

Arkansas Charter Authorizing Panel Hearing
August 18, 2021

**ARKANSAS
MILITARY AND FIRST
RESPONDERS
ACADEMY (AMFRA)**

Building global leaders and citizens...one cadet at a time

Arkansas Military and First Responders Academy

INTRODUCTIONS

- Dr. Michael Bakalis, CEO, American Quality Schools

Previously served as:

- Illinois State Superintendent of Education
- Under Secretary for US Department of Education
- IL State Comptroller
- Professor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management

Arkansas Military and First Responders Academy

INTRODUCTIONS

- Mr. Paul Vallas, Project Executive

Previously served as:

- CEO for Chicago Public Schools
- Superintendent for Philadelphia Public Schools
- Superintendent for New Orleans Recovery School District
- Executive Consultant for US Department of Education

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INTRODUCTIONS

- Dr. Don Hall, Project Superintendent

Previously served as:

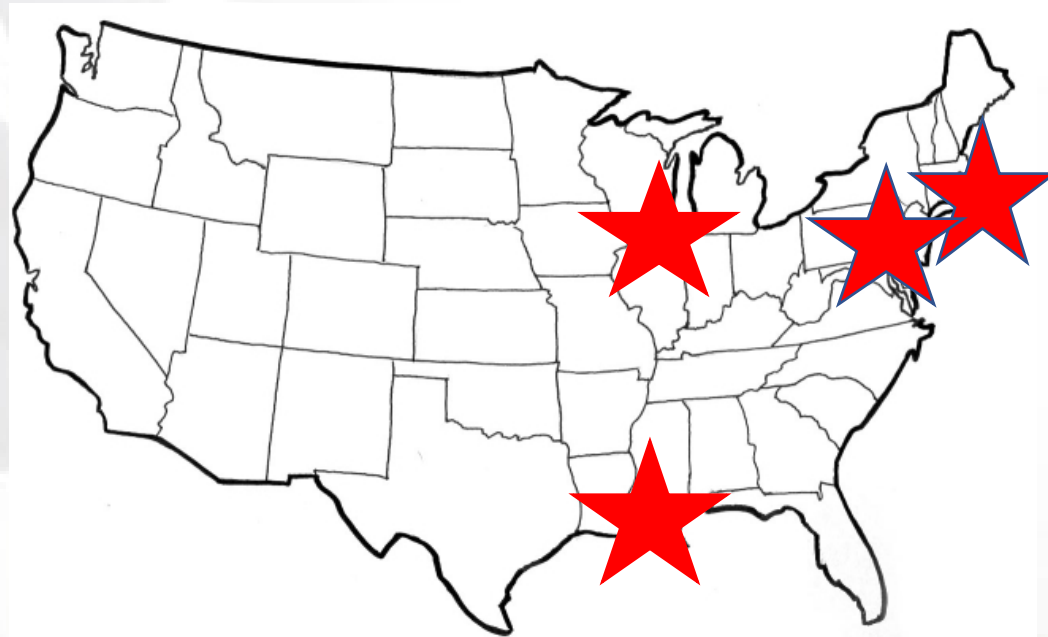
- PK-12 School District Executive for 25+ years
- University Professor (Undergraduate, Graduate, Doctoral)
- North American Training Director for GE Capital ITS
- Executive Consultant for AVID, Microsoft, & PCG.

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ESTABLISHED MILITARY ACADEMIES

The AMFRA sponsors have created 11 military academies in 4 states:

- Chicago
- Philadelphia
- New Orleans
- Bridgeport, Conn.



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Why Military and First Responders Here?

The current **11 military academies** previously established on average are **greater than 80% minority and 80% poverty**. In each, **test scores and graduation rates outperform** their local school districts. **College entrance rates** for each academy rank **higher** than their local school districts average. Military academies also report **minimal behavioral problems**.

	State Avg	Little Rock Proposed Area School Districts
Student Enrollment 2014 – 2021	>1% decline	11%-33% decline
Student Population % from Minority	39.2%	61%-81%
Free/Reduced Lunch %	65.4%	78%-99.9%
Graduation Rate 2014-2020 Change	+2%	-0.7% to +0.1%

The greater Little Rock area appears to be a good match for this type of focused, innovative academic program, and there is a need for a deeper pool of highly trained First Responder applicants.

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School Vision and Mission

*Our vision is to become a nationally renowned educational institution where **all students** are **challenged** and **nurtured** through **rigorous college preparatory and education-to-career curricula** designed to assure student learning and achievement **resulting in exceptional post-secondary learning and career opportunities.***

The school's mission is "Building global leaders and citizens...one cadet at a time."

This mission is accomplished in part through:

- promoting intellectual rigor and innovation
- developing individual leadership
- strengthening individual and collective self-esteem
- working as team members
- promoting citizenship
- Promoting a drug-free lifestyle
- Improving physical fitness

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Key Components of Model

- Grades 9-12 that will be phased in over a 4-year period with a maximum student capacity of 800.
- Provides a complete college preparatory curriculum with a STEM focus on engineering and coding.
- Special concentration tracks linked to JROTC and First Responder curriculum
- Numerous elective, extracurricular, and co-curricular learning and leadership opportunities

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Key Components of Model (cont.)

- Military-type organizational structure with a chain of command and students organized into companies, platoons and squads
- Partners with organizations such ROTC, police and fire departments, TSA, Emergency Management Services, and Med-Tec institutions to promote career opportunities and community engagement
- Cadets participate in “First Responder” training and internships
- Students wear school uniforms and participate in daily JROTC training activities and formations
- A summer "Boot Camp" orientation program to ensure successful transition into the academy and grade to grade progression

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Key Components of Model (cont.)

- Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) developed for all students
- An Advisory (Counseling Support) Teacher assigned their freshman year who follows that student throughout their high school career
- Use of Behavioral RTI - Positive disciplinary strategies such as restorative justice, peer mentoring, community service, extended day, Saturday extra academic work, and ABD counseling

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Academic Program Framework

The Academy will meet and/or exceed all Arkansas state academic requirements.

- The academy will phase in one grade per year until it reaches a 9-12 configuration. The academy will offer all courses required by the state for those grades each year.
- The academy requires 27 courses for graduation versus the state required 22.
- The academy's instructional day shall consist of no less than 420 minutes (7 hours) of instruction each day versus the state's 370.
- The academy will also provide courses and learning opportunities that support the alternate pathway to graduation for students with special needs.

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Core Instructional Methodologies

All core curriculum courses will use a combination of the following evidence-based strategies for instructional planning and delivery, both in core and elective classes:

- Standards-based Instruction and Assessment (State and National)
- Principles of Understanding by Design (UBD)
- Principles of Project-based and Mastery Learning
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- The Science of Reading including Arkansas's RISE program guidelines

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Student Support Services

Student Populations With Special Needs

- Special Education – Full continuum of services provided based on IEP
- ELL - Home Language Survey, Required Parent Notifications, and ESOL Student Assessment.
- Gifted/Talented – Differentiation through classroom-based, virtual, and work-site-based learning experiences
- Dyslexia Screening -Will comply with all required dyslexia reporting and screening regulations

Food Services – Contracted but will apply for and participate in CEP or National School Lunch/Breakfast Program

Transportation – Provided using multiple strategies such as contracted and bus passes

Library-Media – Digital Literacy Specialist within a Commons Area Learning Center

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Human Capital

Administration

- Program Superintendent (American Quality Schools)
- Commandant
- Chief Academic Officer
- JROTC Officer
- Full-time Guidance Counselor
- Full-time Nurse

Instructional Staff

- Licensed teachers for state required curriculum areas
- Licensed special education teachers
- Learning and intervention specialists
- Digital Literacy Specialist

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Site Selection/Business Operations

- The proposed academy would be located within the boundary of the Pulaski County Special School District.
- In ongoing discussions with local military bases' leadership about securing facilities onsite.
- Academy business operations (finance and budget, payroll, human resources, facilities management, technology management) will be managed by American Quality Schools' central office as the CMO.

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Governance and Accountability

- Minimum 7-member local school board with representatives from community, first responder agencies, and national education leaders
- Annual program quality and effectiveness assessment conducted by external agency partner
- Partner with Arkansas post-secondary institution for on-going longitudinal research initiatives

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Stakeholder and Family Engagement

- Local Public School Board Meetings
- School-based Parent/Community Center
- Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) Development and Management
- Quarterly 1:1 Parent Teacher Meetings
- Academy Town Forums
- Ongoing Quality Satisfaction Survey Program

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Questions and Answers?

Thank you for your time.