

2021-2023
Aberdeen
Christian



School
Improvement
Plan

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Aberdeen Christian School

Mission, Purpose, & Philosophy

Mission Statement

Equipping students to glorify God.

Statement of Purpose

A basic responsibility of Christian parents is to “train up a child in the way he should go” (Proverbs 22:6). The goal is that each child “increase in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:52).

Aberdeen Christian School is an extension of the home and church, and is established to train each student in the knowledge of God, the scriptural way of life, and the exercise of servant leadership. By providing highest standards for intellectual and spiritual learning, our goal is to equip each student to fulfill the will of God for their life.

Our desire is that our students be used by God to spread the Gospel to our community, our nation, and the world.

Philosophy

The concepts of Aberdeen Christian School’s philosophy of education are derived from the Bible and include the following:

1. The triune God is Creator, Sustainer, and Source of all truth, knowledge, and wisdom.
2. The Living God is sovereign, loving, and personal.
3. All things were created for His glory.
4. Jesus Christ is God the Son, Savior, and Mediator, who died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day, ascended into Heaven, and is coming again.
5. Jesus Christ's sinless life is the perfect example after which believers are to pattern their lives.
6. The Holy Spirit magnifies Jesus Christ, teaches the truth, convicts of sins, indwells, and enables believers to do God's will.

7. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God and is the authority and guide in the development of the whole person, spiritually, mentally, physically, and socially.
8. Man is the direct creation of God, created in the image and likeness of God.
9. Man is a sinner by nature and choice, and is redeemable only through Jesus Christ.
10. With differing abilities and spiritual capacities, each person is equal in God's sight. Each person is responsible to God. His purpose is to glorify God, to grow in fellowship with Him, and to delight in Him forever.
11. We believe that sex is a gift given by God for a man and a woman, only within the confines of a marriage. A marriage is sanctioned by God, only between a man and a woman. Homosexual/bi-sexual/transgender identification are not compatible with our statement of faith (Romans 1:24-28; I Corinthians 6:9; Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Genesis 1:27; and Genesis 2:24; Deuteronomy 22:5).
12. Education is a tool used to develop each student's unique potential and abilities, and to equip him or her to effectively pursue the vocation to which the Lord leads.
13. Christian education is to be God centered, Christ-glorifying, Spirit-controlled, and Bible-based, equipping the student for fulfilling God's will.

Aberdeen Christian School

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In an effort to facilitate and enhance student achievement at Aberdeen Christian School, we have a school improvement process. The team’s findings are found in this document, which is a tool that will enable us to focus on school improvement at Aberdeen Christian. This plan should drive subsequent decision-making, interactions, activities, and planning processes to further the goal of student achievement.

Aberdeen Christian School Profile

Aberdeen is located in northeastern South Dakota, a primarily rural state. It is the third largest city in the state with a population of 26,000. Aberdeen has two post-secondary institutions, Northern State University and Presentation College. Its main employers are the hospitals, the public school system, and 3M. Agriculture is still the community's predominant industry. Grain terminals, livestock sale barns, a grain inspection service, and related agribusiness help support the area.

Aberdeen Christian School is a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 institution. Unique characteristics of the staffing patterns and student population of Aberdeen Christian School are listed below:

Staff FTE	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	School Improvement Planning Team	
General Education Teachers	16.25	16.50	16.00	ACS Faculty	Administration Teachers
Special Education Teachers	1.00	1.00	1.00		
Physical Education	0.75	0.75	1.00		
Vocal Music	0.75	0.75	0.75		
Band	0.75	0.75	0.75		
Drama	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Art	0.70	0.70	1.00		
Counselor	0.00	0.00	0.00		

Breakdown of Tested Students

Aberdeen Christian School				Aberdeen Christian School			
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total, Grades 3-6	25	32	29	Total, Gr 7-12	42	40	39
Grade 3	11	14	13	Grade 7	21	19	16
Grade 4	X	X	X	Grade 8	X	X	X
Grade 5	14	18	16	Grade 9	21	21	23
Grade 6	X	X	X	Grade 11	X	X	X

IOWA Assessment Results

Description of Data #1 (% of students at or exceeding 50%)

Many private schools around the country have chosen the IOWA Assessments to track academic progress. We have transitioned from the ACT Aspire test to the IOWA Assessment for data collection. The information below shows our first three years (2021, 2022 & 2023) of IOWA testing data for our students. We will continue to administer the exam each spring. The table below that shows just the 2023 data.

Grade 3: Reading 67/63/67, Written Expression 69/78/67, Conventions of Writing 65/79/69, Vocabulary 56/65/56, English & Language Arts Total 62/75/67, Math Total 59/77/64, Social Studies 65/85/74, Science 60/77/61

Grade 5: Reading 72/63/50, Written Expression 72/72/60, Conventions of Writing 82/68/67, Vocabulary 77/64/64, English & Language Arts Total 81/73/61, Math Total 57/62/64, Social Studies 72/64/60, Science 71/70/60

Grade 7: Reading 69/76/80, Written Expression 71/87/84, Conventions of Writing 63/76/80, Vocabulary 68/77/82, English & Language Arts Total 75/89/90, Math Total 60/70/77, Social Studies 63/76/72, Science 53/73/72

Grade 9: Reading 79/77/78, Written Expression 83/78/74, Vocabulary 79/71/76, English & Language Arts Total 87/83/82, Math Total 80/64/73, Social Studies 82/79/79, Science 79/71/77

Description of Data #2 (National Percentile for 2023) ELA = English & Language Arts

Grade 3		Grade 5		Grade 7		Grade 9	
Reading	67%	Reading	50%	Reading	80%	Reading	78%
Written Exp.	67%	Written Exp.	60%	Written Exp.	84%	Written Exp.	74%
Conventions	69%	Conventions	67%	Conventions	80%	Conventions	(not tested)
Vocabulary	56%	Vocabulary	64%	Vocabulary	82%	Vocabulary	76%
ELA Total	67%	ELA Total	61%	ELA Total	90%	ELA Total	82%
Math Total	64%	Math Total	64%	Math Total	77%	Math Total	73%
Social Studies	74%	Social Studies	60%	Social Studies	72%	Social Studies	79%
Science	61%	Science	60%	Science	72%	Science	77%

Analysis of Data

ACS students fared well on the exams. Our students exceeded the 50% ranking all reported areas. Our strongest school-wide area continues to be English & Language Arts (75%), followed by Social Studies (71%), Math (70%), and Science (68%) of students exceeding the 50% ranking.

Implications of Data

Aberdeen Christian School staff will continue to provide support for students lacking proficiency in subject areas through the use of small group help when possible, repeated review and drill, directions given in a variety of ways, recommended home practice, and teacher-directed accommodations as necessary (differentiation). Staff will continue to monitor progress after assessments to ensure all students are improving their academic skills. We will continue to emphasize the importance of developing partnerships with parents. Technology will be used when appropriate to enhance teaching/learning. We are emphasizing the importance of maximizing academic learning time for reading/writing by focusing on the 5 core elements of good reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), as well as writing across the curriculum, using Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW) principles. Repeated readings will be also be used to build fluency. The use of ABEKA and ACSI Math grades PK-4, and SAXON Math for grades 5-12, will help our students be better math thinkers and problem solvers.

ACT Test Results

Description of Data

Aberdeen Christian students voluntarily participate in the ACT Testing Program, in preparation for college and career. Here are the results from the past three years:

2020-2021: English – 21.4 Math – 20.3 Reading – 22.3 Science – 20.4 Composite – 21.3

2021-2022: English – 20.5 Math – 20.7 Reading – 21.9 Science – 20.7 Composite – 21.1

2022-2023: English – 21.7 Math – 21.0 Reading – 22.7 Science – 21.1 Composite – 21.9

Analysis of Data

In 2020-2021, we had 29 students take the test with a composite score of 21.3, which was slightly lower than the state average of 21.6. In 2021-2022, we had 24 students take the exam; our composite was 21.5, which equaled the state average of 21.5. In 2022-2023, we had 22 take the exam; our composite was 21.9, which was slightly higher than the state average of 21.5.

Implications of Data

It is important to reflect on our curriculum and the delivery of it, to ensure students are gaining the appropriate skills to meet state-wide averages and college-entrance requirements, in addition to having career-readiness skills. In 2021, 2022, and 2023 ACS scores were slightly below, equal to, and slightly above the state average. ACS will continue to reflect and deliver quality core content instruction to its students.

It is important to note the school has gone through many transitions over the past decade. These challenging times resulted in a 'survival' mode versus a 'thriving' mode. We look forward to walking in more stability as we've settled into a permanent location and divided administrative, financial, and teaching duties, to maximize efficiency and productivity. The addition of a Business Manager has allowed for the Principal/Superintendent/Development duties to be more defined. It is also pertinent to note that during the past five years, there was a dramatic increase in transfer students, who did not get to benefit from the continuity of curriculum/instruction offered through the grades. As Robert Marzano's research has shown, a 'Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum' is essential for academic success.

CLIMATE SURVEY

Aberdeen Christian School sought narrative feedback from all ACS families in November of 2021 through a School Climate Survey. Themes were identified as responses were reviewed, and the following is a summary of the findings:

2021 Parent Survey Results – Summary/Implications

Overall parent feedback was quite positive. It was encouraging to note how parents valued smaller class sizes, integration of faith into the curriculum, caring staff, a family atmosphere, and strong administrative leadership.

Some of the suggestions included increasing teacher pay, adding more variety and healthier options to the school lunch program, providing more help to students with scholarship applications and ACT prep, maintaining high standards for student manners and conduct, and providing better communication to parents. Respondents also commented that they would like to see more opportunities for elective classes, such as drama, forensics, shop, and STEM classes.

We are grateful for the trust parents have placed in the school and we desire to maintain that trust through transparent relationships, clear communication, placing high value on safety/orderliness, staff training, personalizing the academic learning plan experience, and biblical integration. We will continue our student services coordinator position for secondary students, be diligent in managing student discipline issues by balancing assertiveness and compassion. A public relations committee was established to help foster a positive school culture and help with fundraising efforts.

Our team has undergone continuous training in the area of communication. Staff members completed a communication profile and were provided a book entitled, Communication IQ by Fred and Anna Kendall. A Communications Coach provided the entire staff with ways to improve communication with other people. We have also had our 10th graders complete the profile every year to help guide them in learning more

about their communication styles as they reflect on college, career, and life goals. The outcomes are used by our Student Services Coordinator and Principal for college and career planning and the development of personal learning plans.

2022-23 Goals, Objectives, and Intervention Strategies

Goal 1: All children will improve their ability to read, write, and comprehend a variety of literary texts in all curricular areas.

Objective: Increase the percentage of all students reading at the 50% to a minimum of 72%. Spring 2023 was at 69%.

Activities/Strategies: 1. Continue auditing State Standards and matching them to curriculum (through teacher-prepared course outlines). 2. Implementing effective teaching strategies to engage learners using reading and writing across the curriculum (IEW). 3. Identifying struggling students early and implement teacher directed accommodations to help them experience success. (Example: Flexible reading groups/differentiation. 4. Tutoring. 5. Integrating technology.

Assessments: 1. ACT Testing for 10th-12th grades & IOWA Assessment for 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th grades. 2. Review individual progress, based on mid-term & quarterly report cards. 3. Identify mini-assessments to monitor progress/performance, for immediate feedback (chapter quizzes/review).

Goal 2: All students will use mathematical and scientific concepts, procedures, and computation skills to solve problems.

Objective: Increase the percentage of all students at the 50% to a minimum of 72%. Spring 2023 was at 70%.

Activities/Strategies: 1. Continue auditing State Standards and matching them to curriculum (through teacher-prepared course outlines). 2. Implementing effective teaching strategies to engage learners using ABEKA, ACSI/Bob Jones Science, and SAXON curriculum. 3. Identifying struggling students early and implement teacher directed accommodations to help them experience success through differentiation, tutoring, and having them attend the math enrichment period we began during the 2020-2021 school year. 4. The School Board adopted SAXON Math for grades 5-12.

Assessments: 1. ACT Testing for 10th-12th grades & IOWA Assessment for 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th grades. 2. Review individual progress based on mid-term & quarterly report cards. 3. Identify mini-assessments to monitor progress/performance for immediate feedback (chapter quizzes/review).

Other Goals:

The School Board and Administration will review school's strategic plan at each monthly board meeting.

Highly Qualified Staff

Our goal is to have all teachers at Aberdeen Christian School meet the definition of being highly qualified as determined by the South Dakota Department of Education. We do our best to staff our school with teachers who are certified in their content area(s).

Parent Involvement in Education

Aberdeen Christian School provided parents with written notice of the school's improvement plan process in the October patron update. In addition, the school improvement plan will be discussed and approved at the November board meeting and posted on the website. Finally, mid-term grades and quarterly report cards are shared with families. Parents also have an opportunity to sign up for the JMC Parent Portal.

Transition Processes

ACS implements the following processes to assist families with transitions:

1. The registration process for incoming kindergarten students begins in January.
2. During the enrollment process, families and students learn more about the school through a meet and greet/tour.
3. Families are invited to attend an open house prior to school starting - a back to school video is provided to help build community and an overview of expectations.
4. Parents are encouraged to provide the school with child and family information, birth certificate, and immunization records to complete the registration process.
5. In the spring, the Principal provides an orientation for 6th graders, to prepare them to transition to junior high.
6. During the 3rd quarter, the Principal and Student Services Coordinator provide an orientation for 8th grade students and their parents regarding the transition to high school. A student services link is also available on the web site.
7. The Student Services Coordinator and Principal meet with high school students periodically to educate and help facilitate the transition to college and/or career choices.

Monitoring and Support

The Superintendent, Principal, and Special Education Teacher meet twice a month to discuss student concerns that would arise, either academically or socially, as part of the Student Assistance Team (SAT) process. Teachers are encouraged to attempt accommodations/behavior plans in their classrooms, using 'tools' they've learned over the years to help students experience success. After several attempted interventions, with a lack of success, a referral is made to the SAT, where further brainstorming is done. If these new interventions are not successful, the team will decide whether or not special education testing is warranted. We rely on the Aberdeen School District to complete the testing. If a student qualifies, we write a 'service plan,' outlining areas of strengths, weaknesses, and goals to help them experience success. The service plan is reviewed annually and children are re-tested every three years. The Aberdeen School District also provides speech therapy to qualifying students.

Ongoing Program Development

The school improvement plan is a two-year systematic process, with periodic evaluation needed to assess progress toward meeting goals. It is evaluated annually and revised as needed. Future revisions in the plan will be made according to data obtained from assessment results, surveys, state mandates, and student needs.