

A.C.E. Academy Charter School
Education Plan
June 2018

The school's mission states that, "*A.C.E. Academy will equip students from all backgrounds to succeed in the college and career of their choice by driving academic excellence, developing strong character, and instilling an entrepreneurial mindset.*" The mission is the starting point for the school's education plan, one in which academics, character, and entrepreneurship are integrated into a rigorous research-based curriculum. Student centered learning at A.C.E. Academy not only promotes critical thinking, increases student engagement, and empowers students to take ownership of their learning, but is also at the heart of academic, character, and entrepreneurship integration at the school. When combined with highly effective teaching strategies, data driven instruction, and instructional support, this model ensures achievement of academic goals and post-secondary success.

Academics

A.C.E. Academy teachers will utilize research-based curriculum that aligns to the NC Standards to drive academic excellence and best meets the learning needs of the students at the school. The ACE Academy instructional leadership has adopted specific curriculum in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science. The curriculum is consistent with college preparedness expectations to allow for a smooth transition from A.C.E. Academy to high school. The goal of all instruction at A.C.E. Academy is to shift the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the student.

ELA

The school has adopted Wit & Wisdom for Kindergarten - 8th grade ELA instruction. Wit & Wisdom integrates liberal arts and science into a text-based ELA curriculum through daily reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary study.

Math

In Kindergarten-2nd grade math, the school has adopted EngageNY. Through the integration of discovery based lessons and the use of manipulatives, EngageNY builds math knowledge in a logical and thorough manner that develops a deep understanding of math concepts.

In 3rd-8th grades, the school has adopted the National Training Network (NTN) for math instruction. Through the integration of SOLVE (a five-step problem solving paradigm that develops students skills for reasoning), manipulatives, pictorials, graphic organizers, engaging activities, formative assessments, and systematic reviews, NTN builds deep conceptual understanding of mathematical concepts.

Science and Social Studies

A.C.E. Academy has adopted Teachers Curriculum Institute (TCI) for Science and Social Studies in 5th-8th grades. TCI incorporates literacy into Science and Social Studies through a technology based program that utilizes informational texts, as well as discovery based lessons and hand-on investigations and activities.

The scope and sequence provided for the ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies curriculum serve as a foundation for grade level pacing guides. Curriculum and Instructional Coaches will monitor instruction through check in walk-throughs, deep observations, and collaborative post conference conversations and team meetings to ensure pacing guides are used to design and deliver timely, standards aligned lessons. Teachers are not permitted to stray from these set guides without demonstrating clear evidences that the students need something different.

Instructional Day

In both the Lower (Kindergarten-4th Grade) and Upper School (5th-8th grades) students begin their day with a morning meeting. During the morning meeting, students greet one another, share information in a structured format, and discuss a daily message and the weekly character trait (will there be a schedule provided? Part of the pacing guide?). The morning meeting supports social, emotional, and academic learning by establishing trust, building relationships, encouraging collaboration, giving students a sense of belonging and making students feel significant; therefore, the morning meeting is powerful and sets a respectful tone for the school day.

In the Lower School , students receive 150 minutes of literacy instruction each day. In the literacy block, there is a heavy focus on reading and writing instruction. Students participate in whole and small group reading, vocabulary study, phonics instruction as well as socratic seminar. While science and social studies are integrated into literacy instruction, time is allotted for daily science and social studies instruction. Each day, students participate in 90 minutes of math instruction that is divided into whole group math instruction, math centers, and math journal time.

In the Upper School, students receive 90 minutes of instruction in ELA and Math each day and 90 minutes of Science and Social Studies instruction on alternating days throughout the school year.

Students in kindergarten and first grade participate in block or lego time where they create, build, and work while learning the skills necessary to work as a team towards a common goal. Additionally, block or lego time builds the students' capacity to maintain focus and attention for longer periods of time.

Success Block is a 45-50 minute period of time built into the schedule for students in 2nd-6th grades. During this time, students are divided into skill-based small groups where students learn remedial skills or enhance skills with enrichment. Recognizing that student success requires the involvement and support of all staff members, support staff, exploratory teachers, and classroom teachers facilitate student learning groups during Success Block.

Students are enrolled in the following exploratory classes at A.C.E. Academy: Spanish, PE/Health, Music, Art (K-4) STEAM (K-4), Creative Writing (5th-6th grades), Coding (5th-8th grades) and Entrepreneurship Education (7th-8th grades).

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, A.C.E. Academy will offer a Partial Dual Immersion Program for one class of kindergarten students. Over a five year period, the immersion program will grow to include one immersion class per grade level in kindergarten through 4th grade. In the Partial Dual Immersion Program, content is delivered in both the target language, which is Spanish, and English.

A.C.E. Academy believes there is a business aspect involved in every pathway; therefore, teachers connect business concepts within the core curriculum. Activities, simulations, and projects give students hands-on learning experiences that ensure students have a solid grounding in economics, personal finance, and entrepreneurial concepts. Teachers integrate business skills, ethics, and business practices into the core curriculum by focusing on management and leadership, sales and marketing, finance and economics, and social entrepreneurship.

Curriculum and Instructional Coaches at A.C.E. Academy are a critical component in improving student achievement. The role of the coach is to build teacher capacity and understanding of instructional practices as related to the NC Content Standards and Data Driven Instruction. A curriculum and instructional coach is a leader who models continuous improvement, lifelong learning, and goes above and beyond to ensure

student success. All curriculum and instructional coaches work collaboratively as a team. Curriculum and instructional coaches promote reflection, provide guidance and structure where needed, and focus on teacher strengths, collaboration, and common issues of concern. They are responsible for ensuring high-quality instruction in the classroom through modeling, co-planning, co-teaching, and providing feedback to teachers. Curriculum and instructional coaches leverage concepts from Doug Lemov's *Teach Like A Champion* and Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's *Getting Better Faster*.

The school's instructional design and program components are grounded in best practices for achieving academic success for all students. Through differentiation, guided instruction, project based learning, and collaborative learning, student learning is stimulated and academic performance is improved.

- **Differentiation** is a strategy for meeting the variety of learning needs of students at A.C.E. Academy. Differentiation at A.C.E. Academy may include, but is not limited to, providing students with reading materials at varying reading or Lexile levels, presenting materials in both an auditory and visual format, utilizing small groups to re-teach or extend content, providing students with options to express learning, offering manipulatives or other hands-on supports for students, and providing material that reflect a variety of cultures. Whether the teacher differentiates content, process, product, and/or learning environment, differentiation is an essential practice for increasing student understanding and achievement.
- **Guided learning** fosters an active learning environment and provides students with the opportunity to learn from their experiences and interaction with the world through inquiry-based and discovery-based learning. Guided learning allows students opportunities to collaborate, exchange ideas, learn how to work together towards a common goal, take ownership of their education, and challenge and push students outside of their comfort zone, which are all skills necessary for an entrepreneurial mindset. Guided learning at A.C.E. Academy consists of reading groups, discussions, workshops, collaborative learning, project-based learning, role plays, and debates.
- **Project-based learning** provides student-centered and authentic learning opportunities by engaging students in in-depth projects developed around standards-based questions. At A.C.E. Academy, project-based learning allows students to make real-world connections as students investigate, acquire new knowledge through inquiry, and develop critical thinking skills. While students

complete two entrepreneurship projects each year, project-based learning at A.C.E. is not limited to the entrepreneurship projects as this type of learning gives students the skills, behaviors, and content needed to be successful entrepreneurs.

- **Collaborative learning** increases student interest and promotes critical thinking. In order to increase student “talk time” and decrease teacher “talk time”, the school supports increased partner work rather than groups of three or more. Recognizing that collaboration is essential in business, students work collaboratively with the goal of achieving increased social interaction and oral communication skills, simulating real life social and employment situations, as well as developing a greater ability to view situations from others’ point of view.

A.C.E. Academy offers a variety of student support services, including but not limited to Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), Exceptional Children Services, and related services.

MTSS

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) at A.C.E. Academy allows teachers to quickly identify student needs and the best methods to address them. These can be needs of individuals students or groups of students, related to academics, behavior, or both. The goal of MTSS is to provide each and every student, both those with profound needs and those who are gifted and all those in between, what he or she requires to be successful. MTSS provides guidelines to more quickly identify both student challenges and solutions. Data, including test scores, suspension rates, attendance and more, are used to help problem solve and identify the levels of support needed for students.

A.C.E. Academy utilizes the three levels or tiers of instruction and support. All three tiers give teachers a streamlined way to provide best instruction to all students. Tier I includes the instruction and support provided to all children, while Tier II serves students who need more support. In Tier II, extra instruction and support are provided to students in small groups. Finally, Tier III is for students who need intense support in order to succeed. Extra instruction and support are provided, mostly in small groups or through one-on-one instruction.

Exceptional Children's Services

The goal of A.C.E. Academy’s Exceptional Children Services is to provide students with the support to grow into being functional, adaptable, flexible learners who will live, work, and learn in mainstream society. At A.C.E. Academy, the Individuated Education

Program team meets to identify the child's areas of strength, areas of weakness, and present level of performance. During this meeting, academic, social, and/or behavior goals are written for the student, as well as classroom or testing accommodations are created. Students receiving Exceptional Children's Services learn in the least restrictive environment or spend as much time as possible with peers who do not receive special education services. Additionally, content and curricular offerings are available for students who exhibit an interest and ability to stretch beyond grade-level core content.

Character

Character education at A.C.E. Academy allows students to develop the skills that will help them succeed in all areas of their life, solve behavioral problems, and improve academic achievement. It is part of the mission of the school to develop and shape the character of students. A.C.E. Academy does this in many forms, from how we talk, how we behave, and what we expect to how we tolerate and encourage others. With the knowledge that all employees of A.C.E. Academy are character educators, it is imperative that we keep this in mind and project the values of the school in all that is done at the school. The future leaders in our school intently watch and emulate the behaviors of the adults in the building.

Through the integration of the nine character traits into daily lessons and projects, students develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills, understand the consequences (both good and bad) of their decisions, and understand how their decisions impact others, as well as understand the value of community and teamwork. A.C.E. Academy's nine character traits are: adaptability, respect, confidence, empathy, responsibility, self-discipline, passion, integrity, and perseverance. One week during each quarter throughout the school year is spent focusing on a different character trait. By the end of the quarter, students have studied each character trait and by the end of the year, students have focused on each character trait for a total of four weeks. Curriculum and instructional coaches provide support to teachers as they plan and implement weekly character traits into their daily lessons. The 2018-2019 weekly schedule for character traits is on the following page.

A.C.E. Academy 9 Traits	
Month	Trait
Adaptability	(Week of Aug. 27, Oct. 29, Jan. 14, & Apr. 10) <i>(adjust to the unexpected)</i>
Respect	(Week of Aug. 27, Oct. 29, Jan. 14, Apr. 8) <i>(a feeling or understanding that someone or something is important and should be treated in an appropriate way)</i>
Confidence	(Week of Sept. 10, Nov. 12 & Nov. 19, Jan. 28, Apr. 22) <i>(a feeling or belief that you can do what you set your mind to do)</i>
Empathy	(Week of Sept. 17, Nov. 26, Feb. 4, Apr. 29) <i>(the ability to share someone else's feelings)</i>
Responsibility	(Week of Sept. 24, Dec. 3, Feb. 11 & Feb. 18, May 6) <i>(doing the things you are expected to do and accept the consequences of your actions)</i>
Self-Discipline	(Week of Oct. 1, Dec. 10, Feb. 25, May 13) <i>(the ability to make yourself do things that should be done)</i>
Passion	(Week of Oct. 8, Dec. 17, Mar. 4, May 20) <i>(strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement for something or about doing something)</i>
Integrity	(Week of Oct. 15, Jan. 2, Mar. 11, May 27) <i>(being honest and fair even when no one is looking)</i>
Perseverance	(Week of Oct. 22, Jan. 7, Mar. 18 & Mar. 25, June 3) <i>(continuously trying to do something even when it is difficult)</i>

At A.C.E. Academy, the Dean of Students is responsible for shaping and sustaining the school's distinctive culture and ensuring that the students internalize the school's values, character traits, and aspirations for academic excellence. The Dean of Students understands and responds to the challenges presented by today's diverse student population. The Dean of Students provides proactive leadership to engage all

stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to support the students' academic achievement, personal and social development. The Dean of Students works cooperatively with administration, staff, students and parents towards a positive school climate.

Entrepreneurship

A.C.E. Academy instills an entrepreneurial mindset or “a critical mix of success-oriented attitudes of initiative, intelligent risk-taking, collaboration, and opportunity recognition”, (Bell-Rose) through the integration of entrepreneurship education into daily lessons and projects. While students learn financial literacy, business concepts, and leadership skills, entrepreneurship education at A.C.E. Academy provides students with the opportunity to think outside of the box, discover talents not typically recognized in the classroom, take risks while not being fearful of making mistakes, and gain confidence in their problem-solving abilities; which, in turn, encourages student to engage in learning at a higher level and better retain subject matter. In addition to entrepreneurship integration into daily lesson plans and projects, students are provided entrepreneurship learning opportunities through partnerships with local businesses and community members. The school partners with Junior Achievement for in-house learning opportunities for students in kindergarten through third grades and annual participation in J.A. Biztown for students in fourth through eighth grades. Additionally, Upper School students create a business plan and present the plan to local entrepreneurs in A.C.E. Academy's annual *Shark Tank* and have the opportunity to participate in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), .