

ALTERNATIVE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION (ACE)

The Alternative Cooperative Education (ACE) program is in accordance with California Education Code Sections 58500 through 58512 which provides that school districts may establish and maintain alternative schools and programs of choice.

The ACE philosophy of education honors and supports each child's unique development. Our goal is to empower children to reach their potential in a supportive atmosphere where they experience joy, creativity, and self-confidence while learning about themselves and the world around them.

For further explanation about the ACE Program, please refer to Exhibit 1: The ACE Program Guide.

Program Components

1. The ACE curriculum and instruction design is based on integrated thematic curriculum, multi-age classrooms, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, extended learning experiences, authentic assessment, teacher team collaboration and family participation. All instruction is based on Common Core State Standards and taught through educational themes.

ACE curriculum and instruction follows a historical timeline. Themes pulled from social studies and science form the umbrella of a four-year cycle. Participation in the program from K-6th gives students the opportunity to experience the curriculum at both primary and intermediate grades.

Math is taught as a subject matter and it is integrated across the curriculum with an emphasis on teaching students to think and reason mathematically.

2. ACE utilizes multi-age grouping. A multi-age classroom is organized with a mindful concern for heterogeneity in gender, ability, and age levels.
3. Differentiation is a proactive approach to instruction that incorporates a variety of strategies, based on the assessed needs of the students. This includes students who are English learners and student with special needs. Multiple ways of learning are provided for students of different abilities, learning styles, and needs.
4. Cooperative Learning is a small group, interactive instructional strategy that allows students to work collaboratively on meaningful tasks. Students work to help themselves and others in a group. There is academic engagement through social interaction and activities are structured so that students need each other to accomplish tasks.

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5. Extended learning experiences beyond the classroom are essential to expose children to rich learning experiences so they can make connections between what they learn in school and the world in which they live. ACE expresses this belief by instituting programs including home learning, field trips, guest speakers, Service Club, and Multicultural enrichment.
 - a. The participation in such events relies solely on the donations and fundraising of the ACE Parent Board.
6. ACE will utilize clearly measurable student outcomes as a means to demonstrate that students are attaining requisite skills and knowledge. An important focus of ACE is assessment of student progress, both social and academic. This is accomplished through the use of portfolio assessment as well as federal, state, and district testing. The ACE report card represents student progress as it relates to academic skills and standards using terms such as proficient, practicing and needs improvement; traditional letter grades are not used on the ACE report card.

Family Participation

The ACE program was founded on the principle of parent/guardian participation is critical for student success. In order to assist all families with meeting this recommendation, ACE has a committee (Parent Component Committee) whose function is to help families find ways to meet their volunteer hour goals. PCC ensures that all families are provided with opportunities to volunteer and become an integral part of the school.

School Mascot and Representation

Students enrolled in ACE will be represented by the Otter mascot. For purposes of district and county competitions, participants will participate under the ACE Program and enter as a team of that name.

Calendar

The ACE calendar is adjusted to meet the program goals while still meeting the state required minutes for the year. Total minutes for the year will be in alignment with the district average.

Enrollment and Admissions

1. Participation in ACE is voluntary and is open to all Vacaville Unified School District (District) families. To be successful at ACE, a student should:
 - a. Be able to work independently and collaboratively in cooperative groups
 - b. Be able to transition between activities;

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- c. Demonstrate a willingness to learn;
 - d. Share responsibility for their own learning, both at home and at school;
 - e. Be self-motivated and committed to following through on one's own decisions.
2. Prior to enrolling, families are strongly encouraged to attend an informational program meeting as well as observe an ACE class and/or parent led activity.
3. If the number of interested students in enrolling exceeds the capacity of ACE, then students will be enrolled in order of their enrollment priority grouping. When the process reaches a group that cannot be fully accommodated, a random public lottery will be held for members of that group. Admission preference will be given in the following manner:
 - a. Currently enrolled students (exempt from the lottery process);
 - b. Children and grandchildren of ACE certificated staff (exempt from the lottery process);
 - c. Siblings of students currently enrolled;
 - d. All other interested students, with preference given to students who reside within VUSD.
4. ACE may accept students from outside the District by following the procedures outlined in the District's guidelines for inter-district transfers. Those students accepted on an inter-district transfer may continue within the program through 6th grade provided that all terms of the inter-district agreement are abided by. Inter-district agreements must be completed annually.
5. For more information on the lottery process, please refer to the ACE Program Guide.

Class sizes

Class sizes shall be determined according to district staffing ratios and applicable contractual provisions.

Facilities

Facilities shall be consistent with district facilities assignment for self-contained classes.

Funding and Capital Assets Inventory

Each ACE class may raise funds following district guidelines to supplement the general education program funds provided by the District (BP 5536). Funds shall be accounted for in accordance with student body and/or parent organization regulations. Any equipment or capital assets purchased for ACE shall become property of the district (BP 1245) unless it is owned by the ACE Parent Board.

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Program Evaluation

During any school level self-review, internal review, or external review, school administration and staff shall make members of the review team aware of any alternative programs housed on the campus as well as the unique characteristics of each program.

Meetings, Trainings and Events

ACE staff will participate in staff meetings, training and events held at the school campus. In the event the content is not relevant to ACE staff, site administration will attempt, when possible, to release ACE teachers in full or part from staff meeting, training or event. During regularly scheduled grade level collaboration meetings on Early Release Wednesdays, teachers in the ACE program will meet all together.