and compiled insights into an exhaustive report on the potential paths forward. Specifically, A&M:
 - Interviewed the Client’s Board of Trustees, president, CFO, vice president of fundraising and administrators to understand the college’s current state;
 - Collected and analyzed financial statements, annual budgets, debt agreements and cash flow forecasts to assess the Client’s financial health;
 - Utilized third-party reports, a real estate firm analysis and an overview of the macroeconomic environment and headwinds facing small U.S. colleges to build out the Client’s financial state;
 - Compiled the current state and financial health findings, along with options to sustain the institution, into a comprehensive report and preliminary timeline;
 - Presented the report at the Board of Trustees’ annual retreat over the course of two days, outlining initiatives to bolster funds, M&A opportunities and wind-down options; and
 - Facilitated conversations among the Board members, diving into each option thoroughly and aligning them with priorities.



OUTCOMES

A&M gave the Client’s Board of Trustees unprecedented visibility into the institution’s financial state and a strategy to support operations going forward. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:

- Developed a report with five options to sustain the institution that included financial considerations, actions and risks for each as well as timelines that accounted for academic calendars;
- Enabled Client leadership to decide on a multifaceted strategy, where three of the proposed options would be pursued simultaneously;
- Identified opportunities to raise \$10.0MM by the summer to address deferred maintenance costs before students returned for the fall semester;
- Established the Client’s future mission and priorities to consider when continuing operations and assessing and negotiating potential M&A opportunities;
- Informed Client leadership of the institution’s current financial health by creating a single source of information created with information from various sources; and
- Provided a combination of public sector and M&A expertise to the engagement, which positioned the Client to take advantage of the increasing opportunities for growth through M&A in higher education.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Ivy League University

Post-Secondary Capacity Assistance Approach



BACKGROUND ...

- Our client received a grant from a major family foundation to identify available resources – and resource gaps – to strengthen key institutional operating capacities to better serve students. To develop a strategy for an investment approach, the client needed to identify the most promising areas that could help advance institutional transformation for student success. We focused on three operating capacities, identified as particularly challenging for postsecondary transformation: Leadership, Strategic Finance, and Institutional Research.



APPROACH ...

- Research approach and execution – working with the university client team, A&M took a partnership role in defining the research approach to engage subject-matter experts and services providers to postsecondary institutions. A&M also led an effort to visit with six campus teams across the country to talk to them about their work to improve equitable student outcomes. A&M team led multiple interviews and focus groups and managed a broad survey to collect data-drive results.
- Project management – A&M oversaw multiple aspects of the project beyond research, including timelines, communications tracking, troubleshooting, and managing fidelity to the project plan to deliver a complex research scope in six months.
- Convening planning – as part of the engagement, A&M worked to develop a convening of approximately 60 industry experts and stakeholders to share, learn and advance the research into capacity building in leadership, strategic finance and institutional research.



OUTCOMES

- A field researched definition of the areas and functions of leadership, institutional research and strategic finance where institutions need to be able to perform in order to be “good at” these core operating capacities.
- An inventory of available resources, tools, and professional organizations to support the target operating capacities, mapped to the necessary areas and functions. This included a gap analysis, identifying where practitioners felt that support was missing and where further investment in resource development was needed to serve the field.
- An investment strategy for the university and major family foundation, with identified areas of work and investment estimates to address needs and gaps for capacity building. This included a framework for identifying future investments and recommendations on scaling. The foundation is currently developing a set of investments while the university has developed a new program to address postsecondary issues identified through the engagement.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓			✓	✓

State University Medical Center

Performance Improvement / Interim Management



BACKGROUND ...

- Client is the largest osteopathic teaching hospital in the nation and serves as the official teaching hospital for the State University College of Osteopathic Medicine.
- The State University Medical Center Trust and a large Foundation, representing the institution, required strategic direction, review of their market position and development of their position on public policy.



APPROACH ...

- A&M was retained to help the Medical Center, the College of Medicine, and the members of the Trust (Governing Board) in the development of a new strategic direction for the hospital. After completion of “Phase 1” work, A&M was retained to provide interim management roles and is currently serving as CEO, CFO, and CNO, with assistance from other A&M employees as its project advisory team.
- Within 120 days of stepping in as interim management, A&M specifically identified and implemented cost savings of \$1.2M. In replacing the role of the Client’s previously contracted management services team, A&M developed an internal treasury function, developed an internal compliance function, and implemented payer contract management tools and productivity tools.
- In addition to managing day to day operations, A&M’s focus has undertaken a number of special projects including: creating a medical staff development plan, renegotiating physician contracts for business value and compliance; and improving the hospital’s relationship with the University and local funding sources.



OUTCOMES

- The engagement is in progress. A&M is currently representing the hospital in seeking ongoing state funding with legislature as well as facilitating potential strategic transaction negotiations.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓			✓		

Philanthropic Organization

Investment Analysis and Strategy

 **BACKGROUND**

- Having recently developed a research and development (R&D) portfolio within its education group, a large philanthropic organization wanted to frame an investment strategy around learner records, the sum of a person’s lifetime of education. A&M was engaged to identify a theory of action to invest in learner records and to build out a tactical multi-year engagement strategy.

 **APPROACH**

A&M assessed various components of learner record systems to identify a focus for the Client’s investment strategy. Specifically, A&M:

- Performed a landscape analysis of investment relevant topics, including learner microdata, privacy preserving technologies and data interoperability;
- Interviewed Client peer experts to gain perspective on the education and learner record fields;
- Summarized potential areas of focus and created options for potential research investments across the possible investment areas;
- Tailored and scaled investment options to fit the Client’s mission to support underserved communities and leverage digital record tools to assist learners nationally and internationally; and
- Worked with the Client’s leadership and peers to frame investment criteria and prioritized investment options by impact and feasibility.

 **OUTCOMES**

- A&M created a focused investment strategy that aligned with the Client’s mission and values. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:
 - Provided the Client with a foundation to decide on an R&D focus and make investment decisions;
 - Developed the Client’s 2024 investment strategy and was further engaged to facilitate the strategy’s execution;
 - Created a multi-year investment plan along with an exit strategy that would keep the results of the investment from dissipating; and
 - Combined experience and expertise in the education data space with the ability to plan around difficult and ambiguous technical problems in a little-known field.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓			✓	✓	

Private University

Financial Advisory / Interim Management



BACKGROUND ...

- Major research university with ten undergraduate and graduate schools, including a medical school, spread across four campuses in New York City
- Approximately 6,000 students
- At the time of A&M’s engagement, the University faced a liquidity crisis, near-term debt maturities and a substantial annual operating deficit



APPROACH ...

- A&M was engaged as the Financial and Restructuring Advisor to stabilize operations and develop near and long-term strategies in connection with a sustainable business model



OUTCOMES

- Demonstrated the University as a going concern to the independent auditors, avoiding potential default
- Increased cash runway from less than six months to more than three years, including debt refinancing, management of cash disbursements, identification of available liquidity resources and detailed monitoring and reporting on cash projections and liquidity balances
- Sold non-core residential properties to enhance liquidity
- Refinanced two near-term debt maturities into one long-term financing
- Led discussions with rating and accreditation agencies regarding financial forecasts and restructuring initiatives
- Created “bottoms-up” budget for the University with material reductions to the operating deficit
- Implemented operational strategies to generate savings, including reducing corporate support costs and right-sizing administrative infrastructure
- Developed academic restructuring process and achieved significant savings while maintaining academic standards
- Promulgated strategic changes to curriculum and teaching loads, working in concert with provost, faculty and deans

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓	✓			

Large Community College

Budget Prioritization and Stakeholder Facilitation



BACKGROUND

- Our client is the largest community college in a state. It is a member of the state's Board of Community and Technical Colleges.
- In order to address the ongoing fiscal challenges of the college, the Interim President convened a representative group of stakeholders to “generate bold and actionable recommendations for how the Board can, over the next several years, use its financial resources to deliver better outcomes to its students and community that achieve equity and inclusion and ensure the organization’s long-term fiscal sustainability.” This 27-member group became known as the Budget Stakeholder Group (BSG) and met at least weekly from mid-August 2020 to mid-March 2021.
- A&M was engaged to facilitate the BSG’s sessions and coordinate with internal and external stakeholders to help the BSG complete its budget prioritization exercise. The goals of this exercise were to –
 - Create a set of guiding principles to employ in the development of recommendations, ensuring equity is at the forefront
 - Develop recommendations for sunseting and opportunities for investment in specific college programs targeted at ensuring the long-term financial health of the college



APPROACH

- Created a workplan and timeline to ensure the BSG met its stated goals by March 2021
- Facilitated weekly sessions among the 27 BSG members to guide the BSG through their budget prioritization exercise
- Coordinated with internal and external stakeholders to ensure quantitative and qualitative information was provided as part of the BSG’s evaluation of the college’s budget
- Compiled the final report of recommendations and submitted it to the Interim President and college’s Cabinet
- Facilitated a town hall between the BSG, the state governor, and the larger college community to review the recommendations of the report and field questions about next steps



OUTCOMES

- Developed a report with 9 key recommendations for program sunseting and efficiencies, and 4 additional areas for budget investment
- Presented the report to Interim President and Cabinet for consideration
- Recommendations were implemented in FY22

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓	✓				

State Higher Education Services Agency

Data Analytics Infrastructure Modernization



BACKGROUND

- A major aspect of the client’s mission is to collect and make accessible higher education data to support policy recommendations, and to this end, it collects data from higher education institutions to inform progress on key accountability measures. Its core data management infrastructure and architecture has not been refreshed to incorporate decades of technology advances, including the emergence of public cloud infrastructure, platforms and services (IaaS, PaaS and SaaS) for data management and analytics.
- Although the client has a broad catalog of student-level higher education data, its outdated technology stance makes it unable to quickly and easily make relevant data available to researchers and practitioners; the current operating model relies heavily on hand curation to provide data and analyses to stakeholders. Data made available through the agency’s various public websites is fragmented, consisting largely of static report documents, and does not leverage modern interactive visualization tools and techniques to provide insightful access to data.



APPROACH

- In its initial 12-week engagement, A&M
 - Conducted architecture discovery by reviewing the existing data and technology architecture design, data collection methods and processes, and data reporting processes and capabilities through documentation review and in-depth interviews with internal stakeholders throughout management, program delivery areas and IT
 - Performed business process analysis to document key business and technical capabilities, opportunities and requirements
 - Conducted customer discovery to review the agency’s existing service model – services provided, stakeholders impacted, value delivered and to identify challenges with and desires for the agency’s data platform
 - Developed a landscape of potential partners and technology solutions to identify data platform and service providers that could be leveraged to meet the organization’s goals
 - Developed a future-state conceptual solution design and implementation roadmap for reaching the future state, including prioritized projects and dependencies



OUTCOMES

- The technical architecture and conceptual model documentation provided a basis for , itemized requirements, opportunities and constraints of a future state system linked with each business capabilities
- Summarized feedback from stakeholder interviews identified key requirements for service enhancement and high potential areas of opportunity for modernization and increased data sharing
- Landscape findings, including analysis of product and service offerings by key vendors, alignment with requirements, and best practices or differentiators, enabled development of a future-state design
- A&M’s engagement was extended by the client for an additional seven weeks to assist in framing and making key technology decisions, refining the conceptual architecture, producing a concrete design based on cloud-native service components, and elaboration of the future-state project roadmap to migrate existing and new capabilities to the Azure public cloud

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓		✓			

County Community College District

Organizational Assessment

 **BACKGROUND**

- The client is a County's Community College District - one of the largest community college systems in the country
- The client sought to achieve the Chancellor's vision in the context of the economic downturn and the associated impacts, that it faces numerous challenges, including:
 - How does the client unify the student experience for the client students when the college locations and individual campuses have differing cultures and approaches to handling student services, academic advising and counseling.
 - How does the client prepare for an increase in enrollment while the District's budget is decreasing?

 **APPROACH**

- Present a potential new vision and framework for redesigning the client around these core processes from the perspective of students and how to serve them more efficiently and effectively.
- Obtain feedback and consensus.
- Review findings with stakeholders and obtain feedback on revised administrative, financial and operational functions.
- Present recommendations and final report to the Board for approval.
- Present findings to the community as the Board directs.

 **OUTCOMES**

- Identified cost savings to client ranging from \$29M to \$48M
- Review of client's organizational structure
- Increased efficiency through back-office cost reductions
- Realigned organizational structure and identified non-essential areas

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
		✓	✓			✓	

Historically Black College and University

Interim Management, Financial Advisory, and Real Estate Advisory and Negotiation



BACKGROUND ...

- Gentrification of the community surrounding the university’s hospital drove significant declines in patient volume. Lack of cost management resulted in material operating losses at the hospital for several years
- Declines in enrollment coupled with deeper tuition discounting were leading to losses at the university
- As an institution with valuable assets and limited capital liquidity, the client is monetizing real estate and infrastructure assets to fund academic programs and to reinvest in campus facilities



APPROACH ...

- Served interim management at Client’s University Hospital, including CEO and CFO, of the 241-bed hospital. As interim managers, A&M was responsible for restoring the financial viability of the hospital
- Served as financial advisor to the university assessing the overall cash position and liquidity management. Met with banks to negotiate new line of credit for university
- Served as the Project Management office for university’s real estate office, focused on formulating and executing immediate, mid-term and long-term real estate development strategies



OUTCOMES

- Hospital efforts included improvements to liquidity and working capital, and improved the financial performance of the hospital from an EBIDA loss of (\$34M) to breakeven within 9 months
- Advisory efforts at the University resulted in assessment of how extensive the liquidity issues were, the development of strategic alternatives to address the accumulated vendor liabilities and development of long-term liquidity requirements necessary to fund turnaround of the university
- Real Estate advisory efforts are leading to the monetization of non-core real estate assets and investments – through P3 transactions - in the core real estate portfolio. Efforts are critical to the turnaround of the University.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓			✓		

Nonprofit

CFO Advisory Services



BACKGROUND

- Client is a mission-driven nonprofit organization, known for standardized testing, but that also provides a number of additional solutions to help students on the path to college and career readiness.
- The organization, through various strategic acquisitions over the last few years, depleted a substantial portion of its liquidity reserves. The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional operational and financial pressures, resulting in test cancellations and test center closings, causing the organization face even more liquidity depletion, and putting the organization at risk of meeting its debt covenants, and its ability to continue to operate as a going concern beyond the short-term. With no CFO in place, the organization struggled to make financial decisions that would limit financial losses and set the organization up for future success.



APPROACH

A&M was engaged to provide CFO advisory services to the organization with the goal of assessing its financial state, identifying cost saving and revenue enhancement opportunities, and presenting financial information to Management and the Board of Directors in a way that could drive decision-making. A&M:

- Identified quick-win cost savings opportunities to limit the organizations FY20 losses and to set the organization on a path to achieve break-even operating income in FY21
- Built a 52-week cash flow model the for the organization to enhance decision making and to ensure compliance with debt covenant ratios
- Provided financial and accounting advice regarding various transactions
- Analyzed assets to identify additional opportunities to generate liquidity
- Facilitated the creation of alternate budget scenarios and a contingency plan to enable the organization to weather future uncertainty



OUTCOMES

With A&M's leadership and support, the organization was able to:

- Meet its debt covenant tests, ensuring that debtors would not call for repayment of all outstanding debt
- Preserve liquidity of the organization through implementation of various cost saving strategies
- Improve accountability, Board and creditor confidence, and financial transparency
- Create and prioritize a contingency plan that could be accessed if/when financial performance falls short of budget

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓				

Private University

ERP Planning Project



BACKGROUND ...

- Client wants a planning and cost analysis for an ERP implementation and on-going maintenance to support eight of the client's academic institutions in converting from their current legacy ERP systems to Oracle/PeopleSoft Financials and HR/Payroll.
- The final report and presentation produced from the project information collection and analysis are intended to provide a package of briefing materials to be presented to the institutions in December 2008.
- The goal is to offer the institutions a clear set of costs and options for participating in the broader Oracle/PeopleSoft implementation.



APPROACH ...

Nine week effort with a team of three FTEs plus SMEs, Alvarez & Marsal was engaged to provide:

- Project Management and coordination of other related initiatives that may impact the ERP planning and cost estimates.
- An estimate of costs for the transition itself with breakdowns showing how much overall costs and individual costs would vary depending on the number of institutions participating in the program, as well as estimates of the costs for each institution to implement PS Financials/HRMS on their own.
- Conduct a high-level gap analysis at one institution in order to develop a scope baseline for the level of effort required to convert major business processes, state and client mandated reports and functionality, and external data interfaces with legacy systems.
- An analysis and recommendations on whether it would be more advantageous for client to host the shared instances of PeopleSoft in their existing data center or contract out to a commercial hosting service.



OUTCOMES

- Report was delivered to client; they are evaluating their options for moving forward with a consolidated ERP system.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓				

Medical College

Sponsorship / Transition Advisory

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- The College consists of three schools — the School of Medicine, the Graduate School of Basic Medical Sciences and the School of Health Sciences and Practice.
- The College was founded in 1860 by a group of city civic leaders. Today, it is one of the largest private health sciences universities in the nation.
- 1,400+ students, 1,300+ residents and clinical fellows, and 3,000+ faculty members
- The College has been sponsored by the Archdiocese of the state since 1979. The Archdiocese has recently explored options to be replaced as the College’s corporate sponsor. A&M has assisted the College and its Board in this endeavor.

 **APPROACH** ...

- A&M performed assessment and diligence services on various prospective corporate sponsors to evaluate each sponsor-candidates’ financial and operational suitability of performing as a sponsor.
- A&M’s work entailed a detailed evaluation of each party’s current operations and financial strength and their ability to support the College’s continuing needs and Mission.
- A&M advised the College and its Board regarding potential benefits and risks with respect to being sponsored by selected parties. Additionally, A&M reviewed certain structural issues related to both the sponsorship replacement itself and the subsequent undertakings by the new and departing sponsor.

OUTCOMES 

- A&M supported the College and its Board and negotiated improved sponsorship terms.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓					

University System

HR Transformation

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- The Client is the administrative overseer of four otherwise autonomous Texas institutions of higher learning, from a law school to a medical school to a traditional, research-based college.
- The Client had a highly decentralized HR organization, with each of the four entities operating/implementing independent HR departments
- The Client engaged A&M to review and assess the HR function provided at the system-level and its component institution campuses, and A&M was to identify and recommend strategies for providing those services at the system level, as well as recommend strategies for implementing those changes.

 **APPROACH** ...

- Determining overlap between HR departments across the institutions through data review, interviews, workshops and best practice review
- Assessing organization capacity to support future growth and recommending alternative HR service delivery models
- Administering and analyzing surveys to 17 peer university systems for leading practices
- Providing a business case to help quantify and qualify benefits of the recommended structure
- Developing an implementation plan and strategy
- Identifying opportunities for improvement via over 50 interviews conducted, benchmark data reviewed, and 64 HR sub-processes analyzed, with a focus on sharing similar processes across the system

 **OUTCOMES**

- Presented multiple HR service delivery models and the advantages and disadvantages of each
- Recommended a model that included HR Business Partners aligned with college/department HR needs, Centers of Expertise in strategic HR areas such as Compensation and Development and a Shared Service Center for execution of basic HR transactions such as benefits and records
- Developed a business case for the recommended model, which forecasted a reduction in HR costs of 50% annually once fully implemented and increased service, quality and efficiency
- Developed an implementation plan to allow the client to deploy the recommended model

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	

Public College

Overview of College Operations



BACKGROUND ...

- The client is a four-year public college that serves first-generation and Hispanic students. Beyond liberal arts programs, it also has schools developing the next generation of nurses, educators, business leaders, and social workers. The client has developed a structural deficit of \$16MM. The college and the State struggle to understand the driver of this deficit.
- The COVID-19 pandemic added further strain on the academic institution when enrollment continued to decline while costs to provide education have increased.



APPROACH ...

- A&M was engaged in assessing the college operations, including organization insights, program data, programmatic profitability, and improve federal funds. Specifically, A&M:
 - Developed an understanding of the structural deficit for recommendations for the next fiscal year budget;
 - Interviewed key staff members to understand the challenges the institution was facing;
 - Analyzed programmatic and enrollment data to develop insights into the current operating model;
 - Combined financial and program data to develop an understanding of programmatic profitability; and
 - Evaluated whether the college was maximizing the use of federal funds both for operations and students.



OUTCOMES

- A&M furnished insight and value to the Client in the following ways:
 - Created a Tableau dashboard compiling key data collected and provide insights into trends in enrollment and student outcomes;
 - Developed a unit cost model to understand profitability by program (both graduate and undergraduate);
 - Identified the potential qualification for federal Hispanic serving institution grant;
 - Provided insights into statewide enrollment programs involving community college admission and NE neighbors program; and
 - Developed metrics tracking retention and graduation rates for various admission programs.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
		✓	✓			✓	

Large Global Foundation

Academic Advising for Adaptive Learning Project

 **BACKGROUND**

- A major family foundation is exploring how all students — not just those who attend the most elite, expensive colleges—can attain a high-quality education that is tailored to their individual needs, academic capabilities, and long-term career goals. By leveraging technology to personalize the learning experience, the foundation seeks to improve student outcomes at the postsecondary level and beyond.
- The foundation launched a grant program to drive the market for personalized, or “adaptive” learning technologies designed to assist students in selecting course sequences, supplemental programs and career paths. Nineteen postsecondary institutions were awarded grants to integrate these technologies into their student advising programs. The foundation also contracted a third-party research organization to document and measure the impact of the adaptive learning technologies on student outcomes.

 **APPROACH**

- A&M was engaged to manage and drive the implementation of this grant program over a two-year period. In this role, A&M:
 - Supported 19 grantee institutions by coordinating the activities of technology vendors, institutional resources and other grant stakeholders
 - Established relationships with the IT project managers of each grantee to assess each grantee’s technical capabilities and needs, providing on-site support when necessary
 - Developed tools and templates to aid grantees in the technical project management and systems integration required for the grant program
 - Planned and hosted grantee convenings to promote cross-collaboration, identify best practices and scale improvements throughout the grant implementation process
 - Facilitated timely communication of status reporting between grantees and foundation staff
 - Managed contributions from the third-party research organization; Facilitated development of the evaluation program to capture changes in student outcomes at each grantee institution

OUTCOMES

- Implementation of the grant program is successfully underway at all 19 grantee institutions

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

State University System

BPM Vision, Process Improvement and Technology Enablement



BACKGROUND ...

- The client has a vision of building a common chart of accounts design and standardized reporting across all 15 operating entities within the School and Administration System.
- Focus is on management reporting and consolidation capabilities including the ability to roll-up to entity levels and provide drill-down analysis capabilities
- To manage this effort, the client has divided the effort into two phases:
 - Phase 1: Accounting Key Design and System Selection – The foundation phase to identify the elements of the new accounting key, define the chart of accounts, and assess the organization structure required to accommodate the client’s consolidation and reporting needs now and for the future
 - Phase 2: Implementation – The phase for executing the plan and installing the application chosen



APPROACH ...

- Definition of a meta data model beyond standard P/L and Balance Sheet accounts (i.e., fund, entity, cost center, mission, etc.) for the nine academic and six health institutions, as well as their satellite branches
- Analysis of Institution feeder systems and how their data formats will map into the system level data model
- Design state university system-level Financials (Monthly Financial Reports MFR, Quarterly reports) as well as Institutional level reporting (in a common format as reported to client)
- Lead and manage the appropriate software evaluation and selection (selected Hyperion Financial Management)
- Facilitate the implementation of the Hyperion product suite (Design, Build, and Testing) and associated deployment and change management



OUTCOMES

- Established consistent data definitions and uniform accounting key structure. Create one central source of data and calculations for the client for all management and regulatory reporting
- Eliminated manual processes wherever possible (i.e., one-off spreadsheet activity) so long as the automation costs are not prohibitive. Eliminate duplicative reporting and manual support processes as well as shadow systems such as Excel reports, Recognize downstream implications to any client data model changes and create the ability to support many reporting hierarchies / alternate reporting views.
- Selected User-friendly tools with the ability to view and filter data from multiple supporting systems on an ad-hoc basis and ensure data quality from the source applications (i.e., consistent feed from Institutions)
- Identified benefits for academic / health institution level (internal best practices, project lessons, current tools, etc.)

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
	✓	✓					

Nonprofit

Post-Secondary Assessment Tool Refinement

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- Our client was a fiscal intermediary executing a project on behalf of a large private foundation to develop a “Higher Education Assessment Tool.” The content for the tool came from multiple organizations, the use cases for the tool were undeveloped, and there was no existing platform for the tool.

 **APPROACH** ...

- A&M engaged with two subcontractors, a design firm and a user-centered design (UCD) research firm, to develop a prototype version of the assessment tool and refine the prototype through a UCD research process.
- The combined team merged, edited, and pared down the hundreds of questions from the original content creators and developed a survey and data visualization prototypes. The team also developed use cases and accompanying visual designs for the assessment tool. The areas of content included:
 - Strategic Finance
 - IT
 - Leadership
 - Policy
 - Institutional Research
 - “Solution Areas”: Developmental Education, Digital Learning, Guided Pathways, Integrated Advising
- The team conducted a user-centered design research study on the prototype tool at three selected higher education institutions.
- Based on the findings from the first research study, the team revised the assessment tool and conducted a second UCD research study with two additional institutions.

 **OUTCOMES**

- The end result was a well-accepted prototype assessment tool, a defined process for taking the assessment, and documentation of the purpose and process for using the assessment tool in a detailed field guide.
- Based on the prototype and the recommendations arising from the UCD process, the client planned to develop the assessment tool prototype into an operational tool in a second phase of work.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

Texan University System

Review of Shared Services Implementation

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- Alvarez & Marsal conducted a review of a University System’s IT and HR functions in Sept, 2009 and recommended formation of a Shared Services organization for these functions
- Scope was expanded to include Business Service Center (purchasing, payments, and payroll) as a result of an Accenture study in Sep, 2010
- University System initiated Shared Services planning efforts in early 2011
- University System initiated Shared Services implementation efforts in mid/late 2011

 **APPROACH** ...

Alvarez & Marsal was engaged to provide:

- Review progress made to date in implementing shared services within University System
- Identify potential areas for improvement of shared services currently delivered
- Identify additional opportunities, for future consideration, to provide system level services to component institutions

 **OUTCOMES**

- Report was delivered to client with A&M’s assessment and findings related to current status of BSC and ITSS Shared Services
- Review of University System organizational structure
- Shared services implementation of IT/HR functions
- Shared Services implementation of purchasing, payments, and payroll



Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

Tier One Research University System

Compliance Strategy for Research Financed by the Department of Defense

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- As a tier one research university, the client executes a significant number of projects financed by Department of Defense grants. In late 2015 new cybersecurity regulations were issued by the DoD that require sensitive data/information to be adequately protected and monitored by December 31st, 2017.
- Failure to comply with the new cybersecurity regulations could lead to the cancellation of active and future DoD projects and have an adverse impact on retention and recruitment of top researchers to the university.

 **APPROACH** ...

- A&M was engaged to identify the client's compliance gaps against the new cybersecurity regulations and define a sustainable solution (people, process, technology) to address the gaps before the compliance deadline.
- A&M designed a shared services function that will enable the client to:
 - Replace complex organizational, governance, and process models with simpler models that decrease costs, increase efficiencies and decrease risks
 - Centralize and standardize the tools and processes used for DoD projects
 - Drive cost reductions and lower risk through virtualization, consolidation of servers and storage and creation of shared services back office functions
- Specifically, A&M's recommended solution consisted of:
 - Research Security Office – a new organization focused on providing compliance and technical service for DoD projects and other federal technical regulations at the university
 - Secure Enclave – a secure computing environment designed to protect sensitive DoD data/information
 - Security Operations Center – a cybersecurity center well equipped to provide constant monitoring and reporting required by the DoD

 **OUTCOMES**

- A&M recommendations were positively accepted by the client's IT and research leadership and are being considered for funding approval by executive leadership at the system level.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

Top Texan University System

ERP Planning Project

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- As a tier one research university, the school executes a significant simultaneous number of projects financed by Department of Defense grants. In late 2015, new cybersecurity regulations were issued by the DoD that require sensitive data/information to be adequately protected and monitored by a deadline of December 31, 2017. Realizing that failure to comply with the new cybersecurity regulations could lead to the cancellation of current and stoppage of future research awards, the school engaged Alvarez & Marsal to assess the System’s preparedness and develop a plan for compliance built upon a resilient cybersecurity posture.

 **APPROACH** ...

Alvarez & Marsal was engaged to identify the school’s compliance gaps against the new cybersecurity regulations and define a sustainable solution (people, process, technology) to address the gaps before the compliance deadline.

- Alvarez & Marsal designed a shared services function that will enable the school to achieve compliance with the NIST 800-171 and DFARS regulations and achieve a strong protective posture
- Replaced disparate and complex organizational governance models with centralized simpler models that increase security, assure compliance and simplify operations
- Our multipronged recommended solution consisted of Research Security Office, the build out of a secure enclave and the establishment of a Security Operations Center

 **OUTCOMES**

- Project was delivered to client according to the parameters and scope outlined

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
		✓					

Largest US College System

Strategic IT Assessment and Operating Model Transformation to Support Pathways



BACKGROUND ...

- The client is the largest system of higher education in the world, with 2.4M students attending 114 colleges, providing students with the knowledge and background necessary to compete in today's economy. The Chancellor developed a future state vision built upon the Guided Pathways (GP) framework, and is focused on transforming the student experience by way of enabling technology and seamless integration.
- The client's ability to drive system-wide IT strategy, policy and standards was limited by its operating model, where 72 college districts have technology decision-making authority for the 114 colleges, resulting in non-standard student information systems and duplicative technology.
- Legislative funding rules require the client to award grant money to individual colleges and/or districts to deliver and support technology solutions. Lower maturity in contract and grantee management resulted in siloed architecture, high cost, low quality, and low transparency.



APPROACH ...

- A&M was engaged to provide interim IT leadership, evaluate the educational technology portfolio and associated grant and IT operations against the Chancellors' 2017 Vision for Success and Guided Pathways strategies.



OUTCOMES

- Conducted 50+ interviews and led 3 architectural workshops to Identify gaps, improvement opportunities and risks, and inventoried the educational technology portfolio. Recommended restructuring the educational technology funding and operating models, and standardizing effective processes across the ecosystem. Developed new educational technology operating model and funding strategy for the edtech portfolio to better align to the pathways framework and enable client to drive system-wide IT strategy, policy and standards.
- Provided transformation advisory support and initiated restructuring projects. Developed a comprehensive educational technology standards legal appendix to strengthen Chancellor's Office leverage within Request for Application (RFA) and other contract templates. Secured Legislative support within the FY18-19 budget for new categorical language and \$60M integrated technology authority item. Lead RFA process standardization and the enhanced RFA management process.
- Lead the executive search for the system-wide Chief Information Office, designed a detailed knowledge transfer plan, and successfully onboarded the new CIO.
- Established a recurring Operations review meetings to build integrated awareness, spur collaboration using collective knowledge and skills, and effectively manage risks related to IT across the system.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓		✓		✓	

State University

Financial Transformation

 **BACKGROUND** ...

- The State Department of Finance and Administration engaged Alvarez & Marsal to support the state university’s board in responding to its growing financial distress and liquidity risks.

 **APPROACH** ...

- A&M’s efforts spanned two phases. In the first phase, A&M generated an updated FY25 budget, forecasted cash flows and identified the university’s “cash cliff,” and generated in-depth context on the drivers of the institution’s financial trajectory. In the second phase, A&M assessed operating functions that would be critical to driving institutional transformation, including: financial aid, bursar, enrollment management, student services, budget and planning, internal controls, and information technology.

OUTCOMES 

- Across phases 1 and 2, A&M synthesized findings, identified priority performance improvement initiatives, and proposed a comprehensive transformation plan inclusive of immediate, short-term and long-term actions.
- A&M presented status updates and summary findings to the state Department of Finance and Administration, and A&M collaborated with the state university’s board, executive leadership, and functional leadership throughout the generation of insights and recommendations.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	

Ivy League University

Accelerated Response to Financial Disruption

 **BACKGROUND**

A&M was engaged by a leading private research institution that was subject to severe and abrupt financial disruption stemming from the implementation of the federal administration’s higher education agenda. Specifically, the institution was subject to financial impacts via the 1) elimination of existing research-grant funding, 2) limitations on the federal government’s future investment in university research, 3) new costs related to the institution’s endowment size, and 4) enrollment loss in select programs that primarily served international students. In parallel, the institution was managing impacts of negative public relations related to its approach to student and faculty discipline, leading to leadership turnover and governance turmoil. In response, the institution sought a partner that could accelerate assessment and transformation across a range of “high-priority” areas – which were identified based on their potential for financial and operational impact to the institution. Assessment areas included: board governance, research administration, HR and finance business services, and alumni development.

 **APPROACH**

- A&M stood up work teams dedicated to each high-priority assessment area, as well as central project management work team.
- A&M has generated insights and recommendations in each area to support the institution as it quickly adapts to new funding realities.
- Insights were generated via stakeholder surveys, benchmarking against Ivy-League peer institutions, data analyses, and iterative engagement with constituents.
- A&M is in the process of supporting the institutions through the implementation of recommendations, as well as its identification of its next wave of priorities as its potential financial scenarios continue to take shape.

 **OUTCOMES**

Example recommendations our teams have delivered as part of our ongoing work include:

- **Governance Redesign:** Updates to university governance structures and protocols in response to institutional feedback and emerging risks.
- **Research Administration Transformation:** Adoption of greater shared research infrastructure in response to uncertainty related to research funding.
- **Shared Administrative Services:** Adoption of a regional shared-services model for select HR and Finance functions across central administrative units to realize cost savings, operational efficiencies, and quality improvement.
- **Alumni Engagement Modernization:** Redesign of approaches to alumni engagement, data management, and campaign management.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	

Ivy League Academic Health System

Strategy & Client Acquisition Assessment



BACKGROUND ...

Client is a nonprofit academic health system that serves 1.9 million residents New England with more than 9,000 employees and 1,400 providers across New Hampshire and Vermont. Anchored by Client Medical Center in NH, the system has focused on geographic expansion in New England and now has 30 outpatient clinic locations including clinics in NH and VT; and affiliate hospitals in NH and VT. Client signed a letter of intent (LOI) with a regional hospital and were in the process of negotiating a definitive agreement with the intention of creating an integrated health system that optimized the use of resources to enhance quality, outcomes and access to care, while reducing costs.



APPROACH ...

- A&M was jointly retained by the Client and the potential partner hospital to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of the current operating and financial performance and expected future operating and financial performance of the integrated health system with the contemplated transaction.
- Additionally, A&M identified a set of Preliminary Benefit Categories with an associated value analysis that could be realized upon completion of the contemplated transaction, including:
 - Population Health, including consideration of quality, outcomes and access to care, cost of and value of care
 - Health Care and Population Health Infrastructure and Capital
 - Facility Quality and Program Planning
 - Physician Needs and Management
 - Academic Mission, including research and education



OUTCOMES

- After completion of the initial analysis and creation of the Preliminary Benefit Categories, the partner hospital's Board decided to initiate a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire the hospital.
- Ultimately, the partner hospital's Board opted to pursue an affiliation with another system due to a greater capital commitment.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Ivy League Academic Medical Center

Transformation and Financial Turnaround


BACKGROUND

Client is a health system comprised of four hospitals including an academic medical center and a pediatric behavioral health hospital, a physician group, over 30 ambulatory care sites, 1,165 licensed beds, over 14,000 full-time equivalent employees, 600 employed physicians and total annual net revenue of \$2.6 billion. In 2019, A&M assisted the Client with an organizational assessment, merger due diligence, various performance improvement initiatives and development of a pediatric psychiatry telehealth program. In 2021, A&M was hired by the Board to help form a Transformation Office (TO) and accelerate several operational, financial and strategic initiatives. Most recently, the financial situation arising at Client—driven by the national staffing shortages, high inflation, throughput challenges and a high governmental payor mix—has caused the TO to pivot to a financial recovery plan.


APPROACH

- A&M provided the CEO with a comprehensive evaluation of the leadership team and the organization’s overall readiness to implement transformative change.
- 8 priority areas were established and staffed to support achievement of Client’s 5-year strategic plan.
- A&M’s role has included leadership advisory, interim management (Transformation Office Executive Director), project management, and analytical support. A&M has also assisted with the integration of a 100-physician primary care group, development of Client’s overall physician unification strategy, and evaluation of the business case for a consolidated service center.
- A&M led the pivot and acceleration of the FY2022 Recovery Plan, which prioritized 10 short-term, high-impact financial improvement initiatives, spanning from payor contracting to length of stay, perioperative services, pharmacy, revenue cycle and energy.
- A&M is also in the midst of a comprehensive review of the next fiscal year budget and will deliver an assessment to the Board summarizing the budget’s key identified vulnerabilities and opportunities, overall confidence in achieving the budget if unchanged, and recommended actions.


OUTCOMES

- Formation of Transformation Office governance and structure.
- Identified key leaders and participants in the organization to help implement lasting change.
- Led the development of a financial recovery plan focused on short-term financial improvement. Helped generate over \$150M in return on investment.

Impact Included:

- Improved operational and financial performance
- Identification of key leaders and transformation participants
- Cultural shaping and momentum

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Ivy League University

University Advancement and Development Target Operating Model


BACKGROUND

The University was experiencing inconsistent fundraising results, with many key metrics, such as Cost Per Dollar Raised (CPDR) and Alumni Participation, lagging peers. Their decentralized structure made it difficult to access and monitor key data to understand root causes of and potential solutions to the challenge. Legacy approaches to budgeting and resource allocation stifled growth and collaboration while ongoing leadership transitions created a vacuum and lack of a unified mission and vision for fundraisers and alumni engagement staff. Leaders identified a need to establish a Target Operating Model to enable sustainable fundraising growth and ensure more efficient and effective resource deployment. Simultaneously, budget cuts across the University's administration created urgency around benchmarking performance, shifting staff and budget toward frontline and frontline supporting positions, and outlining a governance and service model to support and sustain the transformation.


APPROACH

Alvarez & Marsal partnered with the central advancement leadership team to conduct a ten-week assessment of the University's current state organizational structure, budget model, and fundraising performance and to recommend a more efficient and growth-oriented Target Operating Model. The goal was to establish a baseline and peer benchmarks, map investments against strategic priorities and opportunities, and make recommendations to enhance efficiencies and collaboration.

The A&M team completed the following:

- Current state analysis: Reviewed historical data at the university, school, and function level. Areas of inquiry included fundraising efficiency, yield to capacity, staffing balance, and capitalization on shared resources including technology platforms and solutions.
- Peer benchmarking: Conducted outside-in analysis of 8 peer institutions and direct interviews with 3 peers to understand where the university was leading or lagging regarding CPDR, commitments and cash by giving band, alumni participation, and more.
- Recommendations and roadmap: Presented 10 core recommendations with 30+ specific sub-recommendations touching structure, processes, tools, governance, and culture. Shared framework for implementing recommendations and partnered with central leadership to begin the transition.


OUTCOMES

- Created a Target Operating Model to establish a more agile, collaborative, and donor-centric fundraising environment.
- Outlined cultural obstacles and helped create a plan to improve alignment between schools and teams.
- Identified and sparked inquiry into potential issues including a growing gap between commitments and cash.
- Highlighted discrepancies in structural balance and fundraising efficiency between schools, creating a case for targeted centralization.
- Recommended automation of low-impact, back-end functions to prioritize resourcing of high-impact, front-end positions.
- Presented innovative opportunities to strengthen operations in priority areas such as major gifts and principal gifts.
- Provided leadership with the framework and momentum needed to foster a more ambitious and collaborative culture.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Ivy League University

Research Operations Efficiency Assessment

 **BACKGROUND**

The University faced a significant challenge when its \$1.4 billion research enterprise—spanning more than a dozen schools, hundreds of laboratories, and thousands of active grants—was threatened by \$400 million in federal funding reductions. These cuts placed increasing pressure on its ability to sustain world-class research output, faculty competitiveness, and administrative efficiency. As the fiscal environment tightened, longstanding fragmentation in research administration, technology, and compliance oversight became more visible. Leaders recognized the need to modernize and align research operations to support a growing and increasingly interdisciplinary research portfolio. In response, the University established a Presidential Taskforce on the Research Mission, charged with evaluating the institution’s research infrastructure, governance, and support functions. A cross-unit workgroup was convened to identify structural barriers, assess operational risks, and develop actionable strategies that would help the University’s research enterprise remain effective, resilient, and globally competitive amid evolving funding and regulatory landscapes.

 **APPROACH**

Alvarez & Marsal partnered with a workgroup of university leaders, faculty, and staff to conduct a six-week structured engagement assessing the University’s research operations. The goal was to identify barriers, quantify inefficiencies, and uncover opportunities to modernize and scale research support across all levels of the institution.

The team took a holistic look at how research is supported and managed—from proposal development and compliance oversight to award administration, reporting, and post-award support. Particular attention was paid to how central and school-level offices coordinate services, where responsibilities overlap, and how processes could be better aligned to reduce administrative burden.

The review also explored how technology systems, governance practices, and staffing models influence the efficiency and consistency of research operations. In addition, it examined challenges related to space utilization, resource sharing, and talent retention, all of which affect the University’s ability to sustain a competitive and collaborative research environment.

Using peer benchmarking and data-driven analysis, A&M validated assumptions about operational inefficiencies and identified clear opportunities for improvement. The engagement culminated in a report outlining 23 initiatives to strengthen the University’s operating model, organizational alignment, and use of technology and data, providing a roadmap for scalable, sustainable research growth.

OUTCOMES

- The diagnostic revealed that the University’s decentralized research support model limited scalability and efficiency.
- Inconsistent pre- and post-award processes, combined with fragmented systems and workflows, led to duplicative effort.
- Significant underutilization of research space and shared equipment was also identified.
- The assessment pinpointed 23 near-term opportunities to streamline operations, optimize capacity, and unlock over \$245 million in research potential through cost savings and enhanced revenue generation.
- Recommendations were grouped into phased rollout stages aligned to CapEx, OpEx, and resource maturity to support sustainable long-term improvement.

Select A&M K-12 Qualifications

A&M K-12 | Summary of A&M Case Studies Mapped to E&I Service Area

	Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
U.S. Territory Department of Education	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Territory Department of Education	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Public Schools	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Major Catholic Diocesan School System	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Charter Management Organization	✓		✓				✓	✓
State Department of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓				
City Department of Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Texas Independent School District	✓		✓				✓	
City Parish School Board	✓		✓				✓	
City Public Schools	✓		✓				✓	
X County Public Schools	✓	✓	✓					
X City Public Schools	✓		✓					
County District	✓		✓					
State Department of Education (X County Public Schools)	✓		✓					
State School District	✓		✓					
Public School District	✓		✓					
State Department of Education	✓		✓				✓	
International Student Services Company (Artificial Intelligence)	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	

U.S. Territory Department of Education

Federal Funds Management | Improving Procedures and Providing Transparency



BACKGROUND

As a result of a Specific Conditions letter issued by the United States Department of Education (USDE) in 2019, the U.S. Territory Department of Education was required to engage a Third-Party Fiduciary Agent (TPFA) to manage and administer USDE grant funds awarded to the U.S. Territory Department of Education. In April 2021 A&M was engaged as the TPFA and provides services that include evaluating grant management procedures, applying procurement processes to comply with federally awarded cost principles, processing disbursements in accordance with federal requirements, applying procedures to properly charge payroll costs to appropriate federal grants, i.e., time distribution and payroll accounting, applying appropriate inventory management procedures and maintaining financial records and reports related to the use of USDE federal funds.



APPROACH

With a school system comprised of over 880 schools, more than 250K students and over 52K employees (25K of which are federally funded), A&M is managing the procurement and payroll reimbursement processes for over \$6B in federal funds. In addition, A&M is recommending process improvements for fiscal and administrative procedures related to grants management, procurement and payroll functions, as well as developing a comprehensive corrective action plan.

Specifically, A&M conducts the following:

- Disburses all USDE grant funds and conducts day-to-day cash management.
- Conducts a bi-weekly 3-way matching process for payroll reimbursement to verify correct employee information, appropriate grant cost assignment, and supporting time distribution records for federally-funded employees.
- Identifies weaknesses in the U.S. Territory Department of Education’s operating procedures and recommends improvements that include procurement, grants management, human resource, and payroll-related processes.
- Manages invoice and purchase order approvals, payables and disbursements analysis, maintains financial records and oversees procurement procedures for all federally-funded goods and services, including fixed assets.
- Overseas the grant management process, identifies weaknesses, and develops recommendations for improving the use of federal funds.



OUTCOMES

Over the past 16 months, A&M has brought much-needed discipline and technical assistance to the procurement, payroll reimbursement, and grant management processes at the U.S. Territory Department of Education, interacting continually with senior-level management, employees at all levels, Territory government officials and the USDE.

Additionally, A&M has :

- Managed drawdowns of almost \$1.4B in federal funds that have been used to either (i) pay for goods and services purchased by the U.S. Territory’s Department of Education and paid for by the Territory’s Department of Treasury or (ii) reimburse payroll expenses initially paid for by the Territory’s Department of Treasury
- Identified over 24 expiring grants and developed procurement procedures to address the use of over \$2.0B in federal funds prior to expiration.
- Developed a highly-complex financial model that has automatically conducted a 3-way matching process of payroll-related records for over \$1.6B in Territory Department of Education payroll.
- Reimbursed over \$700M in payroll-related federal funds to the treasury
- Identified eight general classifications of exceptions in the payroll reimbursement process that highlight critical weaknesses in the department’s payroll-related procedures.
- Reimbursed almost \$700M related to goods and services purchased by the education department

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓			✓	✓	✓

Territory Department of Education

Comprehensive Corrective Action Plan



BACKGROUND

- A Territory’s Department of Education (TDOE) is a single unified school district consisting of grades K-12 serving more than 30,000 students in 40 schools and receives approximately \$40M annually in federal education grants. As a result of continuous deficiencies in administering its U.S. DOE grant programs, TDOE was designated as a “high risk” grantee in September 2003. As part of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 amended Special Conditions, the U.S. DOE required that TDOE procure the services of a third-party fiduciary (TPFA) to perform the financial management responsibilities required by federal law for U.S. DOE grants. Finally, under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in 2020, TDOE received an unprecedented \$450M in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, adding tremendous workload to spend the funds in the allotted timeframe. A&M was engaged to serve as TDOE’s TPFA and effectively utilize U.S. DOE and CARES Act funding.



APPROACH

- A&M implemented the comprehensive corrective action plan and oversaw the TDOE’s spending, sourcing and reporting. Specifically, A&M:
- Complied with the special conditions outlined by the U.S. DOE, being responsible for day-to-day cash management, the TPFA’s standalone financial system, the oversight of procurement and warehouse operations, payroll reimbursement and other functions related to Consolidated, Special Education, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), ARPA and ESSER funds;
 - Disbursed all U.S. DOE grant funds — including education jobs, construction funds and other significant grants driving education reform — and created a process for managing and monitoring fixed assets;
 - Processed payables and disbursements, maintained related records and oversaw the procurement of goods services, verifying their receipts;
 - Conducted training across TDOE on new procurement practices and managed procurement and warehouse management functions in accordance with EDGAR and local Guam law;
 - Established processes to track and report time and effort of federally funded TDOE employees and prepared timely related reimbursements; and
 - Prepared timely and accurate reports on schedule and on demand.



OUTCOMES

- A&M’s work with the TDOE highlights our ability to successfully serve as a TPFA and fully implement a U.S. DOE Comprehensive Corrective Action Plan. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:
- Implemented the TPFA financial management information system (FMIS), Tyler MUNIS, at the start of the engagement and shut it down following the successful transition of TPFA duties, with approval from the U.S. DOE;
 - Prepared and distributed grant status and College and Career Access Pathways (CCAP) update reports with no late liquidations for federal grants over a six-year period;
 - Installed a systematic inventory process for all schools and divisions, resulting in an over 98 percent fixed asset reconciliation rate, and recorded over 50,000 new fixed assets in Tyler MUNIS resulting from ESSER and ARPA funds, with no change in TPFA staffing levels;
 - Reduced the payroll reimbursement discrepancy rate from 23 percent at beginning of the engagement to less than 1 percent, with timely reimbursement of payroll on a biweekly basis;
 - Trained multiple personnel on payroll reimbursement processes and new procurement and fixed asset management practices across the organization after streamlining the procurement system to improve transparency and efficiency;
 - Brought TDOE current with indirect cost applications, established a replicable process, and transitioned to TDOE personnel; rates are higher than those prior to A&M’s tenure
 - Provided an outline of duties to transition from TPFA to TDOE, working closely with TDOE’s Chief Internal Auditor to align on transition processes, clearly define TPFA’s role in the transition and transition duties to TDOE personnel;
 - Participated in monthly meetings with TDOE and the U.S. DOE to discuss TDOE’s progress in assuming TPFA’s duties, fully transitioning procurement duties to TDOE in January 2023 and monitoring procurement activity for the remainder of the year;
 - Transitioned from conducting a reconciliation of assets in TPFA’s Tyler MUNIS to monitoring TDOE’s physical inventory and reconciliation processes in 2023;
 - Transitioned invoice review and approval to the TDOE Business Office in 2023 and provided regular feedback on identified discrepancies in TDOE-approved invoices, closing bank account and transitioned cash disbursements in October 2023; and
 - Enabled ten consecutive years of clean audits with no federal funds-related material weaknesses on TDOE’s single audit for any year where A&M served as TPFA.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	

Public Schools District

Financial Advisory Services



BACKGROUND ...

- The client is the largest school district in a state with over 35,000 students and 5,300 faculty and staff throughout 65 schools. The district faced a structural budget deficit due to the combination of flat State Aid, a 10 percent increase in enrollment, and a 100 percent increase in charter aid over eight years.



APPROACH ...

- Client hired A&M to identify and implement performance improvement opportunities, lead the district through three annual budget cycles, and ensure long-term fiscal sustainability.
- A&M served as financial advisor to client, helping to plan and execute balanced budgets.
- Identified opportunities that would minimize the impact of budget shortfalls on academic programs and direct student supports including new revenue opportunities, operational efficiencies, while minimizing reductions in personnel and aligning spending with district priorities.



OUTCOMES

A&M advised on and/or implement the following initiatives:

- Closed or re-purposed under-enrolled or performing schools.
- Sold 12 unused school buildings.
- Reduced headcount by nearly 1500 FTEs, while not increasing class size.
- Raised \$30M in critical capital funds, repairing dozens of schools and freeing up facilities money to be transferred to classrooms.
- Audited enrollment, saving \$2M.
- Changed health care providers (over \$10M cost saving); changed prescription benefits to third party (10% cost saving).
- Identified routing efficiencies, implemented a performance/data-driven P3, and revised special education transportation policy.
- Changed the referral process for special education students to out of district placements.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	

Major Catholic Diocesan School System

Finding Opportunity in Crisis – School Revitalization in the COVID-19 Pandemic



BACKGROUND

A large Catholic Diocese in the northeast U.S. facing decades of declining enrollment needed to restructure the finances, governance, and academics of its Department of Education, which managed 39 Catholic Schools and served 11,000 students. The Client needed to understand the individual needs and challenges of each school and to develop a comprehensive plan to revitalize its elementary schools. In the midst of the detailed assessment and revitalization planning phase, the COVID-19 pandemic struck. Suddenly the Client needed resources to conduct remote education, employ digital technology, and plan for safe, hybrid or on-site class schedules in the fall. As private non-profit institutions, Catholic schools rely heavily on the support of their Parishes and charitable giving, both of which had declined during the pandemic, adding to the financial pressures posed by decades of declining enrollment.



APPROACH

Following the initial study and approval of a multi-year revitalization plan, A&M set out to assess each of the 39 elementary schools in the Diocese and flesh out recommendations to revitalize their academic programs, improve enrollment, strengthen the operations of the Department of Education, and enhance governance to support long-term sustainability. As the pandemic evolved, A&M also provided swift academic, financial, and technological expertise to support individual schools as they faced the impact of COVID-19. Specifically, A&M:

- Assessed academics, enrollment and finances across the network of schools;
- Created a consolidated school health dashboard to track progress at each school;
- Built a 26-week cash flow model for each elementary school and advised on school-specific risks and mitigation strategies;
- Implemented a new academic benchmarking program for tracking achievement gaps and forming a more accurate picture of student growth over time;
- Recommended the closure of several high-risk schools and provided support for communication of school closure decisions;
- Advised schools and Parishes on participation in the CARES Act Paycheck Protection Program (PPP); and
- Recommended and implemented support programs for teachers and administrators to plan and process educational plans during the pandemic.



OUTCOMES

- A&M brought a much-needed technical skillset, and objectivity to the school district's greatest educational challenges. The team on the ground helped Diocesan leaders navigate the COVID-19 crisis, thrive in a remote learning environment and sustain and improve Catholic education in the area. Additionally, A&M:
 - Provided emergency financial management analysis to help school adjust to the reduction in funding from parishes closed by the pandemic;
 - Developed a multi-year plan to address academic, financial, and enrollment challenges;
 - Demonstrated seamless and rapid flexibility to help schools face the challenges of COVID-19;
 - Provided detailed financial modeling in a high-stress, turnaround environment to build confidence for DOE leaders;
 - Helped navigate leadership challenges, community engagement, and enrollment management practices in a holistic approach to meeting the school district's unique needs;
 - Recommended and implemented a series of supports in order to improve remote and hybrid learning, teacher training and technology usage;
 - Established a team of 35 teachers, called curriculum leads, to mentor other teachers on best practices and collaborate across a range of small, disparate schools;
 - Created a regular cadence of positive and productive collaboration among principals; and
 - Anchored recommendations in the values and goals of the organization.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	✓

Charter Management Organization

Federal Funds Management and Impact Maximization, Financial and Operational Effectiveness



BACKGROUND ...

- In 2019, a non-profit charter management organization operating 26 middle and high schools worked with A&M on new policy implementation and board consolidation.
- When the pandemic began, the Client approached A&M to support its health and safety response and provide financial assistance to efficiently utilize the pandemic-related influx of restricted grants from the federal and state governments.



APPROACH ...

A&M translated national and state policies to fit the Client’s needs, communicating with schools and families, and acted as Interim Director of Accounting Compliance. Specifically, A&M:

- Analyzed and assessed national, state, and county policies to match them to the Client’s needs;
- Kept COVID policies up to date as the pandemic evolved and communicated policies and changes to leadership, schools, and families;
- Conducted facilities assessments regarding distancing compliance and air quality;
- Conducted financial forecasting for remote schooling in the event of a vaccine mandate;
- Led and facilitated health and safety working groups to incorporate stakeholder input into decisions;
- Pivoted communications strategies as the pandemic evolved;
- Recorded payroll to restricted funds and sorted expenses by fund to use all available money;
- Expended payroll and other costs against \$30MM in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds;
- Documented all invoices and non-payroll expenses recorded against restricted funds;
- Developed the Client’s Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards (SEFA) for the year, recording everything as resources grew from four restricted federal funds to 14 by the time the SEFA was prepared;
- Prepared for auditors and supported the Client in a successful and unmodified audit with no deficiencies, material misstatements, or other concerns;
- Planned all payroll tagging for the next fiscal year; and
- Trained the new director of accounting compliance.



OUTCOMES

A&M kept the Client fully compliant with county and state protocols, maintaining COVID-19 safety and ensuring audits and grant reporting were completed properly. The work resulted in the following benefits to the Client:

- Used up all funds from a heavily restrictive \$12.5MM state fund and all second-round ESSER funds;
- Revamped the Title I federal funding payroll tagging system to improve compliance;
- Supported the Title I Federal Program Monitoring process resulting in no financial findings for the first time in the Client’s recent history;
- Trained school leaders and students in COVID-19 protocols across all campuses;
- Created and implemented policies that allowed the network to maintain an average daily attendance above 90%;
- Created communications for the board and acquired and distilled survey data;
- Allowed operations teams to plug and play policies, creating congruence across all 26 schools
- Gave the Client more predictability through the long engagement time and a scalable support model; and
- Provided people who knew and understood the Client’s mission and values while providing A&M’s efficiency and drive.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓	✓				

State Department of Education

K-12 Funding Formula

 **BACKGROUND**

- The current K-12 education funding formula in the state, established in 2010, incorporates a poverty factor known as the "student success factor" to account for additional funding needed for students in poverty. Historically, poverty status was determined using free-and-reduced-price-lunch (FRPL) data. However, the shift to universal free meal programs — such as the Community Eligibility Provision in some districts — and federal funding during the COVID-19 pandemic that allowed all students to receive free meals have comprised the reliability of FRPL data. Consequently, the State Department of Education has since faced significant challenges in accurately determining student poverty levels for equitable funding. In 2023, the General Assembly required the Department to develop a poverty measure independent of school nutrition programs, leading to the use of Department of Human Services direct certification data, multiplied by a factor of 1.6, as a temporary solution. Due to challenges with this method, A&M was hired to explore and develop alternative methodologies that would impact over \$1.0B in education aid to support students from low-income families.

 **APPROACH**

- To support RIDE in developing alternative measures of student poverty for its education funding formula, A&M undertook a comprehensive approach. Specifically, A&M:
 - Conducted in-depth research on other states' methodologies for measuring student poverty;
 - Facilitated interviews with national experts and state leaders to understand their methodologies, including the strengths and challenges of their approaches;
 - Held interviews with key leaders in state agencies, including the Department of Human Services, the Division of Taxation and the Department of Revenue, to understand the current state and varying perspectives to inform potential alternatives;
 - Created a framework of criteria and assessed the initial list of potential alternative measures against the framework;
 - Analyzed student counts for past, current and potential measures to determine which accounted for the most eligible students; and
 - Provided RIDE with data-driven recommendations.

 **OUTCOMES**

A&M played an important role in advancing equitable resource allocation for the state's K-12 system and provided critical insights and recommendations that will facilitate the more accurate and effective distribution of funding to support the most vulnerable student populations. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:

- Developed recommendations on alternative measures of student poverty to RIDE for inclusion in their 2026 budget submission, as requested by the General Assembly;
- Reviewed historical data on enrollment, free and reduced-price lunch and social program eligibility for school-aged children statewide to determine how to most closely capture all students who qualify without the need of a multiplier;
- Delivered data-driven insights to help ensure the highest-need communities receive the necessary resources by more accurately measuring student poverty in the education funding formula; and
- Shared innovative practices from other states to enhance the state's K-12 funding formula and support the inclusion of the most eligible students.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

City Department of Education

K-12 Transformation



BACKGROUND

- The City Dept. of Education (C DOE) is one of the largest school systems in the United States, with just over 1M students.
- C DOE was facing several financial issues including, but not limited to, declining enrollment (exacerbated by the pandemic) and related funding, the end of pandemic funding, and increasing transportation costs.
- The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) was created to coordinate birth to five years old educational programs and schools. As part of this redesign, several operational challenges emerged, including many in human resources.
- There was no central, common and modern system for personnel tracking, which prompted data integrity risks, and, in turn, budgeting and operations complications. In addition to these challenges, the Universal Pre-K initiative has contracts with over 1,200 local Community Based Organization (CBOs) to provide early childhood education services.
- In January 2022, a new Chancellor was appointed by the City’s newly elected mayor to lead the department. In February 2022, the Client engaged A&M to begin a 90-day assessment.



APPROACH

A&M provided CFO support to the Client in key priority tasks identified by leadership and assisted the newly appointed Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education. Specifically, A&M:

- Developed a dynamic school consolidation savings model that estimates the financial impact tied to the consolidation of K-12 schools.
- Created preliminary enrollment scenarios to support long-term planning including best-case, base-case, and worst-case scenarios.
- Identified areas of efficiency opportunities for the Client’s consideration.
- Refined personnel tracking methods by converting the “most up to date” HR/personnel records into a comprehensive data set and conducting analysis to identify and correct duplicates, discrepancies, gaps, and false information.
- Identified an accurate headcount for DECE, drew consistent and accurate organizational charts for internal teams, reviewed opportunities to adopt data driven best practices for personnel tracking, developed a temporary solution for automated personnel tracking and organizational chart creation, and advised on a system-wide data re-upload.
- Mapped and reimaged the RFP process for contracts with CBOs providing early childhood education services.
- Examined the roles of various stakeholders, key deadlines, and internal capacity to support timely work.



OUTCOMES

A&M completed the assessment and used the findings to provide models, projections, and opportunities. A&M’s work resulted in the following benefits to the Client:

- Built a K-12 School Consolidation Model that estimated cost savings tied to variable and semi-variable school costs such as food services, transportation, facilities, and staffing.
- Developed long-term K-12 enrollment projections under three scenarios - base-case, best-case, and worst-case - that considered long-term impacts of enrollment trends.
- Identified various efficiency opportunities that could be further explored to help prepare for anticipated financial challenges including a long-term financial assessment (and scenario planning), a review of the Fair Student Funding (FSF) formula (weighted funding formula by which funds are allocated to each school), a review of school transportation including Special Education bus services, vehicle insurance, conversion to electric buses, and bus vendor contracts, and instances where space is being leased and whether any of those services can be moved into Client-owned buildings.
- Adopted data driven best practices, allowing the HR team to efficiently and effectively track personnel.
- Enabled the Deputy Chancellor to deploy resources against priorities including the establishment of a data set containing accurate DECE personnel information, development of an automated organization chart tool to streamline internal personnel tracking and user guide, and alignment of Galaxy records to include updated DECE Program/Team names.
- Developed guidelines for streamlining RFP process for 1,200 providers managing key deadlines across 14 months.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	

Texas Independent School District

K-12 Transformation, Federal Funds Impact Maximization



BACKGROUND

- Our client, an Independent School District (ISD) is the largest school district in Texas, serving 194,000 students in 274 schools. Over the last ten years, ISD has faced persistent enrollment losses, growing fixed costs, and static combined state and local revenue due to Texas “recapture” payments which effectively cap per-student revenue.
- As enrollment deteriorated, the district did not make appropriate modifications to scale schools and Central Office supports to efficiently meet student need.
- ISD’s new Superintendent and leadership team recognized the need to improve financial management capacity, including the oversight of over \$1B in new federal funding and seize the opportunity to transform the district to reach fiscal sustainability while improving student outcomes.



APPROACH

A&M conducted a preliminary financial assessment of ISD, which gave ISD’s leadership an objective perspective on the financial standing, capabilities, and practices of ISD, and outlined a series of recommended improvements.

Upon completion of the initial assessment, ISD re-engaged A&M directly to support the development of an operating budget more aligned with strategic goals, improve financial management capacity, and develop a long-term fiscal transformation plan. Under this expanded scope, A&M:

- Supported the ISD Finance Team in developing SY22-23 budget and provided support and analysis to the ISD Board during budget workshops, and supported the development and validation of Central Office budget reductions
- Developed action plans for six critical financial capacity improvement initiatives to address findings from A&M’s preliminary assessment. The initiatives served as a baseline for transformation and helped create a PMO function to lead the implementation.
- Developed analysis and tools for enhanced transparency of federal funds use and facilitated FY22 year-end review and reprioritization exercises to better align investments with demonstrated success and student outcomes
- Evaluated the tools and supports available to school leaders, conducted a gap assessment to identify principal needs, and developed a suite of solutions to improve school support, training and accountability
- Refined the academic, operational, and financial case for broader fiscal transformation and supported ISD in developing a long-term fiscal transformation roadmap and communicating this vision to the Board and public



OUTCOMES

- Provided an independent perspective to ISD’s CFO, Superintendent, and Board by preparing the SY22-23 budget, which helped the district refine and improve the budget process with a clear understanding of the long-term fiscal sustainability implications
- Led the implementation of key fiscal improvement initiatives, which has improved the leadership team’s visibility, transparency, and control over the district’s finances, setting the stage for a broader fiscal transformation
- Analyzed staffing models and identified misalignment of resources to current student needs in operation
- Developed comprehensive decision support model to provide insight on various district transformation scenarios and summarized the impact of potential alternatives
- Supported ISD leadership in balancing the ESSER budget, aligning planned programs to available resourcing, and re-prioritizing ESSER investments to align with leadership strategy
- Currently providing ongoing support to ISD as it develops and executes a long-term plan for district transformation

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	

City Parish School Board

Interim Management



BACKGROUND ...

- On July 11, 2005, the City Parish School Board and the State Department of Education hired A&M's Public Sector Group to turn around the non-academic operations and finances of the City's struggling pre-K-12 public school system.
- The City Public School system was the worst of all major school systems in the county and faced intractable corruption, in-fighting and racial tension. With \$450M of debt, state audits revealed that employees were siphoning millions in unauthorized pay checks.
- In August 2005, less than two weeks after the first day of school, the nature of A&M's assignment had significantly changed. The city was deeply impacted by a hurricane, and the school district, which had just celebrated the on time opening of 117 schools, was left with none.



APPROACH ...

- A&M provided leadership by assuming interim management roles within the organization, including Chief Restructuring Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Chief Information Officer, and Chief Procurement Officer.
- A&M spearheaded the reconstruction of damaged schools and the insurance claims recovery process to ensure that adequate funds would be available to address the school system's fiscal challenges.



OUTCOMES

- A&M recovered \$30M from private insurers, obtained \$57M in funding from community disaster relief organizations and \$102M from the federal government and \$250M from Gulf Coast Recovery Credit Bonds.
- A&M developed a shared service model, offering back-office support functions critical to the classroom through experienced providers in key areas such as transportation, information technology, food, and maintenance to both public and charter schools.
- A&M initiated a new system of financial controls.
- As a result of A&M's efforts, the City Parish Schools was able to meet all of its obligations, avoid bankruptcy and return to solvency, obtaining its first clean audit in many years.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	

City Public Schools

Interim Financial Management


BACKGROUND

The client, City Public Schools, was faced with an operating deficit of more than \$305M and major academic and financial shortfalls. City Public Schools needed to serve its mission while restructuring the department for long term fiscal stability. The state governor appointed an Emergency Manager to oversee the financial and academic restructuring of the State’s largest public education system. The city’s fiscal crisis limited City Public School’s ability to service 16,000+ special education students.


APPROACH

A&M was a financial advisor to the Emergency Financial Manager of City Public Schools. A&M:

- Developed financial condition assessment and financial models, operational assessments, alternatives for increased revenues and cost cutting measures and debt restructuring plans.
- Provided capacity to reform / restructure delivery of services to better serve students in light of fiscal deficit, enrollment trends and diminishing accountability, while adhering to state and Federal regulations and mandates.
- Managed Special Education finances and operations.
- Reviewed spending and processes to assist the client with efforts to improve quality and efficiency and to lower costs.


OUTCOMES

- Over a two-year period, the client implemented \$53M in cost savings, which included \$14.8M annual savings in janitorial and maintenance costs, \$8M in transportation, \$4M in security, and \$4.8M in revenue from the sale of a bus fleet, while achieving unprecedented levels of compliance. A&M developed a new finance/budget organization including:
 - Creating a school-based revenue allocation budget model (Responsibility Centered Management).
 - Serving as Acting Executive Budget Director /Deputy CFO.
 - Serving as Acting Director of Special Education, improving service, lowering costs and managing Special Education referral processes.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓					

X County Public Schools

Central Administration Staffing Analysis / Benchmarking


BACKGROUND

- The district was publicly viewed as overstaffed in the central office function. The school district, in conjunction with the board, sought an independent analysis and verification of the staffing levels.


APPROACH

A&M performed an objective staffing study of the Central Administrative Offices (CAO) to compare benchmarks and assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the central administrative functions. Specifically, A&M:

- Analyzed the difference in operating models across the peer districts to understand the different ways districts categorized their central and school level staff.
- Performed an in-depth analysis of each of the staffing models to rebuild the staff comparisons and ensure apples to apples comparisons.
- Developed a cross-agency peer benchmarking interview guide, conducted interviews and a review of the current state of each XCS department, collected peer district staffing files, conducted outreach to peer districts, and analyzed the results against best practices.


OUTCOMES

- Presented a final report indicating the level of staffing by department for XCS against peer school districts was presented to the school board
- Determined that the XCS central office was understaffed in comparison to relative peer districts (this conflicted with the original hypothesis prior to A&M's analysis)
- Recommended that XCS increase staffing for four central office functions, weight hiring of staff toward central academic support functions, and consider hiring additional deputies

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

X City Public Schools

Grading Performance Review

 **BACKGROUND**

- The client comprehensively overhauled its grading policies and procedures, including the adoption of two major Board policies in 2019. These policies established research-based common standards and safeguards to prevent inappropriate grading practices while maintaining school-based autonomy within these standards. Additionally, in part as a response to the June 2022 investigative audit by the State Office of the Inspector General for Education, the Client implemented mandatory training for school staff across their 155 schools and programs and shared guidance to relevant stakeholders to enhance clarity, trust and consistency regarding grading standards and grade changes. In the 2023 to 2024 school year, the first year after the main thrust of the COVID-19 pandemic and a return to a more normal school environment, A&M was engaged to conduct a performance review of its grading policies and practices — including grade changes from the prior school year — to inform the Client in governance, policies and data collection and analysis.

 **APPROACH**

A&M supported the Client with its performance review of grading policies and practices, identifying improvement opportunities. Specifically, A&M:

- Reviewed grading policies, training, guidance and other communications implemented during the 2022 to 2023 school year (SY22-23);
- Led interviews and focus group with district- and school-level personnel to understand their experiences with and understanding of grading and grade changes;
- Disseminated a survey to the teachers across the Client’s 155 schools and programs to understand their implementation of the grading policies and opportunities for improvement;
- Utilized data from the Client’s Student Information System to understand all grade changes recorded in SY22-23;
- Analyzed the scale and impact of grade changes requiring documentation per the Client’s policies and reviewed documentation for a sample of grade changes in the Client’s ticket management system to verify appropriate completion and documentation per the relevant policies; and
- Observed improvements made in the Client’s grading policies and practices since 2019 and the subsequent 2022 audit, providing recommendations for areas of improvement.

 **OUTCOMES**

A&M left the Client with improvement recommendations that will prepare grading and grade change practices for future audits. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:

- Provided an objective perspective regarding the fidelity with which changes to grading policies were implemented across the Client’s grading and reporting team and within schools;
- Identified improvements in grading and grade change practices that the Client made after the 2022 investigative audit;
- Developed findings and proposed recommendations to support the Client’s commitment to continuous improvement;
- Determined areas of improvement to enhance the Client’s grading policies, procedures and practices and to increase alignment with State of Maryland’s standards; and
- Created a template that the Client can use for future State Department of Education grading performance audits.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

County District

District Transformation



BACKGROUND

- County District, a K-12 public school district in Western Colorado serving approximately 20,000 students, had experienced gradually declining enrollment over the past several years, adding pressure to its financial situation. County District utilized adhoc tools to forecast future financial performance, lacking a full picture of the changing revenue and expenditure picture to be expected in future years. Additionally, like other districts nationwide during the COVID-19 crisis, County District purchased various academic interventions using Elementary and Secondary school Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding in an effort to improve student academic performance and subsequently faced the expiration of this funding in 2024, necessitating re-examination of these important investments. Recognizing the need for improved financial forecasting, analytical support for reducing the school footprint and an independent perspective to rationalize prioritization of academic interventions beyond the expiration of ESSER funds, County District contracted with A&M to support these workstreams.



APPROACH

- A&M supported the Client with the three workstreams, conducting analyses and workshops to develop recommendations. Specifically, A&M:
 - Built a comprehensive financial forecast model for County District's CFO that included a dynamic buildup of state, local and federal funding sources and all areas of general fund expenses to forecast changes to the Client's cash balance over five years.
 - Utilized decision factors created by County District's Elementary Declining Enrollment Committee to develop analytic underpinnings for each outlined factor flowing into a consolidation decision model for County District that ranked candidates for consolidation based on objective, data-informed metrics.
 - Developed a communications plan to support County District's communications about the process to reduce the school footprint.
 - Conducted a workshop with the County District leadership team to develop a shared understanding of the district's preparedness for adjusting to declining revenues.
 - Analyzed the ESSER-funded academic interventions utilized by County District, collecting relevant metrics including student usage data and developing measurements for student academic impact by intervention.
 - Provided a series of recommended initiatives to strengthen County District's understanding of its financial outlook and the school consolidation options including related savings as well as insights on the relative impact of ESSER-funded academic interventions to guide ongoing investment decisions.



OUTCOMES

A&M gave the Client clarity into the impacts of its financial outlook and programs to prepare it for the post-ESSER environment. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:

- Provided an objective perspective on the Client's readiness to adjust to the new post-ESSER operating environment.
- Brought transparency to County District's financial situation, revealing that cash balances had been maintained conservatively and clarifying district planning and budgeting processes over the next several years.
- Delivered a comprehensive view of the financial, operational and academic landscape across County District on a comparative basis, utilizing objective factors and ranking school comparative performance to inform future decisions around consolidation.
- Analyzed cost, access, use and performance data related to academic interventions to identify several interventions falling short of expected impacts and guide the Client's strategy for continued investment.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

State Department of Education (_County Public Schools)

Academic Integrity and Accountability



BACKGROUND

- In 2017, following a period of exceptional growth in PGCPs's graduation rates, widespread allegations of record manipulation and fraud intentent to improve graduation rates arose.
- The client requested an independent audit of graduation rates for the 15/16 and 16/17 school years, including an assessment of surrounding policies, procedures, and processes.
- Both the X County Public Schools and client needed an objective, third party assessment of the validity of claims, the impact of record manipulation, as well as a clear plan for remediation and improvement.



APPROACH

- A&M conducted a rapid assessment and investigation of practices at the county's 28 high schools:
 - Reviewed authorities, policies, and procedures
 - Interviewed county school administrators, support staff, and faculty
 - Received, logged, and responded to complaints from over 145 individuals
 - Analyzed student grading system records of 15,215 students
 - Assessed transcripts, grade changes, and alternative learning data for a sample of 1,212 students
- A&M delivered the findings of this investigation in a formal, public report which detailed not only by-school results, but the underlying causes contributing to record manipulation.
- A&M recommended policy clarifications, enhanced controls, and more accurate and trackable monitoring processes.
- Upon completion of the 2017 Audit, client requested A&M conduct a progress assessment to validate improvements and inform further reform efforts.



OUTCOMES

- A&M's 2017 audit identified widespread grade keeping, attendance, and graduation process manipulation.
- 5% of students graduated despite not meeting basic client credit requirements and that 24% of all students benefited from inappropriate grade changes.
- A&M developed 40 distinct recommendations, including policy clarifications, enhanced controls, and more accurate and trackable monitoring processes.
- In 2018, A&M performed a follow-up audit and progress assessment that identified that the County Public Schools had successfully implemented 38 out of 40 recommendations from the 2017 Audit.
- The County Public Schools demonstrated notable improvements, specifically in graduation certification, grade changes, and credit recovery programs.
- State Department of Education applauded the progress the County Public Schools has made to date and described the District as leaders of best practices for the State.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

State Unified School District

Payroll and Self-Service Portal Support


BACKGROUND

- A Unified School District (USD) implemented a new systems applications and products (SAP) software including an employee self-service portal. After implementation, the USD experienced problems with SAP success factors and the new portal, which left the Client with a backlog of over 11,000 tickets and with multiple payroll system issues. A&M was brought in to support the Client’s payroll team and stabilize the new portal.


APPROACH

A&M bolstered Client payroll and systems teams with additional people as well as developed an operations center and teams to document system processes and issues and accelerate ticket resolution. Specifically, A&M:

- Developed case management operations center supported with a Zendesk ticket management system and expanded onboarding for new case managers to increase team size and accelerate ticket resolution;
- Created a root cause team that analyzed over 500 separated tickets, 300 known system issues and approximately 70 individual employees to distill specific root causes and associated symptoms;
- Established a process team that reviewed the existing process document repository for portal training and guidelines, mapped end-to-end hire to retire activities, documented known issues and developed solution work packages to address root cause remediation; and
- Augmented the USD’s systems team with several additional individuals to assist with gathering requirements and documentation as well as prioritizing and gaining approval for remediation work.

OUTCOMES


A&M’s support and the new operations center and teams allowed the USD’s payroll team to close tickets, create processes and fix SAP and portal system issues. A&M provided the following benefits to the Client:

- Closed 14,000 tickets during first six months and reduced backlog from 11,000 to 3,000 tickets;
- Produced 12 separate campaign themes for large groups of tickets with similar profiles that resulted in over 4,100 ticket closures during the first three months of the engagement;
- Identified 65 unique root causes that involved system architecture and organizational processes that were used to develop tailored work packages to address remediation efforts;
- Built 14 separate process and system-related work packages by consolidating the identified root causes into similar sets of related work;
- Prioritized recommendations based on work level of effort and organizational impact;
- Audited over 130 employee payroll correction claims in the SAP and identified 91 additional claims associated with employee tax withholdings for review; and
- Resolved over 600 system-related issues and revised and improved over 50 organizational processes.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

Public School District

IT Cost Baseline


BACKGROUND

- Large public school district with ~200 schools and ~90k students. IT department was preparing for an upcoming bond request and needed to strategize on device support costs and actual costs of their services.
- District was preparing for an “opt in vs opt out” model for schools interested in outsourcing their IT support to a 3rd party rather than using the district supplied IT department (shared service).


APPROACH

- Utilizing an industry standard IT model, A&M developed a taxonomy to categorize operating expenses, fixed assets, and labor costs. These costs were then allocated to their respective applications and business units (i.e., departments and individual schools).
- Each layer of the model provided a different “slice” of current IT spend, which was then loaded into a dynamic dashboard for the client and A&M for ad hoc analysis.
- Using the model, A&M provided a roadmap for preparing the district for the upcoming bond request and potential cost savings opportunities to optimize current IT budget of ~\$20M.


OUTCOMES

- A&M identified opportunities to reduce annual spend by 10% through sourcing, rationalization, and process improvement initiatives.
- District has the necessary cost baseline to understand how their costs roll up to applications and services and then allocated to schools and departments to determine the “true cost” of services provided.
- A&M provided a roadmap to optimize current budget as well as the methodology to continually track IT spend for ongoing analysis and optimization.
- District is using device support cost analysis to provide guidance to schools on asset purchases to reduce the future impact on constrained resources.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	

State Department of Education (X City Public Schools)

Financial Management

 **BACKGROUND**

- After a series of financial mismanagement challenges, and public allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse, the State Department of Education (State DOE) stepped in to support X City Public Schools in improving controls and regaining public trust. The State DOE engaged A&M to conduct a thorough performance review of the district's financial processes, controls, and financial outlook. State DOE was particularly interested in identifying deficiencies in the control environment that could contribute to the misuse of funds, understanding the degree to which control failures led to non-compliant spend, and recommending enhancements to procedures to improve accountability and compliance.

 **APPROACH**

- Documenting and understanding controls environment: Review policies and procedures, understand control environment, understand resource allocation, monitoring, and execution, conduct process walkthroughs to understand and document controls for:
 - Employee payroll
 - Third-party payments
 - Employee expenses
 - Treasury controls
 - Federal funding compliance requirements
- Testing adherence to internal controls:
 - Selected key representative samples across some focus areas to observe documentation maintained by X City Public Schools and adherence to current control practices based on process walkthroughs.
 - Developed findings and recommendations based on inconsistencies in approach identified through interviews and process walkthroughs.
- Evaluated financial forecasting capabilities and provided independent assessment of financial outlook:
 - Reviewed latest financial reports, forecasts, and budget to actuals and developed independent perspective on the accuracy of forecasts and sufficiency of funding for SY24-25 operations.
- Identifying gaps and risks: Combining learnings from process walkthroughs, documentation reviews, policy analysis, and control testing, developed a series of findings and recommendations to improve overall financial accountability and transparency.

 **OUTCOMES**

Alvarez & Marsal (A&M) provided much needed technical expertise and independent perspective on the risks and opportunities for improvements needed to improve consistency, transparency, and accountability in financial processes. Our key contributions included:

- Developed findings related to the overall policy and control environment, and related to sub-processes including procurement, accounts payable, employee expenses, payroll, human resources, treasury and financial forecasting.
- Integrated findings from all sub-processes into a prioritized series of recommendations to support X City Public Schools in addressing the specific findings, and the underlying challenges associated with each focus area.
- Synthesized insights gained through gap analysis between policy review and stakeholder interviews to formulate actionable steps to mitigate immediate risks at X City Public Schools.
- Provided ongoing support for financial forecasting to manage cash flow risks during SY24-25.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

International Student Services Company

AI-Powered Virtual Guidance Counselor Strategy and Digital Platform


BACKGROUND

A \$1B international educational services company provides education and training services to colleges, universities, businesses and individuals around the world and offers a variety of test preparation, professional training, career development, language training, university and student support services

A&M was engaged to define and AI strategy, and design and implement an AI powered virtual guidance counselor platform to transform college admission and career counseling, and standardized test preparation services for high school students


APPROACH

- Defined an AI strategy and prioritized critical features aligned with long-term product vision and business goals
- Designed the AI Solution applying lean product management principles and led product development using an agile, iterative approach focused on continuous exploration
- Transitioned and further enhanced the application within the client’s Asure environment. Defined test and implementation strategies and orchestrated end –to-end testing, production deployment and stabilization of new “Advisor” platform


OUTCOMES

The AI-powered “Advisor” solution significantly increased student engagement and measurably improved free-to-premium course conversions, enabling personalized academic guidance at scale while establishing a reusable AI platform for future enterprise-wide education application

Select A&M Early Childhood Qualifications

A&M Early Childhood | Summary of A&M Case Studies Mapped to E&I Service Area

	Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
City Department of Education	✓	✓	✓		✓			
State Agency Launch, Program and Staff Integration	✓		✓					
State Child Welfare Agency	✓		✓					
State Child and Family Services Division	✓		✓					
State Department of Children, Youth, and Families	✓		✓					

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	

City Department of Education

K-12 Transformation



BACKGROUND

- The City Dept. of Education (C DOE) is one of the largest school systems in the United States, with just over 1M students.
- C DOE was facing several financial issues including, but not limited to, declining enrollment (exacerbated by the pandemic) and related funding, the end of pandemic funding, and increasing transportation costs.
- The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) was created to coordinate birth to five years old educational programs and schools. As part of this redesign, several operational challenges emerged, including many in human resources.
- There was no central, common and modern system for personnel tracking, which prompted data integrity risks, and, in turn, budgeting and operations complications. In addition to these challenges, the Universal Pre-K initiative has contracts with over 1,200 local Community Based Organization (CBOs) to provide early childhood education services.
- In January 2022, a new Chancellor was appointed by the City’s newly elected mayor to lead the Client. In February 2022, the Client engaged A&M to begin a 90-day assessment.



APPROACH

A&M provided CFO support to the Client in key priority tasks identified by leadership and assisted the newly appointed Deputy Chancellor for Early Childhood Education. Specifically, A&M:

- Developed a dynamic school consolidation savings model that estimates the financial impact tied to the consolidation of K-12 schools.
- Created preliminary enrollment scenarios to support long-term planning including best-case, base-case, and worst-case scenarios.
- Identified areas of efficiency opportunities for the Client’s consideration.
- Refined personnel tracking methods by converting the “most up to date” HR/personnel records into a comprehensive data set and conducting analysis to identify and correct duplicates, discrepancies, gaps, and false information.
- Identified an accurate headcount for DECE, drew consistent and accurate organizational charts for internal teams, reviewed opportunities to adopt data driven best practices for personnel tracking, developed a temporary solution for automated personnel tracking and organizational chart creation, and advised on a system-wide data re-upload.
- Mapped and reimagined the RFP process for contracts with CBOs providing early childhood education services.
- Examined the roles of various stakeholders, key deadlines, and internal capacity to support timely work.



OUTCOMES

A&M completed the 90-day assessment and used the findings to provide models, projections, and opportunities. A&M’s work resulted in the following benefits to the Client:

- Built a K-12 School Consolidation Model that estimated cost savings tied to variable and semi-variable school costs such as food services, transportation, facilities, and staffing.
- Developed long-term K-12 enrollment projections under three scenarios - base-case, best-case, and worst-case - that considered long-term impacts of enrollment trends.
- Identified various efficiency opportunities that could be further explored to help prepare for anticipated financial challenges including a long-term financial assessment (and scenario planning), a review of the Fair Student Funding (FSF) formula (weighted funding formula by which funds are allocated to each school), a review of school transportation including Special Education bus services, vehicle insurance, conversion to electric buses, and bus vendor contracts, and instances where space is being leased and whether any of those services can be moved into Client-owned buildings.
- Adopted data driven best practices, allowing the HR team to efficiently and effectively track personnel.
- Enabled the Deputy Chancellor to deploy resources against priorities including the establishment of a data set containing accurate DECE personnel information, development of an automated organization chart tool to streamline internal personnel tracking and user guide, and alignment of Galaxy records to include updated DECE Program/Team names.
- Developed guidelines for streamlining RFP process for 1,200 providers managing key deadlines across 14 months.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

State Agency Launch, Program and Staff Integration

Early Childhood Learning and Care



BACKGROUND ...

- With the goal of enabling and expanding access to high-quality and affordable early care and education, in 2021 a state engaged A&M to launch a new, cabinet-level agency, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), comprised of existing programs and resources from the Early Learning Division (ELD) of the Department of Education (DoE), and multiple programs from the Department of Human Services (DHS)
- A&M worked with cross agency leaders and staff to understand the implications of transitioning programs and resources, facilitate collaboration and joint decision making, and to design, strategically plan, launch and stabilize the new agency on July 1, 2023



APPROACH ...

- To accomplish this high-stakes and complex work, A&M:
- Conducted a current state analysis of ELD and DHS programs, functions and organizations, documenting their key operations, rules, roles, supporting systems and budgets.
- Mapped Family and Provider journeys, IT systems, data flows.
- Benchmarked other states' efforts to create new policy and agencies.
- Identified key transition considerations for the agency leadership teams to address through strategy and planning.
- Facilitated the design of DELC Mission, Vision and Values, and future state operating and organization models.
- Developed organizational charters, mapped future state processes, services and internal and cross-agency processes.
- Developed start-up, carve-out and integration strategies and a 24-month roadmap of projects to address new agency operations, IT & data, human resources, general administration, strategy & policy, and change management.
- Facilitated the development of Legislative reports and agency budget requests including general fund and braided funding for ongoing operations and one-time costs.
- Orchestrated internal staff and external interest holder engagement and communications and developed an agency orientation strategy.
- Orchestrated the Project Management Office and execution of the implementation project portfolio and lead mission critical workstreams to: establish the new agency in federal and state systems and stand-up administrative capabilities; develop future state IT systems landscape, design future state data infrastructure, and elicit requirements for a provider management system; migrate policy, rationalize cross-agency rule sets and implement eligibility rule changes; develop new interagency agreements and contracts; prepare facilities; transition of staff, program operations and support shared services.
- Developed governance frameworks to enable decision making, transparency, risk management, policy and procedure standards and manage service performance and a model to assess and mature operational and systemic capabilities.



OUTCOMES

The impact of A&M's work included the following outcomes:

- A co-created agency Mission, Visions and Values to anchor staff, partners and interest holders.
- Reached joint decisions between multiple agencies on the approach to transition programs and resources.
- Compelling legislative status reports including comprehensive implementation and budget plans which enabled the agency to secure 100% of the one-time and on-going resources required to launch and operate.
- Aligned policy, processes and procedures across the new agency to establish the foundation for operational efficiency and enable improved outcomes for more families.
- Staff, partners and interest holders aware, prepared for transition and adopting new structures, policies and procedures.
- Successful launch of a new state agency with new and migrated staff, new organization and back-office functions, budget, operating capabilities, new and refined processes, new IT systems and services, expanded facilities and rationalized rules and expanded edibility.
- Project was delivered on time, on budget without impact to program services.
- Models and tools for ongoing continuous improvement and capability maturity.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

State Child Welfare Agency

Child Welfare System Transformation

 **BACKGROUND** ...

The state’s Secretary of State released audits finding significant deficiencies in the Child Welfare (CW) system within the Department of Human Services (DHS). Concurrently, a state-based advocacy group filed a class action lawsuit against the state and DHS alleging that they had failed to provide necessary services through the foster care system. In response, the Governor issued an Executive Order to create a Child Welfare Oversight Board and hire a crisis management team to overhaul the CW system.

 **APPROACH** ...

During A&M’s time in the State Child Welfare Agency, A&M focused on supporting DHS and CW in the following key areas:

- Care Capacity
 - Improve Foster Care Certification Processes and Systems
 - Reduce Reliance on Out of State Placement
 - Facilitate Rapid Access of Mental Health and
 - Substance Abuse Services for Youth
- Data
 - Create Operational Key Metrics Dashboards
 - Overhaul Governors Monthly Report
 - Improve culture around use of data for DHS/CW

- Communications
 - Streamline Public Records
 - Centralize CW Communications Team
 - Enhance Transparency through Communications
 - Improve Critical Incident Response and Prevention
- Workforce
 - Surge Hire Caseworkers and Field Staff
 - Create Opportunities to Improve Retention
 - Improve Child Welfare Training Systems
 - Improve Centralized Child Abuse Hotline Outcomes

A&M conducted a four-phase approach to addressing the challenges in State Child Welfare, Phase 1: Initial Assessment and Planning; Phase 2: Workplan Implementation and Refinement; Phase 3: Ongoing Implementation; Phase 4: Ongoing Implementation and Transition.

OUTCOMES 

A&M served as the crisis management team to assess the key deficiencies of the agency and implement operational improvements. Partnering with Child Welfare, Department of Human Services, the Child Welfare Oversight Board, and the Governor, A&M:

- Supported increasing the behavioral health providers to help reduce the youth placed out of state by 64% in less than nine months.
- Revamped hiring processes to secure 7,000+ applications that led to conditional hires of 345 positions that was notably more diverse than the state’s population at-large.
- Revised the Critical Incident Review Team (CIRT) process to align with the reduced timeline and increased reporting requirements of new legislation and reorganized the team structure to increase independence of fatality reviews.
- Helped establish the centralized public records team and reduced Public Record requests backlog of 500+ requests to functional zero in five weeks.
- Partnered with the DHS Communications team to revamp the Governor’s Child Welfare Monthly Report and developed dashboard to track performance metrics for key initiatives.
- Leveraged data and performance management to drive more productive behaviors and decision making for Hotline staff to improve quality, efficiency, and responsiveness.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓					

State Child and Family Services Division

CWW Survey and Wellness Program Design


BACKGROUND

The State’s Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) experienced retention issues with their child welfare workers (CWW). The staff carried high caseloads and suffered from burnout without the support of professional development opportunities. These factors and others led to low staff morale, lack of job satisfaction, and high turnover. The CFSD leadership sought to understand the problem and its dimensions in a scientific and systematic way and to develop solutions to create a satisfied workforce.


APPROACH

A&M was contracted to assist with creating a framework for understanding and assessing causes of low morale and high turnover, and to analyze the data collected to develop a set of evidence-based recommendations. A&M:

- Worked with CFSD leadership to adopt a well-published survey instrument to measure CWW satisfaction across salary, professional development, workload impact, recognition, peer support, supervision, and accomplishment.
- Performed quantitative and qualitative data analysis to assess the CWW staff level of satisfaction across the different scales, and to understand specific factors that led to low/high satisfaction of the scales. Analysis was performed at the aggregate level and stratified by several demographic elements such as job role, age, tenure, and region.
- Conducted a set of focus groups by job role to gain more insight about elements that required additional context and to explore services and changes sought by the staff to improve the morale and work-life balance.
- Worked with CFSD leadership to create a set of CWW employees wellness programs and services, and to propose other organizational improvements to improve communication, inclusion, and training.


OUTCOMES

- Conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey data and identified factors that affect staff morale, job satisfaction, and burnout. The results were presented to DPHHS senior leadership team and to all CWW staff.
- Conducted a series of focus groups with CWW staff to explore and prioritize programs and services they perceived as helpful to address morale, burnout, and health impact.
- Collaborated with CFSD senior leadership team to design and roll out wellness programs and services, and other structural changes to address issues related to physical and mental health, work-life balance, burnout, recognition, communication, and professional development.
- Developed a careful communication plan to encourage the CWW staff to respond to the survey, which resulted in 70% response rate across all CWW staff statewide. After the survey, developed job requirements for a Wellness Program Coordinator to manage the development and rollout the wellness program.

Operational Excellence	Benchmarking	Strategy	Partnerships	Student Experience & Enrollment	Economic Development	Capital Planning & Management	Executive Management Mentoring / Coaching
✓		✓				✓	

State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)

Child Welfare Spending and Efficiency Review


BACKGROUND

The State contracted A&M to provide a combination of finance, child welfare, and Medicaid subject expertise to assist in both improving child safety outcomes as well as assist in preventing future overspending within the agency. State-issued reports on Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) showed the agency was on track to significantly overspend its budget by 13% (or nearly \$22M) unless corrective action was taken


APPROACH

The project occurred in two discrete phases during which A&M:

- Conducted a Budget to Actuals variance analysis of the financial information available to DCYF
- Identified financial opportunities for DCYF and made recommendations that could be assumed in DCYF’s FY20 & FY21 budgets

In phase two, A&M’s engagement was extended to help support DCYF in the implementation of the following opportunities identified in phase one

- Revenue Maximization Opportunities for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS).
- DCYF Private Agency Contract Support
- Initiative Management Support
- DCYF Fiscal Leadership Transition Support


OUTCOMES

The analysis and recommendations made were critical to guide decision making around future policies that would impact DCYF, its budget, providers, and families. The A&M team identified a variety of savings opportunities across various federal funding streams. Significant sources of funding for DCYF included Medicaid, Title IV-E, and TANF.

- The team helped DCYF identify a potential savings of \$1.04M in FY20 and a run-rate of \$4.37M by FY21
- Provided analysis that led to a successful renegotiation of all ten private agency foster care agencies to better support children and create a more equitable foster care system
- Supported back claiming for some HCBS services and moving forward with a future Medicaid claiming structure for applicable HCBS services