ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION - CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION
Arkansas Department of Education

Organization Information

Organization Name

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison

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3209 Southwest Joshua Ave

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72713

City

Bentonville

State

Arkansas

1. Applicant Profile Information

Q1.

Name of applicant

Freedom Education Services, Inc.

Q2.

Contact person

1. Full Name
2. Title/Relationship to Charter
3. Mailing Address
4. Primary Phone
5. Primary Contact Email

1. Dr. Christie Toland

2. Co-Founder/President

3. 3209 SW Joshua Ave, Bentonville, AR 72713

4. 501-215-3209

5. patriotsforeducation@gmail.com

Q3.

Please list the names and roles of all persons in the applicant group, i.e., anyone with a role in drafting the substantive content of this application and is expected to have a significant role with the school, including any consultants or employees of an education service provider or management organization.

Include the following information for each person listed:

1. Full Name

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2. **Current Role with Proposed School**

3. **Future Role with Proposed School**

> **A. Dr. Elizabeth(Beth) Shumate,** Co-Founder/CEO Freedom Education Services, Inc., Board member

> **B. Dr. Christie Toland,** Co-Founder/President Freedom Education Services, Inc., CEO/Supt. of charter school

Q4.
Projected Date of School Opening (Month/Year)

> August, 2026

Q5.
Type of Charter

- ○ Open Enrollment
- ◉ Open Enrollment - CMO

Q6.
Educational Model If your Educational Model is not listed, please use the comment section to write in your response and provide a brief explanation of the model and why you selected that model.

- ☑ Classical
- ☑ Traditional
- ☐ Virtual
- ☑ Career/CTE
- ☐ Hybrid Learning

☐ Performing Arts

☐ Special Populations

☐ Other. Please explain in the comment section:

2. Executive Summary

Q7. A.1 Vision and Mission State the charter school's mission and vision for the proposed school. Provide a clear, focused, and compelling purpose for the school that is measurable and focused on educational outcomes. The mission and vision narrative should address how the school will help to provide high-quality education to Arkansas students.

Please see attachment for response.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF	PDF
Harrison Charter Sc...	Executive Summary ...

Uploaded on **5/23/2025**   Uploaded on **8/6/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**   by **Beth Shumate**

Q8. A.2 Vision and Mission Arkansas intends to be a national leader in education. To that end, provide an overview of the proposed school's education program, including major instructional methods. Explain why this school model will impact student outcomes for the targeted population.

The foundation on which our school programming and instructional model has been developed is the professional learning community process. This process will be implemented continually to maintain and enhance the positive school culture and climate. Please see the attachments for details regarding our instructional model.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF	🖼️
Freedom Education I...	Freedom Educationa...

Uploaded on **5/15/2025**   Uploaded on **5/21/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**   by **Beth Shumate**

Q9. **B.1 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement Describe the anticipated student population the school intends to serve. Provide a rationale for seeking to serve this population.**

Arkansas Executive Preparatory Academy (AEPA) is a reimagined K–12 Career and Technical Education (CTE) charter school designed to meet the growing demand for educational choice in Arkansas—especially among homeschool families and students who have become disengaged in traditional settings. AEPA's mission is rooted in the belief that learning should be personalized, purposeful, and practical. We are responding directly to what families have told us they need.

Survey results from prospective parents and community members indicate a strong desire for more flexible, values-driven education options that provide students with life skills, career exposure, and preparation for life after high school—not just academic instruction. Families, particularly within the homeschool community, expressed a deep need for a school that supports hands-on learning, offers real-world experiences, and prioritizes student wellness alongside academic success (see attached survey results).

AEPA is built to meet those needs. Our student population will include both traditionally enrolled students and homeschool learners seeking access to high-quality, CTE-integrated academics without sacrificing the personalized learning environments they value. By embedding mastery-based, experiential learning across all grade levels, we ensure that students are not waiting until high school to explore careers or build practical skills. Instead, they begin developing those tools early, so they graduate "Always Ready"—equipped to lead, work, and contribute meaningfully in any path they choose.

Our holistic model goes beyond academics. With a full-service wellness center, a Parents at the Center program, and implementation of the Next Education Workforce Model, AEPA supports the whole child and their family. Instruction is rigorous, personalized, and relevant, blending Ivy League academic standards with real-world application.

Families want more than test scores—they want their children to thrive. AEPA offers a dynamic, inclusive alternative to the traditional system that too often fails to engage or adapt to individual student needs. Whether students are entering from homeschool, public, or private settings, AEPA provides the structure, flexibility, and always ready focus that families across Arkansas have asked for—and deserve.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF	PDF
Educational Landsca...	**COMMUNITY SURVE...**

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Uploaded on **8/9/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q10. **B.2 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement Describe the current educational options available to your target population. Include the overall academic performance of schools located near the proposed school and geographic area.**

Educational Landscape Analysis for the Harrison, AR Area
Current Educational Options

In the Harrison, Arkansas region, families have limited educational choices. There are **no public charter schools** available in the area, and options are largely restricted to traditional public schools, small secular or parochial private schools, and homeschooling. The current education providers include:

- **Traditional Public School Districts**:
  - Harrison School District
  - Bergman School District
  - Valley Springs School District
  - Alpena School District
  - Ozark Mountain School District
  - Omaha School District

- **Private Schools**:
  - Harrison Seventh-Day Adventist School
  - Crestline Academy (secular)
  - Mary Mother of God Catholic School
  - St. John's Episcopal School
  - Bloom Academy (secular)

- **Home Education**: Homeschooling is a growing alternative in all area districts.

Homeschool Enrollment

The high percentage of homeschool participation in local districts reflects unmet needs or dissatisfaction with current educational options. During the 2023–2024 school year, homeschool enrollment by district was as follows:

District	Homeschooled Students	% of Total Enrollment
Harrison	394	12.5%

Bergman	150	12.8%
Valley Springs	109	11.8%
Alpena	90	18.0%
Ozark Mountain	109	17.3%
Omaha	58	13.2%

Across these six districts, the average homeschool rate is approximately 14.3%, significantly higher than the Arkansas state average of 3.5%, highlighting a strong demand for alternative public education models in the area.

Academic Performance of Area Schools

While area schools report moderate academic performance, there is a clear need for improved foundational literacy and postsecondary preparation:

- **Third Grade Reading Proficiency** (Percentage of students reading on grade level):
  - Harrison: 38%
  - Bergman: 50%
  - Valley Springs: 46%
  - Alpena: 38%
  - Ozark Mountain: 16%
  - Omaha: 31%

The regional average reading proficiency in third grade is 36.5%, well below Arkansas's goal of 80% literacy by third grade, indicating a critical area for targeted intervention.

- **Average ACT Composite Score (2023–2024)**:
  - Harrison: 18.86
  - Bergman: 19.73
  - Valley Springs: 21.22
  - Alpena: 21.52

- ○ Ozark Mountain: 16.36
- ○ Omaha: 18.29

The average ACT score across these districts is 19.33, slightly below the Arkansas state average of 19.5 and well below the national college readiness benchmark of 21.0.

- **Attendance Rates**:
- ○ Harrison: 94.00%
- ○ Bergman: 92.79%
- ○ Valley Springs: 94.09%
- ○ Alpena: 92.67%
- ○ Ozark Mountain: 91.26%
- ○ Omaha: 93.12%

These rates are generally consistent with state averages, suggesting community engagement is high and families may be receptive to alternative models that offer enhanced academic rigor and relevance.

Rationale for AEPA

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) aims to meet an urgent local demand for a tuition-free, future preparatory education tailored to aspiring entrepreneurs, leaders, and innovators who may be overlooked in the current system. AEPA will provide a rigorous mastery-based curriculum and real-world project-based learning opportunities—educational features currently not available in any nearby public institution.

Given that over 14% of local students are being homeschooled and third grade reading proficiency rates are consistently below 50%, AEPA is well-positioned to fill a significant educational gap. The school will provide families in Harrison and surrounding communities access to a high-quality, future-focused, public school option that prepares students for college, career, and entrepreneurial success.

Q11. **B.3 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement Based on your outreach, research, and understanding of the community and the students you seek to serve, what are the main challenges to the student's success in the community you seek to serve? What does your proposed school intend to do to address these challenges?**

See attached document.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF	PDF	PDF
Parks Support letter ...	**Freedom Education ...**	**Evidence of Need, S...**

Uploaded on **8/7/2025** by **Beth Shumate**

Uploaded on **8/8/2025** by **Beth Shumate**

Uploaded on **8/6/2025** by **Beth Shumate**

Q12. **B.4 Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement Explain the process for setting, monitoring, and revising performance expectations. In your response, include how the school will use data and how you would define success for the students and school.**

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) process will be utilized school wide to set, monitor, and revise performance expectations.

We will prepare future executives to lead our state to greatness through five tenets:

1. Providing teachers and staff with a career changing model through Next Education Workforce Model.
2. Elite academics
3. Mental and physical health supports for students, staff, families and the community
4. Parents at the Center Program
5. Future Fluent/Always Ready students

PLC teams and their guiding coalition will constantly and consistently review data weekly, monthly and quarterly in order to make timely decisions based on best practices. Each team will review lesson and unit plans and formative and summative data to determine the success of each students. The Response to Intervention (RTI) process will also be followed to determine if intervention is necessary on an individual basis.

Success at AEPA is determined as students master skills. While a minimum time expectation to stay on track are established each student will be able to accelerate at their own speed to ensure that skills are not missed or lacking.

Process for Setting, Monitoring, and Revising Performance Expectations

The Arkansas Experiential Preparatory Academy (AEPA) maintains a dynamic and data-driven cycle for setting, monitoring, and revising academic and developmental performance expectations to ensure continuous improvement and equity in student outcomes.

1. Setting Performance Expectations

Standards-Based and Mission-Aligned Goal Setting:

-

Performance expectations are initially set based on Arkansas Academic Standards, ESSA benchmarks, and AEPA's internal values (mastery learning, future fluency, equity, and community wellness).

- Academic expectations are defined through proficiency scales for each standard, which clarify learning progressions from emerging to mastery.

- Non-academic expectations (e.g., SEL competencies, power skills, career readiness) are based on CASEL, Employability Skills Framework, and CTE career readiness standards.

Collaborative Goal Design:

- Instructional teams, including teachers, instructional leaders, and community instructors, collaboratively design unit-level learning targets and quarterly student growth benchmarks.

- Families and students participate in goal-setting conferences to co-construct personal learning goals, career aspirations, and SEL milestones.

2. Monitoring Performance Expectations

Data Collection and Use:
AEPA uses a multi-tiered, multi-source data system to monitor academic and non-academic progress:

- Formative Assessments: Frequent, low-stakes assessments during instruction to adjust teaching and provide immediate feedback.

- Benchmark Assessments: Quarterly data checks using state-aligned platforms to measure student growth and proficiency.

- Power Skills Rubrics: Teacher observations and student self-assessments aligned to CASEL and employability skills.

- Work-Based Learning Milestones: Measured through authentic projects, student portfolios, and AEPA Mall performance rubrics.

- Family and Student Feedback: Surveys, conferences, and community engagement events ensure qualitative data is also considered.

Progress Monitoring Infrastructure:

- Data Teams meet biweekly to analyze trends, disaggregate data by subgroup, and determine intervention needs.

- Student Data Notebooks track academic and SEL progress, reviewed monthly with students during advisory.

- Instructional Rounds and Walkthroughs conducted by leadership teams to calibrate expectations and observe implementation fidelity.

3. Revising Performance Expectations

Continuous Improvement Cycle:

- At the end of each quarter, AEPA engages in a Data Reflection and Planning Retreat, where educators analyze performance outcomes, identify trends, and revise instruction accordingly.

- Instructional units and performance expectations are adjusted based on:

  - Student achievement data (growth and proficiency)

  - Teacher implementation feedback

  - Changes in state policy or assessment frameworks

  - Community and workforce trends that inform future readiness

Personalized Revisions:

- For individual students, learning goals and support plans are revised during student-led conferences with advisors and families.

- For instructional teams, expectations are recalibrated through peer collaboration, coaching cycles, and professional learning communities (PLCs).

Defining Success at AEPA

For Students:

Success means each student graduates:

- Proficient in all core academic areas, having met or exceeded Arkansas standards

- Equipped with power skills: communication, critical thinking, etiquette, collaboration, and leadership

- Certified in career-relevant and emotional intelligence skills

- Multilingual, culturally competent, and financially literate

- Experienced in authentic, community-embedded work-based learning

- Confident, self-directed, and future-fluent—ready to excel in postsecondary education, the workforce, or entrepreneurship

For the School:

Success is defined by:

- High levels of student growth and achievement across all subgroups

- Reduction of achievement and opportunity gaps

- High rates of student, staff, and family engagement and satisfaction

- Strong retention of educators due to supportive work conditions

- Sustained community partnerships and on-site business viability through the AEPA Mall

- Demonstrable college, career, and life readiness of all graduate

This process ensures that AEPA remains agile, equitable, and relentlessly focused on student-centered success.

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3. Academic Plan

Q13. **A.1 Academic focus Describe and outline the proposed school's academic focus. Include specific academic benchmarks, educational philosophy, instructional methods, and innovations.**

Academic Focus

The Freedom Education Model centers on rigorous, multidisciplinary, real-world learning experiences that align with state academic standards and exceed minimum expectations. The academic focus includes

- Elite level academic rigor

- Integration of core content through project-based units

- Explicit instruction in power skills, communication, and etiquette

- CTE (Career & Technical Education) pathways with real-world application

- Multilingual fluency and cultural literacy from early grades onward

Academic Benchmarks

Benchmarks within this model are both standards-based and performance-based:

- **Standards Alignment**: Arkansas state standards and proficiency scales for every unit

- **Mastery Tracking**: Students advance upon demonstrating mastery.

- **Multi-Modal Assessments**: Combination of formative, summative, experiential, and reflective assessment tools

- **Power Skills Benchmarks**: Social and emotional competencies, communication fluency, etiquette, and workplace readiness

-

Language Acquisition Goals: Progressive benchmarks for multilingual fluency beginning in early grades

Educational Philosophy

The Freedom Education Model is grounded in the belief that education must prepare students holistically—academically, socially, emotionally, and professionally—to lead successful, empowered lives in diverse communities. Core beliefs include:

- Education as a lifelong partnership between school, family, and community

- Equity through mastery learning and inclusive team-based instruction

- Learning as an active, applied, and contextualized process

- Schools as community wellness hubs supporting full human development

Instructional Methods

The model employs diverse, innovative strategies to ensure deep learning and real-world relevance:

- **Mastery Learning**: Students progress upon demonstrating understanding

- **Multi-Year Classrooms**: Foster long-term teacher-student relationships and continuity of support

- **Project-Based Learning (PBL)**: Units integrate core subjects through real-world, collaborative projects

- **Experiential Learning**: Each unit culminates in a hands-on, authentic learning experience

-

Next Education Workforce Model: Instruction by educator teams including certified teachers, interns, tutors, and community instructors

-

On-Site Work-Based Learning: Students operate school-based businesses through the AEPA Mall

-

Integrated SEL & Power Skills Instruction: Daily embedded lessons in communication, interpersonal skills, and etiquette

Innovation

The AEPA is innovative in our context for the following:

1. **Holistic wrap-around approach for not only student well-being but also for families, staff, and community well-being.** This approach allows us to promote a physically, socially, and intellectually safer learning environment by addressing the interconnected needs of the whole school ecosystem. In addition to these services, each high school student will be certified in **peer emotional support and mental health first aid** in order to assist others in the regulation of emotions, conflict resolution, and stress management. This certification equips students with the skills to recognize signs of emotional distress in themselves and others, respond with empathy, and access appropriate resources when needed. By empowering students to support one another, AEPA fosters a culture of compassion, resilience, and proactive mental wellness that extends beyond the classroom into every aspect of school life.

2. **Parents at the Center** addresses families as the first teachers and the most important factor in a child's educational success, and provides direct support to empower them. While all parents send their very best to school, it has become apparent that families need guidance in helping their students grow into self-sufficient, capable members of society. This will happen by providing targeted training, resources, and coaching aligned to the developmental needs of each age group. Parents will receive quarterly opportunities to identify areas in which they need support, such as fostering responsibility, building resilience, developing routines, and teaching accountability. Workshops, classes, and hands-on learning experiences will equip parents with practical tools to reinforce academic and life skills at home. By partnering intentionally with families, the AEPA ensures that the growth of the child is matched by the growth of the family unit—creating a culture where success is cultivated together, from the ground up.

3. **AEPA is built on the foundation of the Next Education Workforce Model.** This model reimagines the traditional one-teacher-per-classroom structure by implementing diverse educator teams designed to meet the complex and evolving needs of every student. These teams include certified teachers, teacher interns, student tutors, and community instructors who collaborate to

provide integrated, personalized instruction and support. The model ensures that academic, social-emotional, and developmental needs are met within the learning environment, rather than through fragmented pull-out services. By fostering team-based teaching, AEPA supports teacher collaboration, professional growth, and improved working conditions through innovative scheduling —such as staggered four-day work weeks. Ultimately, the Next Education Workforce Model strengthens community ownership, promotes equity, and empowers both educators and learners to thrive in a dynamic, future-ready school system.

4. **AEPA provides flexible scheduling for teachers who will work a four-day week while school remains open five days per week for students.** This innovative approach supports educator well-being, retention, and professional growth by allowing staff to have dedicated time for planning, collaboration, and self-care. Through staggered staffing and strategic scheduling, students continue to receive uninterrupted access to academic instruction, enrichment opportunities, and support services throughout the full school week. This model not only promotes a healthier work-life balance for educators but also enhances the overall quality and consistency of instruction, ensuring that every student has access to a highly effective and energized instructional team each day.

5. **AEPA aims to have self-sustaining programs within ten years through the AEPA Mall.** The AEPA Mall will take skills taught during the early years and put them into practical, real-world application. Students will understand that success requires dedication, growth, and progression— they must work their way up the ladder. They will achieve this by participating in tiered, hands-on work experiences that mirror real-world employment structures. Beginning with foundational tasks and responsibilities, students will gradually take on more complex roles, such as managing operations, overseeing finances, leading teams, and engaging with customers and vendors. Each level of responsibility will be earned through demonstrated mastery of academic content, power skills, and workplace competencies. Through this model, students will develop a strong work ethic, financial literacy, leadership capacity, and a deep sense of ownership—preparing them to thrive as future entrepreneurs, professionals, and community contributors.

Applicant Evidence :

W	PDF
AEPA Future Fluent f...	Curriculum and Inst...

Uploaded on **8/7/2025** by **Beth Shumate**

Uploaded on **8/8/2025** by **Beth Shumate**

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Q14. **A.2 Academic focus Describe the school-wide, evidence-based plan that will drive academic improvement for all students and help close achievement gaps. Please provide any relevant research and evidence you used in developing the plan.**

School-Wide Academic Improvement Plan

Overview:

The Arkansas Experiential Preparatory Academy (AEPA) employs a comprehensive, school-wide academic improvement plan rooted in evidence-based practices and equity-driven design. This plan is aligned with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Tier I and II interventions, and it integrates instructional excellence, student wellness, and family/community engagement to drive achievement for all learners—particularly those historically underserved.

Core Components of the Plan

1. Mastery-Based, Standards-Aligned Instruction

AEPA implements a mastery learning model in which students progress upon demonstrating proficiency in clearly defined learning objectives. Instructional units are aligned to Arkansas state standards and are delivered through multidisciplinary project-based learning (PBL).

Evidence Base:

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Bloom (1968) demonstrated that mastery learning can improve academic outcomes significantly, often achieving "two sigma" improvements over traditional models.

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Marzano (2006) found that when students understand the learning target and receive feedback on their progress, academic gains increase substantially.

2. Next Education Workforce Model (NEWF)

Instruction is delivered through educator teams rather than isolated classroom teachers. Each team includes certified teachers, interns, tutors, and community instructors to ensure differentiated instruction and support for all learners.

Evidence Base:

-

The *Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University* has documented the NEWF model's success in improving academic performance, teacher satisfaction, and equity outcomes.

-

Research on collaborative teaching and teaming (Friend & Cook, 2013) shows improvements in inclusion, personalization, and student engagement.

3. Embedded Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Power Skills

Daily instruction integrates SEL competencies and life-readiness skills including communication, etiquette, collaboration, and emotional regulation. This helps students overcome barriers to learning and contributes to a safe, inclusive school climate.

Evidence Base:

-

Durlak et al. (2011): Students who participated in well-implemented SEL programs showed an 11% gain in academic achievement.

4. Tiered Interventions and Embedded Support

AEPA's academic model includes universal screening, progress monitoring, and tiered interventions (RTI/MTSS) within the instructional day. Intervention and enrichment blocks are built into the master schedule, and services are delivered without pulling students out of their learning teams.

Evidence Base:

-

Fuchs & Fuchs (2006) found Response to Intervention to be a powerful tool in reducing referrals to special education and closing gaps in reading and math.

-

The *National Center on Intensive Intervention* supports MTSS as a systemic approach to identifying and addressing student needs.

5. Family Empowerment Through the "Parents at the Center" Program

Families participate in quarterly needs assessments and ongoing learning opportunities that align with their child's academic and developmental stage. This addresses out-of-school factors that impact achievement.

Evidence Base:

-

Henderson & Mapp (2002) show that family engagement is one of the most powerful predictors of student success, particularly for low-income and marginalized students.

6. Student Ownership Through Experiential and Workplace Learning

All high school students participate in real-world learning through the AEPA Mall, which includes student-run businesses. Work-based learning reinforces academic content and develops transferable skills, helping students see relevance in their education.

Evidence Base:

- *Lent, Brown, & Hackett (2000)*: Career development models show that self-efficacy and real-world experience predict academic persistence.

- *Linked Learning Alliance* and *Jobs for the Future* confirm that experiential learning leads to increased engagement and postsecondary success.

Monitoring & Evaluation

AEPA uses benchmark assessments, student work analysis, walkthroughs, and stakeholder feedback to track implementation and impact. Student progress is monitored through proficiency scales, formative assessments, and SEL trackers. The plan is reviewed annually and refined through data-driven decision-making.

This school-wide plan is a cohesive, evidence-based approach to advancing equity, excellence, and real-world readiness. By aligning academic instruction with wellness, workforce preparation, and family engagement, AEPA ensures that all students—regardless of background—have the opportunity to thrive.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF
Attendance Tiered S...

Uploaded on **5/22/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q15. **A.3 Academic focus Describe the school's curriculum and discuss how it will prepare students to meet or exceed Arkansas standards.**
a. If the curriculum is fully developed, summarize curricular choices, and explain the rationale for selection. If the curriculum still needs to be fully developed, describe any curriculum decisions made to date, share any proposed curricular decisions that are pending, and explain the process for completion.
b. Provide evidence or documentation that the literacy curriculum chosen is based on the science of reading. Describe your strategy for students reading at or above grade level or higher and your strategy for students reading below grade level.

The curriculum taught in the AEPA will include the Arkansas State Standards for all subject areas provided. Instructional units will be developed by the leadership team that will include all levels of educators. The units will include instructional materials that are vetted by DESE and identified as HQIM for all subject areas. Mastery learning will be a central component of each unit. The unit plans include acceleration and remediation components in order to promote and fulfill the needs of all students. Proficiency scales that define mastery are contained within the units for each identified skill.

Elementary/Middle:

○ Mastery learning allows students to accelerate or spend additional time on subjects in which they need assistance. Allows for multi-age grade levels.

○ Foreign language will be offered as an elective where it is more developmentally appropriate for retention of language.

○ Parents at the Center will empower parents to discuss their needs as well as allowing the school to inform/work with parents about skills needed to be successful in both their educational journey and in life.

○ Future Fluent/Always Ready allows for Power Skills for Life, a holistic wrap around approach to ensure each students success.

Specific instructional materials being considered for the AEPA include the following:

All core subjects except Reading

Cambridge Primary K-5

Cambridge Lower Secondary Grades 6-8

Cambridge Pre-Advanced (IGCSE) Grades 9-10

Cambridge Advanced Grades 11-12

Teachers will review and provide input on this program prior to any purchases being made. Teachers will have the opportunity to review and recommend alternative or supplemental materials that have been identified as HQIM. The attached curriculum review cycle will be implemented as a part of the AEPA curriculum development system to ensure inclusion of teachers and stakeholders in this process.

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*Reading

Lexia Learning Core 5 Grades K-5 (Core and Intervention)

Phonics First and Structures for Tier II intervention

S.P.I.R.E. or Take Flight for Dyslexia interventions

*Teachers will have input on the program selected. They will be able to review any items on the DESE approved list for HQIM in reading, intervention, and dyslexia instruction. All components of the Science of Reading will be met with the choices made.

Core Features of the AEPA Curriculum
1. Standards-Based and Mastery-Aligned

- Every unit of instruction is aligned to Arkansas Academic Standards across English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

- Curriculum is built around proficiency scales, which clearly define what it means to progress from emerging understanding to mastery.

- Students demonstrate mastery through both traditional and performance-based assessments, with opportunities for revision and growth embedded into the learning process.

2. Multidisciplinary Project-Based Learning (PBL)

- Core subjects are taught through project-based learning units that connect academic content to real-world applications.

- Units are collaboratively designed by instructional teams and integrate state standards, vocabulary, SEL competencies, power skills, and career-ready practices.

-

Every project culminates in an experiential learning opportunity, such as community presentations, entrepreneurial ventures, or problem-solving challenges.

3. Experiential and Career-Connected Instruction

- Students apply academic knowledge in authentic contexts—including real and simulated businesses, labs, outdoor classrooms, and the AEPA Mall.

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways begin in middle school, ensuring early exposure to career-relevant skills that reinforce academic content.

- Each high school student will participate in student-run businesses, building literacy, numeracy, financial management, and communication skills in real-world settings.

4. Multilingual and Global Competency Curriculum

- Starting in elementary grades, students receive foreign language instruction to develop cultural literacy and multilingual communication skills.

- Lessons emphasize global awareness, cultural responsiveness, and the ability to collaborate with diverse communities—skills essential in a 21st-century workforce.

5. Embedded SEL and Etiquette Instruction

- Daily instruction includes explicit SEL instruction, as well as etiquette and professional behavior education.

- Skills such as formal written and verbal communication, personal presentation, conflict resolution, and public speaking are integrated into all content areas.

6. Customized Supports and Differentiation

-

All core academic content is delivered by educator teams within the Next Education Workforce Model, which includes certified teachers, interns, tutors, and community educators.

- Supports for diverse learners—including those with IEPs, 504 plans, English Learners, and gifted students—are delivered within inclusive classroom environments through flexible grouping, targeted interventions, and instructional scaffolds.

How the Curriculum Prepares Students to Meet or Exceed Arkansas Standards

- **Explicit Alignment**: All units are mapped directly to Arkansas Department of Education's standards and frameworks.

- **Higher-Level Application**: Through project-based and experiential learning, students engage in critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—pushing them beyond minimum expectations.

- **Formative Feedback Cycles**: Instruction includes frequent formative assessments and mastery checks to inform instruction and adjust learning paths in real time.

- **Vertical and Horizontal Articulation**: Learning goals are intentionally designed across grade levels to ensure that each year's instruction builds coherently on the last and connects across disciplines.

- **Real-World Competency Development**: The curriculum reinforces the state's Portrait of a Graduate goals through practical experiences that align with college, career, and civic readiness benchmarks.

Conclusion

AEPA's curriculum is intentionally designed not only to ensure that students meet Arkansas academic standards but to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind to excel beyond them. By combining academic rigor with hands-on application, cultural fluency, and wellness-focused instruction, AEPA graduates are Always Ready and Future Fluent—prepared to thrive in college, career, and life.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF

Student Performanc...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q16. **A.4 Academic focus Describe the professional learning opportunities and support provided to educators to implement the described academic plan.**

See attached.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF

Professional Learnin...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q17. **A.5 Academic focus Explain the proposed master schedule. Describe why this schedule will be optimal for student learning. Summarize how the school will plan time for teacher development, tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring, acceleration, and other academic activities.**

See attached document

Applicant Evidence :

PDF
Proposed Master Sc...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q18. **A.6 Academic focus Upload a copy of the proposed annual academic calendar and proposed master schedule.**

☑ Upload Required   **File Type:** pdf, excel, word   **Max File Size:** 30   **Total Files Count:** 10

Applicant Comments :

Attached is a proposed calendar and master schedule, however we will want to meet with employees to gain input in order to foster a culture and climate of collaboration.

Applicant Evidence :

W	PDF
AEPA 26-27 school y...	AEPA Schedule (K-8) ...

Uploaded on **5/19/2025**   Uploaded on **5/21/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**   by **Beth Shumate**

Q19. **B.1 Academic Performance Explain the process for setting, monitoring, and revising academic performance Include in your response how the proposed school will use data to improve instruction, inform professional development, and evaluate curriculum.**

Please see attachment for response.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF
AEPA Academic Perf...

Uploaded on **8/5/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q20. **B.2 Academic Performance Describe the grade-level promotion/retention policies for students.**

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Grade-Level Promotion and Retention Policy

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is committed to ensuring that all students demonstrate academic, social, and developmental readiness before being promoted to the next grade level. AEPA's promotion and retention policy is grounded in mastery-based learning principles, aligned with Arkansas Department of Education regulations, and designed to provide equitable opportunities for every student to succeed.

Promotion Criteria

Students will be considered for promotion to the next grade level based on the following criteria:

1.
Academic Proficiency

o

Demonstrated mastery of Arkansas Academic Standards in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, as measured by:

▪

Proficiency scale ratings

▪

Benchmark assessments

▪

Project-based learning performance

▪

End-of-unit or end-of-year summative assessments

2.
Growth and Progress Monitoring

o

Evidence of academic growth based on multiple data points including:

▪

Diagnostic tools

■

Progress monitoring reports

■

Formative assessments

3.
Student Portfolio

○

A portfolio of student work that reflects standards mastery, power skills development, and personal learning goals.

4.
Social-Emotional Readiness and School Engagement

○

Consideration of SEL development, attendance, and engagement, as measured by advisory feedback, behavior reports, and participation in learning activities.

Retention Criteria

Retention is not used as a punitive measure but rather as a targeted intervention strategy when it is in the best interest of the student. This is used only as a last resort. A student may be considered for retention if:

•

They have not met the minimum proficiency level on key standards in two or more core subjects, even with interventions.

•

There is insufficient evidence of academic growth despite individualized support.

Retention decisions are made collaboratively and require:

•

A comprehensive Student Success Review Meeting including the teacher team, family, school administrator, and student (where developmentally appropriate).

•

Documentation of interventions provided (RTI/MTSS supports), including Tier II or Tier III strategies and progress tracking.

- A promotion plan that outlines next steps, supports, and measurable goals.

Mid-Year Grade Advancement (Acceleration)

Students demonstrating exceptional academic achievement and social-emotional maturity may be considered for mid-year grade acceleration. This process includes:

- Formal academic review of performance data across all content areas

- Social-emotional readiness evaluation

- Teacher and family recommendations

- Approval by the school leadership team

Supports for At-Risk Students

Before retention is considered, AEPA will implement multiple layers of support, including:

- Differentiated instruction

- Intervention blocks within the school day

- Individualized learning plans

- Tutoring and Friday remediation sessions

- Family conferences and engagement through the *Parents at the Center* program

Communication with Families

Families are critical partners in the promotion/retention process. AEPA maintains ongoing communication with families throughout the year via:

- Quarterly student-led conferences

- Progress reports aligned with proficiency scales

- Early notification if a student is at risk for retention

- Collaborative development of intervention or retention plans

AEPA's promotion and retention policy ensures that decisions are student-centered, evidence-based, and equitable, supporting long-term academic success and personal growth. The goal is for all students to advance with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to thrive in the next stage of their learning journey.

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4. Student Services and Special Populations

Q21.

A.1 Explain the proposed charter school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) or similar intervention service models. Please include a description of the model, data, and components that will help ensure students receive high-quality instruction.

See attached response

Applicant Evidence :

Multi-Tiered System ...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q22.

A.2 Describe how the charter school intends to identify, evaluate, and appropriately place exceptional students with disabilities in the most appropriate educational setting.

See attached document.

Applicant Evidence :

Special Education Su...

Uploaded on **8/6/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q23.

A.3 Describe how the school will meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL). Include the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students, ensuring that they have equitable access to the school's programming, and engaging with their families.

Please see attachment for response.

Applicant Evidence :

Serving English Lang...

Uploaded on **5/22/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q24.

A.4 Describe how the school will meet the needs of gifted and talented students. Include the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students, ensuring that they have equitable access to the school's programming, and engaging with their families.

Please see attachment for response.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF

Serving Gifted and T...

Uploaded on **5/22/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q25.

A.5 Describe how the school will meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure. Include the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students, ensuring that they have equitable access to the school's programming, and engaging with their families.

Please see attachment for response.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF

Serving Students at ...

Uploaded on **5/22/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q26.

A.6 As required by Ark. Code Ann. §6-41-603, all charter schools are required to screen every student in kindergarten through grade 3 (K-3) and those in grades 3-12 who experience difficulty with fluency using a high-quality, evidence-based screener approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. Screeners should use the Arkansas Literacy screening assessment in their evaluation. In addition to the screening requirements, describe how the school will provide literacy intervention and dyslexia services for identified students.

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Please see attached response.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF
Literacy Screening, I...

Uploaded on **8/6/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

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5. School Climate

Q27. A.1 Describe the intended school climate/environment. Explain how that climate will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.

a. Include in your explanation how the climate for students, teachers, administrators, and parents will be established.

b. Include in your explanation how the school climate will be supportive of students with a variety of needs, including students receiving special education services, English language learners, gifted and talented students, and students who are at risk of academic failure.

Intended School Climate and Learning Environment

AEPA is designed to foster a welcoming, inclusive, and empowering school climate that promotes academic success, personal growth, and strong community engagement. The learning environment at AEPA is intentionally structured to support the intellectual, social, emotional, and behavioral development of all students, while also sustaining a culture of collaboration and respect among educators, families, and community partners.

AEPA's school climate is grounded in mutual accountability, culturally responsive practices, and the belief that every student deserves to learn in a physically, socially, and emotionally safe environment. The school's instructional and operational model reflects a commitment to whole-child development, equity, and excellence.

Promoting a positive academic and developmental environment

AEPA's learning environment is structured around a mastery-based, project-driven model that encourages curiosity, problem solving, collaboration, and real-world application of knowledge. Daily advisory meetings provide students with consistent mentorship, goal-setting opportunities, and a space for self-reflection. The school day includes social-emotional learning integration, student-led discussions, and experiential learning experiences to promote engagement and personal agency.

Students are taught power skills, such as communication, adaptability, and etiquette, alongside core academic content, reinforcing both academic readiness and life preparedness. In addition, AEPA promotes a cell phone–free and social media–conscious environment during the school day to strengthen focus, peer relationships, and responsible behavior.

Teachers are supported through a four-day instructional workweek, collaborative planning structures, and participation in instructional teams. These teams create a professional culture in which teachers have shared responsibility for student outcomes, the autonomy to innovate, and the support to grow.

Parents and families are actively involved in school culture through the Parents at the Center program. This initiative provides them with tools to reinforce learning and development at home, and offers structured opportunities for learning, reflection, and contribution to the school's mission.

Establishing a unified climate for students, staff, and families

AEPA's climate is established intentionally through shared values, consistent structures, and relationship-building at every level. Upon enrollment and onboarding, all students and families are introduced to the school's vision, expectations, and supports. Each student is assigned an advisor who serves as a liaison for family engagement and academic monitoring.

Educators participate in annual and ongoing training in inclusive practices, SEL, trauma-informed strategies, restorative approaches, and culturally responsive teaching. A climate of staff collaboration is supported through professional learning communities (PLCs), peer observations, and open communication with school leadership.

Administrators lead with visibility, accessibility, and a focus on instructional leadership. They prioritize building trust with students, staff, and families, and they model the behaviors and dispositions expected throughout the school.

Climate is continuously monitored through student and staff feedback surveys, family input, and regular reviews of behavioral, attendance, and engagement data. The school uses this data to adjust practices, strengthen relationships, and promote continuous improvement.

Supporting diverse student needs

AEPA's inclusive school climate is designed to meet the full range of learner needs by embedding support into all aspects of school life.

Students with disabilities receive services in the least restrictive environment, with push-in support and co-teaching models whenever possible. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are honored with fidelity, and all staff are trained in the implementation of accommodations, modifications, and behavior plans.

English language learners are fully included in core academic instruction and receive designated English Language Development (ELD) support aligned with their proficiency level. Instruction is scaffolded to ensure comprehension and access to grade-level content.

Gifted and talented students are supported through differentiated instruction, curriculum compacting, independent study, and accelerated learning opportunities. These students are encouraged to take leadership roles in projects, community partnerships, and school-based enterprises.

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Students at risk of academic failure are identified early through data reviews and receive targeted interventions during daily enrichment and support blocks. Instruction is personalized based on each student's needs, and advisors work with families to co-create learning goals and progress plans.

Social-emotional needs are met through daily advisory sessions, embedded SEL instruction, access to counseling, and strong relationships with trusted adults. Behavioral expectations are taught and reinforced positively, and student voice is regularly included in decisions that affect school climate and culture.

Attached is information on the specific actions that we will take as a school team to collaboratively develop this culture and climate.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF

Culture_Climate Dev...

Uploaded on **5/22/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q28. **A.2 Describe the school's approach to discipline, behavior intervention, and classroom management. Highlight key policies, systems, and related structures and address how they will support the climate described in question 1 and will comply with Arkansas laws.**

We are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every student can learn and grow. The school's approach to behavior and discipline is proactive, relationship-centered, and grounded in restorative practices. AEPA's policies emphasize prevention, accountability, and growth over punishment, and are designed to support the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all students.

This approach aligns with Arkansas state law and guidance from the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, including the requirement that discipline practices be fair, non-discriminatory, and developmentally appropriate.

Philosophy and guiding principles

AEPA views discipline as an opportunity for instruction and restoration rather than compliance and control. The goal is to help students build self-regulation, understand the impact of their actions, and make positive choices that reflect the values of the school community.

To that end, AEPA's behavior framework is built on four key principles:

1.
build strong, respectful relationships between students, staff, and families

2.
create clear expectations and explicitly teach behavioral norms

3.
respond to misbehavior with empathy, structure, and consistency

4.
repair harm and restore community through accountability and support

These principles are reinforced through daily advisory sessions, schoolwide norms, and consistent staff modeling of respectful communication and conflict resolution.

Systems and structures for prevention and intervention

AEPA uses a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior (MTSS-B) that provides universal supports for all students and more targeted interventions as needed:

Tier I: Universal supports (all students)

- daily advisory circles to build belonging, set goals, and reflect on behavior

- schoolwide norms co-developed with students and reinforced through positive recognition

- social-emotional learning (SEL) integrated into all content areas

- clear behavior expectations posted and reviewed regularly in each classroom

- regular recognition of positive behavior through advisory points, leadership roles, and student shout-outs

Tier II: Targeted interventions (some students)

- check-in/check-out systems with a staff mentor

- small group SEL or behavior coaching sessions

- restorative conversations with a trained staff member

- student reflection forms and behavior goal tracking

Tier III: Individualized interventions (few students)

- functional behavior assessments and behavior intervention plans (BIPs)

- individualized support from a behavior specialist or counselor

-

family conferences to co-design behavior support plans

- restorative circles involving peers, teachers, administrators, and families

All discipline data are tracked in a secure system to monitor patterns, ensure equity, and evaluate intervention effectiveness.

Restorative practices

Restorative practices are central to AEPA's discipline system. These practices help students and staff resolve conflict, repair relationships, and rebuild trust after harm has occurred.

AEPA's restorative framework includes:

- proactive community-building circles held regularly in classrooms

- restorative conversations between students and staff when expectations are not met

- peer mediation and student leadership in conflict resolution

- restorative conferences for serious incidents, involving all affected parties (may include restitution)

Rather than relying on exclusionary practices, AEPA prioritizes solutions that help students learn from mistakes and remain engaged in the school community.

Classroom management

Classroom management at AEPA is based on high expectations, clear routines, and consistent adult presence. Teachers:

- co-develop classroom norms with students

- use collaborative problem-solving to address disruptions

- apply logical and consistent consequences

- receive ongoing professional development in culturally responsive classroom management, trauma-informed practices, and de-escalation strategies

Educator teams work together to support classroom climate and share strategies for success. Leadership and instructional coaches observe regularly and provide support as needed.

Family engagement and communication

Families are essential partners in promoting positive student behavior. AEPA:

- communicates behavior expectations and discipline policies clearly at enrollment and during family events

- uses family conferences to involve caregivers in behavior plans and goal setting

- provides regular updates on behavior through advisors and the student information system

- offers parent workshops on conflict resolution, adolescent development, and restorative discipline through the Parents at the Center program

Compliance with state law and nondiscrimination

AEPA's discipline practices comply with Arkansas law, including:

- Act 1100 (limiting out-of-school suspensions for young students)

- Act 1329 (prohibiting corporal punishment)

-

all requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504, and Title VI, ensuring that disciplinary actions are fair, inclusive, and legally compliant

Exclusionary practices (suspension, expulsion) are used only as a last resort, and only after documented interventions have been attempted.

Q29. A.3 Briefly explain the general plan to engage parents in school life and communicate with them regularly about school matters.

At AEPA, we will actively engage parents as essential partners in student success through our *Parents at the Center* initiative and a comprehensive family engagement plan. The school will provide multiple opportunities for parents to participate in school life, including quarterly student-led conferences, family workshops, school events, and volunteer roles within the school, Next Education Workforce model, and enrichment programs. *Parents at the Center* will also welcome homeschooling families and serve as a hub for them in the community. Currently, there is no designated meeting space for homeschooling families to gather and work on lessons or obtain information. Students can receive tutoring and assessment services here as well.

Communication with families will be regular, two-way, and accessible. AEPA will use multiple channels including weekly newsletters, parent portals, emails, text alerts, and advisory check-ins to keep families informed about student progress, school events, and academic expectations. Advisors will serve as primary contacts for each student, ensuring personalized updates and direct outreach. Translation and interpretation services will be available to support multilingual families and promote inclusive engagement.

Q30. A.4 Will the school offer any extra and/or co-curricular activities? If so, please describe.

AEPA will offer a diverse range of extra- and co-curricular activities designed to complement academic learning, promote student interests, and support whole-child development.

Co-curricular activities will be integrated into the daily schedule through elective blocks, project-based learning, and the AEPA Mall. The AEPA Mall is a school-operated hub where students can participate in entrepreneurial ventures, leadership roles, and work-based learning. These experiences will reinforce communication, collaboration, financial literacy, and real-world problem solving.

Extra-curricular activities will be available before or after school based on student interest and may include but are not limited to

- STEM and robotics clubs

- Performing and visual arts programs

- Student government and leadership councils

- Community service and social impact groups

- Foreign language and cultural exchange clubs

- Etiquette and public speaking societies

- Fitness and wellness programs

- Debate, entrepreneurship, and career exploration groups

These offerings will be designed with input from students and families to ensure relevance, inclusivity, and engagement across grade levels. All students, including those receiving special education or English language services, will have equitable access to participate.

Q31.

A.5 Briefly explain and describe the school's policy concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints. Include what role the governing board may have in complaints. Upload a copy of the current handbook (if possible) describing those policies and procedures.

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is committed to maintaining an open, respectful, and responsive environment where all members of the school community, students, parents, staff, and community stakeholders, can raise concerns and have them addressed in a timely and fair manner.

To achieve this and upon approval, AEPA has will adopt model policies specifically designed for regarding grievances and complaints. These policies provide clear procedures that encourage resolution at the earliest possible stage, typically beginning with direct communication between the concerned party and the appropriate staff member or administrator.

If a grievance cannot be resolved informally, the model policies guide a formal complaint process that includes written documentation, investigation, and timely response. The procedures emphasize transparency, confidentiality, and respect for all parties involved.

The governing board of AEPA serves as the final level of review in the complaint process. After all administrative remedies have been exhausted, the board may hear appeals or unresolved complaints, ensuring due process and impartial consideration consistent with policy guidelines. The board's role is to ensure that the school adheres to its policies, protects stakeholders' rights, and upholds the school's mission and values.

By implementing model grievance and complaint policies, AEPA ensures a consistent, legally compliant framework for addressing concerns while fostering trust and accountability within the school community.

6. Organizational Plan

Q32. A.1 Governance and Leadership Board of Directors– Provide a list of proposed board members, if identified. Please include the actual or preferred roles of each member, a brief description of major responsibilities, their expertise area (i.e., academics, finances, legal, management, and operations, parents, community leaders, educator, operations, or community relations).

See attached explanation.

Applicant Evidence :

[PDF]

Board Compostion (...

Uploaded on **8/5/2025**
by **Christie Toland**

Q33. A.2 Governance and Leadership Explain the selection process of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors for Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) has been independently formed and intentionally structured to meet the specific needs of the school and its mission. While Freedom Education Services (FESI), the non-profit sponsor, played a valuable role in the early development of AEPA's instructional design, the AEPA board operates as a separate governing body charged exclusively with providing focused oversight, strategic direction, and accountability for AEPA.

Board members will be carefully selected from diverse regions across the state of Arkansas to ensure broad representation and a deep understanding of the communities AEPA will serve. The selection process will emphasize relevant professional expertise, real-world experience, and a strong personal commitment to AEPA's vision of preparing students for leadership and executive roles statewide. Collectively, board members bring valuable knowledge in education, law, business, finance, workforce development, and community engagement which are fields essential to the effective governance of a high-quality charter school.

The selection process will begin once approved with identifying the core responsibilities of a successful charter school board: overseeing academic outcomes, safeguarding financial resources, ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements, and supporting long-term strategic planning. Upon charter approval, prospective members will be interviewed and vetted to ensure alignment with AEPA's mission and readiness to contribute meaningfully and accountably to the school's success.

Q34. A.3 Governance and Leadership Identify the processes and structures that the proposed board will have in place to ensure the following:
a. Effective and efficient operation of school governance,
b. Establishment and monitoring of school improvement goals,
c. Procedural oversight and monitoring of personnel decisions, if applicable,
d. Fiscal responsibility and sustainability of the school,
e. Compliance with all applicable laws and rules concerning ethics, and
f. Community Engagement.

The Board of Directors at Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) fully understands its responsibility to serve as the governing and oversight body of the school. The board is committed to following all applicable local, state, and federal laws, as well as the rules and regulations set forth by the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Board members will actively monitor the school's academic performance, financial health, and operational practices to ensure AEPA remains in full compliance and aligned with its mission. Through regular meetings, timely reviews of data, and ongoing training, the board will provide clear oversight and direction while holding school leadership accountable to high standards.

Above all, the board's focus will remain on ensuring that AEPA serves students with excellence, integrity, and transparency at every level.

Freedom Education Services Inc. (FESI), a nonprofit organization, is committed to supporting AEPA from its inception through every stage of growth. FESI will serve as the Charter Management Organization (CMO) once AEPA begins operations, delivering comprehensive administrative services including financial management, human resources, professional development, enrollment and marketing support, executive-level administrative guidance, and curriculum and instructional support. To ensure AEPA's strong launch and sustainable growth, FESI will waive all management fees until the school's enrollment reaches 550 students. Once this enrollment threshold is met, AEPA will pay a management fee equal to 10% of its funding to cover the full range of services provided by FESI.

Applicant Evidence :

PDF	PDF
Conflict of Interest S...	**Governance Structure**

Uploaded on **8/1/2025** by **Christie Toland**   Uploaded on **8/1/2025** by **Christie Toland**

Q35. **B.1 School Administration** *Superintendent Position* **– If a superintendent has been appointed, please indicate the selection criteria and a rationale for the choice, including leadership qualities and capacity that uniquely qualify the selected individual to lead this charter. If a superintendent has not been selected, please include a job description and**

indicate the leadership qualities and capacity desired for this position. How will this leader be supported and developed?

The selection criteria for the position on the Superintendent for AEPA is as follows:

Licensure Requirements

- **Hold a District Level Administrator License.**
- **Educational Background: An advanced graduate degree (e.g., Ed.S., Ed.D., or Ph.D.) in educational leadership or a related field**
- **Licensure: Possession of a current Building Level Administrator License.**

Professional Experience:

-

A minimum of three years of teaching experience as a licensed educator.

-

At least one year of experience as a licensed building-level or curriculum/program administrator.

- **At least one year experience as a district level leader**
-

Program Completion: Successful completion of a state-approved educational leadership program, which includes:

- ○

Core coursework in areas such as governance, school finance, and facilities planning.

- ○

An internship experience in P-12 settings.

-

Assessment: Passing scores on the required licensure examinations.

Leadership Qualities and Competencies

-

Visionary Leadership: Ability to articulate and implement a clear, strategic vision for the school's future.

-

Innovative Thinking: Capacity to foster and manage innovative educational practices and programs.

-

Instructional Expertise: Deep understanding of curriculum development, instructional strategies, and assessment.

-

Equity and Inclusion: Commitment to creating an inclusive environment that promotes equity for all students.

-

Collaborative Skills: Proficiency in building relationships with stakeholders, including staff, students, parents, and the community.

-

Operational Knowledge: Knowledge of school finance, facilities management, and compliance with state and federal regulations.

Support and Development:

To ensure the success and continuous growth of the superintendent, the following support structures are in place:

-

Mentorship: Ongoing guidance from experienced superintendents through the expertise and experience of the founders.

-

Professional Development: Access to workshops, seminars, and courses focusing on leadership, innovation, and school management.

-

Networking Opportunities: Engagement with professional organizations such as the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) for peer support and knowledge sharing.

-

Resource Access: Availability of tools and resources provided by the Arkansas Department of Education to aid in effective school administration.

Currently, Dr. Christie Toland, has been appointed as the Superintendent due to her unwavering commitment to innovation and student success. She is a licensed District Administrator with experience as an Asst. Superintendent.

Q36. **B.2 School Administration** _Principal Position_ **– If a principal has been appointed, please indicate the selection criteria and a rationale for the choice, including leadership qualities and capacity that uniquely qualify the selected individual to lead this charter. If a principal has not been selected, please include a job description and indicate the leadership qualities and capacity desired for this position. How will this leader be supported and developed?**

The ideal AEPA school principal must embody visionary leadership, with a clear commitment to academic excellence, equity, and innovation. This leader should possess strong instructional knowledge, be data-driven, and have a proven ability to foster a culture of continuous improvement. Essential qualities include:

- **Innovative Thinking: Ability to design and implement creative educational models that support accelerated and personalized learning and student achievement.**

- **Instructional Leadership: Deep understanding of curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy, with a focus on supporting teacher development and instructional excellence.**

- **Collaborative Leadership: Ability to build strong relationships with staff, students, families, and the community, fostering a shared sense of ownership and purpose.**

- **Change Management: Skilled in leading complex initiatives, managing resistance, and creating sustainable systems for innovation and growth.**

- **Strategic Visioning: Capacity to set a clear mission and align school practices to long-term goals that reflect student needs and community aspirations.**

Support and Development for the Principal

To ensure this leader's success and growth, FESI will provide:

- **Coaching and Mentorship: Regular, individualized support from experienced educational leaders and executive coaches.**

- **Professional Development: Access to ongoing training in instructional leadership, equity-focused practices, innovation in education, and data use.**

-

Peer Learning Networks: Opportunities to collaborate with other charter school leaders to share best practices and troubleshoot challenges.

- **Operational Support: Centralized assistance with finance, compliance, and human resources to allow the principal to focus on instructional leadership.**

- **Performance Feedback: A structured evaluation system that includes regular feedback, goal setting, and reflection to promote continuous professional growth.**

By combining a bold leadership vision with robust support systems, the FESI and AEPA can cultivate a principal who not only drives student success but also serves as a catalyst for educational innovation.

See attached for the job description

Applicant Evidence :

PDF
Elementary Principal...

Uploaded on **5/21/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q37. **C.1 Faculty and Staff Describe the school's proposed leadership structure. Upload a copy of the school's proposed organizational chart.**

See attached

☑ Upload Required   File Type: **pdf, image, excel, word, text**   Max File Size: **30**

Total Files Count: 10

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Applicant Evidence :

AEPA (1).png
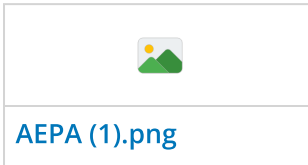
Uploaded on **5/20/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q38. **C.2 Faculty and Staff Describe the strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring faculty and staff. Explain the school's proposed strategy for retaining high-performing faculty and staff.**

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Recruitment and Hiring Strategy

The Arkansas Experiential Preparatory Academy (AEPA) is committed to attracting and hiring highly qualified, mission-aligned educators and staff who are passionate about equity, innovation, and whole-child development. AEPA's recruitment process will prioritize diverse candidates who are skilled in student-centered, culturally responsive, and team-based instructional approaches.

Recruitment Timeline and Milestones

Timeline	Activity
October–December	Finalize staffing model and job descriptions for the following school year
January–March	Launch recruitment campaign; begin screening and interviews
April–May	Finalize hiring for leadership, core instructional staff, and interventionists
June–July	Hire support staff, complete onboarding and training
August	Staff orientation, team building, and instructional planning

Recruitment Strategies

•

Partner with Arkansas educator preparation programs and alternative certification pathways

•

Attend state and regional job fairs and education conferences

•

Promote openings on national education job boards, social media, and local networks

•

Prioritize hiring candidates with experience in project-based learning, restorative practices, and multilingual instruction

- **Recruit community instructors and specialists to support the Next Education Workforce Model**

Hiring Process

- **Multi-phase screening, including application review, structured interviews, and performance-based demonstrations (e.g., sample lesson or project facilitation)**

- **Evaluation criteria include alignment to AEPA's mission, cultural competence, instructional expertise, and collaboration skills**

- **Final interviews will include interaction with school leadership, advisory team members, and student/family representatives when appropriate**

Retention of High-Performing Faculty and Staff

AEPA is committed to retaining exceptional educators by offering a supportive, collaborative, and rewarding professional environment. The school's retention strategy includes the following key elements:

1. Innovative Workforce Model

- **AEPA implements the Next Education Workforce Model, which distributes instructional responsibilities among teams of certified teachers, interns, tutors, and community instructors.**

- **Educators benefit from shared workload, opportunities to specialize, and the ability to support students holistically without isolation.**

2. Competitive Compensation and Scheduling

-

AEPA offers competitive salary packages, stipends for leadership and coaching roles, and performance-based bonuses (pending board approval and funding).

- **The school operates on a four-day instructional week for staff, with staggered scheduling that allows for extended rest, planning, and professional growth, while maintaining five-day service for students.**

3. Embedded Professional Development

- **Ongoing professional learning through PLCs, coaching cycles, and monthly early-release PD days**

- **Support for certification, National Board preparation, and leadership development**

- **Access to growth pathways including instructional coaching, PBL facilitation, and curriculum leadership**

4. Recognition and Voice

- **High-performing staff are celebrated through recognition programs, public showcases, and leadership opportunities**

- **Teachers have meaningful voice in decision-making through advisory councils and leadership teams**

5. Wellness and Belonging

- **Staff wellness is a schoolwide priority, supported by access to on-site mental health services, collaborative planning time, and a positive professional culture**

-

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AEPA's values-driven environment emphasizes psychological safety, trust, and work-life balance

Applicant Evidence :

Staffing and Recruit...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q39. **C.3 Faculty and Staff Describe the policies and procedures for evaluating staff and providing performance feedback. Describe how the school intends to handle unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance, including termination, as well as leadership/teacher changes. Please upload a copy of the policy and procedures listed in your employee handbook (If available).**

Recruitment and Hiring Strategy

The Arkansas Experiential Preparatory Academy (AEPA) is committed to attracting and hiring highly qualified, mission-aligned educators and staff who are passionate about equity, innovation, and whole-child development. AEPA's recruitment process will prioritize diverse candidates who are skilled in student-centered, culturally responsive, and team-based instructional approaches.

Recruitment Timeline and Milestones

Timeline	Activity
October–December	Finalize staffing model and job descriptions for the following school year
January–March	Launch recruitment campaign; begin screening and interviews
April–May	Finalize hiring for leadership, core instructional staff, and interventionists
June–July	Hire support staff, complete onboarding and training
August	Staff orientation, team building, and instructional planning

Recruitment Strategies

- **Partner with Arkansas educator preparation programs and alternative certification pathways**

- **Attend state and regional job fairs and education conferences**

- **Promote openings on national education job boards, social media, and local networks**

- **Prioritize hiring candidates with experience in project-based learning, restorative practices, and multilingual instruction**

- **Recruit community instructors and specialists to support the Next Education Workforce Model**

Hiring Process

- **Multi-phase screening, including application review, structured interviews, and performance-based demonstrations (e.g., sample lesson or project facilitation)**

- **Evaluation criteria include alignment to AEPA's mission, cultural competence, instructional expertise, and collaboration skills**

- **Final interviews will include interaction with school leadership, advisory team members, and student/family representatives when appropriate**

Retention of High-Performing Faculty and Staff

AEPA is committed to retaining exceptional educators by offering a supportive, collaborative, and rewarding professional environment. The school's retention strategy includes the following key elements:

1. Innovative Workforce Model

- **AEPA implements the Next Education Workforce Model, which distributes instructional responsibilities among teams of certified teachers, interns, tutors, and community instructors.**

- **Educators benefit from shared workload, opportunities to specialize, and the ability to support students holistically without isolation.**

2. Competitive Compensation and Scheduling

-

AEPA offers competitive salary packages, stipends for leadership and coaching roles, and performance-based bonuses (pending board approval and funding).

- The school operates on a four-day instructional week for staff, with staggered scheduling that allows for extended rest, planning, and professional growth, while maintaining five-day service for students.

3. Embedded Professional Development

- Ongoing professional learning through PLCs, coaching cycles, and monthly early-release PD days

- Support for certification, National Board preparation, and leadership development

- Access to growth pathways including instructional coaching, PBL facilitation, and curriculum leadership

4. Recognition and Voice

- High-performing staff are celebrated through recognition programs, public showcases, and leadership opportunities

- Teachers have meaningful voice in decision-making through advisory councils and leadership teams

5. Wellness and Belonging

- Staff wellness is a schoolwide priority, supported by access to on-site mental health services, collaborative planning time, and a positive professional culture

-

AEPA's values-driven environment emphasizes psychological safety, trust, and work-life balance

Q40. **D.1 Transportation Will the school provide transportation services? If so, describe the transportation services plan that the school will provide.**

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will not provide transportation services initially with the exception of those who qualify as McKinney Vento and/or have transportation needs as written in their IEP. Families will be informed during the enrollment process that transportation is not provided by the school, and they must have arrangements in place for their students. The school's location will be selected to ensure accessibility for the community it serves.

AEPA is committed to ensuring equitable access for all students. If transportation emerges as a significant barrier for students' attendance or participation, the school will explore alternative strategies such as community carpool coordination or partnerships with local organizations. Should these strategies prove insufficient, AEPA is prepared to implement transportation services to meet student needs.

This approach allows AEPA to prioritize instructional and student support services during the startup phase, while remaining responsive to the evolving needs of its students and families. The school will continuously assess transportation needs and adjust its plan accordingly to support student success.

Q41. **E.1 Food Service Describe how the school will provide meal services.**

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Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will provide meal services. Instead of operating an on-site cafeteria, AEPA will develop partnerships with local vendors and community organizations to offer nutritious meals to students. These partnerships will ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal nutrition guidelines and accommodate students' dietary needs.

AEPA's approach will focus on convenience, quality, and healthy options, ensuring students receive balanced meals that support their academic performance and overall well-being. Additionally, the school will explore opportunities to provide meals through community-supported programs or food delivery services where appropriate.

As AEPA becomes fully operational and transitions into its permanent facility, the school will reassess the need for establishing an on-site food service program to better meet the evolving needs of students and families.

Q42. **E.2 Food Service Describe the food service space at the facility.**

At the temporary facility, Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will have a designated multi-purpose area that can accommodate meal distribution and student dining. This space will be equipped with necessary utilities and furnishings to support safe and efficient delivery of meals provided through partnerships with local vendors and community organizations.

The area will be designed to maintain appropriate hygiene and food safety standards, including easy access to handwashing stations and waste disposal. Seating arrangements will allow for comfortable dining, aligned with health guidelines.

Once AEPA moves to its permanent facility, the food service space will be evaluated and designed to support either continued meal distribution through external partnerships or, if needed, a full-service on-site food service program, based on the reassessment of student and family needs.

Q43. **F.1 Safety Describe how the school safety and security plan for students, staff, facility, and property will be developed and updated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.**

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School Safety and Security Plan Development and Compliance

School safety is a top priority at AEPA. It is our responsibility to ensure the development, implementation, and continuous improvement of a comprehensive safety and security plan that safeguards our students, staff, facilities, and property. This plan is structured in full compliance with Arkansas state laws and regulations, as outlined in *Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1301 through § 6-15-1303*, and is guided by rules promulgated by the Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). AEPA will have a designated School Safety Coordinator that will ensure that all laws and regulations for safety are met.

1. Development of the School Safety and Security Plan

Our school safety plan begins with the foundational requirement of a Comprehensive School Safety Assessment, as mandated by *Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1303(a)(1)*. This assessment is conducted at least once every three years and evaluates our school's emergency preparedness, safety procedures, building access control, physical security infrastructure, and school climate. It is completed in close coordination with local law enforcement, emergency management, fire protection services, and includes an assessor who is not regularly assigned to the facility, ensuring an objective evaluation. This assessment will be completed during the first year the school is open and every three years thereafter.

Based on this assessment, we will craft and annually update our Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). This plan includes protocols for:

- **Lockdowns and intruder response**

- **Natural disasters (e.g., tornadoes, floods)**

- **Fire and hazardous materials incidents**

- **Evacuations and reunification**

-

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Communications with families and first responders

-

Continuity of operations following an emergency

In accordance with DESE guidelines, the EOP is reviewed annually and updated as necessary based on changing threats, building modifications, or lessons learned from drills and real incidents.

2. Compliance with Emergency Drill Requirements

We fulfill the drill obligations set forth in _Arkansas School Safety Rules_ by DESE:

-

Fire Drills are conducted monthly, ensuring compliance with fire code and readiness among students and staff.

-

Tornado Drills are held three times annually, with the first occurring by October 15 of each school year, as mandated in safety regulations.

-

Lockdown Drills are conducted at least once per year, simulating intruder or active shooter scenarios to ensure preparedness and effective response.

Documentation of these drills, including dates, participants, and feedback, is maintained in compliance with _DESE reporting protocols_.

3. Collaboration with First Responders and Data Sharing

AEPA will collaborate proactively with law enforcement and emergency responders by submitting updated floor plans, emergency contact rosters, and access instructions annually, before the first day of school and any time modifications to the building occur. This is required under _Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1303(c)(2)_ and ensures that responders have the necessary information for effective, timely intervention in emergencies.

Furthermore, as part of our EOP, we will coordinate tabletop exercises and joint response drills with first responders to improve coordination and response times.

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4. Training and Mental Health Provisions

We provide annual safety training to all staff and faculty, including emergency procedures, de-escalation techniques, mental health awareness, and threat assessment protocols. As per recommendations from the Arkansas School Safety Commission, we integrate Youth Mental Health First Aid training and promote a positive school climate to identify and mitigate behavioral concerns before they escalate into safety threats.

To support behavioral intervention efforts, our school will established a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team comprising administrators, and trained staff. This team will follow the guidance of the Arkansas Center for School Safety to evaluate and respond to potential threats to the school community.

5. Ongoing Compliance, Oversight, and Reporting

Each year, our safety plan and related updates are submitted to the board of directors, fulfilling our legal obligation to demonstrate ongoing compliance and improvement. Additionally, we use feedback from drills, assessments, and stakeholder input to identify gaps and refine our procedures.

We will also participate in trainings and updates hosted by the Arkansas Center for School Safety (arsafeschools.com) and the Arkansas Division of Emergency Management, staying aligned with the latest best practices in K–12 emergency preparedness.

6. Facilities Requirements

We will ensure that appropriate and required safety equipment is on sight and operational during the school day. Security items including but not limited to access controls with badge system, visitor management systems, secure vestibules, cameras, window and building numbering systems, and perimeter fencing will all be included in school facilities.

Through strict adherence to Arkansas law, collaboration with community safety partners, and a proactive, data-informed approach, our school's safety and security plan serves as a robust framework to ensure a safe learning environment for every student and staff member. The combination of structured assessments, thorough planning, responsive drills, and continual training enables our school to be prepared, resilient, and compliant with all applicable regulations.

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Q44. **G.1 Facilities**

a. **Provide a description of the school facility if it has been obtained. If not, describe the process for identifying and securing a facility.**

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Securing a safe, accessible, and educationally conducive facility is a critical component of the successful launch and growth of AEPA. Our approach to facility development is intentional, community-focused. This process is being executed in two distinct phases securing a temporary facility to meet immediate operational needs and planning for the construction of a permanent, purpose-built campus.

Phase 1: Securing a temporary facility

See attached information for a temporary facility.

Phase 2: Planning and Constructing a Permanent Facility

While our temporary site will serve immediate needs, our long-term vision involves designing and constructing a permanent, purpose-built educational facility that reflects our innovative instructional model and community values.

• Site Selection: In parallel with temporary placement, we are working with city planners and local economic development officials to identify and acquire land suitable for long-term development. Ideal locations will be accessible within proximity to our targeted student population, and shopping opportunities the AEPA Mall will come to fruition.
• Design and Funding Strategy: We will engage a licensed architectural firm with experience in K–12 design to ensure the building meets educational specifications and sustainability goals. Our funding strategy includes a combination of public funding, private philanthropy, and low-interest financing options.
• Permitting and Compliance: We will work closely with the Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Health, and DPSAFT to ensure full regulatory compliance. Environmental impact assessments, traffic flow studies, and community engagement forums will also be conducted.
• Construction Timeline: Once design and funding are in place, we will work toward a construction start date aligned with projected enrollment growth, aiming for a seamless transition from the temporary facility to our new campus within 3-5 years of opening.

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Applicant Evidence :

[PDF]

Proposed Temporar...

Uploaded on **8/6/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q45. G.2 Facilities Briefly describe the contingency plan should you not be able to acquire the desired facility.

In the event that we are unable to secure our desired temporary facility, we have established a contingency plan to ensure uninterrupted school operations. This includes:

- Utilizing Modular Classrooms: We are prepared to lease state-approved, ADA-compliant modular classroom units that can be quickly installed on an alternative site approved by local authorities.

- Partnering with Community Organizations: We are working to identified local community centers, churches, and higher education institutions willing to offer shared space arrangements on a temporary basis.

- Flexible Phased Opening: If necessary, we will implement a phased grade-level rollout to reduce space needs while maintaining quality instruction and student support.

Each option will meet all health, safety, and accessibility requirements set by the Arkansas Department of Education and local authorities. This contingency plan while not ideal ensures we remain operational and aligned with our mission regardless of initial facility constraints

Q46. H.1 Additional Operations Describe the school's technology plan for meeting the academic and operational needs of classrooms, labs, library/media standards, district website, and other relevant areas of the school.

See attached

Applicant Evidence :

[PDF] AEPA's Technology P...
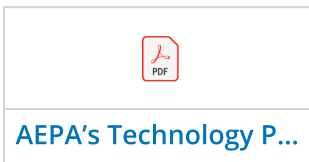
Uploaded on **5/21/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q47. **H.2 Additional Operations Describe the school's school health and nursing services plan.**

Please see attached response.

Applicant Evidence :

[PDF] Nursing_Health Serv...

Uploaded on **5/22/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q48. **H.3 Additional Operations Describe the school counseling services that the school will provide to enrolled students, including how the school will staff these services in a way that meets the academic, career, and other needs of all students.**

Comprehensive Counseling Program Overview

AEPA's counseling program will be proactive, equitable, and integrated into the fabric of the school's academic and enrichment model. It is aligned with the ASCA National Model and the Arkansas Comprehensive School Counseling Program Framework. The program will include the following components:

Academic Counseling

- Individual and small-group academic planning, goal setting, and monitoring of student progress

- Study skills instruction, executive functioning support, and time management strategies

- Advocacy for student access to accelerated courses, project-based learning, and credit recovery when needed

Career Counseling

- K–12 career awareness activities, including interest inventories and career exploration modules

- Middle and high school students will engage in pathway planning through CTE programs and student-led businesses at the AEPA Mall

- Career fairs, job shadowing, and internship coordination

- Support for postsecondary transition planning, including college application assistance, financial aid workshops, and resume/interview preparation

Social-Emotional and Mental Health Support

-

Schoolwide SEL integration, reinforced by counselors through classroom lessons on emotional regulation, decision-making, conflict resolution, and relationship-building

- **Short-term individual counseling and small group counseling on topics such as grief, anxiety, identity development, or peer issues**

- **Crisis response services and referrals to on-site or community mental health professionals**

- **Partnership with the school's wellness center to coordinate therapeutic services and case management for students requiring long-term support**

Staffing Plan

To ensure that counseling services are accessible and effective for all students, AEPA will staff its program with certified professionals and maintain ratios that comply with or exceed state recommendations:

- **One full-time, licensed school counselor per 450 students as required by DESE.**

- **Additional counseling interns or paraprofessional support staff may be assigned to support group facilitation and student check-ins**

- **Partnerships with local agencies will expand capacity for clinical counseling, family therapy, and specialized mental health services when needed**

Counselors will also serve as members of the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) team, providing insight into behavioral data, attendance concerns, and social-emotional interventions.

Equity and Accessibility

AEPA ensures all students—including those with disabilities, English learners, gifted students, and those at risk of academic failure—have equitable access to school counseling services. This includes:

-

Translation/interpretation services for family conferences and counseling communications

- **Inclusive practices that recognize cultural, linguistic, and neurodiverse needs**

- **Coordination with special education and ELD staff to ensure services complement individualized education programs (IEPs) or 504 plans**

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The effectiveness of the counseling program will be evaluated annually through:

- **Analysis of student academic, behavioral, and attendance data**

- **Student and family surveys on counseling services and school climate**

- **Progress monitoring of individual counseling goals and postsecondary outcomes**

- **Professional development reflection and annual goal-setting for counseling staff**

Q49. **I.1 Recruitment and Marketing**

Describe the Year 0 plan to recruit students. Include strategies, activities, events, responsible parties, and a timeline
a. Describe the key elements of the school's marketing plan aimed at recruiting and retaining students in subsequent years.

Student Recruitment and Marketing Plan
Year 0 (Pre-Opening) Student Recruitment Plan

In Year 0, AEPA will implement a strategic and community-driven student recruitment campaign to build awareness, generate interest, and enroll a diverse and representative student body. The school will use a multi-channel approach targeting families across the local area, with special attention to underserved and underrepresented populations.

Recruitment Goals:

- Build community awareness of AEPA's mission, vision, and unique offerings

- Enroll a full, balanced cohort of students in each targeted grade level

- Ensure that recruitment efforts reach families from a range of socioeconomic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds

Timeline, Activities, and Responsibilities

Timeframe	Activity/Event	Responsible Party
August–October	Develop branding, print/digital materials, website, and social media platforms	Founding team, communications consultant
October–November	Launch community listening sessions and interest surveys	Founding team, board members
December	Host informational webinars and virtual parent nights	Founding director, parent engagement lead
January	Begin open enrollment window; host enrollment kickoff event	Founding director, student recruitment lead
February–April	Hold school tours, pop-up info tables at libraries, churches, parks	Community ambassadors, teachers, support staff

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March	Attend school fairs, host Family Experience Day at school site	Leadership team, prospective staff
April–May	Follow-up calls, mailers, and home visits to interested families	Recruitment team and community partners
June–July	Finalize enrollments; host Summer Welcome Events for new students/families	Operations and student support team

AEPA will track interest, enrollment, and demographic data in real-time to assess recruitment efforts and adjust strategies to meet enrollment targets and diversity goals.

Long-Term Marketing and Student Retention Plan

AEPA's long-term marketing strategy is designed to retain enrolled families and sustain healthy enrollment growth year over year. The strategy centers on relationship-building, visibility in the community, and consistent communication of AEPA's unique value proposition.

Key Elements of the Long-Term Plan

1. Strong Brand Identity and Community Presence

- **Maintain a professional, engaging website and active social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)**

- **Publish quarterly newsletters featuring student projects, teacher highlights, and community partnerships**

- **Participate in local events, fairs, parades, and community markets to build long-term visibility**

2. Annual Recruitment Events and Activities

-

Host "AEPA Preview Nights" and student exhibitions showcasing project-based learning outcomes

- **Facilitate open houses and learning showcases at the end of each trimester**

- **Collaborate with local daycare centers, middle schools, and homeschool networks to target specific grade-level recruitment needs**

3. Parent and Student Ambassadors

- **Develop a "Parent Champions" program to support peer-to-peer recruitment**

- **Feature current students and alumni in outreach materials and social media spotlights**

- **Provide training and incentives for ambassadors to lead tours and share their AEPA story**

4. Retention Through Experience

- **Maintain strong advisory systems and personalized student support**

- **Offer consistent communication and feedback to families through conferences, portals, and surveys**

- **Provide meaningful extracurriculars, enrichment, and student-led experiences (such as AEPA Mall roles) that deepen school connection**

5. Bilingual and Inclusive Outreach

- **Translate all materials and communications into key community languages (e.g., Spanish, Marshallese)**

- **Ensure representation of diverse students and families in marketing visuals and storytelling**

- **Partner with cultural organizations and community centers to reach multilingual and newcomer families**

6. Data-Informed Refinement

- **Conduct annual marketing performance reviews based on enrollment trends, retention rates, and family satisfaction surveys**

- **Adjust messaging, channels, and outreach focus to ensure alignment with community needs and expectations**

AEPA's Year 0 recruitment strategy and ongoing marketing plan are rooted in transparency, inclusivity, and authentic relationship-building. Through targeted outreach, family-centered communication, and high-quality programming that speaks for itself, AEPA will build a thriving and sustainable learning community.

Q50. **I.2 Recruitment and Marketing In accordance with Arkansas law 6-23-306, the school must prohibit discrimination in its admission policy based on gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility. If the school has more applicants than available seats, then it shall conduct a random, anonymous lottery to fill the seats. Describe how the school's enrollment lottery process will comply with these requirements.**
a. **Code Ann 6-23- 306(14)(B)(ii)(a) and (b) allows for certain enrollment preferences. Will the charter school utilize any of the permitted enrollment preferences? If so, please briefly describe the school's policy.**

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Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is fully committed to ensuring a fair and equitable admissions process in accordance with Arkansas Code Annotated §6-23-306. The school's enrollment policy explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility.

If AEPA receives more applications than available seats, the school will conduct a random, anonymous lottery to determine enrollment. The lottery process will be transparent and accessible to all applicants. Families will be informed of the lottery procedures in advance, and the results will be documented to ensure fairness and compliance. AEPA will maintain records of the lottery process to provide accountability and transparency.

Regarding enrollment preferences, AEPA will utilize permitted preferences as allowed under Arkansas law. Specifically, the school may prioritize siblings of currently enrolled students and children of staff members, consistent with Code Ann. 6-23-306(14)(B)(ii)(a) and (b). These preferences are designed to support family engagement and operational stability while maintaining equity in admissions.

AEPA's enrollment and lottery policies will be clearly communicated in application materials, on the school's website, and through community outreach to ensure all prospective families understand the process and have equal opportunity to apply.

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7. Financial Plan and Fiscal Sustainability

Q51.

A.1 Indicate the number of students the charter school intends to serve for each year of the initial charter term. What data and factors were used to determine the demand for the school and the projected enrollment provided?

For each school year in the initial charter term please provide the following

a. **School Year (e.g. Year One, Year Two, etc.)**
b. **Grade Levels offered per school year**
c. **Total projected Student Enrollment for all grades per school year (min, anticipated, max)**
d. **Faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment per school year**
e. **Non-faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment per school year**

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School Year	Grade Levels offered per school year	Total Projected Student Enrollment for all grades per school year (min, anticipated, max)	Faculty Projections based on anticipated enrollment	Non-faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment per school year
Year 1 (26-27)	K-8	500	50	10
Year 2 (27-28)	PreK-9	600	60	15
Year 3 (28-29)	Prek-10	700	70	20
Year 4 (29-30)	PreK-11	800	80	25
Year 5 (30-31)	PreK-12	1000	90	30

Q52. **A.2 Provide a startup budget and a three-year budget forecast beginning July 1 of year 1, necessary to sustain the successful startup of the school. Include revenue projections, expenses, and anticipated fund balances. Upload a copy of the startup and three-year projected budgets.**
a. **Include in your budget analysis the line-item revenue and expenditure assumptions on which the operating and start-up budgets are based. This description should include the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and expenses. Provide sufficient information to guide a full understanding of how budgetary figures were determined.**
b. **Describe any anticipated state and federal funding sources the school expects to receive in addition to per-pupil foundation funding. In addition to these alternative income sources, clearly explain the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (grants, donations, fundraising).**

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See attached budget sheet. Multi-enrollment projections are included to best describe possible scenarios.

☑ Upload Required   File Type: **pdf, image, excel, word, text**   Max File Size: **30**

Total Files Count: **10**

Applicant Evidence :

[PDF]

Budget narrative 5.p...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q53.

A.3 If the budget is contingent upon funding sources beyond those typically provided by the state and federal government, provide evidence of such funding.

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While the Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will primarily operate within the funding structures provided by state and federal allocations, we recognize the importance of pursuing additional funding to support innovation, expand opportunities, and strengthen long-term sustainability. As such, our proposed budget includes line items that reflect a proactive approach to securing supplemental funding through competitive grants and philanthropic partnerships.

To date, we have identified and begun outreach to several potential funding sources aligned with our mission, including private foundations, local business partnerships, and regional education initiatives. These include (but are not limited to) career and technical education (CTE) grants, mental health and wellness funding streams, and STEM innovation grants. In addition, we are engaging in ongoing conversations with local community leaders, the Harrison Chamber of Commerce, and regional employers to build public-private collaborations that may offer both in-kind and financial support in the future.

That said, we fully acknowledge that grant funding is inherently competitive and not guaranteed. While our leadership team is experienced in identifying, writing, obtaining, and managing grant applications—and will continue to seek out every available opportunity to supplement our operational and programmatic needs—we are committed to ensuring that our core academic and operational budget is viable without reliance on external or speculative funds.

All essential functions of the school—including instruction, staffing, student services, and compliance—will be supported through the foundation of state and federal per-pupil allocations. Any funds received beyond this foundation will be used to enhance programming, such as expanding career readiness initiatives, incorporating additional instructional technology, providing extended learning opportunities, and offering deeper family engagement services.

In short, while we are actively pursuing external funding opportunities to enrich our school's offerings, we are committed to financial stewardship and sustainability. The school's operating plan does not hinge on uncertain funding sources, and no critical elements of the proposed educational program are contingent on receiving grants or private donations.

Our funding philosophy is rooted in both realism and ambition: we will do everything we can to bring additional resources to our students—but never at the expense of responsible, stable planning.

Q54.

A.4 Explain how the school will remain fiscally sustainable and describe the school's emergency plan for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower-than-expected enrollment, or other financial challenges in the early years of operation.

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The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy is committed to operating with financial responsibility, sustainability, and transparency from the outset. We understand that the early years of a charter school's operation can be financially challenging and unpredictable. Therefore, we have established a comprehensive fiscal plan that prioritizes sustainability while preparing for potential financial uncertainties such as cash flow interruptions, budget shortfalls, or lower-than-anticipated enrollment.

Our financial model is built on conservative assumptions regarding enrollment and revenue. All projections are based on realistic enrollment targets, and we have intentionally avoided inflating expected student counts or external funding. We will monitor enrollment closely in the months leading up to the school's opening and continue to track it daily during the critical early enrollment period. In the event of lower-than-expected enrollment, we will adjust staffing and non-essential expenditures accordingly to align expenses with actual revenues.

To further protect against financial instability, we will maintain a reserve fund that serves as an emergency cushion during the start-up phase. This fund will cover at least two months of core operational expenses, including payroll, facility costs, and essential services. Additionally, we will implement a phased spending plan that delays large discretionary purchases until stable revenue is confirmed. This approach allows us to remain flexible and responsive while avoiding unnecessary financial risk.

In the event of cash flow disruptions or delayed funding from state or federal sources, we are prepared to access short-term financing through established relationships with local financial institutions or educational lending programs but only as allowed within state law and would only be used as a last resort and with board oversight and transparency.

We plan to continue proactively pursuing grant funding and private philanthropy to support new initiatives and enhance student services. While these sources are not included in our core operating budget—due to their unpredictability—any funds we secure will be used to strengthen and expand our programming, not sustain it. In addition to pursuing federal opportunities such as the Charter Schools Program (CSP), we are actively exploring grants that support replication, innovation, and facilities growth, with potential backing from organizations like the Walton Family Foundation, NewSchools Venture Fund, and the Charter School Growth Fund.

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We also aim to build strategic partnerships with local and regional businesses to secure in-kind support, sponsorships, and other collaborative funding streams that benefit our students and programs. Furthermore, once fully operational, the AEPA Mall will serve as a unique and sustainable revenue source for the school, generating funds through rental income from storefronts—helping to further support student services, safety measures, and innovation labs.

The governing board, in partnership with our financial management team, will monitor all financial indicators on a monthly basis, reviewing reports on actual versus projected revenue, expenditures, and cash flow. Any deviations from the financial plan will trigger immediate review and corrective action to ensure the school remains on a stable footing.

In summary, through conservative planning, the establishment of emergency reserves, flexible staffing and purchasing strategies, and strong financial oversight, Arkansas Executive Prep Academy is fully prepared to remain fiscally sustainable even in the face of early operational challenges.

Q55. **A.5 Describe how the annual operating budget will be developed and refined each year in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (10). Please include how resource allocation decisions are aligned with organizational improvement priorities, student achievement data, and mission-driven priorities.**

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The annual operating budget for Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will be developed and refined each year through a structured, mission-driven process that complies fully with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (10). This law requires open-enrollment public charter schools to develop a budget that outlines the proposed expenditure of all public funds and demonstrates alignment with the educational objectives of the charter. AEPA will use this mandate as the foundation for a transparent and strategic budgeting process that reflects both legal compliance and a strong commitment to student outcomes.

Each year, the budget will be developed by school leadership in collaboration with the school board and our finance and operations team. The process will begin in early spring with a comprehensive review of projected revenues based on student enrollment, federal funding, and any supplementary grants or partnerships. Budget assumptions will be conservative to account for potential fluctuations in enrollment or state disbursements. Leadership will also review prior-year spending patterns to assess the effectiveness of past allocations and identify opportunities for increased efficiency or investment.

Resource allocation decisions will be closely tied to AEPA's improvement priorities, ongoing analysis of student achievement data, and the core mission to prepare future-ready students. For example, if academic data indicate a need for targeted support in literacy or math, the budget will prioritize resources for evidence-based interventions, instructional coaches, or expanded learning time in those subjects. Similarly, if data show a need for increased family engagement or student mental health supports, funds will be allocated toward services and programming that strengthen the home-school connection and overall well-being.

AEPA's mission—to prepare future executives in a new and innovative way—guides every budgetary decision. This means that investments in career readiness, leadership development, project-based learning, and technology integration will be sustained and grown as necessary to align with our Future Fluent and Always Ready frameworks. Additionally, teacher training and support systems will remain a core area of focus, ensuring staff have the tools and structures needed to deliver high-quality instruction.

Stakeholder input, including feedback from staff, families, and community partners, will be considered during the budgeting process. Final budget proposals will be reviewed and approved by the governing board, who will ensure that the plan meets all state requirements and reflects responsible stewardship of public funds.

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Throughout the year, the budget will be monitored regularly through monthly financial reports presented to the board. Adjustments will be made as needed to reflect changes in enrollment, funding, or student needs. This iterative approach ensures that the budget remains a living document—one that evolves in response to both external conditions and the internal goal of improving outcomes for all students.

In summary, AEPA's budgeting process is deeply integrated with its educational mission and strategic goals. It is designed not only to meet statutory requirements, but also to serve as a powerful tool for driving school improvement, supporting innovation, and ensuring that every dollar spent contributes meaningfully to student success.

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8. Waivers

Q58.

Will you be requesting waivers for this school year? If yes, please provide the following information for each waiver. Each waiver request must include a rationale. Failure to provide a rationale will result in your application being marked as incomplete.

Please include the following:

a. Waiver Topic

b. Arkansas Code Annotated

c. Standard for Accreditation

d. ADE Rules

e. Rationale for Waiver

◉ Yes

◯ No

Resources

[PDF] 2024_charter_waiver...

Applicant Evidence :

[PDF] AEPA Harrison Waiv...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

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9. Appendix A ARKANSAS STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Please review the Statement of Assurances (see Appendix A) and acknowledge with your signature that they will be addressed through policies adopted by the charter school or sponsoring entity.

As an authorized representative of the applicant group, I hereby certify that under the penalties of perjury, the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Further, I understand that if awarded a charter, the school and its charter school board will address the assurances listed below through policies adopted by the sponsoring entity and charter school board. In addition, if the application is approved, the charter school board, administration, staff of the charter school, and educational service provider shall comply with all relevant state and federal laws in addition to the assurances listed below.

1. The charter school shall be open to all students on a space-available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policy on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility, except as follows: the charter school may adopt admissions policies that are consistent with state and federal law, regulations, or guidelines applicable to charter schools. The charter may provide for the exclusion of a student who has been expelled from another public school district.

2. If applications exceed the approved enrollment cap, the open-enrollment charter school shall hold an annual random and anonymous public lottery, followed by notifying parents of the enrollment status of all applicants. The waiting list generated by the lottery is valid until the next time the open-enrollment public charter school is required to conduct a random, anonymous student selection in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (14)(B)(b)(2).

3. The charter school shall comply with all applicable laws concerning the recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, or termination of its employees.

4. The charter school shall operate in accordance with federal laws and rules governing public schools, applicable provisions of the Arkansas Constitution, and state laws and regulations governing public schools not waived by the approved charter.

5. The charter school shall not use the money that it receives from the state for any unlawful sectarian program, obligations, or activity or as collateral for debt except as allowed by law.

6. Charter schools may enter public-private partnerships where they enter into a lease-purchase agreement for the acquisition or construction of a school building or related facilities built or acquired by private entities exempt from federal taxes under 26 U.S.C. 142(a)(13) as allowed by Ark. Code Ann. 6-20-402(a)(1)(B).

7. The charter school shall not impose taxes or charge students' tuition or fees that are not allowable by law

8. The charter school shall not be religious in its operations or programmatic offerings in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-401(a)(7) or as otherwise allowed by law.

9. The charter school shall ensure that any of its employees who qualify for membership in the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System or the Arkansas State and Public-School Employee Insurance Program are covered under those systems to the same extent required by law.

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10. Under applicable state laws, the employees and volunteers of the charter school are immune from liability to the same extent as other public school district employees and volunteers.

11. The charter school shall carefully review the potential impact of its application on the efforts of a public school district or public-school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 (a).

12. The charter school shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations regarding the facilities and school property.

13. The applicant confirms the understanding that certain provisions of state law shall not be waived. The charter school is subject to any prohibition, restriction, or requirement imposed by Title 6 of the Arkansas Code and any rule and regulation approved by the State Board of Education under this title relating to (a) Monitoring compliance with Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-101 et seq., as determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Education; (b) Conducting criminal background checks for employees; (c) High school graduation requirements as established by the State Board of Education; (d) Special education programs as provided by this title; (e) Public school accountability under this title; (g) Health and safety codes as established by the State Board of Education and state and local governmental entities, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-401(b).

14. No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by the charter school shall constitute an indebtedness of the state or its political subdivisions. No debts of the charter school shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit, or taxing power of the state or its political subdivisions, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-503. Upon dissolution of the charter school or nonrenewal or revocation of the charter, all net assets of the charter school, including any interest in real property purchased with public funds, shall be deemed the property of the state unless otherwise specified in the charter of the charter school. If the charter school used state or federal funds to purchase or finance personal property, real property, or fixtures for use by the charter school, the authorizer may require that the property be sold. The state has a perfected priority security interest in the net proceeds from the sale or liquidation of the property to the extent of the public funds used in the purchase.

15. The school's curriculum will be aligned with the Arkansas Academic Standards.

16. The school will operate within the statewide assessment system.

17. The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Financial Management System, provided by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, shall be the original and official accounting system of record for the public charter school as required by state law and the rules and regulations of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education for all financial transaction records and reporting (including, but not limited to, payroll processing and wage and tax reporting to the IRS ATRS, DFA, etc., accounts payable, fixed assets, personnel budgeting, and budgeting). APSCN shall be used to record all private, as well as local, state, and federal revenues and expenditures.

18. The charter school shall comply with Ark. Code Ann. §6-24-105-107 concerning contracting with charter school board members, administrators, and employees.

19. The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Student Management System, provided by the Department of Education, shall be the original and official student management system for the public charter school as required by state law and the rules and regulations of the Department of Education for all student management areas (including, but not limited to, systems administration, demographics, attendance, scheduling, report cards, discipline, medical, Cognos reporting, and Statewide Information System reporting).

20. The facility to be used will comply with all applicable accessibility requirements in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and all other state and federal laws and local zoning ordinances.

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21. **Should your charter school application be approved, the charter school board must be incorporated as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Arkansas . Additionally, the charter school board will be expected to obtain Federal 501(c)(3) status. A copy of the charter school board's application for Federal 501(c)(3) status must be included with the application. The charter school board must receive formal tax-exempt status under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 prior to the first day of its operation with students.**

To the best of my knowledge, I certify that the information and data contained in the application are true and correct. The applicant will comply with the Arkansas Statement of Assurances for Charter Schools and all State and Federal laws guiding Charter Schools in Arkansas unless granted a waiver. The charter school board and any educational service providers affirm and acknowledge the information and affirmations presented in this application.

Q59.
Type your name.

Dr. Christie Toland

Q60.
Type your job title.

Co-Founder/President, Freedom Education Services, Inc.

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10. Addendum – Experienced Operator or Charter Management Organization

Q60.

Are you an experienced Operator and/or do you plan to use a CMO?

◉ Yes

○ No

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Applicant Comments :

Operator Educational Experience and CMO Affiliation

The founding leadership team, Dr. Christie Toland and Dr. Beth Shumate, are highly experienced, mission-driven educators with decades of successful leadership in diverse educational settings. Collectively, they bring over 50 years of public education experience spanning large urban districts, medium-sized suburban systems, and small rural communities.

Dr. Toland's Experience

Dr. Toland's 25-year career in public education includes service as a K–12 special education teacher, inclusion teacher, and general education instructor in math, history, social studies, science, and high school English. Her leadership trajectory includes roles as Assistant Principal and Principal in the Searcy School District, Principal in the South Conway County School District and Greenbrier School District, and District-Level Administrator in the North Little Rock School District.
While at North Little Rock, Dr. Toland co-authored the charter proposal and co-founded the North Little Rock Center of Excellence conversion charter school, which remains in successful operation today. She most recently served for eight years as Assistant Superintendent in the Gentry School District, retiring in 2025. Throughout her career, she has demonstrated expertise in curriculum, instruction, school culture, and operational leadership.

Dr. Shumate's Experience

Dr. Shumate has a similarly distinguished career, with a background that includes special education, technology and federal programs, curriculum and instruction, building leadership, district administration, and the superintendency in both rural and urban districts. Her deep expertise in budgeting, district finance, and strategic resource allocation is matched by a strong reputation for fostering innovation, equity, and academic excellence.

Charter-Specific Leadership Experience

Both leaders have direct experience with the charter school approval process, start-up operations, and long-term sustainability planning. Their success in launching the North Little Rock Center of Excellence from concept to operation provides them with first-hand knowledge of the legal, financial, and instructional considerations necessary to open and maintain a high-quality charter school.

Over the past decade, Drs. Toland and Shumate have researched, toured, and studied innovative school models nationwide. They have engaged in professional training, site visits, and expert consultations to develop the Freedom Education Model, an instructional framework that blends mastery learning, project-based learning, multi-age classrooms, and experiential education to meet the needs of diverse learners.

CMO Affiliation

The school will be managed by the Freedom Education Services Charter Management division. There will be no fees charged to the school for management until the school reaches an enrollment of 550 students. At that time, the school will be charged a 10% management fee for charter management services which will include but is not limited to district level operations, finance, and maintenance. Until such time as the AEPA has an enrollment of less than 550 students, the governing board and leadership team will directly oversee daily operations, financial management, and instructional implementation, ensuring decisions remain responsive to the local community while drawing on proven best practices from national education research.

Q61.

Describe the enrollment practices, processes, and policies of the proposed school. If these differ from the operators/Charter Management Organization (CMO)'s other existing school(s), please describe how and why they differ.

Drs. Toland and Shumate and are highly trained and experienced school leaders and teachers. Dr. Toland has served in public education for the past 25 years. She taught K-12 special education, inclusion, math, history, social studies, science, and 9th-12th grade general education English in large urban, medium sized suburban, and small rural schools prior to becoming an assistant principal and principal in Searcy School District. She then served as a principal in the South Conway County School District and Greenbrier School District before accepting a promotion to a district level position in the North Little Rock School District. While at North Little Rock, she and Dr. Shumate wrote and opened the North Little Rock Center of Excellence conversion charter. This school is still in operation today. Dr. Toland retired from public education in 2025 after serving the community of Gentry for eight years as Assistant Superintendent.

Dr. Shumate brings similar experiences to the table with a background in special education, technology, high school principal, district testing coordinator, federal programs, curriculum and instruction, building leadership, district leadership, and the superintendency in small rural and large urban school districts as well. She brings strong expertise in budgeting and district finance with a strong reputation for innovation and excellence.

Both leaders have deep knowledge and experience of how to run a school district. What enhances their readiness for leading and opening another charter school is their experiences with the approval process and opening a charter school from scratch already. Not only have they done this successfully before, but they have also spent the last ten years researching, visiting, training, touring, and seeking out experts in education innovation to develop the Freedom Education Model.

Applicant Evidence :

Enrollment Practices...

Uploaded on **8/8/2025**
by **Beth Shumate**

Q62.

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Explain how the community for the proposed school is similar and/or different from the community that schools in the Operator/CMO's portfolio currently serve.

Harrison will be the first community in which Freedom Education Services manages a school.

Q63.

Provide a portfolio summary of existing schools operated by the Operator/CMO. List all charter schools that have operated within the last five years. Please indicate if any of those schools have had their charter revoked, not renewed, or the CMO agreement was non-renewed or terminated by the Board.

N/A

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy will be the first school to be managed by this CMO.

Q64.**For each school listed, provide name, location, years opened, grades served. In addition, please provide five years of data (or a maximum number of years of data available, if less than five) for the following categories:**

a. **Total enrollment.**

b. **Statewide designations and letter grades, if applicable.**

c. **Student Achievement**

d. **Student Growth**

e. **Graduation rate, if applicable.**

f. **Demographic and socioeconomic breakdown.**

i. **% African American, Asian, Hispanic, White, Other race/ethnicity**

ii. **% Free and Reduced lunch**

iii. **% Special Education**

iv. **% English Language Learners/Emergent Bilingual**

v. **% Gifted and Talented**

N/A

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison Campus is the first school to be managed by this CMO.

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Q65.Select one of the network's lower-performing schools and describe its performance. What specific strategies have been implemented to improve performance?

N/A

The AEPA Harrison campus is the first school managed by this CMO.

Q66.
Describe the scope of specific resources, services, or set of services that the Operator/CMO will provide for the school to support operation or management.

Once the AEPA Harrison campus reaches an enrollment of 550 students, the CMO will provide the following services.

Scope of Resources and Services Provided by the CMO

1. Academic Program Design and Oversight

- Develop and maintain the Freedom Education Model instructional framework, including mastery learning, multi-age classrooms, project-based learning, and experiential learning.

- Selection and implementation of high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and instructional materials.

2. Staffing and Human Resources

- Lead recruitment, hiring, and onboarding for all instructional and operational staff, including hard-to-staff roles such as special education, gifted and talented, and literacy interventionists.

- Manage personnel policies, job descriptions, evaluation systems, and professional growth plans.

- Oversee compliance with state and federal HR regulations, including licensure requirements.

3. Special Populations and Student Support

- Ensure full compliance with IDEA, Section 504, ADA, and state regulations for special education services.

- Oversee services for multilingual learners, including identification, language instruction, and progress monitoring.

- Coordinate gifted education programming and enrichment opportunities.

- Lead the development and implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for academic and behavioral needs.

4. Financial and Business Management

- Develop and oversee the annual budget and long-term financial projections.

- Manage all accounting, purchasing, payroll, and financial reporting systems.

- Ensure compliance with state and federal funding requirements, including Title funds and state categorical aid.

- Prepare and present monthly financial reports to the governing board.

5. Facilities and Operations

- Identify, lease, or purchase and manage school facilities.

- Oversee compliance with safety, health, and accessibility standards.

- Coordinate maintenance, custodial services, and capital improvement projects.

- Develop and implement a school safety and crisis management plan.

6. Compliance and Reporting

- Ensure compliance with all applicable Arkansas Department of Education rules, charter contract provisions, and state/federal laws.

- Prepare and submit all required accountability reports, including academic performance, financial audits, and student demographic data.

- Maintain accurate student records in compliance with FERPA.

7. Governance Support

- Provide the governing board with timely, accurate data to inform decision-making.

- Support board development, including annual training and strategic planning sessions.

- Prepare board meeting agendas, reports, and policy recommendations.

8. Family and Community Engagement

- Develop and implement a comprehensive parent and community engagement plan.

- Coordinate enrollment events, information sessions, and public outreach campaigns.

- Facilitate communication through newsletters, social media, and parent conferences.

- Build partnerships with local businesses, higher education institutions, and community organizations.

9. Technology and Data Systems

- Procure and manage student information systems (SIS), learning management systems (LMS), and assessment platforms.

- Ensure cybersecurity and data privacy compliance.

- **Provide staff training in technology integration and instructional software.**

10. Continuous Improvement and Innovation

- **Monitor implementation of the Freedom Education Model through classroom walkthroughs, teacher feedback, and student data.**

- **Conduct annual program evaluations and adjust based on outcomes.**

- **Research and incorporate innovative instructional and operational practices.**

In short, the CMO will provide end-to-end operational management and instructional support, ensuring that every aspect of school management, from compliance and finance to instructional excellence, is executed with fidelity, transparency, and responsiveness to the local community. This approach eliminates ensures consistency and maintenance of the professional infrastructure, accountability systems, and innovation needed for long-term success.

Q67.Please describe and explain any monetary obligations designated for services or fees associated with partnering with the Operator/CMO (if applicable).

There are no fees or monetary obligations designated for services of the CMO until the school reaches a target enrollment of 550 students. At that time, a 10% management fee will be applied.

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11. Addendum – Virtual or Blended Operator

Q68.

Will you be a virtual or blended operator?

○ Yes

◉ No

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Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison
Executive Summary

In 2023, less than 40% of students in grades 3-10 in the state of Arkansas could read on grade level. Only 17% of African American and 25% of economically disadvantaged students were reading on grade level. 59% of all students in the state of Arkansas are economically disadvantaged. Freedom Education Services, Inc. aims to not only change the lives of these marginalized students but to also change the trajectories of entire families with emphasis on those suffering from generational poverty.

Students who live in Harrison and the surrounding area (Boone, Newton, Caroll, and Madison counties) have no access to choice in their schooling other than secular private or home schools. While there are numerous choices for public schools in this area, there is little to no difference in the programming and operations of these schools, providing families who cannot afford private or homeschooling with no educational choice or freedom. The lack of freedom and choice especially places the many families who live in extremely rural areas or are economically disadvantaged behind. Harrison serves as a hub for work, commerce, and entertainment for the area. This is why it is imperative that we open the Arkansas Executive Prep Academy in Harrison so that all families in the area will have access to innovative school choices and services that fit their needs.

The vision for Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is for all graduates from AEPA to always be ready with a unique set of skills that make them the candidate of choice. They possess a firm knowledge and understanding of leadership skills and responsibilities that span from entry level to executive level positions. They are prepared to enter the workforce and lead in any position they are entrusted. They understand that hard work and ethical practices are essential to high performance and advancement.

The founders are experienced leaders in the public and charter school arena who have a proven track record of assisting students and families in reaching their greatest potential. Due to the strength of the co-founders students will receive laser focused expert leadership training specific to their chosen career interest in order that they will be ready for any executive leadership position. In addition to leadership training the instructional model used will be that of mastery learning where time is not a constraint to a students ability to advance their goals. With a marriott of teachers who play to students strengths working together in one classroom students are propelled into the best learning environment possible in order for every child to be successful.

The AEPA dares to dream of new and innovative ways to transform the teaching and learning of today's students. The instructional model directly supports the expanded definition of student success through the five tenets of its programming: mental and physical well being, ivy league academics, Parents at the Center, Always Ready/Future Fluent program, and the Next Education Workforce Model. We intend to go above and beyond this definition by expanding our focus on teachers, staff, families, and our community as part of the education process.

2019 Top 10% Growth in Arkansas High Schools
2018 & 2019 Beating the Odds Awards - English Language Arts
95% or greater graduation rate for all three year
Magazine High school 55% growth in ACT Aspire Scores since 2019
Magazine Elementary 10.2% growth in ACT Aspire Scores since 2018
Top 8% of 11th grade ACT scores in the state

Vision: Graduates from Arkansas Executive Prep Academy are always ready with a unique set of skills that make them the candidate of choice.They possess a firm knowledge and understanding of leadership skills and responsibilities that span from entry level to executive level positions. They are prepared to enter the workforce and lead in any position they are entrusted. They understand that hard work and ethical practices are essential to high performance and advancement.

Mission:
Arkansas Executive Prep Academy is dedicated to empowering students to reach their full potential as cutting edge executives.

Motto: Unlocking potential and building tomorrow's executives

Core Beliefs:
While well intentioned, public education can no longer meet the needs of all students, families, and staff. We must create and maintain schools that work for ALL students, specifically those who are underserved in the current system.

- The traditional classroom is not working for the majority of students and teachers. Having one teacher in one classroom with 25 students must change.
- We believe that children should not be required to conform to the learning style and needs of schools. Rather, schools must adjust and adapt to the needs of the children they serve.
- Families must play a central and contributing role to their students' education as true partners in the process. Family support and resources are necessary for the success of future generations.
- The most successful learning model is that of mastery learning. Teaching to a test is not allowing our students to gain the knowledge and skills they must have to be successful.
- At AEPA our students can and will dispel any sense of entitlement characteristics that is prevalent in their generation. Students will set goals, work hard, and earn everything in an inclusive environment that is tailored for ALL to succeed.
- We will prepare students to be "Always Ready" for their career and in life.
- The most successful future executives must be "Future Fluent" and have been exposed to multiple countries and cultures.
- While some leaders are born, all leaders are trained. Leadership training is necessary for all to grow our future.
- Diversity makes us stronger in all ways. AEPA will push the genius in every child and staff member in order to create, support, celebrate, and nurture opportunities for ALL staff, students, and families we have the privilege to serve.
- Leaders must have the knowledge and skills necessary to assist all types of individuals including those who may suffer from a mental health crisis.
- Today's traditional school setting is not meeting the needs of the workforce. The workforce wants schools to prepare students with skills and knowledge that are relevant to today's job market. Critical thinking, Problem-Solving, Communication Skills and Resilience are top skills being sought by employers and not being adequately addressed in schools

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison
Executive Summary

- Schools needs to be structured to provide the following:
    a. Continual upskilling with an emphasis on the need for students to continue to learn and develop their skills.
    b. Real-world experiences that incorporate real-world problems into lessons and providing opportunities for students to gain practical experience
    c. Developing soft skills such as emotional intelligence, and work ethic
    d. Creating opportunities for students to be mentored by professionals other than just educators

Objectives:
1. Develop and implement "Parents at the Center" program to provide support, training, and partnership with families which includes homeschooling families.
2. Implement the Next Education Workforce Model (NEWF) to create classroom environments that are inclusive, supportive, and rigorous for students and staff.
3. Go beyond "Character Education and Soft Skills" to jointly implement "Power Skills for Life".
4. Create learning spaces that inspire imagination, collaboration, and creativity while promoting hard work, conceptualization, deep learning, and real world experiences.
5. Employ, inspire, and empower the most skilled and qualified administrators, teachers and support staff and provide avenues for growth, training, and promotion within AEPA and Freedom Education Services, Inc.
6. Develop and Implement a mastery learning model for all subject areas including experiential learning targets, Power Skills for Life standards, embedded career and technical skills, pedagogy, and evaluations of mastery (formative and summative). This model will include unit plans, individual lesson plans, essential standards, essential vocabulary, acceleration plans, and additional support plans.
7. Students will leave AEPA in a state of "Always Ready". This is the level of preparation that is required for a student to excel and be successful in all avenues of life including academic, career, family, community, and philanthropic endeavors. We aim to prepare strong men and women of all races, ethnicities, genders, religions, creeds, and orientations who will be looked to for leadership and strength throughout their lives.
8. Prioritize the hiring of diverse populations with diverse and real world experiences of teachers, staff, and administration.
9. Students will obtain written and spoken command of multiple languages as well as a thorough understanding of the country(s) and cultural aspects of the languages they speak.
10. Students will develop critical leadership skills that mimic the traits of great leaders of our past in order to propel AEPA students into their future.
11. Students will have knowledge of mental health issues, proper techniques, and additional resources in order to assist those they work with, for, and potentially supervise.

The AEPA will implement a new model of education, the Freedom Education Model, that combines select principals from currently existing models combined with a laser focus on staff learning and working conditions and family/community health and wellbeing. The Freedom Education Model is built on the following principles: mastery learning combined with the opportunity for students to participate in multi-year classrooms, experiential learning embedded as the culmination of a unit of instruction, project based learning units developed for the purpose of teaching all core content subjects both explicitly and implicitly in diverse settings, the Next Education Workforce Model to inject community ownership and participation in our school as well as provide a working environment that supports teacher teaming, student collaboration, and family empowerment; partnership with the mental and physical health community to provide free services on-site for students, staff, and community instructors; classes, support, and seminars for families that will allow them to grow as their child grows, early opportunities to learn multiple languages and power skills for life to ensure our graduates are Always Ready and Future Fluent, provide on-site work experiences in school businesses located within the high school and operated by the school and students from the ground up, and explicit instruction and direction for students in all forms of etiquette (formal written and verbal communication, personal interaction, dress, interview, introductions, meeting new people, addressing an audience, attending formal events, casual and formal meals, and all situations a student may encounter when entering the world of adulthood).

AEPA will support an expanded definition of student success with a focus on the following **five core elements** of the student experience.

1. Full implementation of Next Education Workforce Model school wide

2. Ivy league academics

3. Mental and physical health center on-site

4. Parents at the Center program

5. Future Fluent/Always Ready students

Next Education Workforce Model: The implementation of NEWF consists of a team of practitioners and support services per student year (grade) instead of the one teacher to twenty students model. Teams include certified teachers, teacher interns, student tutors, and community instructors. Students will receive their core academic instruction with the team of practitioners. In the event that a student requires special academic services or support, this is provided within the learning space rather than in a pull out setting. Teachers will move with the students as their needs change and they grow. With this model, we will implement innovative scheduling opportunities for staff and students. Staff schedules will be staggered to allow for all staff to participate in a four day week while students still have access to education and services for five days per week. Extended day student and family services will also be available four days per week within this model.

Ivy League Academics: Multidisciplinary units of instruction will be collaboratively developed by instructional teams that will include the Arkansas state standards, proficiency scales for each skill, key vocabulary, social/emotional learning connections, power skills for life, experiential learning activities, formative and summative assessment, advancement strategies, and remediation strategies. Instructional materials will be included in all instructional units that are at a minimum approved as high quality instructional materials by the state of Arkansas. We aim to go above and beyond what is minimally required to produce healthy, socially responsible, and productive leaders.

Mental and Physical Wellbeing Support: Power skills for life will be embedded into all units of daily instruction. The power skills include tools that will support students as they grow into young adults. AEPA graduates will possess the tools needed to co-exist, support, and work with those who are different from themselves. The AEPA will also implement a wellness center in partnership with the Arkansas Departments of Education and Health. AEPA students, staff, families, and community educators will be able to access free mental and physical health services through the center. The non-profit sponsor, Freedom Education Services, Inc., will hold

the contract for the center and will oversee implementation at the school to ensure continuity and consistency in implementation.

Parents/Families at the Center Program: Freedom Education Services, Inc. will develop, implement, and oversee this program within the AEPA. Parents at the Center will be prescriptive based on parent and student needs. Quarterly, parents will be asked what skills in which they need assistance. At each grade level specific age appropriate skills will be identified and taught. These skills will target the chronic societal entitlement issues that so many of our youth and families face today. Working together we will teach students that to be successful one must start from the bottom.

Future Fluent/Always Ready Students: CTE courses, direct work experiences within the AEPA Mall, K-12 foreign language instruction, K-12 etiquette classes, personal and intrapersonal communication classes, self selected extracurricular training activities

The AEPA is innovative in our context for the following:

1. Holistic wrap-around approach for not only student well being but also for families, staff, and community well being. This approach allows us to promote a physically, socially and intellectually safe learning environment. This includes digital citizenship, literacy, and a social media and cell phone free environment.

2. Parents/Families at the Center addresses families as the first teachers and the most important factor in a child's education success and provides direct help.

3. AEPA is built on the foundation of the Next Education Workforce Model.

4. AEPA provides flexible scheduling for teachers who will work a four day week while school is open five days/week for students.

5. AEPA aims to have self-sustaining programs within ten years through the AEPA Mall. Partnerships, pathways, and parents are key foundations of the AEPA Mall. .

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy
2026-2027

Calendar Key

Mandated PD Days	
Holidays/Breaks	
First of School	
Parent Teacher Conferences/Open House	
End of Quarter	

AUGUST '26

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER '26

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27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER '26

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NOVEMBER '26

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29	30					

DECEMBER '26

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JANUARY '27

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY '27

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28						

MARCH '27

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28	29	30	31			

APRIL '27

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MAY '276

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

1st 9 Weeks
August 6: Open House (4:00-7:00)
August 12: First Day of School
September 7: Labor Day/No School
September 30: Parent/Teacher Conferences (2:15-6:45)
October 9: End of 1st Quarter (42)

2nd 9 Weeks
October Oct. 20-219-23: Fall Break
November 23-27: Thanksgiving Break
December 18: End of 2nd Quarter (40)
December 21-January 1: Christmas Break

3rd 9 Weeks
January 18: MLK Day/No School
February 15: President's Day/No School
March 3: Parent/Teacher Conference (2:15-6:45)
March 12: End of 3rd Quarter (48)

4th 9 Weeks
March 23-27: Spring Break
May 26: End of 4th Quarter/Last Day of School (48)

Make-up Snow Days will be taken out of excess hours
Additional hours not used for snow days may be taken at the end of the school year.
Required: 1,068 Student Interaction Hours

ARKANSAS EXECUTIVE PREP ACADEMY

Christie Toland
CO-FOUNDER/CEO

Dr. Beth Shumate
CO-FOUNDER/PRES.

Headmaster

PRINCIPAL

OPERATING

IT

HR/FINANCE

FED PROG/CURR

MASTER TEACHER (MCL)

MASTER TEACHER (MCL)

MASTER TEACHER (MCL)

K-8 LITERACY TEACHERS

K-8 SS/SCI TEACHERS

K-8 MATH TEACHERS

INTERN

COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

INTERN

COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

SPECIALTY TEACHERS

K-8 Shedule	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday					
7:00	Wellness Center opens	Wellness Center opens	Wellness Center opens	Wellness Center opens	Wellness Center opens					
7:30	Early Intervention/ Acceleration/ Elective time	Early Intervention/ Acceleration/ Elective time	Early Intervention/ Acceleration/ Elective time	Early Intervention/ Acceleration/ Elective time	Early Intervention/ Acceleration/ Elective time					
8:00	Breakfast in the classroom/Morning Meeting/Instruction Begins	Breakfast in the classroom/Morning Meeting/Instruction Begins	Breakfast in the classroom/Morning Meeting/Instruction Begins	Breakfast in the classroom/ Morning Meeting/Instruction Begins	Breakfast in the classroom/Morning Meeting/Instruction Begins					
8:30	Reading Block	Reading Block	Reading Block	Reading Block	Reading Block					
9:00										
9:30	Math Block	Math Block	Math Block	Math Block	Math Block					
10:00										
10:30	Physical Activity	Physical Activity	Physical Activity	Physical Activity	Physical Activity					
11:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch					
11:30	Academic/Wellness Checkin	Academic/Wellness Checkin	Academic/Wellness Checkin	Academic/Wellness Checkin	Academic/Wellness Checkin					
12:00	Social Studies Block/Parents at the Center Opens	Social Studies Block/Parents at the Center Opens	Social Studies Block/Parents at the Center Opens	Social Studies Block/Parents at the Center Opens	Social Studies Block/Parents at the Center Opens					
12:30	Elective Wheel	Elective Wheel	Elective Wheel	Elective Wheel	Elective Wheel					
1:00										
1:30	Science Block	Science Block	Science Block	Science Block	Science Block					
2:00										
2:30	Wellness Checkin/Check Outs	Wellness Checkin/Check Outs	Wellness Checkin/Check Outs	Wellness Checkin/Check Outs	Wellness Checkin/Check Outs					
3:00										
3:30	Student Selected Activites	Student Selected Activites	Student Selected Activites	Student Selected Activites	Student Selected Activites					
4:00										
4:30										
5:00										

While this schedule looks to be traditional, all core classes are offered at the same time of day to support mastery learning and student acceleration. This is also vital for implementation of the Next Education Workforce Model.

Elective Wheel-Music, Art, Physical Education, Computer Science, Library

Student Selected Activities such as tutoring, acceleration, athletic training, choral or music lessons, art classes, robotics, guided field experiences, science camps, etiquette training, interviews, invention conventions, small business development, and other activities requested according to student interests					

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy

Job Description

Title:
Elementary Principal

Reports to: Superintendent
Terms of Employment: 240 Days
Salary: District Salary Schedule Plus Additional Duties Schedule

Qualifications:
Current Arkansas Teacher Licensure with appropriate endorsements
Master's Degree
Proficient technology skills
Strong leadership and collaboration skills
Strong instructional skills inclusive of oral and written communication

Supervises: All Building Staff

Purpose: Provide teachers and staff with appropriate learning activities and experiences designed to fulfill their potential for intellectual, emotional, physical, and social growth.

Essential Job Functions:
1. Assumes responsibility for the administration of assigned building.
2. Assists in assignment of all staff members, including hiring of new staff.
3. Assumes responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of all employees assigned to the building.
4. Promotes and supervises an effective instructional program which is consistent with the District curriculum.
5. Monitors student achievement and works with the teachers to improve student performance.
6. Provides leadership in curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation along with other administrators.
7. Administers the building budget, requisitions needed supplies and materials in compliance with state regulations, policies and regulations of the school board.
8. Identifies opportunities for professional growth of staff.
9. Chairs the three-year review committees and initial IEP staffing meetings.
10. Establishes and maintains good relationships with parent organizations, community members, civic, service and professional organizations.
11. Works cooperatively with site council and other groups within the building.
12. Communicates with staff, parents, students and the community about school activities and events.
13. Assumes responsibility for the security, safety of students and appearance of the physical plant.
14. Performs other duties as assigned by superintendent.

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy

Physical and Cognitive Requirements

The major physical and **cognitive** requirements listed below are applicable to the **Elementary Principal** job classification within Magazine School District.

Work in this classification is considered **medium physical work** requiring the exertion of up to 75 pounds of force occasionally and 50 pounds of force frequently or 25 pounds constantly to move objects.

Must be able to:
- operate a variety of equipment including computers, copiers, Elmo projectors, and Smart Boards
- operate a motor vehicle
- compare, interpret, analyze and generate data and apply basic principles of statistics, listen and communicate effectively in order to gather, convey or exchange information, including giving instructions, assignments or directions to subordinates or assistants
- respond appropriately to inquiries or complaints
- use tact and courtesy when working and dealing with community
- read, comprehend, and prepare various kinds of communication and information including emails, correspondence, reports, articles, proposals, contracts, policies, charts, spreadsheets, curriculum documents, staff development plans, educational forms and data
- write using prescribed formats and conforming to all rules of punctuation, grammar, diction, and style
- speak before groups of people with poise, voice control and confidence
- apply principles of logical, critical, creative or scientific thinking to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions
- deal with abstract and concrete variables
- demonstrate and apply common sense understanding to carry out simple instruction and to make simple decisions
- interpret, infer, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate materials, resources, situations and problems to generate options and solutions
- interpret and carry out oral and/or written instructions
- demonstrate continued professional curiosity and growth
- communicate effectively and efficiently in a variety of settings, using appropriate terminology and by telephone and email
- hear, speak, read, record, and explain information, communication, and procedures
- perform basic math functions to understand and interpret data
- deal fairly with people beyond giving and receiving instructions
- perform under stress, deal with persons acting under stress and displaying emotional distress and adapt when confronted with emergency situations

Evaluation: Performance of this position will be evaluated in accordance with board policy and Arkansas Code pertaining to evaluation of certified personnel.
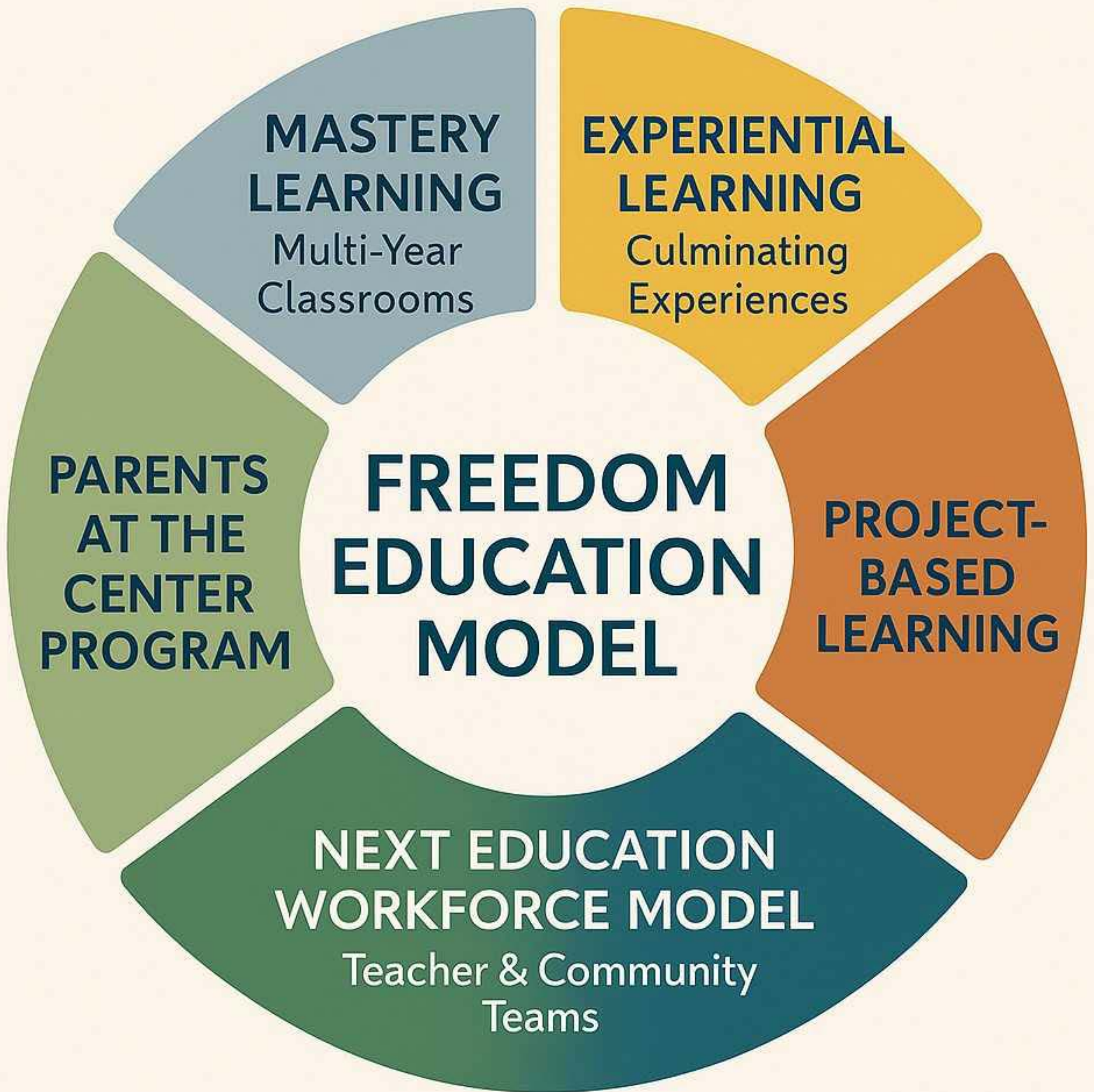
AEPA's Technology Plan

Our school's technology plan is strategically designed to meet both the academic and operational needs of a 21st-century learning environment. It ensures secure, equitable, and effective access to digital tools and infrastructure across all areas of the school—including classrooms, labs, library/media services, communications, and administrative functions.

We have established a comprehensive technology partnership with K12itc, a trusted provider of managed IT services for K–12 institutions. Through this partnership, K12itc will furnish and support the full suite of our school's technology systems, including:

- **Core Infrastructure**: Provisioning and installation of enterprise-grade network switches, Wi-Fi access points, servers, and firewalls to ensure fast, reliable connectivity throughout the facility.
- **Cybersecurity & Compliance**: Deployment of advanced cybersecurity protocols, including firewall content filtering, endpoint protection, threat detection, and full FERPA and CIPA compliance to protect student data and school operations.
- **Device & Support Services**: Provisioning of classroom and office devices, along with full-service IT support—including remote helpdesk, on-site tech support, and maintenance of all equipment and systems.

Academic Technology Implementation

- **Classrooms**: Each classroom will be outfitted with teacher devices, student devices (e.g., Chromebooks), and interactive technology (such as smart displays or projectors) to support digital instruction, blended learning, and curriculum delivery.
- **STEM and Innovation Labs**: Designated spaces will include higher-capacity machines and software to support coding, engineering, robotics, multimedia production, and data science instruction.
- **The Hub**: A digitally enabled media center will provide access to online databases, research tools, digital catalogs, and eBooks. Stations will support both collaborative and independent research and media production.

School Website and Communications

Our school website will serve as a central communications and resource hub for families, students, and staff. We will build and maintain a custom, ADA-compliant website that includes:

- Online enrollment and registration
- News and calendar updates
- Family portal access to learning platforms
- Links to all state required information such as academic resources, handbooks, and policies
- Secure staff login area and internal communication tools

The website will be integrated with school-wide communication systems to support timely messaging, emergency alerts, and community engagement.

Operational Technology and Management

- **Student Information System (SIS)**: A secure, state-approved SIS will manage enrollment, attendance, grading, transcripts, and parent communication.
- **Learning Management System (LMS)**: We will implement an LMS to deliver and manage digital coursework, assessments, and instructional resources.
- **Device Management & Data Security**: K12itc will use centralized device management tools to ensure all equipment remains secure, up-to-date, and compliant with state and federal regulations. Regular backups and redundancy systems will protect against data loss.

Staff Training and Support

K12itc will provide ongoing professional development and on-demand technical support to ensure teachers and staff can confidently integrate technology into instruction and daily operations. This includes:

- Initial onboarding and training sessions
- Just-in-time tech assistance

Additional professional development will be provided to staff through the Arkansas Public Resource Center, local educational cooperative, the state of Arkansas and other contract services.

Conclusion

With K12itc as our dedicated technology partner, we are establishing a reliable, secure, and scalable technology ecosystem that supports our innovative academic model and operational efficiency. Our integrated plan ensures that technology is not only functional, but a transformative tool for learning, communication, and school success.

Attendance Tiered System of Supports

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy

Tier 2-Early Intervention

Students missing 5 days of school for any reason or two consecutive days-Interventions for students on an **individual or group** basis designed to remove barriers to daily attendance at school. Individual student and caregiver contact with an improvement plan developed.

Foundational

Supports and actions that promote a positive school climate and conditions conducive for attendance and engagement
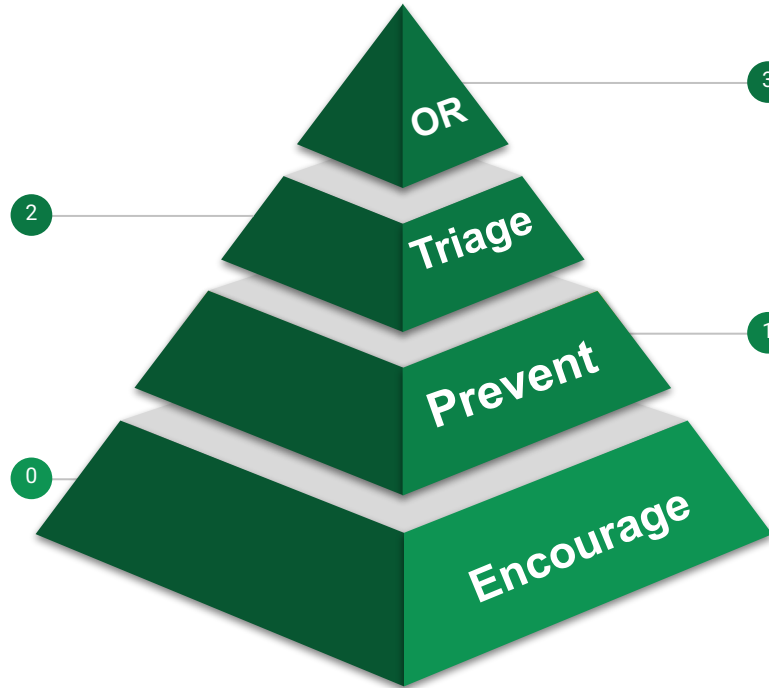
Tier 3-Intensive Intervention

Community wrap around services, intense collaborative support based on **individual** situation and need

Tier 1-Universal Prevention

Supports provided for **all students and families** such as daily automated phone calls, swift reach/Talking Points messages, and other **prevention** strategies.

OR

Triage

Prevent

Encourage

Foundational Tier-Universal (Encourage)

Student Engagement

School Climate and Culture

Collective Efficacy

Collaborative Work

Hiring Practices

Family/Caregiver Engagement

Welcoming to Families-Officers of First Impressions

Communication and Connection of Importance of School Attendance

AEPA Attendance Loose vs. Tight (Foundational)

Tight

1. All students will be engaged in learning that is meaningful to them daily.
2. A collaborative culture of collective efficacy will be established and supported.
3. Students will be recognized for their contributions to a positive learning environment.
4. Families and caregivers will be made welcome in all schools.
5. Everyday will be a day of importance at school for students and staff.

Loose

1. Head Masters and teachers will determine how to engage learners in meaningful instruction daily with student input.
2. Head Masters will take necessary steps to ensure the creation and support this type of culture.
3. Head Masters will determine the types of awards and present to kids each month.
4. Head Masters will establish and implement protocol/expectations for teachers and staff in welcoming others to the building.
5. Head Masters and teachers will determine how to make everyday a day of importance at school.

Tier 1–Universal (Prevent)

Policy

Daily automated phone calls

Teacher relationships/contacts/support

Make up work/opportunities for recovering lost learning

Targeted interventions

Tutoring

Peer support

Special services (ex. homeless support)

AEPA Attendance Loose vs. Tight (Prevention)

Tight

1. Each building will have a dedicated committee for the purpose of addressing attendance.
2. Daily informational phone calls will be made to families/caregivers for absences.
3. Students who are absent will have the opportunity to make up work and recover learning once they return.
4. Intervention and tutoring time will be made available in each building.
5. A system of peer support will be implemented in each building.
6. Teachers will foster relationships with students that support daily attendance.

Loose

1. Head Masters will determine how this is carried out in their school(s). It may be automated.
2. Head Masters will determine how this is accomplished in their school(s).
3. Head Masters will determine how this is accomplished.
4. Head Masters will determine how this is accomplished.
5. Head Masters will determine how this is accomplished.

AEPA Attendance Loose vs. Tight (Triage and Treatment)

1. Interventions to remove barriers to attendance for students will be provided on an individual or group basis determined by data indicated needs.
2. Attendance data will be collected and reviewed weekly.
3. *The Attendance Playbook* by Phyllis Jordan (2023) will be one resource utilized to support intervention selection and implementation.
4. Individual students and families/caregivers will receive a personal contact from the school to determine why absence(s) occurred and how we can help.
5. An attendance improvement plan will be developed to support students and families in removing barriers to attendance.
6. Continual monitoring, follow up and follow through with families.

Head Masters will determine how these are accomplished in their school(s).

Tier 2–Individual or Group (Triage and Treatment)

Students missing 5 days for any reason OR two consecutive days of school.

Assess root cause

Personal contact

Hold meetings

Develop attendance improvement plan that also addresses lost learning

Follow up and follow through

Continual support

Tier 3–Individual (ER/OR–Intensive Wrap Around Support) 10+ Absences

Attendance support plan

Wrap around services for families/caregivers

Involvement of community agencies

Consideration of homebound or other alternative services

Special services (ex. 504)

FINS

Drop (Mexico, moved, etc.)

AEPA Attendance Loose vs. Tight (OR)

Tight

1. An intensive attendance support plan will be developed at the 10th absence.
2. Personal contact with family/caregiver will be made and meeting will be held to address attendance and learning.
3. Community agency involvement, special services, drops, and FINS will be considered for appropriateness at this level.
4. Plans will be individualized and collaboratively developed with families/caregivers/students (age appropriate).

Loose

1. Head Masters will determine how this is carried out in their schools(s).

Attendance Support Plan (OR–Wrap Around Support)

Tight

1. Attendance support plans will be developed for each child who is considered chronic or extreme chronic absent.
2. Plans will be developed collaboratively with appropriate school, community, and caregiver representatives.
3. Plans will contain SMART goals, review dates, and concrete next steps if the plan is AND is not completed.
4. FINS will be a part of the discussion as a potential support.
5. Head Master/designee will facilitate the meeting.

Loose

1. Head Master//designee will determine who should be involved in the development of plans.
2. Head Master//designee will facilitate the collaborative development of plans and content.
3. Head Master/designee will determine when a FINS will be filed and complete the filing.
4. Head Master/designee will monitor progress and determine next steps.

AEPA Academic Performance: Setting, Monitoring, and Revising

The Arkansas Experiential Preparatory Academy (AEPA) uses a **comprehensive, data-driven performance management system** that integrates high expectations with continuous improvement. This system is designed to monitor student learning outcomes, enhance instructional practices, guide professional development, and ensure that curriculum remains aligned to Arkansas state standards and the evolving needs of learners.

1. Setting Academic Performance Expectations

AEPA sets academic expectations through a collaborative and standards-based approach:

- **Alignment to Arkansas Academic Standards**: All instructional units are aligned to clearly defined grade-level expectations as outlined by the Arkansas Department of Education.

- **Proficiency Scales**: Each standard is accompanied by a proficiency scale that delineates student progress from emerging to mastery. These are co-developed by instructional teams and ensure clarity in instructional targets and assessment criteria.

- **Student-Centered Goal Setting**: Students co-create learning goals in advisory settings using data from diagnostic assessments and formative performance. These goals are revisited regularly with staff and families.

2. Monitoring Student Progress

AEPA utilizes a **multi-tiered assessment and data monitoring framework** to ensure timely and accurate insights into student learning:

- **Formative Assessments**: Frequent classroom checks for understanding guide daily instruction and identify immediate student needs.

- **Benchmark Assessments**: Administered quarterly using standards-aligned tools to track growth, proficiency, and readiness. Data are disaggregated by subgroup to monitor equity.

- **Progress Monitoring Tools**: Digital platforms, data dashboards, and student portfolios track real-time growth across core subjects, SEL, and power skills.

- **Tiered Intervention Reviews**: Biweekly team meetings identify students needing Tier II or Tier III support, and revise intervention plans accordingly.

- **Student Data Notebooks**: Students maintain their own academic data, reflections, and goals, reviewed during student-led conferences.

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3. Revising Instruction and Performance Strategies

Academic performance expectations are revised regularly based on school-wide and individual data trends:

- **Quarterly Data Retreats**: Instructional teams, administrators, and coaches analyze benchmark data and adjust pacing guides, instructional strategies, and grouping practices.

- **Curriculum Audits**: Curriculum is reviewed every semester to ensure fidelity to state standards, relevance to student interests, and alignment to performance outcomes.

- **Flexible Grouping**: Instructional teams use ongoing data to regroup students for targeted instruction, remediation, or acceleration during intervention blocks.

Using Data to Improve Instruction

AEPA leverages data to personalize and strengthen instructional delivery:

- Teachers use real-time data to adjust instructional pacing, re-teach key concepts, or extend learning for advanced students.

- Formative data inform lesson design, differentiation strategies, and scaffolding approaches for students with diverse needs.

- Instructional coaches use classroom walkthrough data and student work analysis to support high-impact practices, especially within the project-based and experiential learning frameworks.

Using Data to Inform Professional Development

AEPA's professional development plan is directly informed by student learning data:

- **Weekly PLCs** analyze student performance, identify instructional gaps, and determine focus areas for collaborative improvement.

- **Coaching Cycles** are tailored based on instructional needs revealed through formative data and classroom observations.

- **Monthly PD Days** feature sessions on standards-based instruction, assessment literacy, SEL integration, and culturally responsive teaching—all grounded in current school data.

- **Individual Growth Plans** for educators are developed using student achievement trends and professional self-reflections.

Using Data to Evaluate Curriculum

AEPA regularly evaluates and refines curriculum using a three-part data strategy:

1. **Alignment Audits**: Ensure unit plans and resources match Arkansas Academic Standards and address proficiency expectations.

2. **Student Outcome Analysis**: Units or lessons are adjusted based on student performance on associated formative and summative tasks.

3. **Stakeholder Feedback**: Teachers, students, and families provide feedback on curriculum relevance, accessibility, and rigor through surveys and focus groups.

Defining and Evaluating Success

- **Student-Level**: Success is defined as growth toward or beyond grade-level proficiency, mastery of core content and power skills, and readiness for college, career, and life.

- **School-Level**: Success includes increased academic achievement across subgroups, effective implementation of PBL and experiential learning, high educator effectiveness, and strong engagement from families and students.
  Through a robust and responsive performance management system, AEPA ensures that data is not just collected—but actively used to inform instruction, empower educators, and ensure that every student reaches their full potential.

Budget Overview and Narrative

AEPA is projecting positive fund balances each year with conservative, realistic enrollment and revenue projections. Core expenses are prioritized around staffing, facilities, and student support. K12itc will manage technology infrastructure and cybersecurity needs, included in the technology line.

This budget includes sufficient margin to absorb mild enrollment fluctuations or unexpected cost increases. The school will adjust discretionary expenses, delay hires, or restructure non-essential services if needed

Revenue Forecast

- **Foundation Funding**: $8,037 per student (based on updated 2025 legislative session values)
- **ESA (Educationally Disadvantaged) Funding**: 70% of students eligible at $1,130 per eligible student
- **Federal Title I & II**: Estimated conservatively based on student population growth
- **Grants & Donations**: Includes modest fundraising, not core to budget sustainability
- **Startup Fund**: $150,000 in Year 1 for launch-phase expenses

Year	Enrollment	Foundation Funding	ESA Funding	Title I & II	Grants & Donations	Total Revenue	Fund Balance
2026–27 (Year 1)	200	$1,607,400	$220,600	$85,000	$50,000	$1,963,000	$424,250
2027–28 (Year 2)	250	$2,009,250	$275,750	$90,000	$25,000	$2,400,000	$817,250
2028–29 (Year 3)	300	$2,411,100	$330,900	$95,000	$20,000	$2,857,000	$1,152,000

The revenue projections do not include potential funding sources such as Charter School Facilities Funding, AR LEARNS allocations, English Language Learner (ELL) funding, Professional Development funds, or other supplemental state, federal programs. These exclusions are intentional and reflect a conservative budgeting approach designed to ensure the financial model remains viable even in the absence of additional, variable income streams.

Expense Forecast

Year	Personnel	Facilities	Tech.	Curr.	Student Services	Prof. Dev.	Trans.	Other Ops	Total Expenses
2026–27 (Year 1)	$1,218,750	$100,000	$50,000	$45,000	$50,000	$25,000	$0	$50,000	$1,538,750
2027–28 (Year 2)	$1,218,750	$100,000	$50,000	$72,000	$60,000	$30,000	$0	$52,000	$1,582,750
2028–29 (Year 3)	$1,200,000	$200,000	$40,000	$90,000	$75,000	$35,000	$0	$65,000	$1,705,000

Personnel Expenses Year 1

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	.5	$25,000	$25,000	$6,250	$31,250
Teacher	12	$50,000	$600,000	$150,000	$750,000
Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					**$1,218,750**

Personnel Expenses Year 2

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	.5	$25,000	$25,000	$6,250	$31,250
Teacher	15	$50,000	$750,000	$187,000	$937,500
Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					**$1,406,250**

Personnel Expenses Year 3

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	.5	$25,000	$25,000	$6,250	$31,250
Teacher	20	$50,000	$1,000,000	$250,000	$1,250,000
Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					**$1,718,750**

The AEPA is committed to providing a free and appropriate public education to all students, including those with disabilities, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Arkansas state special education regulations. AEPA will ensure that all students with exceptional needs are accurately identified, thoroughly evaluated, and educated in the least restrictive environment that meets their individual needs.

1. Child Find and Identification Procedures

AEPA will implement robust Child Find procedures to identify students who may be in need of special education services:

- Universal screening tools will be administered to all students three times per year in academic and social-emotional areas.

- Teacher observations, advisory reports, and family input will be regularly reviewed to identify signs of academic, behavioral, or developmental challenges.

- A pre-referral intervention process through AEPA's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) will be used to determine if interventions can address the student's needs before referring for evaluation.

- All staff will be trained annually on how to recognize and report suspected disabilities and on the referral process.

2. Evaluation Procedures

Students suspected of having a disability will be referred for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation conducted in accordance with IDEA guidelines. AEPA will ensure the following:

- Parental consent is obtained prior to evaluation.

- Evaluations are conducted in the student's native language and free from cultural or linguistic bias.

- Assessments will be multifaceted and include academic achievement, cognitive ability, communication, behavior, and adaptive functioning, as appropriate.

- A licensed school psychologist or contracted evaluation team will conduct all required assessments within mandated timelines.

All evaluations will result in a formal eligibility determination meeting and documented findings to guide appropriate educational planning.

3. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development and Placement

If a student is found eligible for special education services, AEPA will convene an **IEP Team**, which includes:

- The student's parent(s)/guardian(s)

- At least one general education teacher

- At least one special education teacher

- A qualified representative of the charter school

- Related service providers (as needed)

- The student (when age-appropriate)

The IEP Team will:

- Develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that outlines present levels of performance, annual goals, accommodations, modifications, and necessary services.

- Identify and recommend the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate for the student, with a strong commitment to inclusion in general education settings whenever possible.

- Establish a plan for regular progress monitoring and reporting to families.

4. Service Delivery and Supports

AEPA will deliver special education services in alignment with each student's IEP, which may include:

- Push-in support within the general education classroom by special educators or paraeducators

- Speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, or other related services as required

- Assistive technology and accessible instructional materials as needed

- Behavioral supports, functional behavior assessments (FBAs), and behavior intervention plans (BIPs), where appropriate

Instruction will be personalized, utilizing AEPA's educator team model to ensure collaboration among staff.

5. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Commitment

AEPA believes in inclusive education and will:

- Provide students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum, extracurricular activities, and school-wide programs

- Implement co-teaching, small-group, and differentiated instruction models within inclusive classrooms

- Place students in more restrictive environments only when necessary, based on documented needs and IEP team consensus

6. Parent Communication and Procedural Safeguards

AEPA will:

- Provide parents with regular updates on progress toward IEP goals

- Ensure parents receive all procedural safeguards, including prior written notice and access to dispute resolution options

- Offer translation and interpretation services for families who speak a language other than English

- Involve parents as partners in all stages of evaluation, planning, and service delivery

7. Staffing and Compliance

AEPA will:

- Employ or contract with **appropriately licensed special education teachers, evaluators, and service providers**

- Provide ongoing professional development on **inclusive practices, IDEA compliance, accommodations/modifications, and differentiated instruction**

- Maintain compliance with all **state reporting and documentation requirements**, including IEP timelines, service minutes, and progress monitoring

AEPA is committed to educational equity and inclusion. Through a rigorous and collaborative process of identification, evaluation, and placement, the school will ensure that all exceptional learners receive the services they need in the most inclusive setting possible. This aligns with AEPA's broader mission to prepare every student—regardless of ability—to be Always Ready and Future Fluent.

The AEPA is committed to providing English Language Learners (ELLs) with equitable access to high-quality instruction, full participation in school programs, and support to achieve English language proficiency and academic success. AEPA complies with the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and Arkansas state ELL guidelines.

1. Identification of English Language Learners

AEPA will implement a standardized identification process for all incoming students:

- Upon enrollment, families will complete a Home Language Survey (HLS) to determine if a language other than English is spoken at home.

- If the HLS indicates a potential need, the student will be screened for English language proficiency using a state-approved assessment tool, such as the ELPA21 Screener, within 30 days of enrollment (or within 2 weeks if enrolled during the school year).

- Identified ELLs will be entered into the EL monitoring system and formally placed in the English Language Development (ELD) program.

2. Placement and Access to Instruction

AEPA ensures that ELL students receive instruction that is both language-accessible and academically rigorous:

- ELLs will be integrated into the general education curriculum with the support of specially trained educators and instructional strategies designed to develop both English proficiency and content mastery.

- All ELL students will receive designated ELD instruction appropriate to their English proficiency level using research-based models (e.g., sheltered instruction, co-teaching, push-in/pull-out models).

- AEPA will ensure that instructional materials, assessments, and classroom communication are accessible and culturally relevant.

ELL students will have full access to:

- Project-based learning and experiential education

- Career and technical education (CTE)

- Social-emotional learning (SEL) and power skills development

- Extracurricular activities, field trips, and student-led initiatives

3. Language Development Services

AEPA will provide targeted English language support based on individual student needs:

- Certified ESL/ELD teachers and team members trained in ELL strategies will deliver instruction using tools aligned with WIDA or ELPA21 standards.

- Instruction will focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing within academic content.

- ELD services may be provided through:

    - Push-in support during core instruction

    - Co-teaching models that integrate language and content instruction

- Formative assessments will be used to monitor ongoing language growth and adjust instruction accordingly.

4. Monitoring and Reclassification

AEPA will monitor the progress of all ELL students and follow a clear process for reclassification:

- ELLs will take the ELPA21 annual English proficiency assessment, as required by the state.

- Multiple data sources (proficiency scores, classroom performance, teacher input) will be used to determine readiness for exit from ELD services.

- Exited ELLs will be monitored for four years to ensure continued academic success and receive additional support if needed.

5. Family Engagement and Communication

AEPA recognizes that families are key partners in student success and is committed to engaging linguistically diverse families through:

- Translation and interpretation services for all major school communications, including enrollment, policies, report cards, and parent meetings

- Bilingual staff or liaisons to assist families with school navigation and student progress

- Culturally inclusive events, multilingual workshops, and opportunities for parents to participate in the *Parents at the Center* program

- Parent-teacher conferences that reflect respect for cultural norms and promote two-way communication

6. Staff Training and Program Oversight

AEPA will ensure that all educators are trained to support ELLs:

- Ongoing professional development on language acquisition, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inclusive instruction

- Training on differentiated strategies for ELLs within project-based and interdisciplinary learning environments

- Oversight by a designated EL Coordinator or team member who ensures compliance with state/federal law, monitors student progress, and coordinates services

AEPA's English Language Learner program is designed to provide equitable, inclusive, and high-quality educational opportunities for multilingual students. Through early identification, personalized instruction, continuous monitoring, and strong family engagement, AEPA will ensure that ELLs thrive academically and graduate as confident, culturally competent, and future fluent learners.

Serving Gifted and Talented Students

Overview

The Arkansas Experiential Preparatory Academy (AEPA) is committed to identifying and supporting gifted and talented (GT) students through differentiated instruction, acceleration opportunities, and real-world learning experiences that challenge and inspire advanced learners. AEPA's approach aligns with Arkansas Department of Education GT Program Approval Standards, and ensures that all students—regardless of background—have equitable access to advanced learning opportunities.

1. Identification of Gifted and Talented Students

AEPA will use a multi-criteria, equitable identification process to ensure that gifted students are recognized based on ability, performance, and potential. The process includes:

- Universal screening of all students in designated grades using a state-approved GT screener (e.g., CogAT, NNAT, or other cognitive assessments)

- Multiple data points, including:

    - Standardized test scores and academic benchmarks

    - Teacher observations and performance-based assessments

    - Parent/guardian input through surveys or checklists

    - Portfolios of student work and project-based learning outcomes

- Referral process open to teachers, families, or students themselves at any time during the year

- Consideration of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity to reduce underrepresentation of marginalized student populations

All evaluations and decisions are reviewed by a Gifted and Talented Committee composed of certified educators and administrators trained in gifted education.

2. Instructional Services and Programming

AEPA provides a school-wide enrichment model that integrates gifted services into its broader instructional framework. Services for GT students include:

A. Differentiated Core Instruction

- GT students receive advanced content, process, and product differentiation in core subjects during daily instruction.

- Learning goals are extended using proficiency-based advancement, allowing students to move ahead upon demonstrating mastery.

B. Project-Based and Experiential Learning

- All students, including GT learners, engage in rigorous interdisciplinary projects that allow for depth, complexity, and creativity.

- Students may propose independent study projects, guided by a mentor, to explore topics beyond grade-level expectations.

C. Acceleration and Flexible Grouping

- GT students may be grouped for tiered instruction during intervention/enrichment blocks.

- Curriculum compacting is used to eliminate repetition and allow advancement in subjects of strength.

- Middle and high school students may accelerate in math, science, language arts, or CTE pathways, and participate in school-based enterprises at the AEPA Mall.

D. Leadership, Communication, and Innovation Training

- AEPA embeds etiquette, public speaking, and interpersonal skills training in all grade levels.

- GT students are encouraged to take on leadership roles in teams, presentations, and community projects.

3. Equitable Access and Inclusion

AEPA ensures that access to gifted programming is equitable and inclusive by:

- Monitoring demographic data of identified GT students to address underrepresentation of English learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income households

- Providing professional development for all staff on recognizing giftedness across diverse populations

- Using non-verbal and culturally sensitive screening tools where appropriate

- Maintaining an open and continuous identification process throughout the school year

4. Family Engagement and Communication

AEPA engages families of gifted students as collaborative partners in the learning journey by:

- Providing clear information about the GT identification process, services, and instructional models

- Holding student-led conferences to discuss learning goals, enrichment opportunities, and performance

- Offering family workshops and informational sessions on nurturing giftedness, executive functioning, and postsecondary planning

- Communicating opportunities for GT students to participate in competitions, enrichment programs, or community partnerships

Families also participate in goal setting, portfolio reviews, and program evaluations to ensure services remain responsive and relevant.

5. Program Oversight and Evaluation

- AEPA's GT Coordinator ensures fidelity of implementation, maintains documentation, and ensures compliance with Arkansas Gifted and Talented Program standards.

- The program is evaluated annually through:

    - Student outcome data (growth, achievement, engagement)

    - Family and student satisfaction surveys

    - Classroom observation and teacher feedback

    - Results inform professional development, program enhancements, and continuous improvement.

AEPA's gifted education program is designed to challenge, engage, and support gifted learners across grade levels and backgrounds. Through differentiated instruction, advanced learning experiences, and meaningful family collaboration, AEPA prepares gifted students to reach their full potential and thrive as creative, confident, future-fluent leaders.

The AEPA is committed to ensuring that all students—including those at risk of academic failure—receive personalized, proactive, and equitable support to achieve academic success. AEPA uses a Multi-Tiered System of Support that integrates academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and environmental factors to identify and support at-risk students before they fall behind.

1. Identification of At-Risk Students

AEPA uses multiple, data-informed measures to identify students who may be at risk of academic failure. These include:

A. Academic Indicators

- Below-grade-level performance in literacy or math

- Benchmark and diagnostic assessments

- Course grades and progress toward proficiency

- Poor performance on standardized tests

B. Behavioral and Social-Emotional Indicators

- Chronic absenteeism or frequent tardiness

- Behavioral incidents or disciplinary referrals

- Social-emotional challenges identified through advisory, SEL screeners, or teacher reports

C. Contextual Risk Factors

- Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds

- Students in foster care or experiencing housing instability

- English learners and students with limited formal education

- Students with a history of school mobility or prior retention

A dedicated Student Support Team (SST) will meet biweekly to review data, flag students, and coordinate interventions.

2. Intervention and Support Services

AEPA's tiered intervention model ensures that all students receive targeted, personalized support based on their needs:

A. Tier I – Universal Supports (All Students)

- High-quality, differentiated core instruction aligned to Arkansas Academic Standards

- Embedded social-emotional learning (SEL) and daily advisory

- Culturally responsive teaching strategies

- Project-based learning to foster engagement and real-world relevance

B. Tier II – Targeted Small Group Interventions

- Additional instruction in foundational skills (literacy, numeracy)

- Structured intervention blocks built into the daily schedule

- Push-in or pull-out support from intervention specialists and instructional aides

- Small group SEL or behavioral coaching for students struggling with regulation, motivation, or social connection

C. Tier III – Intensive Individualized Interventions

- Personalized learning plans developed by the SST

- One-on-one academic tutoring or credit recovery

- Behavioral or trauma-informed counseling

- Wrap-around services in partnership with external mental health and wellness providers

All interventions are progress-monitored and adjusted using real-time data.

3. Equitable Access to School Programming

AEPA ensures that at-risk students are not excluded from advanced coursework, enrichment, or full participation in school activities:

- Project-based learning and real-world application are universally designed to accommodate diverse learners

- Enrichment opportunities, student-run businesses, and electives are open to all students, with supports embedded as needed

- Flexible scheduling allows students to access tutoring, interventions, and CTE programming without being pulled from core instruction

Students receive access to high-quality instruction in inclusive settings, with accommodations and scaffolds based on individual needs and learning profiles.

4. Family Engagement and Support

AEPA believes family involvement is essential to student success, especially for those at risk. The school supports families through:

- Early notification when students are identified as at risk

- Quarterly student-led conferences to review academic data, set goals, and discuss interventions

- Personalized communication through family liaisons, advisors, or interventionists

- Access to the *Parents at the Center* program, which offers:

    - Family workshops on learning strategies and youth development

    - Assistance with accessing community resources (housing, healthcare, mental health)

    - Language translation and interpretation services for non-English-speaking families

Families are viewed as partners in both intervention planning and accountability.

5. Continuous Monitoring and Progress Evaluation

AEPA uses a robust data-driven review cycle to monitor the effectiveness of supports for at-risk students:

- Weekly PLCs use formative and benchmark data to adjust instruction

- Biweekly MTSS meetings review intervention plans, student progress, and service effectiveness

- The SST coordinates with instructional teams to revise support strategies based on real-time performance

Student progress is documented through data portfolios, goal-tracking sheets, and SEL indicators, all shared with students and families regularly.

AEPA's approach to supporting students at risk of academic failure is preventive, personalized, and equity-focused. Through early identification, tiered intervention, inclusive programming, and strong family partnerships, AEPA ensures that every student, regardless of background or circumstance,receives the support needed to succeed and graduate Always Ready and Future Fluent.

The AEPA is fully committed to ensuring that all students receive high-quality reading instruction and timely support for literacy difficulties, including characteristics of dyslexia. In alignment with Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-41-603, AEPA will administer an approved, evidence-based Arkansas Literacy Screening Assessment to all students in grades K–3, and to students in grades 3–12 who exhibit difficulty with reading fluency.

1. Literacy Screening Process

AEPA will use a DESE-approved universal screener (such as DIBELS 8th Edition, Acadience Reading, or MAP Reading Fluency) to evaluate:

- Phonological and phonemic awareness

- Alphabet knowledge

- Sound-symbol recognition

- Decoding skills

- Rapid naming

- Encoding (spelling)

Screening Timeline:

- Grades K–3: Screened three times annually (fall, winter, spring)

- Grades 4–12: Screened as needed if reading difficulties are observed

- New students: Screened within 30 days of enrollment

All results are documented in accordance with DESE guidance and securely maintained as part of each student's academic record.

2. Dyslexia Evaluation and Tiered Intervention

Students who exhibit characteristics consistent with dyslexia will be provided targeted, evidence-based interventions. AEPA will implement a structured three-tiered system of literacy intervention:

Tier I – Core Literacy Instruction (All Students)

- Evidence-based core curriculum aligned to the Science of Reading and Arkansas standards

- Explicit instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension

- Daily foundational reading instruction in K–5

Tier II – Targeted Small-Group Interventions

- Students not meeting grade-level reading benchmarks will receive small-group instruction focused on specific skill deficits

- Interventions will occur within the daily schedule during designated intervention/enrichment blocks

- Progress will be monitored biweekly using short-cycle assessments

Tier III – Intensive Interventions

- For students who continue to exhibit reading deficiencies or characteristics of dyslexia, AEPA will provide:

    - Daily one-on-one or small-group sessions

    - DESE-approved dyslexia intervention programs such as *Take Flight*, *Connections*, or *Wilson Reading System*

    - Instruction delivered by a trained interventionist with appropriate dyslexia certification

3. Dyslexia Program Compliance and Implementation

AEPA will:

- Assign a Dyslexia Interventionist or Literacy Specialist to coordinate screenings, interventions, documentation, and family communication

- Submit required annual Dyslexia Program Reports to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

- Ensure all staff receive annual professional development in:

- ○ Characteristics of dyslexia

- ○ Screening requirements

- ○ The Science of Reading

- ○ Appropriate classroom accommodations and instructional strategies

4. Family Notification and Engagement

AEPA will maintain open and timely communication with families regarding literacy progress and dyslexia services:

- Parents will be notified in writing if a child exhibits markers consistent with dyslexia

- Families will receive a summary of:

  - ○ Screening results

  - ○ Description of the intervention being provided

  - ○ Information on dyslexia characteristics and support strategies

- AEPA will offer family literacy workshops, aligned with the *Parents at the Center* program, to help caregivers support reading at home

5. Documentation and Accountability

AEPA will:

- Maintain a Dyslexia Documentation Folder for each identified student

- Monitor intervention fidelity and student progress using DESE guidance

- Track and report:

  - ○ The number of students screened

  - ○ The number identified as exhibiting dyslexia characteristics

  - ○ The number receiving dyslexia intervention

- Use literacy data to inform instructional decisions, revise interventions, and evaluate program effectiveness

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy

Establishing Culture and Climate

The professional learning community process is the vehicle through which our culture, climate, and work will be done.

Three Big Ideas of Our Work

1. Learning is our fundamental purpose.
2. We will do this work within a collaborative culture.
3. We will focus on results.

Four Critical Questions of Our Work

1. What do we want students to know and be able to do?
2. How do we know if they have learned it?
3. How do we provide intervention when students have not reached mastery on the standard or target?
4. How do we extend the curriculum when students have mastered the standard or target?

Initial Actions

Establish a Culture of Collective Responsibility
ACTION 1: Establish a Guiding Coalition
ACTION 2: Build a Culture of Collective Responsibility
ACTION 3: Form Collaborative Teacher Teams
ACTION 4: Create Time for Collaboration
ACTION 5: Commit to Team Norms

Tier 1 Actions

Teacher Team Essential Actions	Schoolwide Essential Actions
Action 1: Identify Essential Standards for each grade level course	Action 1: Ensure access to essential grade level curriculum to ALL students
Action 2: Create an Essential Standards Unit Plan	Action 2: Identify and teach essential academic and social behaviors
Action 3: Implement the Team Teaching-Assessing Cycle	Action 3: Provide preventions to proactively support student success
Action 4: Give common end-of-unit assessment for essential standards	
Action 5: Identify students for Tier 2 support by student, standard and learning target	

Tier 2 Essential Actions

Teacher Team Essential Actions	Schoolwide Essential Actions
Action 1: Design and lead supplemental interventions for academic essential standards	Action 1: Schedule time for supplemental interventions
Action 2: Consider screening Immediate Prerequisite Skills	Action 2: Establish a process for schoolwide student intervention identification
Action 3: Monitor the progress of students receiving supplemental supports	Action 3: Plan and implement supplemental interventions for essential social and academic behaviors
Action 4: Extend student learning	Action 4: Coordinate interventions for students needing skill and will supports

Tier 3 Essential Actions

Schoolwide Essential Actions	Intervention Team Essential Actions
Action 1: Identify students needing intensive support	Action 1: Diagnose, treat, prioritize, and monitor Tier 3 interventions
Action 2: Create a dynamic, problem-solving site intervention team	Action 2: Ensure proper intervention intensity
Action 3: Prioritize resources based on greatest student needs	Action 3: Determine if special education is needed and justifiable
Action 4: Create a systematic and timely process to refer students to the site intervention team	
Action 5: Assess intervention effectiveness	

References

Mattos, M., et al. (2024). <u>Taking Action: A Handbook for RTI at Work</u>. 2nd Ed.

WAIVERS

Waiver #1 Topic	Board of Directors
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-13-608 6-13-611 6-13-612(c) 6-13-613 6-13-615 6-13-616(a) 6-13-617 6-13-618 6-13-619(a), (c), (d)(1)(A), (d)(4) 6-13-620(5) 6-13-622(b) 6-13-630 6-13-631 6-13-634 6-13-635 6-13-1303 6-14-101, et seq.
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	The applicant respectfully requests a waiver from the sections of Arkansas Code Annotated and ADE Rules outlined above as they pertain to the structure and governance of the proposed board of directors and the adoption of school policies. Unlike traditional public school boards, the FESI/AEPA board is not elected from the general public. Instead, members are appointed based on the process described within this application, which outlines clear procedures for filling vacancies, holding regular meetings, electing officers, defining their responsibilities, and establishing term lengths.

The AEPA Board of Directors will serve as the sole governing authority responsible for the adoption of school policies. This structure is part of a replication of a highly successful educational model with a strong record of academic achievement. Central to this success is a board composed of accomplished individuals with diverse professional backgrounds and experiences, all united by a shared commitment to the school's mission and vision. |

While physical board meetings will be held, the applicant also seeks approval to conduct meetings via telephone and web-based conferencing platforms. This flexibility is essential to accommodate the schedules of board members and ensure continued engagement from stakeholders. All meetings will remain open to the public in compliance with the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, and public access will be provided through physical attendance, call-in options, or online participation. In addition, members of the public will have the opportunity to register for public comment either through the school's website or in person at a designated campus location.

Waiver #2 Topic	Food Services
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-18-705 (breakfast program) 6-20-701, et seq. (school lunch program)
Standard for Accreditation	3-D.1
ADE Rules	DESE Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity and Body Mass Index for Age Assessment Protocols in Arkansas Public Schools
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will not participate in the federal Child Nutrition Programs administered by the CNU. Instead, AEPA will implement an alternative food service model that better aligns with the school's instructional schedule, operational design, and student needs. Meals may be provided through third-party vendors or community partnerships, and students will also be permitted to bring meals from home. This approach allows for greater

flexibility in scheduling, minimizes overhead costs associated with managing a federally regulated food service program, and supports the school's mission of innovation and operational efficiency. AEPA will ensure that all students have access to adequate and nutritious meal options during the school day and will comply with all applicable health and safety regulations related to food service.

This waiver is essential for maintaining financial sustainability in the early years of operation while also allowing the school to explore more responsive and locally tailored food service solutions for its students and families.

Waiver #3 Topic	Leased Academic Facilities
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-21-117(2)-(5)
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 6-A.1, 6-A.2
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	AEPA will begin operations serving a limited number of grade levels and will utilize a leased facility that meets all applicable health, safety, and accessibility standards required by the Arkansas Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. This temporary arrangement will allow the school to meet immediate community demand and build a strong academic and operational foundation while preparing for

long-term growth.

Once the school reaches full enrollment across all planned grade levels, AEPA intends to construct a permanent facility that fully aligns with the school's vision, programming needs, and projected enrollment. The temporary use of leased space is a practical and fiscally responsible solution that allows the school to launch operations in a timely manner while continuing to plan and secure resources for a long-term facility investment.

This waiver request is essential for ensuring that AEPA can open on schedule and begin delivering high-quality instruction while maintaining compliance with all health and safety regulations during its temporary occupancy.

Waiver #4 Topic	Library Media Services
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-103
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 2-D.1
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will implement an innovative approach to library media services that differs from the conventional model. Rather than a traditional library setting, AEPA will establish a Media and Innovation Hub that serves as a dynamic space for research, technology integration, digital literacy, and project-based learning. This center will support both academic and career-focused instruction and will be

	staffed and resourced according to the school's instructional model and student needs.

In addition, AEPA will form partnerships with local city and county libraries to extend access to high-quality literary, research, and digital resources. These partnerships will allow students and staff to access a broader range of materials and services, including interlibrary loans, maker spaces, digital media tools, and community learning events, without duplicating resources already available in the community.

This waiver will allow AEPA to align its media services with its mission of innovation, personalization, and community collaboration while ensuring that students continue to have full access to the resources they need for research, inquiry, and academic success.

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Waiver #5 Topic	**Library Media Specialist**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 4-F.1, 4-F.2
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will implement an innovative, integrated approach to library media services that differs from the traditional model. Rather than employing a full-time library media specialist, AEPA will embed media literacy, research skills, and digital resource use into daily classroom instruction and project-based learning activities across all grade levels. These

	services will be delivered by certified classroom teachers, who will receive training and ongoing support in digital literacy integration and research instruction.
	AEPA's Media and Innovation Hub will serve as a dynamic center for technology integration, critical thinking, collaborative research, and personalized learning. This space will support student engagement in inquiry-based learning and align with AEPA's broader academic model that emphasizes future fluency and real-world readiness.
	In addition, AEPA will establish formal partnerships with local city and county libraries to expand access to physical and digital collections, research tools, maker spaces, and community programming. These partnerships allow students to benefit from a rich array of resources and experiences that support academic growth without duplicating services already available in the surrounding community.
	This waiver request allows AEPA to maintain flexibility in staffing and resource allocation while still ensuring students receive high-quality, relevant, and accessible library media services aligned with the school's mission and instructional design.

Waiver #6 Topic	**Maintain School Facilities**
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 6-A.1

ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will initially operate from a temporary facility that meets all applicable health, safety, and accessibility standards required by the Arkansas Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. This temporary location will serve as the school's operational base during the early years while a permanent facility is being planned, funded, and constructed. This phased approach to facility development is a strategic decision to ensure that AEPA can launch operations promptly to meet urgent community demand while responsibly managing financial resources. All temporary facilities will be properly maintained and compliant with state guidelines for safety, occupancy, and functionality. The requested waiver will provide the flexibility needed to use an interim facility without being held to permanent facility requirements that are not applicable or feasible in the short term. Once the school is fully operational with all planned grade levels, AEPA will transition to a permanent, purpose-built facility designed to support its innovative instructional model. This waiver ensures operational readiness while maintaining the health and safety of students and staff, in alignment with AEPA's commitment to quality and responsible school development.

Waiver #7 Topic	**Transportation**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-19-101, et seq.

Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will not initially provide daily transportation services. This decision is based on the school's operational model and resource priorities during its startup phase. The school will be located in an accessible area, and all families will be clearly informed during the enrollment process that transportation will not be provided by the school. Families will confirm their ability to provide transportation as part of the admissions process.

However, AEPA is committed to equitable access for all students. If, during the course of operation, the school identifies that transportation presents a significant barrier to student attendance or participation, AEPA will take appropriate action to resolve the issue. This may include implementing alternative strategies such as community carpool coordination, strategic transportation partnerships, or, if necessary and feasible, the establishment of a limited transportation service.

This waiver allows AEPA the flexibility to focus its resources on instructional quality and student support during the early years, while maintaining a strong commitment to student access and equity. The school will continuously assess family needs and respond accordingly to ensure transportation is not a limiting factor for enrollment or engagement. |

Waiver #8 Topic	**ALE**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-15-1005(b)(5) 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i) 6-48-102 6-48-103

Standard for Accreditation	Standard 2-I.1
ADE Rules	ADE Rules DESE Rules Governing Student Special Needs Funding – Section 4
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will meet the needs of students who qualify for ALE services through a comprehensive and innovative approach using Response to Intervention (RtI) and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). These frameworks will allow AEPA to address students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs within the general education setting, rather than through a separate ALE program.

AEPA's RtI and MTSS models will include early identification, tiered interventions, continuous progress monitoring, and data-driven decision-making to ensure that all students receive the support necessary for success. For students requiring intensive and individualized support, an Alternative Student Action Plan will be developed collaboratively by the school counselor, the student's teacher(s), and the designated administrator. The counselor will oversee implementation of the plan, ensuring it is regularly reviewed and adjusted based on student progress.

This waiver will provide AEPA with the flexibility to serve at-risk students in an inclusive, personalized, and supportive environment aligned with the school's mission, while still complying with the intent of ALE guidelines. |

Waiver #9 Topic	Required Instruction K-12
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	1-A.1.3
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	The school is requesting a waiver of this code because the school will not be offering all K-12 grade levels and will be operating at a much smaller number in its initial start up years. The school may not be able to sustain the offering of the full 38 courses until later on in its existence. The school needs the flexibility to ensure that it is offering the courses and electives that are pertinent to achieving its mission. The school commits to providing students with a well rounded education and align all courses and curriculum to Arkansas Academic Standards. The model being replicated has been successful in doing so across different states and is committed to ensuring success for the students of Arkansas.

The AEPA will implement a comprehensive school health and nursing services plan designed to safeguard student well-being, support uninterrupted learning, and meet state requirements. This plan encompasses staffing, preventive screenings, acute and chronic care management, health education, referral systems, and coordination with community providers.

Nursing and Health Staffing
 • Licensed nurse on site daily, at a ratio of one nurse per 350 students, to triage illness and injury, administer medication, and develop individualized health plans.
 • Health aide or trained medical assistant present each day to assist with screenings, first aid, and documentation under nurse supervision.
 • Annual review of staffing levels to adjust for enrollment fluctuations and ensure timely response to student health needs.

Preventive Screenings and Compliance
 • Vision and hearing screenings for all students in kindergarten, grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and for any student new to the school.
 • Height, weight and body mass index measurements in accordance with state guidelines.
 • Dental sealant and fluoride varnish clinics coordinated with local public health units.
 • Immunization tracking and follow-up to ensure each student meets Arkansas Department of Health requirements; families notified promptly of any missing or expiring vaccines.

Acute Care and Emergency Response
 • First-aid and injury assessment provided by the school nurse or health aide; minor wounds cleaned and dressed in the health suite.
 • Emergency response protocols and periodic drills (including anaphylaxis, seizure, asthma crisis and cardiac events) developed in collaboration with local EMS.
 • Designated care rooms for isolation of students with suspected contagious illnesses, preventing cross-contamination while parents are notified.

Chronic Condition Management
 • Individual health plans for students with asthma, diabetes, severe allergies, seizure disorders and other chronic conditions. These plans include medication orders, monitoring schedules, emergency action protocols and staff training.
 • Annual in-service training for all faculty on recognizing and responding to life-threatening conditions, proper use of epinephrine auto-injectors, inhalers and glucometers.

Medication Administration
 • Policies and consent forms for prescription and over-the-counter medications, stored securely in the health office.
 • Nurse-administered dosing during school hours; self-administration only when explicitly approved by a physician and documented in the student's health record.

Health Education and Promotion
 • Age-appropriate health curricula integrated into advisory and science classes, covering

nutrition, hygiene, disease prevention, mental health awareness and substance-use prevention.
 • Monthly wellness bulletins for families, highlighting seasonal health tips and community resources.
 • Annual school wide events (flu vaccination clinic, mindfulness fair, healthy cooking demonstration) in partnership with community health agencies.

Referral and Follow-Up
 • Routine referral protocols to guide families toward primary care providers, mental health counselors or dental clinics when needs exceed in-school support.
 • Tracking system to ensure referred students receive follow-up care and that outcomes are communicated back to the school nurse.

Collaboration with Community Partners
 • Formal agreements with the county health department, local hospitals and nonprofit clinics to provide on-site screenings, health workshops and telehealth appointments as needed.
 • Quarterly meetings of a school health advisory committee—composed of nurses, counselors, administrators, parents and community providers—to review health trends, update protocols and plan new initiatives.

Data Collection and Quality Improvement
 • Electronic health records maintained for each student, capturing screenings, immunizations, visits and care plans.
 • Annual analysis of health office visits, immunization compliance rates and chronic condition outcomes to identify emerging needs and refine service delivery.
 • Family satisfaction surveys to gauge accessibility and responsiveness of health services, with results informing policy adjustments.

FREEDOM EDUCATION SERVICES, INC.

CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy

Harrison Campus

"Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow through Choice"

May 2025

About Us

Founded in October, 2024, Freedom Education Services (FESI) is a non-profit organization that provides top-notch services to students, families, communities, and educational entities. With over 100 years of combined experience in education, our team of highly skilled professionals is committed to delivering outstanding results to those we serve. We take pride in our ability to help our students, families, and communities achieve their goals by providing them with the support and choice they need to succeed.

At FESI, we understand the importance of building strong relationships with our clients. That's why we take the time to get to know each and every one of them, so we can provide personalized solutions that meet their unique needs. Whether you need assistance with completing paperwork, choosing curriculum, lesson planning, instruction, tutoring, labs, college prep, career planning, or special experiences for your children, our team is here to help you every step of the way.

As mothers and lifelong Christians, we fully understand the importance of having choices for educating our children. We are committed to helping you exercise choice in your child's education. Our team is dedicated to delivering the highest quality services, and we pride ourselves in our attention to detail, professionalism, and exceptional customer service.

At FESI, we believe that our success is directly tied to the success of our families. That's why we work tirelessly to ensure that they are completely satisfied with the services we provide. We are always looking for ways to improve our services and stay up-to-date with the latest educational trends. With us, you can rest assured that you are working with a team that is fully committed to your success.

Christie Toland
PRESIDENT & CO-FOUNDER

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

Our Mission

At Freedom Education Services, our mission is to provide exceptional support to our families and students through our team of highly skilled and dedicated educators. We strive to deliver efficient and reliable services that exceed our families' expectations and help them achieve their goals.

Ensuriing Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choiice

Our Team

Christie Toland has served students and families in education for over 25 years. In that time she served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, and assistant superintendent in large and small schools across the state. Mrs. Toland is a wife, and mother of three. She grew up in a large family of educators and veterans who love God and country. She is a fierce advocate for student advancement, teacher empowerment, and parent choice.

Dr. Beth Shumate brings 28 years of experience in education, having held various roles from special education and fifth-grade math and science teacher, to principal, to deputy superintendent and superintendent in both large and small Arkansas districts. Throughout her career, she has been committed to student success, with a special focus on supporting diverse learners. As a wife and mother of three boys, she is passionate about empowering families and creating enriching and effective educational experiences tailored to each child's unique needs.

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice
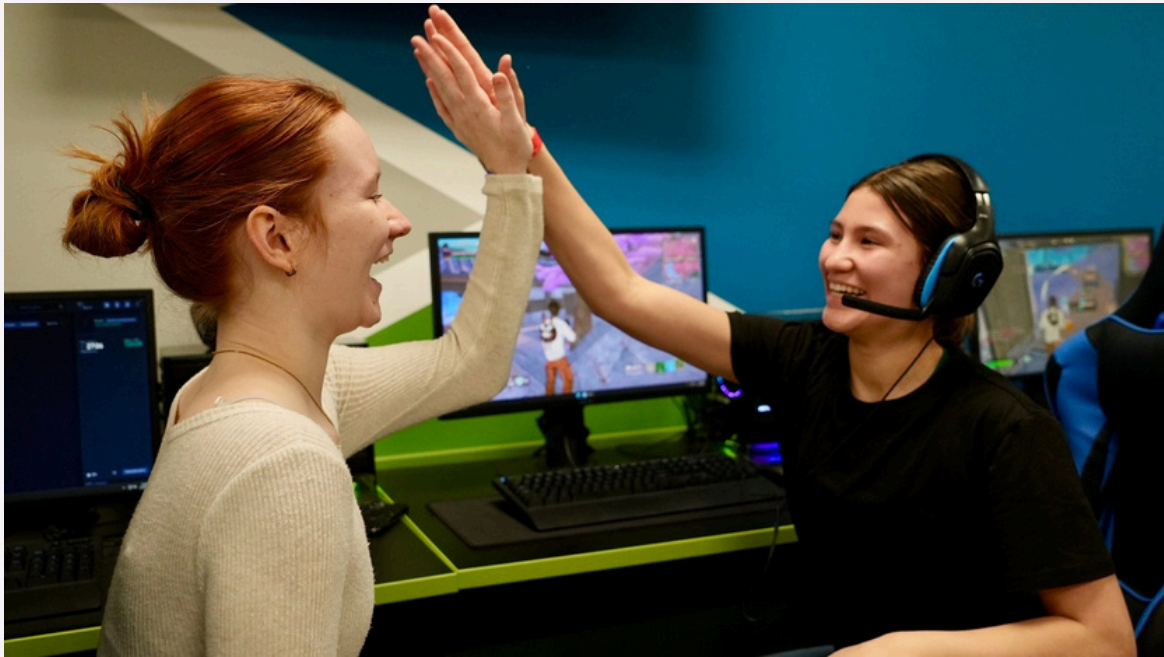
What makes us different?

We believe that Arkansas public schools work as hard as they can for their students. However, the requirements they have to follow somewhat limit their ability to be creative. We are offering a new type of charter school. This model is not currently offered in Arkansas or anywhere across our nation. One that not only helps students achieve at the highest levels, but also assists public schools in offering things that they cannot, all while building the next generation of leaders and workers.

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

How does it look?

5 MAIN TENENTS

1. Next Education Workforce Model
2. Elite academics
3. Mental and physical health supports
4. Parents at the Center Program
5. Future Fluent/Always Ready students

TRUE INNOVATION

Freedom Education Services and Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is innovation at its finest. Focusing on student growth from the womb to the workforce, we are training the next generation of executives.

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

Next Education Workforce Model™

INNOVATION IN TEACHING

The Next Education Workforce strategic school staffing models empower teachers to work in teams for the betterment of their work environment and our students. AEPA's model replaces the traditional one-teacher-to-twenty-students approach with a team of certified teachers, interns, tutors, and community instructors per grade. Students will receive core instruction from a team of experts, with embedded supports provided within the learning space.

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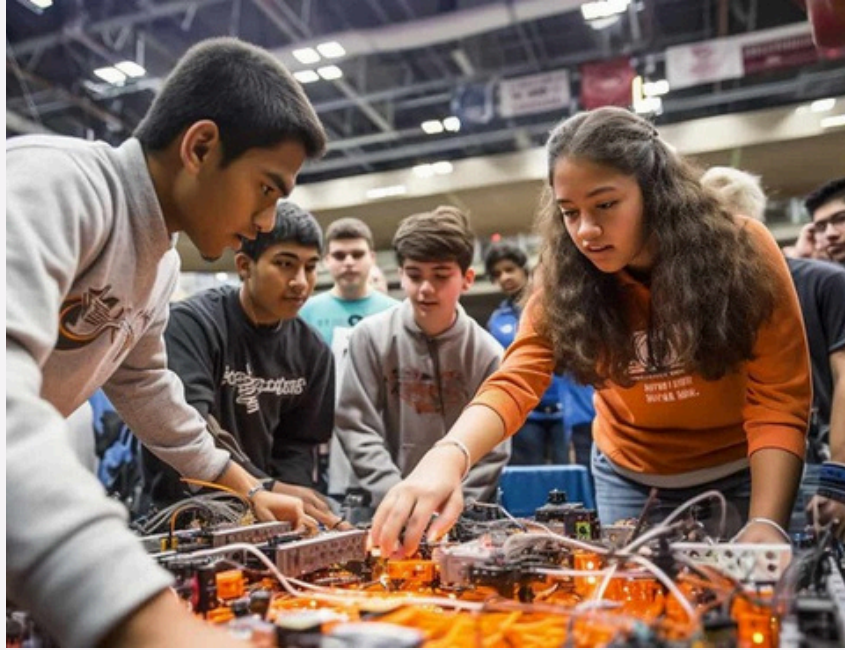
Elite Academics

INNOVATION IN LEARNING

At AEPA, with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) as its central component, students will not be restricted by prescribed content, grade levels, and subjects in their learning. Our academics are grounded in mastery based learning using a rigorous curriculum that allows for the discovery of the genius inside of every student.

AEPA provides a strong acceleration program which means that students that are ready to progress more quickly have the freedom to do so. Students will learn through project based learning in, at times, multiple grade classrooms.

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Mental and Physical Health Supports

INNOVATION IN HEALTHY STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Physical and brain health are essential to student development. AEPA will provide an onsite health clinic where students, families and the community will have access to various health services. At the same time, we will be training the next generation of health care providers by allowing students to get "real world" experience while earning medical credentials.

Becoming an executive means being able to take care of your future employees. Students will be trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid as well as become a Registered Behavioral Technician. These skills will allow graduates to truly understand and care for their future employees.

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice
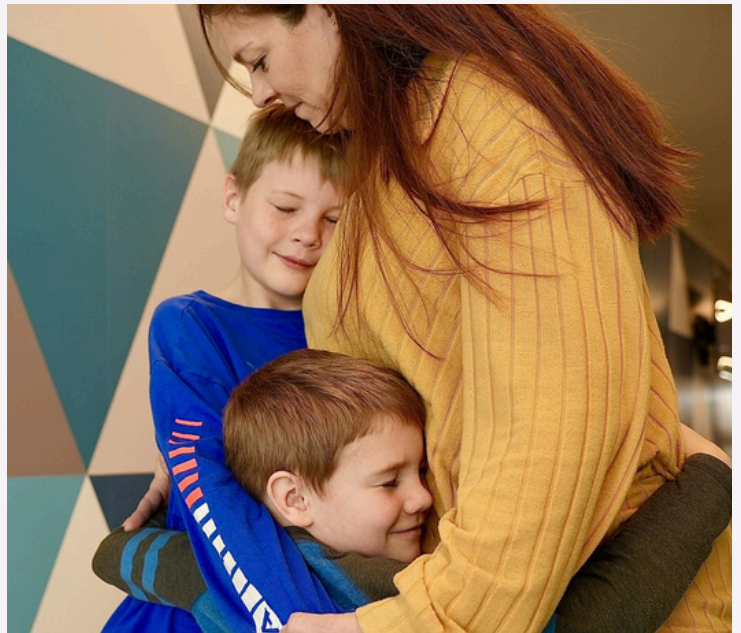
Parents at the Center

INNOVATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Parents at the Center will focus on addressing specific needs of both families and students in our community. Quarterly, we will partner to discover ways that we can extend support. Age-appropriate skills will be taught at each grade level, targeting societal entitlement issues. Together, we will teach students the importance of starting from the bottom and mastering every aspect of their work in order to be successful.

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Future Fluent and Always Ready

INNOVATION THROUGH PREPERATION

FUTURE FLUENT

AEPA offers foreign language training in elementary school, where it's most developmentally appropriate. As students gain language skills and work readiness, they'll have the opportunity to explore other cultures with their families abroad.

ALWAYS READY

Always Ready will provide on-site work experiences in school and community businesses located within the high school and operated in conjunction with students from the ground up. Students will gain experience in all forms of etiquette (formal written and verbal communication, personal interaction, dress, interview, introductions, meeting new people, addressing an audience, attending formal events, casual and formal meals, and all situations a student may encounter when entering the world of adulthood) before entering the "real world".

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

In this hands-on program, 10th through 12th graders will gain real-world experience by working with mall store owners, learning the ins and outs of entrepreneurship and business operations. This model ensures students graduate with valuable work experience, giving them a competitive edge in the job market as well as ready made workers for business and industry.

The Mall

Timeline

	2025				2026					2027				2028					2029				2030			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4

Charter opens — 2026 Q3–Q4

Parents at the Center opens — 2026 Q3

Wellness Center Opens — 2028 Q3

Charter/grant application development and filing, program/partnership development — 2025 Q1–Q4

Approval of charter, open enrollment, program set up, prep for opening day — 2025 Q2–2026 Q2

File grant for Wellness Center and innovative transportation — 2026 Q1

Operate charter school and supplemental programs, reflect, and improve practices. — 2026 Q3–2030 Q4

2025

- Establish partnerships with area schools, business, and industry
- Secure a temporary site
- Submit charter school application and gain approval
- Obtain equipment and furnishings
- Write grants

2026

- Parents at the Center programming begins
- Charter School Opens (K-8)
- Look for permanent space for PreK-12
- Write for Birth-PreK approval/funding
- Lottery drawing for enrollment
- Write grants

2027

- Open enrollment for PreK-9th grade students
- Obtain a permanent site
- Build/remodel
- Write for Wellness Center approval and funding
- Write grants

2028

- Wellness Center Grand Opening
- Open enrollment for PreK-10th grade students
- Open Phase One of The Mall
- Write grants

2029

- Open enrollment for PreK-11th grade students
- Open Phase Two of The Mall
- Write grants

2030

- Open enrollment for PreK-12th grade students
- Open Phase Three of The Mall
- Write grants

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

Deliverables

"In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." - Eric Hoffer

Innovation

We will provide an innovative approach to educating students to better prepare them for their future. We will also provide innovative staffing models that support a healthy work space that encourages career growth for our teachers and staff.

Workforce

We will provide a highly skilled employee who will be qualified to become the next executive of local business and industry, but are prepared to work their way up through the ranks.

STEM

We will provide future employees for the jobs of tomorrow through our comprehensive K-12 STEM program including robotics, e-sports, and rigorous science and math programming that drives critical and solution driven thinking.

Collaboration

We will work with students, families, community, business and industry to produce students that are employable and have the skills necessary to be successful.

Always Ready

We will provide students who will always be ready for the future in whatever field they desire. This includes trades, small business ownership, college, and/or military. You can find your next future executive at the Arkansas Executive Prep Academy.

Value Added

We will add value to the community as a whole by providing the workforce of tomorrow. We will support our students in becoming productive citizens who are good husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers who add value to our community

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

Contact Us

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Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

Ensuring Freedom to Learn and Grow Through Choice

Board of Directors
Conflicts of Interest

A Board member shall not have any direct pecuniary interest in a contract with the School, nor shall the member furnish directly any labor, equipment, or supplies to the School except as permitted under Arkansas law. In the event a Board member is employed by a corporation or business or has a secondary interest in a corporation or business that furnishes goods or services to the School, the Board member shall declare his or her potential conflict of interest, and shall refrain from debating and voting upon the contract in question as recommended by Arkansas law. It is not the intent of this policy to prevent the School from contracting with corporations or businesses because a Board member is an employee of the firm. The policy is designed to prevent placing a Board member in a position in which his or her duties to the School and to the member's employment (or other indirect interest) might conflict and to avoid appearances of impropriety even though none may exist.

Governance Structure & Board Processes

A. Effective and Efficient School Governance

AEPA's board will maintain robust and transparent governance through regular, well-structured board and committee meetings. A master calendar will guide monthly board meetings, along with quarterly academic, finance, and governance committee gatherings. Agendas and meeting materials will be shared in advance, and minutes will be posted publicly in accordance with Arkansas law. To ensure efficiency, the board will use a consent agenda for routine items and reserve time for strategic discussion, keeping governance focused and deliberate.

B. Setting and Monitoring School Improvement Goals

At the start of each school year, AEPA leadership will present a comprehensive academic and operational plan. The board will review and formally adopt school-wide goals—covering areas such as student achievement, graduation rate when applicable, and college/career readiness. Quarterly reports from the school leadership team will track progress, including trend data and any proposed course corrections. Board members will engage in periodic reviews alongside academic committees to ensure alignment and accountability.

C. Oversight of Personnel Decisions (as Applicable)

While day-to-day hiring is handled by school leadership, the board plays a key oversight role in personnel decisions as they will be required to approve all hires. The board will review and conduct an annual performance evaluation for the senior leader. AEPA will also have clear written policies around conflict of interest, grievance procedures, and staff evaluation tied to student and school outcomes.

D. Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainability

AEPA's board will oversee a sound financial structure.. Detailed reports and monthly financial statements will be reviewed using eFiance and UBER reports, along with yearly legislative audits and budget updates. The board will ensure adequate cash reserves, establish internal controls, and approve the annual budget. Together with school leadership, they will engage in multi-year financial forecasting to maintain long-term sustainability.

E. Compliance with Laws and Rules on Ethics

AEPA's governance will include a board ethics policy aligned with charter law expectations. All board members will file conflict of interest statements annually, and affirm the public charter school code of ethics. The board will require timely filing of financial disclosures and monitor compliance with state and federal statutes regarding finance, student data, and

non-discrimination. Regular governance training will help trustees understand their obligations and remain current with evolving regulations.

F. Community Engagement

The board recognizes that community trust is central to AEPA's success. As such, they will sponsor and participate in regular town-hall meetings, stakeholder advisory groups, and family engagement surveys. Leadership will report community feedback at board meetings. Parents, local business leaders, civic partners, and community representatives will be invited to serve on advisory panels. This two-way dialogue ensures board decisions reflect community priorities and build strong relationships across diverse constituencies.

Board Composition

The Board of Directors for Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is intentionally designed to represent different regions across the state of Arkansas so that we can better serve students no matter where they live—or where they might end up working after graduation. The board of directors will be designated upon approval of the charter application. This structure ensures we stay connected to the needs of students and families across the state, not just in one area. Additionally, AEPA board has been independently formed and intentionally structured to meet the specific needs of the school and its mission. While Freedom Education Services (FESI) played a valuable role in the early development of AEPA's instructional design, the AEPA board is a separate governing body created to provide dedicated oversight, strategic direction, and legal and financial accountability exclusively for AEPA.The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will be governed by a five-member Board of Directors serving a six year term.

Broad Expertise & Oversight

Our board will bring together professionals with experience in:

- Education leadership
- Executive/business leadership (e.g. CEOs, organizational leaders)
- Finance/accounting
- Legal/compliance
- Community development or civic engagement

This cross-sector lineup ensures balanced governance, disciplined financial oversight, and strategic decision-making—foundational features seen in successful Arkansas charter school boards.

The Board of Directors at Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) fully understands its responsibility to serve as the governing and oversight body of the school. The board is committed to following all applicable local, state, and federal laws, as well as the rules and regulations set forth by the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Board members will actively monitor the school's academic performance, financial health, and operational practices to ensure AEPA remains in full compliance and aligned with its mission. Through regular meetings, timely reviews of data, and ongoing training, the board will provide clear oversight and direction while holding school leadership accountable to high standards.

Above all, the board's focus will remain on ensuring that AEPA serves students with excellence, integrity, and transparency at every level.

Experience That Supports Our Mission

Our board will include individuals with experience in education, business leadership, law, finance, and community development. Each member brings a unique perspective and a specific area of expertise to help guide the school. This variety of experience ensures our board is equipped to make smart decisions about policy, funding, academic goals, and long-term planning.

By having voices from multiple parts of the state, AEPA's leadership is better equipped to develop policies and programs that prepare students for executive and leadership roles no matter where in Arkansas they come from or where they choose to build their careers.

To ensure that AEPA truly prepares students for executive roles throughout Arkansas, the board members have been thoughtfully selected to represent various regions of our state, including urban, suburban, and rural communities. This geographic diversity is critical—it helps the board understand and respond to the unique needs of students from different backgrounds and communities while also providing a statewide perspective for staff and students. Board members were chosen through a careful process emphasizing relevant professional expertise, lived experience, and a strong commitment to AEPA's mission of preparing students for leadership roles. They bring experience in education, law, finance, business, workforce development, and community engagement—fields essential to governing a high-performing, innovative charter school.

Beyond their expertise, board members share a passion for equity, innovation, and student success. Their leadership emphasizes collaboration and strategic thinking, and each member is committed to helping AEPA prepare students for high-level opportunities in their future careers.

The selection process began by identifying the core responsibilities required of an effective charter school board: monitoring academic outcomes, ensuring financial oversight, maintaining compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and supporting long-term planning. Candidates are being interviewed and vetted to confirm both legal eligibility and alignment with the school's mission and values.

Governance Practices

Board members will serve staggered six-year terms to ensure stability and continuity. Officer roles like Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer will be assigned based on each member's background and skillset. The board will meet regularly and follow Arkansas's open-enrollment charter school laws and best practices, including required training and compliance procedures. All board members will have training in and follow legislative audit rules and corresponding policies.

Why This Matters

We designed our board this way because AEPA's mission is to prepare students for leadership and executive roles across Arkansas. To do that well, we need a leadership team that reflects the state, understands its regions, and knows what executive readiness really looks like in

today's workforce. Our board structure helps ensure that AEPA is responsive, strategic, and student-focused from day one.

Ultimately, the AEPA board's regional representation and diverse expertise help create a culture of excellence, transparency, and responsiveness. This thoughtful governance structure will be reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of the school and the many communities AEPA serves. Through this ongoing commitment, the board will ensure AEPA remains student-focused, mission-driven, and poised to deliver exceptional outcomes for learners statewide.

AEPA Academic Performance: Setting, Monitoring, and Revising

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) uses a **comprehensive, data-driven performance management system** that integrates high expectations with continuous improvement. This system is designed to monitor student learning outcomes, enhance instructional practices, guide professional development, and ensure that curriculum remains aligned to Arkansas state standards and the evolving needs of learners.

1. Setting Academic Performance Expectations

AEPA sets academic expectations through a collaborative and standards-based approach:

- **Alignment to Arkansas Academic Standards**: All instructional units are aligned to clearly defined grade-level expectations as outlined by the Arkansas Department of Education.

- **Proficiency Scales**: Each standard is accompanied by a proficiency scale that delineates student progress from emerging to mastery. These are co-developed by instructional teams and ensure clarity in instructional targets and assessment criteria.

- **Student-Centered Goal Setting**: Students co-create learning goals in advisory settings using data from diagnostic assessments and formative performance. These goals are revisited regularly with staff and families.

2. Monitoring Student Progress

AEPA utilizes a **multi-tiered assessment and data monitoring framework** to ensure timely and accurate insights into student learning:

- **Formative Assessments**: Frequent classroom checks for understanding guide daily instruction and identify immediate student needs.

- **Benchmark Assessments**: Administered quarterly using standards-aligned tools to track growth, proficiency, and readiness. Data are disaggregated by subgroup to monitor equity.

- **Progress Monitoring Tools**: Digital platforms, data dashboards, and student portfolios track real-time growth across core subjects, SEL, and power skills.

- **Tiered Intervention Reviews**: Biweekly team meetings identify students needing Tier II or Tier III support, and revise intervention plans accordingly.

- **Student Data Notebooks**: Students maintain their own academic data, reflections, and goals, reviewed during student-led conferences.

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3. Revising Instruction and Performance Strategies

Academic performance expectations are revised regularly based on school-wide and individual data trends:

- **Quarterly Data Retreats**: Instructional teams, administrators, and coaches analyze benchmark data and adjust pacing guides, instructional strategies, and grouping practices.

- **Curriculum Audits**: Curriculum is reviewed every semester to ensure fidelity to state standards, relevance to student interests, and alignment to performance outcomes.

- **Flexible Grouping**: Instructional teams use ongoing data to regroup students for targeted instruction, remediation, or acceleration during intervention blocks.

Using Data to Improve Instruction

AEPA leverages data to personalize and strengthen instructional delivery:

- Teachers use real-time data to adjust instructional pacing, re-teach key concepts, or extend learning for advanced students.

- Formative data inform lesson design, differentiation strategies, and scaffolding approaches for students with diverse needs.

- Instructional coaches use classroom walkthrough data and student work analysis to support high-impact practices, especially within the project-based and experiential learning frameworks.

Using Data to Inform Professional Development

AEPA's professional development plan is directly informed by student learning data:

- **Weekly PLCs** analyze student performance, identify instructional gaps, and determine focus areas for collaborative improvement.

- **Coaching Cycles** are tailored based on instructional needs revealed through formative data and classroom observations.

- **Monthly PD Days** feature sessions on standards-based instruction, assessment literacy, SEL integration, and culturally responsive teaching—all grounded in current school data.

- **Individual Growth Plans** for educators are developed using student achievement trends and professional self-reflections.

Using Data to Evaluate Curriculum

AEPA regularly evaluates and refines curriculum using a three-part data strategy:

1. **Alignment Audits**: Ensure unit plans and resources match Arkansas Academic Standards and address proficiency expectations.

2. **Student Outcome Analysis**: Units or lessons are adjusted based on student performance on associated formative and summative tasks.

3. **Stakeholder Feedback**: Teachers, students, and families provide feedback on curriculum relevance, accessibility, and rigor through surveys and focus groups.

Defining and Evaluating Success

- **Student-Level**: Success is defined as growth toward or beyond grade-level proficiency, mastery of core content and power skills, and readiness for college, career, and life.

- **School-Level**: Success includes increased academic achievement across subgroups, effective implementation of PBL and experiential learning, high educator effectiveness, and strong engagement from families and students.
Through a robust and responsive performance management system, AEPA ensures that data is not just collected—but actively used to inform instruction, empower educators, and ensure that every student reaches their full potential.

The AEPA is committed to providing a free and appropriate public education to all students, including those with disabilities, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Arkansas state special education regulations. AEPA will ensure that all students with exceptional needs are accurately identified, thoroughly evaluated, and educated in the least restrictive environment that meets their individual needs.

1. Child Find and Identification

AEPA will implement comprehensive Child Find procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate any student suspected of having a disability. Identification will not be delayed or restricted by participation in other interventions (e.g., MTSS Tier levels). Referrals may be made at any time, regardless of the student's response to prior supports.

Identification methods include:

- Universal academic and social-emotional screeners administered three times annually

- Staff observations, academic data reviews, and parent/guardian input

- MTSS team meetings to monitor student response to interventions

- Direct referrals by educators or parents at any time

All staff will be trained annually to recognize signs of disabilities and understand how to initiate the referral process.

AEPA will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for all students. However, MTSS will not delay, prevent, or replace the special education referral process.

- If a disability is suspected, a formal referral must be made and processed in accordance with IDEA timelines, regardless of a student's current tier of support.

- Referrals may be initiated before, during, or after Tier II or Tier III interventions, depending on the needs of the student.

2. Evaluation Procedures

Students suspected of having a disability will be referred for a comprehensive, multidisciplinary evaluation conducted in accordance with IDEA guidelines. AEPA will ensure the following:

- Parental consent is obtained prior to evaluation.

- Evaluations are conducted in the student's native language and free from cultural or linguistic bias.

- Assessments will be multifaceted and include academic achievement, cognitive ability, communication, behavior, and adaptive functioning, as appropriate.

- A licensed school psychologist or contracted evaluation team will conduct all required assessments within mandated timelines.

All evaluations will result in a formal eligibility determination meeting and documented findings to guide appropriate educational planning.

When a student is referred, AEPA will initiate a comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation. AEPA will ensure compliance with IDEA evaluation timelines:

- Initial evaluation: completed within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent

- Re-evaluation: conducted at least once every three years, or more frequently if needed

Evaluations will:

- Be culturally and linguistically appropriate

- Be conducted in the child's native language

- Include input from parents and qualified professionals

- Assess all areas related to the suspected disability

- Be conducted by licensed professionals (school psychologist, special education staff, and related service providers)

3. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development and Placement

If a student is found eligible for special education services, AEPA will convene an IEP Team.

IEP Team Composition and Roles

The **IEP Team** will include:

- The student's parent(s)/guardian(s)

- At least one general education teacher

- At least one special education teacher or provider

- A school administrator or designee with authority over services and staffing

- Related service providers (e.g., speech-language pathologist, OT, PT)

- The student (when age-appropriate)

The team will meet:

- Within **30 days** of an eligibility determination to develop an initial IEP

- At least **annually** to review and revise the IEP

- Whenever requested by a parent or team member due to changes in the student's needs
- The student's parent(s)/guardian(s)

- At least one general education teacher

- At least one special education teacher

- A qualified representative of the charter school

- Related service providers (as needed)

- The student (when age-appropriate)

The IEP Team will:

- Develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that outlines present levels of performance, annual goals, accommodations, modifications, and necessary services.

- Identify and recommend the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate for the student, with a strong commitment to inclusion in general education settings whenever possible.

- Establish a plan for regular progress monitoring and reporting to families.

4. Service Delivery for Special Education and Related Services

AEPA will provide special education services in the setting that best meets the student's needs, as outlined in the IEP. Service delivery models may include:

- Push-in services in general education classrooms

- Pull-out sessions for targeted skill instruction

- Small-group or individualized instruction in specialized settings
- Assistive technology and accessible instructional materials as needed

- Behavioral supports, functional behavior assessments (FBAs), and behavior intervention plans (BIPs), where appropriate

Related Services:

- Speech-Language Pathology (SLP): provided by a licensed SLP, including articulation, language, fluency, and social communication support

- Occupational Therapy (OT): provided by a licensed OT, supporting fine motor skills, sensory integration, and functional daily activities

- Physical Therapy (PT): provided by a licensed PT, focused on gross motor skills, posture, and mobility

Instruction will be personalized, utilizing AEPA's educator team model to ensure collaboration among staff.

5. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Continuum of Services

AEPA will offer a **full continuum of placement options**, including:

- Full inclusion in general education with supports

- Pull out and/or in-class small group support for core academics

- Partial-day self-contained instruction

- Home-based instruction (if medically necessary)

- Placement in more restrictive environments through contracted LEA or cooperative partners if needed

LRE decisions will be made by the IEP team, based on data and documented needs, with a commitment to educating students in the general education environment to the maximum extent appropriate.

AEPA believes in inclusive education and will

- Provide students with disabilities access to the general education curriculum, extracurricular activities, and school-wide programs

- Implement co-teaching, small-group, and differentiated instruction models within inclusive classrooms

- Place students in more restrictive environments only when necessary, based on documented needs and IEP team consensus

6. Parent Communication and Procedural Safeguards

AEPA will

- Provide parents with regular updates on progress toward IEP goals

- Ensure parents receive all procedural safeguards, including prior written notice and access to dispute resolution options

- Offer translation and interpretation services for families who speak a language other than English

- Involve parents as partners in all stages of evaluation, planning, and service delivery

7. Special Education Staff Roles and Responsibilities

AEPA will

- Employ or contract with appropriately licensed special education teachers, evaluators, and service providers

- Provide ongoing professional development on inclusive practices, IDEA compliance, accommodations/modifications, and differentiated instruction

- Maintain compliance with all state reporting and documentation requirements, including IEP timelines, service minutes, and progress monitoring

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Special Education Coordinator (Licensed Administrator or Teacher)**:

- ○ Oversees all special education processes and ensures legal compliance

- ○ Coordinates referrals, evaluations, conferences, and IEP team meetings

- ○ Ensures timelines are met and services are provided as written

- **Case Managers (Special Education Teachers)**:

  - ○ Develop and implement IEPs

  - ○ Monitor student progress and collaborate with general educators

- **General Education Teachers**:

  - ○ Provide accommodations and modifications

  - ○ Collaborate with SPED staff on co-teaching and inclusion practices

- **Related Service Providers**:

  - ○ Deliver services per IEP (SLP, OT, PT, counseling)

  - ○ Participate in evaluations and IEP meetings

- **School Psychologist (Contracted)**:

  - ○ Conduct evaluations and re-evaluations

  - ○ Participate in eligibility and evaluation programming conferences (EPCs)

8. Compliance with Timelines and Conferences

AEPA will strictly follow all IDEA and Arkansas Special Education Rules. The Special Education Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all Referral, Evaluation Programming Conferences (EPCs), and IEP meetings are held on time

- Maintaining documentation of parental notice and consent

- Coordinating with the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as required

- Ensuring accurate entry of services into the statewide data system (SEAS or eSchool)

9. Medicaid Billing and Documentation

AEPA will participate in Medicaid reimbursement for eligible special education and related services:

- All Medicaid-eligible services (e.g., speech, OT, PT) will be documented according to state billing requirements

- Providers will complete service logs, session notes, and parental consent for billing

- The school's Medicaid Coordinator or contracted third party will submit claims

- Reimbursements will be reinvested into the school's special education program

10. Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights

AEPA will ensure:

- Parents receive Notice of Procedural Safeguards annually and upon referral

- All notices are available in the family's preferred language

- Parents have access to translation and interpretation at meetings

- Families are treated as equal partners in the evaluation and IEP process

The AEPA will provide a comprehensive and legally compliant special education program that prioritizes inclusion, collaboration, and results. Through clearly defined roles, timely evaluation practices, inclusive placements, and related service delivery, AEPA will ensure that all students, regardless of ability, are Always Ready and Future Fluent.

The AEPA is fully committed to ensuring that all students receive high-quality reading instruction and timely support for literacy difficulties, including characteristics of dyslexia. In alignment with Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-41-603, AEPA will administer an approved, evidence-based Arkansas Literacy Screening Assessment to all students in grades K–3, and to students in grades 3–12 who exhibit difficulty with reading fluency.

1. Universal Screening Protocol

AEPA will conduct universal literacy screenings using a high-quality, evidence-based screener approved by DESE. All screenings will align with the Arkansas Right to Read Act and dyslexia screening laws.

Screening will include

- **Grades K–3**: All students will be screened at least three times per year (fall, winter, spring) to assess foundational literacy skills.

- **Grades 4–12**: Students will be screened as needed, particularly if they exhibit difficulty with reading fluency, comprehension, or other reading-related concerns.
- **New students**: Screened within 30 days of enrollment

AEPA will use a DESE-approved universal screener (such as DIBELS 8th Edition, Acadience Reading, or MAP Reading Fluency) to evaluate

- Phonological and phonemic awareness

- Sound-symbol recognition

- Alphabet knowledge

- Decoding skills

- Rapid naming

- Encoding (spelling)

Arkansas Literacy Screening Assessments will be used and administered by trained staff. Data from each screening will be reviewed by the school's Literacy and Dyslexia Response Team. All results are documented in accordance with DESE guidance and securely maintained as part of each student's academic record.

2. Literacy and Dyslexia Intervention Services

AEPA will implement a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to provide targeted reading interventions based on student need. These interventions will follow the Arkansas Dyslexia Resource Guide and best practices in literacy development.

Tiered Interventions:

- **Tier I (Core Instruction)**:
  - All students receive daily, evidence-based reading instruction aligned to the Science of Reading, using an approved Arkansas foundational literacy curriculum.
  - Evidence-based core curriculum aligned to the Science of Reading and Arkansas standards

  - Explicit instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension

  - Daily foundational reading instruction in K–5

- **Tier II (Targeted Small Group Support)**:
  - Students identified through screening will receive small-group intervention in addition to core instruction. Interventions will target specific skill deficits and use explicit, systematic instruction.
  - Students not meeting grade-level reading benchmarks will receive small-group instruction focused on specific skill deficits

  - Interventions will occur within the daily schedule during designated intervention/enrichment blocks

  - Progress will be monitored biweekly using short-cycle assessments

- **Tier III (Intensive Intervention)**:

  For students who continue to exhibit reading deficiencies or characteristics of dyslexia, AEPA will provide

  - Daily one-on-one or small-group sessions

  - DESE-approved dyslexia intervention programs such as *Take Flight*, *Connections*, or *Wilson Reading System*

  - Instruction delivered by a trained interventionist with appropriate dyslexia certification

AEPA Dyslexia Services will include

- A DESE-approved, evidence-based dyslexia program, such as:

  - *Take Flight*

  - *SPIRE*

  - *Wilson Reading System*

  - *Orton-Gillingham-based approaches*

- Daily or near-daily sessions, implemented with fidelity by trained interventionists

- Progress monitoring every 2–3 weeks

- Instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, encoding, fluency, and comprehension

3. Dyslexia Program Compliance and Implementation

AEPA will

- Assign a Dyslexia Interventionist or Literacy Specialist to coordinate screenings, interventions, documentation, and family communication

- Submit required annual Dyslexia Program Reports to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

- Ensure all staff receive annual professional development in:

  - Characteristics of dyslexia

  - Screening requirements

  - The Science of Reading

  - Appropriate classroom accommodations and instructional strategies

4. Family Notification and Engagement

AEPA will maintain open and timely communication with families regarding literacy progress and dyslexia services:

- Parents will be notified in writing if a child exhibits markers consistent with dyslexia

- Families will receive a summary of

    - Screening results

    - Description of the intervention being provided

    - Information on dyslexia characteristics and support strategies

- AEPA will offer family literacy workshops, aligned with the *Parents at the Center* program, to help caregivers support reading at home

Following each screening cycle, AEPA will provide timely written notification to parents or guardians if their child demonstrates reading deficiencies or characteristics of dyslexia. Notifications will include

- The student's specific areas of concern

- An overview of planned interventions

- Parent rights and options under Arkansas law

- Strategies families can implement at home

5. Staff Training and Qualifications

AEPA will ensure that

- All K–6 classroom teachers complete required training in the Science of Reading (SoR) and meet the Proficient level under the Arkansas Right to Read Act

- All reading interventionists and dyslexia specialists complete DESE-approved dyslexia intervention training and certification
- Ongoing professional development will be provided to all staff on recognizing characteristics of dyslexia and implementing classroom accommodations

6. Documentation and Accountability

AEPA will:

- Maintain a Dyslexia Documentation Folder for each identified student

- Monitor intervention fidelity and student progress using DESE guidance

- Track and report:

  - The number of students screened

  - The number identified as exhibiting dyslexia characteristics

  - The number receiving dyslexia intervention

- Use literacy data to inform instructional decisions, revise interventions, and evaluate program effectiveness

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison
Executive Summary

In 2023, less than 40% of students in grades 3-10 in the state of Arkansas could read on grade level. Only 17% of African American and 25% of economically disadvantaged students were reading on grade level. 59% of all students in the state of Arkansas are economically disadvantaged. Freedom Education Services, Inc. aims to not only change the lives of these marginalized students but to also change the trajectories of entire families with emphasis on those suffering from generational poverty.

Students who live in Harrison and the surrounding area (Boone, Newton, Caroll, and Madison counties) have no access to choice in their schooling other than secular private or home schools. While there are numerous choices for public schools in this area, there is little to no difference in the programming and operations of these schools, providing families who cannot afford private or homeschooling with no educational choice or freedom. The lack of freedom and choice especially places the many families who live in extremely rural areas or are economically disadvantaged behind. Harrison serves as a hub for work, commerce, and entertainment for the area. This is why it is imperative that we open the Arkansas Executive Prep Academy in Harrison so that all families in the area will have access to innovative school choices and services that fit their needs.

Arkansas Executive Preparatory Academy is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) school that has been thoughtfully reimagined as a K–12 model to create lasting, meaningful impact. Rather than waiting until high school to introduce students to essential career skills, AEPA integrates mastery learning with hands-on, real-world experiences beginning in the early grades. This approach allows students to build a strong foundation in both academic knowledge and practical skill sets over time. By the time they graduate, they are "Always Ready"—prepared to thrive in any path they choose at any point and time—because their journey toward skill development began in their earliest school years. AEPA is not just preparing students for jobs—we are cultivating a future workforce that understands the value of hard work and the importance of mastering every level of their education and chosen field. We believe that to truly lead—to be an executive—you must first understand every aspect of the job from the ground up. By embedding CTE throughout the entire K–12 experience, AEPA is shifting the trajectory for students and communities across Arkansas.

The vision for Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is for all graduates from AEPA to always be ready with a unique set of skills that make them the candidate of choice. They possess a firm knowledge and understanding of leadership skills and responsibilities that span from entry level to executive level positions. They are prepared to enter the workforce and lead in any position they are entrusted. They understand that hard work and ethical practices are essential to high performance and advancement.

The founders are experienced school leaders in the public and charter school arena who have a proven track record of assisting students and families in reaching their greatest potential all while sustaining their districts with challenging budgets. Due to the strength of the co-founders students will receive laser focused expert leadership training specific to their chosen career interest in order that they will be ready for any executive leadership position. In addition to leadership training the instructional model used will be that of mastery learning where time is not a constraint to a student's ability to advance their goals. With a marriott of teachers who play to students strengths working together in one classroom students are propelled into the best learning environment possible in order for every child to be successful.

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison
Executive Summary

The AEPA dares to dream of new and innovative ways to transform the teaching and learning of today's students. The instructional model directly supports the expanded definition of student success through the five tenets of its programming: mental and physical well being, ivy league academics, Parents at the Center, Always Ready/Future Fluent program, and the Next Education Workforce Model. We intend to go above and beyond this definition by expanding our focus on teachers, staff, families, and our community as part of the education process.

The founders have a proven track record in public education earning several different awards for their districts:

2019 Top 10% Growth in Arkansas High Schools
2018 & 2019 Beating the Odds Awards - English Language Arts
95% or greater graduation rate for all three year
55% growth in ACT Aspire Scores since 2019
10.2% growth in ACT Aspire Scores since 2018
Top 8% of 11th grade ACT scores in the state in 2024
Various grant awards for school safety, wellness, food service

Vision: Graduates from Arkansas Executive Prep Academy are always ready with a unique set of skills that make them the candidate of choice.They possess a firm knowledge and understanding of leadership skills and responsibilities that span from entry level to executive level positions. They are prepared to enter the workforce and lead in any position they are entrusted. They understand that hard work and ethical practices are essential to high performance and advancement.

Mission:
Arkansas Executive Prep Academy is dedicated to empowering students to reach their full potential as cutting edge executives.

Motto: Unlocking potential and building tomorrow's executives

Core Beliefs:
While well intentioned and hard working, public education can no longer meet the needs of all students, families, and staff. We must create and maintain schools that work for ALL students, specifically those who are underserved in the current system.
- The traditional classroom is not working for the majority of students and teachers. Having one teacher in one classroom with 25 students must change.
- We believe that children should not be required to conform to the learning style and needs of schools. Rather, schools must adjust and adapt to the needs of the children they serve.
- Families must play a central and contributing role to their students' education as true partners in the process. Family support and resources are necessary for the success of future generations.

Arkansas Executive Prep Academy-Harrison
Executive Summary

- The most successful learning model is that of mastery learning. Teaching to a test is not allowing our students to gain the knowledge and skills they must have to be successful.
- At AEPA our students can and will dispel any sense of entitlement characteristics that is prevalent in their generation. Students will set goals, work hard, and earn everything in an inclusive environment that is tailored for ALL to succeed.
- We will prepare students to be "Always Ready" for their career and in life.
- The most successful future executives must be "Future Fluent" and have been exposed to multiple countries and cultures.
- While some leaders are born, all leaders are trained. Leadership training is necessary for all to grow our future.
- Diversity makes us stronger in all ways. AEPA will push the genius in every child and staff member in order to create, support, celebrate, and nurture opportunities for ALL staff, students, and families we have the privilege to serve.
- Leaders must have the knowledge and skills necessary to assist all types of individuals including those who may suffer from a mental health crisis.
- Today's traditional school setting is not meeting the needs of the workforce. The workforce wants schools to prepare students with skills and knowledge that are relevant to today's job market. Critical thinking, Problem-Solving, Communication Skills and Resilience are top skills being sought by employers and not being adequately addressed in schools in younger grade levels.
- Schools needs to be structured to provide the following:
  a. Continual upskilling with an emphasis on the need for students to continue to learn and develop their skills.
  b. Real-world experiences that incorporate real-world problems into lessons and providing opportunities for students to gain practical experience
  c. Developing soft skills such as emotional intelligence, and work ethic
  d. Creating opportunities for students to be mentored by professionals other than just educators

Objectives:
1. Develop and implement "Parents at the Center" program to provide support, training, and partnership with families which includes homeschooling families.
2. Implement the Next Education Workforce Model (NEWF) to create classroom environments that are inclusive, supportive, and rigorous for students and staff.
3. Go beyond "Character Education and Soft Skills" to jointly implement "Power Skills for Life".
4. Create learning spaces that inspire imagination, collaboration, and creativity while promoting hard work, conceptualization, deep learning, and real world experiences.
5. Employ, inspire, and empower the most skilled and qualified administrators, teachers and support staff and provide avenues for growth, training, and promotion within AEPA and Freedom Education Services, Inc.
6. Develop and Implement a mastery learning model for all subject areas including experiential learning targets, Power Skills for Life standards, embedded career and technical skills, pedagogy, and evaluations of mastery (formative and summative). This

model will include unit plans, individual lesson plans, essential standards, essential vocabulary, acceleration plans, and additional support plans.

7. Students will leave AEPA in a state of "Always Ready". This is the level of preparation that is required for a student to excel and be successful in all avenues of life including academic, career, family, community, and philanthropic endeavors. We aim to prepare strong men and women of all races, ethnicities, genders, religions, creeds, and orientations who will be looked to for leadership and strength throughout their lives.

8. Prioritize the hiring of diverse populations with diverse and real world experiences of teachers, staff, and administration.

9. Students will obtain written and spoken command of multiple languages as well as a thorough understanding of the country(s) and cultural aspects of the languages they speak.

10. Students will develop critical leadership skills that mimic the traits of great leaders of our past in order to propel AEPA students into their future.

11. Students will have knowledge of mental health issues, proper techniques, and additional resources in order to assist those they work with, for, and potentially supervise.

Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement

Educational Challenges in the Harrison Region

Despite the presence of multiple public school districts in and around Harrison including Harrison, Bergman, Valley Springs, Lead Hill, Alpena, and Omaha, families across Boone County face significant barriers to student success. While many educators in these districts are working diligently, systemic gaps continue to prevent a growing number of students from reaching their full potential.

1. **Lack of Diverse Learning Models**
   The most urgent concern is the absence of alternative public education options. There are no charter schools in the Harrison area, and current offerings overwhelmingly reflect a one-size-fits-all instructional approach. For students who are not well-served by conventional classrooms, particularly those who are neurodivergent, entrepreneurial, highly creative, or need acceleration in their learning. There are few, if any, public options that align with their learning styles or aspirations.

2. **Academic Underperformance and Achievement Gaps**
   While some area schools perform near state averages, proficiency data reveals troubling disparities. In Lead Hill, Omaha, and Ozark Mountain School Districts, fewer than 1 in 3 students are reading on grade level by third grade, a foundational predictor of long-term academic success.
   - Ozark Mountain: 16%
   - Omaha: 31%
   - Harrison and Alpena: 38%

These performance challenges disproportionately affect rural, low-income students, who often require individualized instruction, evidence-based interventions, and engaging curricula, none of which are consistently available in the region's traditional schools.

3. **Limited Access to Career and Technical Education**

While high school graduation remains a priority in the region, students in our target community have limited access to meaningful Career and Technical Education (CTE) experiences. Most local schools do not begin skill-based learning until high school—if at all—leaving younger students without early exposure to the foundational skills they need to grow into successful, self-sufficient adults. This gap contributes to a growing concern among families and community members: a generation unprepared for the realities of work, responsibility, and collaboration.

Through surveys and outreach conversations with parents, educators, and local stakeholders, a consistent message emerged—our students need earlier, stronger preparation for life. Families are asking for a school that doesn't just teach academic content but instills character, accountability, and a strong work ethic from the beginning. AEPA will directly address this need

by embedding Career and Technical Education into every grade level, including elementary school.

We believe that preparing students to be "Always Ready" means teaching them, from a young age, that success requires discipline, teamwork, and humility. Our youngest learners will be introduced to the concept that in any workplace or community, every role matters. There are no meaningless jobs. At AEPA, students will learn that to lead, you must first understand every aspect of the work—from the ground up. By experiencing the full range of tasks that contribute to a goal, students gain both respect for others and confidence in their own contributions.

This early exposure helps combat the societal entitlement mindset by reinforcing the idea that success is earned through effort, collaboration, and a willingness to grow. Our students will understand that being part of a team—whether in a classroom, a business, or a community—means showing up, doing your part, and appreciating the work of others. Through project-based learning, peer collaboration, and hands-on experiences that mirror real-world roles, AEPA ensures that every student, starting in kindergarten, begins the journey toward becoming a capable, grounded, and responsible adult.

4. **Declining Public School Enrollment and Rising Homeschool Rates**

According to data from the Arkansas Department of Education, Boone County's public school enrollment is declining, while homeschooling has surged to more than 14% of the total student population across districts, far exceeding the state average of 3.5%. This trend underscores a clear dissatisfaction with existing options.

District	Homeschool Rate (2023–2024)
Alpena	18.0%
Ozark Mountain	17.3%
Omaha	13.2%
Harrison	12.5%

5. **Concerns from Families and Students**

Outreach efforts and community engagement have revealed three consistent themes in family decisions to exit traditional public schools—even those deemed "high-performing":

- Overemphasis on standardized testing, with little time devoted to meaningful, future-focused learning
- Inadequate behavior support and classroom management, impacting the learning environment
- Lack of innovation and relevance, leading to student disengagement and diminished motivation

Students and parents have voiced their frustrations with clarity and conviction:

"I want to be prepared for my future, not for their test." — 8th Grade Student
"I am more than a test score. I haven't learned anything except how to pass 'the test'." — 10th Grade Student
"My son is a square peg in a round hole. The system just doesn't work for him." — Parent
"I can't send her back. They're killing her creativity." — Parent of an elementary student

These firsthand accounts reveal a deep unmet need for a public school model that prioritizes personalization, innovation, and future readiness.

AEPA's Plan to Address These Challenges

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is designed specifically to address the barriers to student success in Boone County and beyond. AEPA's mission is to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs, executives, and change-makers through a rigorous, innovative, and student-centered educational experience.

Key Strategies and Programmatic Innovations

Challenge	AEPA's Strategic Response
Limited Learning Models	Implement mastery-based, project-centered learning that allows students to progress at their own pace and apply knowledge in real-world contexts
Achievement Gaps	Deliver tiered academic supports, structured intervention blocks, and embedded literacy and numeracy instruction across content areas

Lack of Career and Technical Education Pathways	AEPA will integrate Career and Technical Education beginning in the earliest grades to build essential skills like teamwork, responsibility, and respect for all roles in a workplace. Through hands-on, project-based learning and real-world experiences, students will understand the value of every job and the importance of mastering all aspects before leading. This approach fosters a strong work ethic and counters entitlement by teaching that success comes from effort, collaboration, and personal growth.
Mental & Behavioral Health	Provide school-based wellness supports, counseling, and trauma-informed practices to meet the needs of the whole child
Family Disengagement	Launch a robust **Parents at the Center** initiative that includes community events, workshops, and regular two-way communication
Teacher Support & Innovation	Build a dynamic professional learning community for educators, emphasizing growth mindset, future-ready instruction, and collaborative planning

AEPA will also serve as a community innovation hub, working closely with local businesses, civic leaders, and families to align education with regional economic needs. This will ensure that students graduate not only with a diploma but also with the skills, confidence, and vision to lead.

Conclusion

Boone County's current educational landscape is not failing; however, it is falling short for many. AEPA does not seek to compete with existing schools, but to complement and expand the ecosystem with a tuition-free, public option that prioritizes job readiness, mastery, innovation, and personalized learning.

By re-engaging the disengaged, developing the untapped potential of students, and preparing youth to lead in a rapidly changing world, AEPA will meet a critical need at a critical moment for students, families, and the future of the Harrison region.

Proposed Temporary Facility Location

To ensure that Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) opens on schedule and operates effectively from day one, our team has prioritized securing a high-quality facility that meets all required safety, accessibility, and instructional standards. From the outset, we have engaged local stakeholders, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor's office, to identify viable properties that can be adapted quickly and cost-effectively for school use. Their partnership has been invaluable in establishing relationships with commercial property owners, religious institutions, and civic organizations open to short-term educational occupancy.

We have identified a potential temporary facility in Harrison and are currently in the process of finalizing an agreement for use. This centrally located building offers ample space for classrooms, administrative offices, and small-group learning, making it well suited to meet the academic and operational needs of AEPA during our launch year.

While this location is intended for temporary use, it provides a strong foundation for executing our academic mission and launching our Next Education Workforce instructional model. At the same time, we are actively exploring long-term facility options that align with our growth projections and long-range planning goals.

All potential properties have been, and will continue to be, reviewed using a structured site assessment and due diligence process. This includes evaluating compliance with local building codes and zoning regulations, as well as environmental safety and accessibility requirements. Once identified, each site undergoes a formal review with local professionals and consultants to ensure feasibility for short-term occupancy. If necessary, interim non-structural modifications will be made to accommodate instructional delivery and school safety protocols.

Our minimum criteria for any temporary facility include:

- ADA-compliant access for students and staff

- Adequate classroom space and restrooms

- Safety and security infrastructure

- Capacity for reliable internet and instructional technology

- Approvals from the fire marshal and local health department

We recognize that a well-prepared facility is essential to fostering a welcoming, secure, and high-functioning learning environment. As such, we remain committed to working closely with local inspectors, municipal authorities, and the Arkansas Department of Education to ensure that all facility benchmarks are met in a timely and compliant manner. We will also keep lines of

communication open with our community and stakeholders throughout this process to maintain transparency and trust as we launch AEPA with excellence.

Letter of Support

Harrison Parks and Recreation
PO Box 1715
Harrison, AR 72602
870-741-2346
parks@harrisonar.gov

August 7, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department of Harrison, I am writing to express support and a desire to partner with the Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) and to welcome its faculty, staff, and kids to Creekside Community Center, the Brandon Burlsworth Youth Center, and/or the rest of our Parks facilities.

One of our mottos at Parks and Recreation is "it's all about the kids." As we all know, children are the future of our community, nation, and world. We see it as our responsibility to help ALL kids from all schools, walks of life, and economic levels and provide families and the institutions that serve them with recreational, sports, and enrichment activities that help their children grow up healthy, happy, and resilient.

AEPA has approached us with the possiblity of renting facilities for their students' physical education instruction, and we stand ready to provide facilities that will enhance their kids' educational experience.

Sincerely,

Chuck Eddington, Director
Creekside Community Center &
Harrison Parks and Recreation

Future Fluent Framework

The Future Fluent Framework is designed to define and measure the essential professional, academic, and executive competencies Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) expects all students to develop by graduation. This framework supports AEPA's mission to prepare students to be Always Ready and Future Fluent—capable of leading with confidence in academic, entrepreneurial, civic, and professional arenas.

1. Executive Functioning and Leadership
- Demonstrates time management, goal-setting, and task completion skills
- Uses reflection and feedback to improve performance
- Exhibits initiative and accountability in academic and professional contexts
- Contributes to team goals with ethical decision-making

2. Communication and Etiquette
- Communicates effectively across formats (verbal, written, digital)
- Demonstrates active listening and constructive dialogue
- Applies professional etiquette in interactions with peers and adults
- Delivers presentations with poise, clarity, and audience awareness

3. Power Skills (21st Century Competencies)
- Collaborates productively in diverse teams
- Thinks critically and solves complex problems
- Demonstrates creativity and adaptability in varied learning tasks
- Uses technology confidently and responsibly

4. Civic and Cultural Literacy
- Understands civic processes and participates in community initiatives
- Engages in respectful dialogue around diverse perspectives
- Demonstrates global awareness and cultural sensitivity
- Advocates for equity, inclusion, and ethical leadership

5. Career and Financial Readiness
- Explores career pathways and articulates future goals
- Develops financial literacy including budgeting and investing
- Completes internships, service learning, or work-based learning experiences
- Builds a professional resume, portfolio, and digital presence

6. Academic Fluency and Mastery
- Demonstrates mastery of core academic content through real-world application
- Engages in interdisciplinary projects and performance-based assessments
- Applies research skills to solve authentic problems
- Strives for excellence and growth in all academic domains

Instructional Strategies Justification for Harrison and Surrounding Area Student Population

Justification of Mastery Learning and Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Harrison, Arkansas is an economically diverse, rural community with a mix of socioeconomic backgrounds and growing student needs for personalized, real-world learning experiences. To meet these needs, the Freedom Education Model strategically implements mastery learning and project-based learning (PBL) as core instructional strategies.

1. Mastery Learning Justification

Mastery learning ensures students fully understand each standard or skill before progressing, reducing learning gaps. This is a critical approach for communities like Harrison and the surrounding area where students may have experienced inconsistent access to educational resources due to economic or geographic barriers.

- **Why it fits Harrison**: Mastery learning is highly effective in rural or high-poverty areas, where student learning may be non-linear due to absences, mobility, or external responsibilities.

- **Supporting Evidence**: Research shows that mastery learning significantly improves student achievement across ability levels. In a meta-analysis of 108 studies, Bloom (1968) found mastery learning had an average effect size of **0.81**, indicating strong academic gains across subjects.

- **Cultural Fit**: Mastery learning aligns with the **strong work ethic and individual accountability values** present in the Harrison community, reinforcing student agency.

> *"In mastery learning systems, students achieve more, retain information longer, and feel more positive about their learning process."* (Guskey, 2010)

2. Project-Based Learning Justification

PBL allows students to apply academic concepts in real-world contexts through collaborative, interdisciplinary projects, making learning more relevant and engaging.

- **Why it fits Harrison**: Many students in Harrison are involved in **agriculture, trades, and local entrepreneurship**. PBL taps into these local strengths and provides relevance and rigor, particularly for kinesthetic and applied learners.

- **Supporting Evidence**: A study by the Buck Institute for Education (BIE) and Lucas Education Research (2021) found that students in PBL classrooms outperformed peers in traditional classrooms on **AP, state, and literacy assessments**.

- **Cultural Fit**: Project-based learning promotes **problem-solving and teamwork**, values often cultivated in rural communities through shared labor and community involvement.

"PBL is especially effective for improving the performance of students furthest from opportunity, including English learners and students with special needs." (Condliffe et al., 2017)

Research Base Supporting the Freedom Education Model

The Freedom Education Model blends mastery learning, PBL, multi-age classrooms, experiential learning, and community-based instruction. Its design is informed by established research and adapted to the unique needs of rural and underserved learners.

Evidence Base and Pilot Studies:

- **Mastery Learning**: Guskey (2007) found mastery learning increases student motivation and achievement, particularly in low-performing or high-poverty schools.

  A longitudinal study by Buraphadeja and Srisarkun (2024) focused on a computer science (CS1) course that implemented mastery learning during the shift back to in-person instruction post-pandemic. Findings indicated that mastery learning enhanced student engagement and better accommodated diverse learning needs, proving particularly beneficial for students at risk of falling behind.

  Recent work in higher education and health professions continues to support the effectiveness of mastery learning. A 2025 overview by Joy Nolan highlights how mastery learning has been widely adopted in medical, nursing, and other professional training, where it supports students from varied backgrounds, including those who typically struggle with paced or traditional instruction.

  An emerging study by Knowledgeworks and its partner school districts in North Dakota, Arizona, and South Carolina explores how culturally responsive, mastery-based instruction impacts traditionally marginalized students, focusing on both their academic outcomes and engagement. While it's still underway, its direction emphasizes equity and inclusivity.

  In the study by Davis and Sorrell (1995), *Mastery Learning in Public Schools,* it was found that mastery programs benefit learners most in elementary and junior high school,

promote longer retention, and foster positive attitudes about school, especially among students whose needs are not met by one-size-fits-all approaches.

Kulik et al.'s (1990) meta-analysis drew on 108 controlled evaluations, finding that mastery learning produced significant gains in examination performance compared to traditional teaching methods. This was especially notable for students who typically struggled or were advanced academically because students were allowed to work at their own pace and understanding.

This matters for economically diverse communities for the following reasons:

- Tailored pacing and support help bridge learning gaps that often disproportionately affect lower-income students.

- Higher engagement and retention can counteract risk factors common in economically challenged contexts.

- Culturally responsive adaptations further enhance relevance and equity.

Additionally, mastery learning's iterative, feedback-rich structure aligns well with the intervention and tutoring model of the AEPA with strategies that have shown success in high-poverty districts in recent years even if not strictly labeled "mastery learning."

- **PBL Effectiveness**: Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a dynamic instructional model that places students at the center of the learning process. In the AEPA, PBL will allow students to investigate complex, real-world problems over extended periods of time, culminating in the creation and presentation of authentic products. PBL empowers learners to apply academic knowledge and skills mastered across disciplines while developing collaboration, critical thinking, and communication skills that are essential for success in the 21st-century workforce. Thomas (2000) synthesized over 20 years of PBL research showing improved critical thinking, problem-solving, and student engagement.

Rationale for Project-Based Learning in Our School

In economically and culturally diverse communities, like ours, students bring rich experiences and perspectives into the classroom. However, they may also face barriers to engagement and academic success due to lack of access to enrichment, learning supports, or real-world connections. Traditional, lecture-driven methods often fail to tap into these students' strengths or promote equitable outcomes. Project-Based Learning addresses these disparities by making learning relevant, rigorous, and responsive to student voice and community context.

PBL naturally aligns with the needs of learners in rural and economically diverse settings. It fosters agency, ownership, and resilience, and gives all students, including multilingual learners,

students with IEPs, and gifted students, the opportunity to learn through authentic experiences that matter to them and their communities.

Key Features of PBL Implementation

- **Authentic, Interdisciplinary Projects**: Projects are rooted in real-world issues—such as environmental conservation, local business development, or historical investigations—ensuring relevance and meaning.

- **Student-Centered Inquiry**: Students frame questions, conduct research, interview community members, analyze sources, and solve problems collaboratively.

- **Performance-Based Assessment**: Assessment focuses on demonstrated learning through final products, presentations, and public exhibitions, often with rubrics and portfolios.

- **Community Connection**: Projects often incorporate local partners (e.g., businesses, nonprofits, elders, or municipal leaders), which expands learning beyond the classroom.

- **Embedded Literacy and Numeracy**: Standards in reading, writing, and math are integrated into projects so that academic skills are applied in meaningful ways.

Equity-Focused Design

Project-Based Learning is particularly effective in closing opportunity gaps. According to research by Condliffe et al. (2017), PBL increases engagement and performance for students traditionally underserved in school systems, including English learners, low-income students, and students of color. The collaborative, hands-on nature of PBL also supports Universal Design for Learning (UDL), helping teachers differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning needs.

> *"PBL supports deeper learning and knowledge retention, while developing essential skills such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking."*
> — Thomas, J. W. (2000), *A Review of Research on Project-Based Learning*

A 2021 multi-site study by Lucas Education Research and the Buck Institute for Education found that students in PBL classrooms outperformed those in traditional classrooms on AP assessments and state exams, with the greatest gains observed in low-income schools.

Project-Based Learning is a pillar of the Freedom Education Model, which embraces experiential, student-centered learning. PBL complements the model's multi-age classrooms, mastery learning approach, and community-based instruction by:

- Encouraging cross-grade collaboration and peer mentorship

- Supporting competency-based progression through scaffolded project benchmarks

- Embedding place-based learning into every project, connecting students with their cultural and geographic context

PBL transforms the classroom into a launching pad for real-world problem solving, civic engagement, and deeper learning. For students in economically diverse communities, it provides not only a meaningful education, but a foundation for lifelong agency and contribution. Implemented with fidelity, Project-Based Learning becomes both a vehicle for equity and a framework for excellence.

- **Multi-age Classrooms**: Multi-age classrooms group students of varying ages and grade levels together in a shared learning environment. Rather than organizing instruction solely by chronological age, multi-age education emphasizes developmental readiness, peer collaboration, and differentiated instruction. Rooted in child development theory and supported by decades of practice, multi-age classrooms foster a rich, inclusive culture of learning where all students are both teachers and learners.

The traditional model of single-grade classrooms assumes that children learn in lockstep, progressing at the same pace across all subject areas. In reality, students' academic abilities, emotional maturity, and learning styles vary significantly, even within the same age group. This variation is especially pronounced in economically diverse communities, where gaps in opportunity, early childhood education, and learning experiences can result in wide ranges of readiness.

Multi-age classrooms respond to these differences by offering a more flexible, student-centered approach. They allow for personalized learning pathways, reduce the stigma associated with remediation or acceleration, and strengthen peer mentoring relationships.

Core Benefits of Multi-Age Classrooms

- **Peer Mentoring and Leadership**: Older students reinforce their learning by teaching younger peers, while younger students benefit from exposure to advanced vocabulary, concepts, and models of learning.

- **Differentiated Instruction**: Teachers are naturally equipped to provide tiered support, using small group instruction and flexible grouping strategies to meet a range of learning needs. This pairs especially well with the Next Education Workforce Model with team based instruction.

- **Continuity of Relationships**: Multi-age models often keep students with the same teacher for multiple years, deepening trust and supporting long-term academic and

social development.

- **Reduced Competition, Increased Cooperation**: Mixed-age classrooms de-emphasize comparison and promote a collaborative learning culture.

- **Increased Teacher Insight**: Long-term observation across years allows educators to better understand each student's learning trajectory and adjust instruction accordingly.

Equity and Inclusion Benefits

Multi-age classrooms support equity by design. For students who have experienced interrupted formal education, trauma, or developmental delays, they offer more time to master content without the pressure of grade-level pacing. For advanced learners, the environment allows natural acceleration through access to more complex materials and opportunities to lead.

This format is especially powerful in rural and economically diverse settings such as Harrison and the surrounding community where class sizes may be small, but student needs are wide-ranging. It also aligns with principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive practices by removing arbitrary age-based barriers and focusing instead on progress and potential.

> *"Multi-age classrooms are not a reform—they are a return to sound developmental practice rooted in how children actually grow and learn."*
> — Dr. Lilian Katz, University of Illinois

Research Base

- Veenman (1995) conducted a meta-analysis and concluded that multi-age classrooms produce academic outcomes comparable to or better than traditional classes, while offering social benefits such as increased confidence, empathy, and independence.

- Stone (1998) found that students in multi-age settings showed higher levels of intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and social maturity.

- Miller (1991) reported that multi-age programs promote a sense of community and belonging, which contributes to long-term student engagement and achievement.
- Vigo-Arrazola (2025) explores how teachers in multigrade settings use creative and inclusive practices to counteract the standardizing tendencies of traditional classrooms, fostering equity and differentiation across age groups.
- Jones (2025) investigates how K–8 teachers in extremely rural, multigrade environments of the Northern Rocky Mountain region integrate STEM education despite challenges like limited funding and isolation. The study highlights place-based, innovative approaches that enhance relevance and equity for underserved students.

- A September 2024 article outlines practical advantages of multi-age classrooms such as flexible pacing, strong teacher–student relationships through looping, and improved differentiation, especially in Montessori-style environments.

Multi-age classrooms are an essential element of mastery learning in the Freedom Education Model, supporting its core tenets of mastery learning, project-based learning, and community-based instruction. This structure enhances:

- Mastery learning by allowing students to progress at their own pace without grade-level constraints. Students will be assigned grade levels; however, grouping for instruction will be focused on skills mastery.

- PBL and experiential learning through mixed-age collaboration and shared inquiry.

- Student agency by giving all learners roles as both contributors and receivers of knowledge.

Implementation Structures

In our school model, multi-age classrooms will be organized in overlapping 2–3 year grade bands (e.g., K–2, 3–5, 6–8), with flexible groupings within each classroom based on student progress and learning needs. Teachers will be trained in multi-age pedagogy, differentiated instruction, and social-emotional development to ensure high-quality implementation.

Multi-age classrooms are a powerful tool for cultivating a learning environment that is inclusive, flexible, and rooted in authentic child development. For economically and culturally diverse learners, this structure offers a dignified path to mastery, agency, and academic success. In combination with mastery learning and project-based instruction, multi-age classrooms ensure that every student is seen, supported, and empowered to grow. Veenman (1995) concluded that multi-age classrooms produce comparable or better academic achievement and stronger peer mentoring outcomes.

- **Experiential Learning**: Experiential learning is a hands-on, inquiry-driven instructional approach grounded in the principle that students learn best by doing. Rooted in the work of John Dewey, David Kolb, and other constructivist theorists, experiential learning empowers students to engage with real-world problems, reflect on their actions, and apply new understandings through cycles of direct experience, observation, analysis, and experimentation. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory affirms that active, experience-based instruction leads to deeper learning and knowledge retention.
- In the AEPAI, experiential learning is not an enrichment activity. It is a central pillar of our instructional model. We believe that all students, regardless of background, deserve access to authentic, community-connected, and personally meaningful learning experiences that build academic understanding, life skills, and social responsibility.

Students in economically and culturally diverse communities often possess rich lived experiences but are rarely invited to connect them to classroom learning. Experiential learning bridges that gap, affirming students' identities while equipping them with tools to make sense of and improve their world.

This approach responds to challenges such as

- Lack of engagement in abstract or test-driven curricula

- Learning gaps caused by poverty or inconsistent access to quality early education

- The need for critical thinking, adaptability, and real-world readiness in an evolving global economy

By anchoring learning in real tasks and environments, whether in nature, community organizations, field research, internships, or labs, students develop agency, confidence, and ownership of their learning journeys.

Key Features of Experiential Learning in Practice

- **Real-World Contexts**: Students engage in community-based projects, environmental studies, civic problem-solving, entrepreneurship, and field work.

- **Learning Cycles**: Based on Kolb's model, instruction follows a cycle of Concrete Experience → Reflective Observation → Abstract Conceptualization → Active Experimentation.

- **Interdisciplinary Integration**: Science, math, literacy, social studies, and the arts are woven into projects and field experiences.

- **Student Reflection and Ownership**: Reflection journals, discussion protocols, and student-led exhibitions promote metacognition and personal growth.

- **Assessment for Understanding**: Performance tasks, project presentations, portfolios, and real-world feedback serve as key measures of learning.

Equity and Inclusion

Experiential learning is a research-backed strategy to close equity gaps. It affirms diverse ways of knowing, accommodates various learning styles, and fosters inclusion through hands-on, collaborative environments. For multilingual learners and students with IEPs, experiential tasks provide contextual clues, visual supports, and authentic practice, helping to bypass language or processing barriers common in traditional settings.

"Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results."
— John Dewey, *Experience and Education*

Research Base

- Kolb (1984) formalized the experiential learning cycle and found that students who engage in direct experience develop stronger critical thinking and adaptive reasoning skills.

- A 2022 meta-analysis by Association for Experiential Education found that experiential learning increased long-term retention, improved student engagement, and promoted deeper understanding across content areas, particularly in under-resourced schools.

- Beames, Higgins & Nicol (2012) showed that outdoor and experiential education increased student resilience, collaboration, and academic confidence in low-income communities.

- National Research Council (2011) recommended experiential learning as a high-impact strategy for developing 21st-century competencies like problem-solving, creativity, and civic literacy.

Experiential learning is essential to the Freedom Education Model, supporting its vision for student-centered learning environments. Within this model:

- Students apply academic concepts in real-life contexts such as farms, businesses, museums, nature preserves, and maker spaces.

- Classrooms extend into the community through fieldwork, service learning, and professional mentorships.

- Learners progress through mastery-based benchmarks by completing performance tasks tied to real-world applications.

- Interdisciplinary, project-based units are designed to culminate in experiential outputs such as product design, community presentations, or public exhibitions.

Experiential learning transforms education from passive absorption to active exploration. It builds students' intellectual capacity while nurturing the social-emotional and practical skills they need to succeed in school, work, and life. For diverse learners, it provides a gateway to relevance, equity, and empowerment. In the AEPA, experiential learning is not an activity, it is a way of thinking, teaching, and becoming.

- **Pilot Models**:

  - The Big Picture Learning Network uses personalized, project-based approaches rooted in student interest and has demonstrated gains in graduation rates and post-secondary success.

  - EL Education Schools (formerly Expeditionary Learning) consistently outperform their state peers on standardized assessments, particularly among students with disabilities and multilingual learners.

  - Arizona State University oversees the implementation of the Next Education Workforce Model in schools across the country.

  - Knowledgeworks, a non-profit organization, is currently conducting a study with schools in Arizona, North Dakota, and South Carolina involving competency based personalized instruction in schools.

Equitable Access and Measurement: Multilingual & CTE Programming

English Language Learners

Access:

- All ELL students will be identified and assessed within 30 days of enrollment using a state-approved English language proficiency screener.

- Students will receive targeted language development instruction embedded within core subjects through sheltered instruction and content-based ESL support.

- Materials, communication, and community engagement will be provided in students' home languages whenever possible.

Measurement:

- Growth in English proficiency will be measured using the ELPA 21 for ELLs annually.

- Progress in core content areas will be monitored using common formative assessments, rubrics, and portfolios with accommodations aligned to student language needs.

- ELLs will be included in all school-wide PBL and experiential opportunities, with language scaffolds built into instruction.

Career & Technical Education (CTE):

Access:

- CTE pathways will begin with exploratory experiences in grades 6–8 and allow students to select specialized pathways in grades 9–12.

- All students, including those with IEPs, will have equal access to CTE through appropriate supports and co-teaching models.

- Transportation and scheduling flexibility will ensure rural and low-income students can participate in off-site internships and certifications.

Measurement:

- Student progress will be tracked through industry-validated certifications, portfolios, and employability skills rubrics.

- CTE student success will also be measured by completion rates, internship participation, post-secondary enrollment, and workforce entry data.

- Ongoing collaboration with local employers, trade organizations, and higher education partners will ensure relevance and quality of CTE programming.

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my full support for Freedom Education Services Inc. in their initiative to establish a charter school in Harrison, Arkansas. As communities across our state seek innovative and effective educational opportunities, Freedom Education Services brings a much-needed vision of academic excellence, inclusivity, and student-centered learning that will benefit families in our region.

Harrison and the surrounding areas are home to many students who would greatly benefit from expanded educational options. A charter school led by Freedom Education Services Inc. would not only diversify the local educational landscape but also raise the standard of academic performance through personalized instruction, strong community partnerships, and a focus on character development.

Freedom Education Services has demonstrated a clear commitment to academic rigor, parent engagement, and creating a nurturing learning environment where all students can thrive. Their model emphasizes small class sizes, data-driven instruction, and an inclusive curriculum that reflects both local values and global perspectives.

Moreover, establishing a charter school under their leadership would provide parents with meaningful choices in their children's education—especially important in rural areas like ours where options can be limited. The long-term benefits to students, families, and the broader Harrison community would be substantial.

I strongly encourage the relevant authorities to approve this proposal and support Freedom Education Services Inc. in their mission to provide high-quality education and meaningful opportunity to students in Harrison.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Copeland
Business Owner
Community Member

Budget Overview and Narrative

AEPA is projecting positive fund balances each year with conservative, realistic enrollment and revenue projections. Core expenses are prioritized around staffing, facilities, and student support. K12itc will manage technology infrastructure and cybersecurity needs, included in the technology line. We have prepared three revenue forecasts one with the anticipated 500 students in the first year, which supports full staffing, and robust student services. To ensure financial sustainability, we have also prepared a conservative scenario based on a minimum enrollment of 200 students, adjusting expenditures accordingly to prioritize core academic functions and essential operations. The final review forecast of 100 students is for a worse case scenario situation to show the financial viability of the model. This multi scenario approach allows us to remain flexible and responsive while maintaining fiscal responsibility during the school's launch year.

This budget includes sufficient margin to absorb mild enrollment fluctuations or unexpected cost increases. The school will adjust discretionary expenses, delay hires, or restructure non-essential services if enrollment is higher or lower than expected.

Revenue Forecast 500 Student Model:

- **Foundation Funding:** $8,037 per student (based on updated 2025 legislative session values)
- **ESA (Educationally Disadvantaged) Funding:** Less than 70% of student eligibility at $551 per eligible student
- **Federal Title I & II:** Estimated conservatively based on student population growth
- **Grants & Donations:** Includes modest fundraising, not core to budget sustainability
- **Startup Fund:** $150,000 in Year 1 for launch-phase expenses

Year	Enrollment	Foundation Funding	ESA Funding	Title I	Grants & Donations	Total Revenue	End of Year Fund Balance
2026–27 (Year 1)	500	$4,018,500	$275,500	$126,500	$50,600	$4,471,100	$2,321,100
2027–28 (Year 2)	550	$4,420,350	$303,050	$139,150	$25,000	$4,887,550	$2,204,795
2028–29 (Year 3)	600	$4,822,200	$330,600	$151,800	$25,000	$5,329,600	$2,539,140

The revenue projections do not include potential funding sources such as Charter School Facilities Funding, AR LEARNS allocations, Title II, English Language Learner (ELL) funding, Professional Development funds, or other supplemental state, federal programs. These exclusions are intentional and reflect a conservative budgeting approach designed to ensure the financial model remains viable even in the absence of additional, variable income streams.

Expense Forecast

Year	Personnel	Facilities	Tech.	Curr.	Student Services	Prof. Dev.	Trans.	Other Ops	Total Expenses
2026–27 (Year 1)	$1,710,000	$200,000	$50,000	$45,000	$50,000	$25,000	$20,000	$50,000	$2,150,000
2027–28 (Year 2)	$1,710,000	$200,000	$50,000	$72,000	$60,000	$30,000	$20,000	$540,755	$2,682,755
2028–29 (Year 3)	$1,732,500	$200,000	$40,000	$90,000	$75,000	$35,000	$20,000	$597,960	$2,790,460

*Facilities rent is $6,500 per month or $78,000 per year. The remaining $122,000 will be for insurance, utilities, renovations and other unexpected costs.

*The 'Other Operations' category includes a 10% Charter Management Organization (CMO) fee, which will be applied once enrollment exceeds 550 students. If enrollment falls below this threshold due to fluctuations, the CMO fee will be suspended until enrollment again meets or exceeds 550 students.

Personnel Expenses Year 1

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000
Principal	1	$80,000	$80,000	$20,000	$100,000
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$50,000	$12,500	$62,500
Teacher	16	$50,000	$800,000	$200,000	$1,000,000
Assistant Teacher	8	$30,000	$240,000	$60,000	$247,500
Custodian	1	$20,000	$20,000	$5,000	$25,000
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500

Personnel Expenses Year 1

Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					**$1,710,000**

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Personnel Expenses Year 2

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster (paid out with CMO fee)	1	$0	$0	$0	$0
Principal	1	$80,000	$80,000	$20,000	$100,000
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$25,000	$12,500	$62,500
Teacher	18	$50,000	$800,000	$200,000	$1,125,000
Assistant Teacher	8	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$247,500
Custodian	1	$20,000	$20,000	$5,000	$25,000
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					**$1,710,000**

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Personnel Expenses Year 3

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster (paid out with CMO fee)	1	$0	$0	$0	$0
Principal	1	$80,000	$80,000	$20,000	$100,000
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$25,000	$25,000	$12,500	$62,500
Teacher	20	$50,000	$900,000	$225,000	$1,125,000
Assistant Teacher	8	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$270,000
Custodian	1	$20,000	$20,000	$5,000	$25,000
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					$1,732,500

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Revenue Forecast 200 Student Model:

- **Foundation Funding**: $8,037 per student (based on updated 2025 legislative session values)
- **ESA (Educationally Disadvantaged) Funding**: Less than 70% of student eligibility at $551 per eligible student
- **Federal Title I & II**: Estimated conservatively based on student population growth
- **Grants & Donations**: Includes modest fundraising, not core to budget sustainability
- **Startup Fund**: $150,000 in Year 1 for launch-phase expenses

Year	Enrollment	Foundation Funding	ESA Funding	Title I	Grants & Donations	Total Revenue	End of Year Fund Balance
2026–27 (Year 1)	200	$1,607,400	$110,200	$50,600	$50,600	$1,818,800	$185,050
2027–28 (Year 2)	250	$2,009,250	$137,750	$63,250	$25,000	$2,235,250	$432,500
2028–29 (Year 3)	300	$2,672,300	$165,300	$75,900	$25,000	$2,938,500	$913,500

The revenue projections do not include potential funding sources such as Charter School Facilities Funding, AR LEARNS allocations, Title II, English Language Learner (ELL) funding, Professional Development funds, or other supplemental state, federal programs. These exclusions are intentional and reflect a conservative budgeting approach designed to ensure the financial model remains viable even in the absence of additional, variable income streams.

Expense Forecast

Year	Personnel	Facilities	Tech.	Curr.	Student Services	Prof. Dev.	Trans.	Other Ops	Total Expenses
2026–27 (Year 1)	$1,193,750	$200,000	$50,000	$45,000	$50,000	$25,000	$20,000	$50,000	$1,633,750
2027–28 (Year 2)	$1,318,750	$200,000	$50,000	$72,000	$60,000	$30,000	$20,000	$52,000	$1,802,7500
2028–29 (Year 3)	$1,500,000	$200,000	$40,000	$90,000	$75,000	$35,000	$20,000	$65,000	$2,025,000

Facilities rent is $6,500 per month or $78,000 per year. The remaining $122,000 will be for insurance, utilities, renovations and other unexpected costs.

Personnel Expenses Year 1

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$80,000	$80,000	$25,000	$125,000
Principal	1	$75,000	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$50,000	$12,500	$62,500
*Teacher	10	$50,000	$600,000	$150,000	$750,000
Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250

Personnel Expenses Year 1

		Total
Total		$1,193,750

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Personnel Expenses Year 2

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000
Principal	1	$75,000	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$25,000	$12,500	$62,500
Teacher	12	$50,000	$750,000	$187,000	$937,500
Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					$1,318,750

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Personnel Expenses Year 3

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$100,000	$100,000	$25,000	$125,000
Principal	1	$75,000	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$25,000	$25,000	$12,500	$62,500
Teacher	15	$50,000	$1,000,000	$250,000	$1,250,000

Personnel Expenses Year 3

Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					$1,500,000

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Revenue Forecast 100 Student Model:

- **Foundation Funding**: $8,037 per student (based on updated 2025 legislative session values)
- **ESA (Educationally Disadvantaged) Funding**: Less than 70% of student eligibility at $551 per eligible student
- **Federal Title I & II**: Estimated conservatively based on student population growth
- **Grants & Donations**: Includes modest fundraising, not core to budget sustainability
- **Startup Fund**: $150,000 in Year 1 for launch-phase expenses

Year	Enrollment	Foundation Funding	ESA Funding	Title I	Grants & Donations	Total Revenue	End of Year Fund Balance
2026–27 (Year 1)	100	$803,700	$55100	$25,300	$50,600	$934,700	$44,700
2027–28 (Year 2)	150	$1,205,550	$82650	$37,950	$25,000	$1,351,150	$67,150
2028–29 (Year 3)	200	$1,607,400	$110200	$50,600	$25,000	$1,818,800	$100,050

The revenue projections do not include potential funding sources such as Charter School Facilities Funding, AR LEARNS allocations, Title II, English Language Learner (ELL) funding, Professional Development funds, or other supplemental state, federal programs. These exclusions are intentional and reflect a conservative budgeting approach designed to ensure the financial model remains viable even in the absence of additional, variable income streams.

Expense Forecast

Year	Personnel	Facilities	Tech.	Curr.	Student Services	Prof. Dev.	Trans.	Other Ops	Total Expenses
2026–27 (Year 1)	$600,000	$165,000	$20,000	$15,000	$20,000	$10,000	$10,000	$50,000	$890,000
2027–28 (Year 2)	$800,000	$200,000	$50,000	$72,000	$60,000	$30,000	$20,000	$52,000	$1,284,000
2028–29 (Year 3)	$1,193,750	$200,000	$40,000	$90,000	$75,000	$35,000	$20,000	$65,000	$1,718,750

Facilities rent is $6,500 per month or $78,000 per year. The remaining $122,000 will be for insurance, utilities, renovations and other unexpected costs.

Personnel Expenses Year 1

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$0	$0	$0	$0
Principal	1	$75,000	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750
Business Manager	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$50,000	$12,500	$62,500
*Teacher	5	$50,000	$250,000	$62,500	$312,500
Custodian	1	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$20,000	$20,000	$5,000	$25,000
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					$600,000

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Personnel Expenses Year 2

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$80,000	$80,000	$20,000	$100,000
Principal	1	$75,000	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$25,000	$12,500	$62,500
Teacher	5	$50,000	$250,000	$62,500	$312,500
Assistant Teacher	2	$30,000	$60,000	$15,000	$75,000
Custodian	0.5	$10,000	$5,000	$1,250	$6,250
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Headmaster	1	$80,000	$80,000	$20,000	$100,000
Total					$800,000

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Personnel Expenses Year 3

Position	FTE	Salary	Subtotal	Fringe	Total Expense
Headmaster	1	$80,000	$80,000	$25,000	$125,000
Principal	1	$75,000	$75,000	$18,750	$93,750
Business Manager	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
School Counselor	1	$50,000	$50,000	$12,500	$62,500
*Teacher	10	$50,000	$600,000	$150,000	$750,000
Assistant Teacher	4	$30,000	$120,000	$30,000	$150,000
Custodian	.5	$10,000	$10,000	$2,500	$12,500
Secretary	1	$30,000	$30,000	$7,500	$37,500
Nurse	1	$45,000	$45,000	$11,250	$56,250
Total					$1,193,750

*Teachers represent all teachers including but not limited to special education, ELL, ALE, music, and physical education

Educational Landscape Analysis for the Harrison, AR Area

Current Educational Options

In the Harrison, Arkansas region, families have limited educational choices. There are no public charter schools available in the area, and options are largely restricted to traditional public schools, small secular or parochial private schools, and homeschooling. The current education providers include:

- **Traditional Public School Districts**:
    - Harrison School District
    - Bergman School District
    - Valley Springs School District
    - Alpena School District
    - Ozark Mountain School District
    - Omaha School District
- **Private Schools**:
    - Harrison Seventh-Day Adventist School
    - Crestline Academy (secular)
    - Mary Mother of God Catholic School
    - St. John's Episcopal School
    - Bloom Academy (secular)
- **Home Education**: Homeschooling is a growing alternative in all area districts.

Homeschool Enrollment

The high percentage of homeschool participation in local districts reflects unmet needs or dissatisfaction with current educational options. During the 2023–2024 school year, homeschool enrollment by district was as follows:

District	Homeschooled Students	% of Total Enrollment
Harrison	394	12.5%

Bergman	150	12.8%
Valley Springs	109	11.8%
Alpena	90	18.0%
Ozark Mountain	109	17.3%
Omaha	58	13.2%

Across these six districts, the average homeschool rate is approximately 14.3%, significantly higher than the Arkansas state average of 3.5%, highlighting a strong demand for alternative public education models in the area.

Academic Performance of Area Schools

While area schools report moderate academic performance, there is a clear need for improved foundational literacy and postsecondary preparation:

- **Third Grade Reading Proficiency** (Percentage of students reading on grade level):

    - Harrison: 38%

    - Bergman: 50%

    - Valley Springs: 46%

    - Alpena: 38%

    - Ozark Mountain: 16%

    - Omaha: 31%

The regional average reading proficiency in third grade is 36.5%, well below Arkansas's goal of 80% literacy by third grade, indicating a critical area for targeted intervention.

- **Average ACT Composite Score (2023–2024)**:

    - Harrison: 18.86

    - Bergman: 19.73

    - Valley Springs: 21.22

    - Alpena: 21.52

- ○ Ozark Mountain: 16.36

- ○ Omaha: 18.29

The average ACT score across these districts is 19.33, slightly below the Arkansas state average of 19.5 and well below the national college readiness benchmark of 21.0.

- **Attendance Rates**:

  - ○ Harrison: 94.00%

  - ○ Bergman: 92.79%

  - ○ Valley Springs: 94.09%

  - ○ Alpena: 92.67%

  - ○ Ozark Mountain: 91.26%

  - ○ Omaha: 93.12%

These rates are generally consistent with state averages, suggesting community engagement is high and families may be receptive to alternative models that offer enhanced academic rigor and relevance.

Rationale for AEPA

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) aims to meet an urgent local demand for a tuition-free, future preparatory education tailored to aspiring entrepreneurs, leaders, and innovators who may be overlooked in the current system. AEPA will provide a rigorous mastery-based curriculum and real-world project-based learning opportunities—educational features currently not available in any nearby public institution.

Given that over 14% of local students are being homeschooled and third grade reading proficiency rates are consistently below 50%, AEPA is well-positioned to fill a significant educational gap. The school will provide families in Harrison and surrounding communities access to a high-quality, future-focused, public school option that prepares students for college, career, and entrepreneurial success.

Identified Challenges to Student Success and AEPA's Strategic Response

Educational Challenges in the Harrison Region

Despite the presence of multiple public school districts in and around Harrison—including Harrison, Bergman, Valley Springs, Lead Hill, Alpena, and Omaha—families across Boone

County face significant barriers to student success. While many educators in these districts are working diligently, systemic gaps continue to prevent a growing number of students from reaching their full potential.

1. Lack of Diverse Learning Models
 The most urgent concern is the absence of alternative public education options. There are no charter schools in the Harrison area, and current offerings overwhelmingly reflect a one-size-fits-all instructional approach. For students who are not well-served by conventional classrooms, particularly those who are neurodivergent, entrepreneurial, or highly creative, there are few, if any, public options that align with their learning styles or aspirations.

2. Academic Underperformance and Achievement Gaps
 While some area schools perform near state averages, proficiency data reveals troubling disparities. In Lead Hill, Omaha, and Ozark Mountain School Districts, fewer than 1 in 3 students are reading on grade level by third grade, a foundational predictor of long-term academic success.

- Ozark Mountain: 16%
- Omaha: 31%
- Harrison and Alpena: 38%

These performance challenges disproportionately affect rural, low-income students, who often require individualized instruction, evidence-based interventions, and engaging curricula, none of which are consistently available in the region's traditional schools.

3. Limited Access to College and Career Readiness Pathways
 Although high school graduation remains a priority across districts, most local schools do not offer a variety of robust college or career-preparatory experiences matched to student interest. Opportunities for dual enrollment, technical credentials, workforce-aligned internships, and entrepreneurship education are available but extremely limited, leaving students underprepared for meaningful postsecondary success.

The general consensus from all interviews and outreach conducted with students, families, community members, and local education professionals is that this region is not capable of providing these opportunities. It was stated by an educational professional that *"Northwest Arkansas can do those types of things. We don't have that kind of money or connections".* This was an indicator that the educational professionals believe that they are doing the best that they can and are limited in their vision for innovation and expansion of current programs within a secondary setting.

4. Declining Public School Enrollment and Rising Homeschool Rates
According to data from the Arkansas Department of Education, Boone County's public school enrollment is declining, while homeschooling has surged to more than 14% of the total student

population across districts, far exceeding the state average of 3.5%. This trend underscores a clear dissatisfaction with existing options.

District	Homeschool Rate (2023–2024)
Alpena	18.0%
Ozark Mountain	17.3%
Omaha	13.2%
Harrison	12.5%

5. Concerns from Families and Students
Outreach efforts and community engagement have revealed three consistent themes in family decisions to exit traditional public schools—even those deemed "high-performing":

- Overemphasis on standardized testing, with little time devoted to meaningful, future-focused learning
- Inadequate behavior support and classroom management, impacting the learning environment
- Lack of innovation and relevance, leading to student disengagement and diminished motivation

Students and parents have voiced their frustrations with clarity and conviction:

"I want to be prepared for my future, not for their test." — 8th Grade Student
"I am more than a test score. I haven't learned anything except how to pass 'the test'." — 10th Grade Student
"My son is a square peg in a round hole. The system just doesn't work for him." — Parent
"I can't send her back. They're killing her creativity." — Parent of an elementary student

These firsthand accounts reveal a deep unmet need for a public school model that prioritizes personalization, innovation, and future readiness.

AEPA's Plan to Address These Challenges

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) is designed specifically to address the barriers to student success in Boone County and beyond. AEPA's mission is to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs, executives, and change-makers through a rigorous, innovative, and student-centered educational experience.

Key Strategies and Programmatic Innovations

Challenge	AEPA's Strategic Response
Limited Learning Models	Implement mastery-based, project-centered learning that allows students to progress at their own pace and apply knowledge in real-world contexts
Achievement Gaps	Deliver tiered academic supports, structured intervention blocks, and embedded literacy and numeracy instruction across content areas
Lack of College & Career Pathways	Offer Future Fluent and Always Ready programs with dual credit, entrepreneurial training, career certifications, and digital literacy
Mental & Behavioral Health	Provide school-based wellness supports, counseling, and trauma-informed practices to meet the needs of the whole child
Family Disengagement	Launch a robust Parents at the Center initiative that includes community events, workshops, and regular two-way communication
Teacher Support & Innovation	Build a dynamic professional learning community for educators, emphasizing growth mindset, future-ready instruction, and collaborative planning

AEPA will also serve as a community innovation hub, working closely with local businesses, civic leaders, and families to align education with regional economic needs. This will ensure that students graduate not only with a diploma—but with the skills, confidence, and vision to lead.

Conclusion

Boone County's current educational landscape is not failing, but it is falling short for many. AEPA does not seek to compete with existing schools, but to complement and expand the ecosystem with a tuition-free, public option that prioritizes mastery, innovation, and personalized learning.

By re-engaging the disengaged, developing the untapped potential of students, and preparing youth to lead in a rapidly changing world, AEPA will meet a critical need at a critical moment for students, families, and the future of the Harrison region.

Student Performance Metrics and Monitoring Framework

Academic and Non-Academic Performance Metrics Beyond State Standards

In addition to performance on state assessments, our school will utilize a comprehensive set of academic and non-academic performance metrics to assess student growth, readiness, and success. These metrics are aligned with our Freedom Education Model and are essential for capturing a holistic picture of student development.

Academic Metrics Beyond State Standards

Metric	Description	Tool(s)
Curriculum-Based Mastery Assessments	Aligned with the school's mastery learning framework; students must demonstrate proficiency before progressing	Mastery checks, unit rubrics, student portfolios
Performance-Based Projects	Interdisciplinary, real-world tasks scored by rubric	Project rubrics, peer and mentor feedback
Reading & Math Benchmarking	Administered 3x/year to measure growth	ATLAS Interims, progress monitoring such as DIBELS
Writing Portfolios	Includes narrative, informational, and argumentative writing across subjects	School-wide writing rubric
Capstone Projects	Cumulative, student-led inquiry projects in Grades 5, 8, and 12	Rubric aligned to research, writing, and presentation standards

Non-Academic Metrics

Metric	Description	Tool(s)
Student Engagement	Assesses student participation, interest, and autonomy	Discipline and attendance reportsl, school-created survey

Power Skills	Includes critical thinking, collaboration, initiative, and resilience	SEL rubric, student-led conference reflections
Attendance & Punctuality	Monitored monthly to identify early risk factors	SIS data tracking, attendance task force
Behavior & Self-Regulation	Tracks incidents, de-escalation strategies, and peer conflict resolution	Behavior logs, discipline reports, reflection journals
Student Leadership & Service	Participation in school governance, service projects, and peer mentorship	Leadership hours log, advisor evaluation

Growth Monitoring for Student Subgroups

To ensure equitable outcomes, our data monitoring system disaggregates student performance by key subgroups: race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, special education, English Language Learners, and gifted learners.

Monitoring Process

- **Baseline Data Collection**: Administered within the first 30 days of school (math diagnostics, literacy screeners)

- **Progress Monitoring**: Conducted every 6–8 weeks using formative assessments and growth rubrics

- **Data Team Meetings**: Monthly review by teachers, administrators, and student support staff to discuss subgroup progress

- **MTSS Integration**: Students flagged for Tier II or Tier III supports are tracked through intervention logs and progress monitoring tools

- **Family Communication**: Growth reports shared during student-led conferences 2–3 times per year, with subgroup-specific discussions

Key Tools for Subgroup Growth Monitoring

Subgroup	Tools
Students with Disabilities	IEP goals, progress monitoring probes, alternate assessments
English Language Learners	Formative language samples, CAN DO descriptors, attendance, personalized learning plans
Economically Disadvantaged	Attendance, engagement data, behavior tracking, academic growth on benchmark assessments
Gifted Learners	Personalized learning plans, project portfolios, extended benchmarks
All Subgroups	Equity dashboards showing growth across content and skills

Assessment of Etiquette, Executive Coaching, and Power Skills

The Freedom Education Model includes intentional development of power skills—including etiquette, self-regulation, leadership, and executive functioning through instruction and coaching embedded into daily routines, advisories, and co-curricular programs.

Etiquette

Assessment Tool	Description
Etiquette Observation Rubric	Used during formal events, community meals, interviews, and leadership roles
Role-Play Evaluation	Students demonstrate etiquette in simulated professional and social situations

Executive Coaching

Assessment Tool	Description
Executive Function Checklist	Tracks planning, organization, task initiation, and emotional regulation
Student Reflection Logs	Weekly logs evaluating their own time management, habits, and accountability

| Coaching Goal Sheet | Students co-create goals with advisors and review progress bi-weekly |

Power Skills

Skill Area	Assessment Tools
Collaboration	Team project rubrics, peer feedback
Communication	Presentation rubrics, Socratic seminar scores
Critical Thinking	Problem-solving rubrics tied to PBL
Leadership	Leadership portfolio, mentor evaluations, public presentations
Resilience & Initiative	Growth mindset surveys, advisor anecdotal records, reflection journals

By extending beyond state test scores, our model ensures that every student is prepared not only for academic success but also for leadership, college, career, and civic life. Through mastery-based academics, experiential learning, and intentional development of power skills, we provide an equitable and comprehensive assessment system that reflects the whole child.

Staffing and Recruitment Plan

Hiring Timeline and Recruitment Strategies for Key Roles

Our staffing plan reflects a strategic and proactive approach to ensure the recruitment of high-quality educators in specialized and high-need areas, including Special Education (SPED), Gifted and Talented (GT), and Literacy Intervention. Recognizing the nationwide challenges in recruiting specialized staff, particularly in rural areas, our plan emphasizes early hiring, flexible staffing structures, and mission-aligned recruitment pipelines.

Hiring Timeline

Timeframe	Activity
October–December (Year 0)	Post initial positions for leadership, literacy intervention, and SPED leads. Begin virtual recruitment campaigns targeting December graduates and career changers.
January–March	Participate in statewide and regional educator job fairs. Host virtual info sessions. Begin screening interviews and demo lessons.
April–May	Finalize hiring for priority roles (SPED, literacy interventionist, GT specialist). Initiate onboarding and PD planning.
June–July	Hire remaining instructional aides, paraprofessionals, and co-teachers. Conduct staff orientation, MTSS training, and curriculum bootcamps.

Recruitment Strategies

Role	Strategy
SPED Teachers	• Partner with local universities offering SPED licensure (e.g., Arkansas State University, Harding University)
	• Recruit via state education job boards, Council for Exceptional Children, and special education Facebook groups
GT Coordinator / Facilitator	• Contract with certified GT educators for part-time or shared services across multi-age bands

	• Prioritize internal talent with GT endorsement or strong project-based learning expertise
	• Leverage state cooperative programs to share GT services between small districts
Literacy Interventionists	• Recruit from reading specialists and dyslexia interventionists with Arkansas-approved credentials
	• Provide LETRS or Orton-Gillingham training
	• Build a "grow-your-own" pipeline with REACH University partnership to develop classroom teachers among classified instructional staff

Feasibility of the Next Education Workforce Model in a Rural Setting

The Next Education Workforce (NEW) model, developed by Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, emphasizes distributed expertise and team-based teaching to meet the diverse needs of learners. While traditionally implemented in urban or suburban settings, its principles are both adaptable and advantageous for rural schools, particularly those with multi-age classrooms and interdisciplinary instruction.

Key Components of the NEW Model

- **Team-based teaching**: Shifting from one-teacher-one-classroom to multi-educator teams with distributed roles (e.g., lead teacher, interventionist, novice teacher, paraprofessional).

- **Distributed expertise**: Teachers bring specialized strengths (e.g., STEM, literacy, behavior supports) and share responsibilities across a learning community.

- **Personalized learning**: The model supports small-group and mastery-based instruction through shared data and differentiated roles.

Feasibility in Rural Settings

Challenge	Response
Limited staff	Combine roles through multi-age classrooms and team-teaching models. One interventionist can support multiple small groups across grades.

Budget constraints	Use federal, categorical, and grant funding to support shared personnel and co-teaching models. Leverage itinerant staff for specialized roles (e.g., speech, GT).
Recruitment difficulty	Rural candidates often value collaboration, reduced isolation, and mission-driven environments. A team-based model enhances job satisfaction and retention.
Community connection	Rural schools can build strong teaching teams by tapping into local talent—aides, parents, and paraprofessionals—through grow-your-own pathways.

> *"In rural schools, the NEW model doesn't have to mean more staff—it means using people differently. It's about smarter structures, not just more hands."*
> — Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, ASU

Our staffing and recruitment strategy reflects urgency, flexibility, and innovation, especially in hard-to-staff roles. By embracing the Next Education Workforce model, even in a rural context, we aim to maximize educator impact, increase instructional quality, and better meet the complex needs of all learners through collaborative, team-based teaching.

WAIVERS

Waiver #1 Topic	Board of Directors
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-13-608 6-13-611 6-13-612(c) 6-13-613 6-13-615 6-13-616(a) 6-13-617 6-13-618 6-13-619(a), (c), (d)(2)(A), (d)(4) 6-13-620(5) 6-13-622(b) 6-13-630 6-13-631 6-13-634 6-13-635 6-13-1303 6-14-101, et seq.
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	The applicant respectfully requests a waiver from the sections of Arkansas Code Annotated and ADE Rules outlined above as they pertain to the structure and governance of the proposed board of directors and the adoption of school policies. Unlike traditional public school boards, the AEPA board is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Directors. Each Director serves without compensation from the organization. AEPA's board is composed of Directors with varied professional background and expertise; including, but not limited to human resources, finance, operations, health care, community advocacy, and the legal field. The AEPA Board of Directors will serve as the sole governing authority responsible for the adoption of school policies. This structure is part of a replication of a highly successful educational model with a strong record of academic achievement. Central to this success is a board composed of accomplished individuals with diverse professional backgrounds and experiences, all united by a shared commitment to the school's mission and vision. Each Director holds office for a six year term expiring on December 31st of the related year. A Director may be re-elected for an unlimited number of additional terms. The Board of Directors is the decision-making body for the organization. They exercise supervision of the Headmaster, who has delegated authority to ensure achievement of organizational compliance goals, strategic

| | priorities and metrics defined within the State of Arkansas school accountability framework. Each Director is bound to adhere to all State policies governing public charter schools.

AEPA will not hold a public election for board members. A vacancy or vacancies on the Board shall be deemed to exist in the event of the death, resignation or removal of any Director, or if the Board by resolution declares vacant the office of a Director who has been declared of unsound mind by an order of the court, or who has been convicted of a felony, or if the authorized number of Directors is increased, or if the Director fails, at any meeting at which any Director or Directors are elected, to elect the number of Directors to be elected at such meeting. .

In the event of any vacancy of the Board, the remaining Directors may select a replacement to serve for the unexpired portion of the term of his or her predecessor in office. A Director who fills a vacancy shall serve for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor in office. Under the oversight of the Board of Directors, the Headmaster is responsible for daily management of all schools within the network. This responsibility includes hiring and personnel management. AEPA, in all of its practices, promotes transparency and inclusivity. Faculty and staff are invited to engage in meetings of the Board of Directors, as well as daily with the Headmaster. Due to such, we do not support governance by secret ballot. There are opportunities for teachers and staff to participate in school advisory teams, which accomplishes the spirt of Ark Code Ann 6-13-1303.

While physical board meetings will be held, the applicant also seeks approval to conduct meetings via telephone and web-based conferencing platforms. This flexibility is essential to accommodate the schedules of board members who live in various parts of Arkansas and to ensure continued engagement from stakeholders. All meetings will remain open to the public in compliance with the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act, and public access will be provided through physical attendance, call-in options, or online participation. In addition, members of the public will have the opportunity to register for public comment either through the school's website or in person at a designated campus location. |
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Waiver #2 Topic	Personnel Policies
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-17-111 DUTY FREE LUNCH PERIOD 6-17-114 DAILY PLANNING PERIOD 6-17-117 TEACHER NON INSTRUCTIONAL DUTIES 6-17-201 (a) & (c) 6-17-202 6-17-203 PPC 6-17-204 6-17-205 6-17-208 6-17-209 6-17-210 6-17-211 6-17-301(a) & (b) 6-17-1201, et seq. 6-17-1301, et seq. 6-17-2301(c)(1) & (d)(2) 6-17-2302 6-17-2303 6-17-2304 6-17-2305 6-17-2801, et seq. 6-11-129 (a)(1)-(a)(3) & (b)
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	DESE Rules Governing Educator Support and Development AEPA is requesting a waiver of personnel policies in this section to the extent that additional committees and requirements are presented above normal AEPA school personnel procedures. AEPA's personnel policies will be set by the governing board and Headmaster based on best practices throughout the educational industry, staff

| | input, other applicable federal and state legal requirements, and budgetary constraints. AEPA's personnel policy and employee handbook will create a process by which contractual grievances can be mediated. Additionally, disputes arising from staff concerns will be resolved through the Headmaster and other personnel who are trained in best practices. Additional layers of policies and procedures resulting from the above Arkansas codes can cause inefficiencies and delays in efficient resolutions of staff concerns.

AEPA also seeks to waive the requirements surrounding non-teaching hours. AEPA provides ample prep period time as well as lunch time. From time to time, employees may opt to utilize their lunch period to meet with students, call or meet with parents. A waiver allows a teacher the flexibility to use designated 'lunch time' as needed. Additionally, AEPA requests flexibility in the increment of planning time as well as required compensation for missed planning periods. Due to student needs, campuses may be on block schedule or class period timing may be adjusted. This waiver will allow flexibility while still ensuring teachers receive ample planning time. Built into our robust compensation and salary offers are the expectations for non instructional duties such as before and after day supervision. We believe strongly in the importance of relationship building and believe this non-instructional time spent supervising students is key to building strong relationships. Teachers are assigned rotational duties on a weekly (3rd grade teacher for example may have AM supervision for an entire week). A waiver will allow consistent scheduling of these expectations and ensure student |
|---|---|

	safety and supervision.
	AEPA wishes to preserve the right to modify schedules in the event a teacher has less than the required hours and/or a specific student day requires additional help from staff. This flexibility also allows the greatest efficiency and maximum impact to the overall student experience and safety as it pertains to drop-off and dismissal.

Waiver #3 Topic	**Leased Academic Facilities**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-21-117(2)-(5)
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 6-A.1, 6-A.2
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	AEPA will begin operations serving a limited number of grade levels and will utilize a leased facility that meets all applicable health, safety, and accessibility standards required by the Arkansas Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. This temporary arrangement will allow the school to meet immediate community demand and build a strong academic and operational foundation while preparing for long-term growth. Once the school reaches full enrollment across all planned grade levels, AEPA intends to construct a permanent facility that fully aligns with the school's vision, programming needs, and projected enrollment. The temporary use of leased

| | space is a practical and fiscally responsible solution that allows the school to launch operations in a timely manner while continuing to plan and secure resources for a long-term facility investment.

This waiver request is essential for ensuring that AEPA can open on schedule and begin delivering high-quality instruction while maintaining compliance with all health and safety regulations during its temporary occupancy. |
|---|---|

Waiver #4 Topic	**Library Media Services**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-103
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 2-D.1
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will implement an innovative approach to library media services that differs from the conventional model. Rather than a traditional library setting, AEPA will establish a Media and Innovation Hub that serves as a dynamic space for research, technology integration, digital literacy, and project-based learning. This center will support both academic and career-focused instruction and will be staffed and resourced according to the school's instructional model and student needs.

In addition, AEPA will form partnerships with local city and county libraries to extend access to high-quality literary, research, and digital resources. These |

| | partnerships will allow students and staff to access a broader range of materials and services, including interlibrary loans, maker spaces, digital media tools, and community learning events, without duplicating resources already available in the community.

This waiver will allow AEPA to align its media services with its mission of innovation, personalization, and community collaboration while ensuring that students continue to have full access to the resources they need for research, inquiry, and academic success.

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| --- | --- |

Waiver #5 Topic	**Library Media Specialist**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. § 6-25-104
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 4-F.1, 4-F.2
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will implement an innovative, integrated approach to library media services that differs from the traditional model. Rather than employing a full-time library media specialist, AEPA will embed all library media standards into the ELA classroom. These include but are not limited to: media literacy, research skills, and digital resource use into daily classroom instruction and project-based learning activities across all grade levels. These services will be delivered by certified classroom teachers, who will receive training and ongoing support in digital literacy integration and research instruction.

	AEPA's Media and Innovation Hub will serve as a dynamic center for technology integration, critical thinking, collaborative research, and personalized learning. This space will support student engagement in inquiry-based learning and align with AEPA's broader academic model that emphasizes future fluency and real-world readiness.
	In addition, AEPA will establish formal partnerships with local city and county libraries to expand access to physical and digital collections, research tools, maker spaces, and community programming. These partnerships allow students to benefit from a rich array of resources and experiences that support academic growth without duplicating services already available in the surrounding community.
	This waiver request allows AEPA to maintain flexibility in staffing and resource allocation while still ensuring students receive high-quality, relevant, and accessible library media services aligned with the school's mission and instructional design.

Waiver #6 Topic	Maintain School Facilities
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	Standard 6-A.1
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will initially operate from a temporary facility

	that meets all applicable health, safety, and accessibility standards required by the Arkansas Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. This temporary location will serve as the school's operational base during the early years while a permanent facility is being planned, funded, and constructed.
	This phased approach to facility development is a strategic decision to ensure that AEPA can launch operations promptly to meet urgent community demand while responsibly managing financial resources. All temporary facilities will be properly maintained and compliant with state guidelines for safety, occupancy, and functionality. All annual inspections will be completed on schedule within the appropriate timelines.
	The requested waiver will provide the flexibility needed to use an interim facility without being held to permanent facility requirements that are not applicable or feasible in the short term. Once the school is fully operational with all planned grade levels, AEPA will transition to a permanent, purpose-built facility designed to support its innovative instructional model.
	This waiver ensures operational readiness while maintaining the health and safety of students and staff, in alignment with AEPA's commitment to quality and responsible school development.

Waiver #7 Topic	**Transportation**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-19-101, et seq.
Standard for Accreditation	
ADE Rules	

| Rationale for Waiver | Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will not initially provide daily transportation services. This decision is based on the school's operational model and resource priorities during its startup phase. The school will be located in an accessible area, and all families will be clearly informed during the enrollment process that transportation will not be provided by the school. Families will confirm their ability to provide transportation as part of the admissions process.

However, AEPA is committed to equitable access for all students. If, during the course of operation, the school identifies that transportation presents a significant barrier to student attendance or participation, AEPA will take appropriate action to resolve the issue. This may include implementing alternative strategies such as community carpool coordination, strategic transportation partnerships, or, if necessary and feasible, the establishment of a limited transportation service.

AEPA will establish a funding stream and provide transportation for those who qualify under an IEP or McKinny Vento.

This waiver allows AEPA the flexibility to focus its resources on instructional quality and student support during the early years, while maintaining a strong commitment to student access and equity. The school will continuously assess family needs and respond accordingly to ensure transportation is not a limiting factor for enrollment or engagement. |
|---|---|

Waiver #8 Topic	**ALE**
Arkansas Code Annotated	Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-15-1005(b)(5) 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i) 6-48-102 6-48-103

Standard for Accreditation	Standard 2-I.1
ADE Rules	ADE Rules DESE Rules Governing Student Special Needs Funding – Section 4
Rationale for Waiver	Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will meet the needs of students who qualify for ALE services through a comprehensive and innovative approach using Response to Intervention (RtI) and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). These frameworks will allow AEPA to address students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs within the general education setting, rather than through a separate ALE program which is more in line with our current educational model and personalized strategy for nurturing student growth. AEPA will offer in-house support services to help students who are usually considered to require educational alternatives. We will not establish separate educational programs or environments due to educational research and evidence of lack of best practice. Nonetheless, we would employ outside resources for specific student requirements if needed. AEPA's team will actively engage with students requiring exceptional academic, social, or behavioral assistance. Our team is equipped to address these issues, aiming to enhance each student's potential for success within the conventional classroom environment. AEPA's RtI and MTSS models will include early identification, tiered interventions, continuous progress monitoring, and data-driven decision-making to ensure that all students receive the support necessary for success before ALE services are needed. For students requiring intensive and

individualized support, an Alternative Student Action Plan will be developed collaboratively by the school counselor, the student's teacher(s), and the designated administrator. The counselor will oversee implementation of the plan, ensuring it is regularly reviewed and adjusted based on student progress.

This waiver will provide AEPA with the flexibility to serve at-risk students in an inclusive, personalized, and supportive environment aligned with the school's mission, while still complying with the intent of ALE guidelines.

Waiver #9 Topic	Required Instruction K-12
Arkansas Code Annotated	
Standard for Accreditation	1-A.1.3
ADE Rules	
Rationale for Waiver	The school is requesting a waiver of this code because the school will not be offering all K-12 grade levels and will be operating at a much smaller number in its initial start up years. The school may not be able to sustain the offering of the full 38 courses until later on in its existence. The school needs the flexibility to ensure that it is offering the courses and electives that are pertinent to achieving its mission. The school commits to providing students with a well rounded education and align all courses and

	curriculum to Arkansas Academic Standards. The model being replicated has been successful in doing so across different states and is committed to ensuring success for the students of Arkansas.

Proposed Master Schedule and Instructional Time Allocation

Overview

AEPA will implement a flexible, innovative master schedule rooted in the Next Education Workforce Model (NEW) and designed to maximize instructional time, personalize learning, and support the whole child. The schedule allows for a four-day instructional week for educators, while still meeting their 190 contract days, and a five-day service week for students, ensuring extended access to learning, interventions, and enrichment without overburdening staff.

Weekly Schedule Structure

Day	Staff	Students	Key Features
Monday- Thurs.	Full instructional team present	Full school in session	Core instruction, PBL, SEL, interventions, electives
Friday	Rotating instructional staff (approx. 50%)	Students Grouped by targeted skills	Enrichment, intervention, tutoring, acceleration, family services

Daily Schedule Highlights (Monday–Thursday)

- **7:45–8:15 AM** – Arrival & Morning Meeting / SEL Focus

- **8:15–10:15 AM** – Block 1: Core Academic Block (Math/Science or ELA/SS)

- **10:15–11:00 AM** – Tiered Intervention/Enrichment (flexible grouping based on formative data)

- **11:00–12:00 PM** – Project-Based Learning / Cross-Curricular Integration

- **12:00–12:45 PM** – Lunch & Wellness / Recess or Mindfulness

- **12:45–2:00 PM** – Block 2: Core Academic Block (ELA/SS or Math/Science)

- **2:00–2:45 PM** – Electives / CTE / Fine Arts / Etiquette / World Language

- **2:45–3:30 PM** – Advisory / Student Reflection / Goal Setting / Family Communication

- Each day, students in grades 10 through 12 will gain real-world experience by working in the AEPA Mall as part of their Career and Technical Education (CTE) program

Friday Learning Model

Fridays are dedicated to targeted academic services and whole-child support, with rotating staff coverage.

- **Small Group Intervention** (Tier II and III support in literacy and math)

- **Acceleration & Advanced Projects** for students ready to move ahead

- **CTE Training & AEPA Mall Experience** (on-site business operations)

- **Tutoring & Academic Recovery**

- **Enrichment Workshops** (STEAM, entrepreneurship, etiquette, art, etc.)

- **Family Learning Sessions** through the *Parents at the Center* program

Rationale for the Master Schedule

This master schedule is optimal for student learning and teacher effectiveness for the following reasons:

1. Supports Deeper Learning

- Extended instructional blocks promote deeper engagement in project-based learning and cross-curricular activities.

- Reduces cognitive switching and transitions, allowing time for inquiry, collaboration, and authentic application.

2. Personalized Academic Support

- Dedicated time for tiered interventions, enrichment, and acceleration allows educators to respond to real-time student data without pulling students from core instruction.

- Intervention specialists, tutors, and instructional team members provide push-in and pull-out services during built-in blocks.

3. Embedded Teacher Collaboration & Professional Growth

- Staff receive weekly planning periods, PLC time, and access to instructional coaches.

- The rotating schedule on Fridays allows educators time for team planning, curriculum development, and professional learning without sacrificing student support.

4. Enhances Student Engagement and Ownership

- Daily advisory, student reflection, and goal-setting promote metacognition, emotional regulation, and academic responsibility.

- Participation in AEPA Mall operations and student-led projects ensures real-world application and relevance.

5. Promotes Staff Retention and Sustainability

- The four-day instructional week for educators supports well-being, reduces burnout, and increases retention—especially important in high-need or innovation-based environments.

- Staggered schedules ensure students receive five-day access to learning, while educators experience a more sustainable workload.

Instructional Time Summary

Instructional Element	Frequency	How Time is Allocated
Core Academic Instruction	Daily (M-Th)	Two 90 minute blocks per day
Tiered Intervention & Enrichment	Daily (M-Th) + Friday	45 minute daily; Friday targeted sessions
Advisory/SEL/Goal Setting	Daily (M-Th)	45 minutes
Project-Based Learning	Daily (M-Th)	60 minutes minimum
Electives, CTE, and World Language	Daily (M-Th)	45 minutes

Friday Learning Block	Daily (M-Th)	3-5 hours for students in need or enrolled in enrichment
Teacher Collaboration/Development	Weekly+Fridays	2-3 hours per week through PLCs and Friday rotations

Conclusion

The AEPA master schedule is intentionally designed to promote academic excellence, equity, and educator sustainability. It balances structured instruction with flexible supports, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, receive personalized, high-quality learning opportunities. This model supports AEPA's mission to develop students who are Always Ready and Future Fluent.

Enrollment Practices, Processes, and Policies

Commitment to Open Enrollment

The proposed school will operate as a public charter school open to all students who are eligible to attend public school in Arkansas, in accordance with Arkansas Code Annotated §§ 6-23-306 and 6-23-501. Enrollment will be tuition-free and non-selective, with no admissions tests, interviews, or academic prerequisites. The school will not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, disability, language proficiency, academic achievement, athletic ability, or special needs status.

Annual Enrollment Process

1. **Public Notice of Enrollment Period**

   ○ The school will publish enrollment dates and procedures at least 30 days prior to the start of the open enrollment period.

   ○ Information will be made available in English and other prevalent languages in the community.

   ○ Communication channels will include the school website, local newspapers, social media, flyers at community locations, and presentations at local events.

2. **Open Enrollment Period**

   ○ Enrollment applications will be accepted for a minimum of 30 calendar days.

   ○ Parents/guardians may submit applications online, by mail, in person, or at designated enrollment events.

   ○ Applications received during this period will be treated equally, regardless of submission date.

3. **Lottery Process**

   ○ If applications exceed available seats for any grade, a public, random lottery will be held to determine enrollment.

   ○ The lottery will be conducted under the oversight of a neutral party and open for public observation.

- ○ Families will receive written notification of the results and, if applicable, their position on the waiting list.

4. **Priority Enrollment (per Arkansas law)**

   - ○ Children of school founders, board members, and staff (limited to 10% of total enrollment or 50 students, whichever is less).

   - ○ Siblings of currently enrolled students.

5. **Waitlist Management**

   - ○ The waitlist will be maintained for the duration of the academic year.

   - ○ As spaces become available, offers will be made in the order of the waitlist.

Ongoing Enrollment

- If seats remain after the initial lottery, enrollment will remain open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Students admitted mid-year will receive a transition plan to support academic and social integration.

Re-Enrollment

- Current students will have automatic re-enrollment privileges each year, contingent on continued residency eligibility and adherence to school policies.

- Families will be asked to confirm intent to return by March 1 of each year so that available seats can be determined for new applicants.

Transparency and Accessibility

- Enrollment documents will be written in clear, parent-friendly language and available in multiple languages as needed.

- Staff will be trained to assist families in completing applications and understanding the process.

- Enrollment practices will comply fully with FERPA and protect student confidentiality.

The school's enrollment policies will:

- Comply with Arkansas Department of Education Charter School Rules.
  sure broad, equitable access to
- Be reviewed annually by the governing board to ensure alignment with legal requirements and community needs.

- Be included in the student/parent handbook and posted on the school website

Our enrollment practices are designed to ensure access for all to the Freedom Education Model, supporting a diverse and inclusive student body. Our goal is to remove barriers to enrollment so that all students regardless of background can benefit from mastery learning, multi-age classrooms, and experiential education.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) at AEPA

Overview

The Arkansas Executive Prep Academy (AEPA) will implement a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to ensure that all students receive high-quality, differentiated instruction and the support necessary to meet academic, social-emotional, and behavioral expectations. AEPA's MTSS model is rooted in the belief that with the right supports, every student can achieve at high levels.

This model integrates academic interventions, social-emotional learning (SEL), behavior supports, and family engagement within a proactive and data-driven framework.

Core Components of the MTSS Model

1. Tiered Levels of Support

Tier	Support Level	Description
Tier I	Universal (All Students)	High-quality, standards-based core instruction; daily SEL; embedded power skills and etiquette instruction; culturally responsive teaching practices
Tier II	Targeted (Some Students)	Small group interventions during daily intervention/enrichment blocks; focused skill remediation in reading, math, and SEL; short term goal tracking
Tier III	Intensive (Few Students)	Individualized intervention plans; one-on-one support; coordination with special education, 504, or outside service providers; frequent data monitoring and family consultation

2. Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

AEPA will use multiple measures to identify students in need of support and monitor progress:

- Universal Screeners: Administered three times per year in literacy, math, and SEL (using state-approved tools and CASEL-aligned rubrics)

- Formative Assessments: Embedded in daily instruction to monitor skill development

- Benchmark Assessments: Administered quarterly to track growth, mastery, and subgroup performance

- Behavioral and SEL Trackers: Teacher and student surveys, incident reports, and advisory feedback

- Student Data Portfolios: Used in advisory and parent conferences to reflect on academic and SEL growth

3. High-Quality Core Instruction (Tier I)

All students receive engaging, inclusive, and rigorous instruction through AEPA's core curriculum, which includes:

- Arkansas Academic Standards delivered through project-based learning (PBL) units

- Use of Arkansas approved high quality instructional materials (HQIM)

- Mastery-based learning pathways with clearly defined proficiency scales

- Daily embedded SEL and etiquette lessons

- Differentiated instruction based on formative data

- Instruction by collaborative educator teams within the Next Education Workforce Model, including certified teachers, interns, and tutors

4. Data-Based Decision Making

AEPA's Data Team Process will ensure timely and effective intervention decisions:

- Weekly PLC Meetings: Teams analyze classroom and assessment data to adjust instruction and identify at-risk students

- Biweekly MTSS Meetings: Leadership and instructional staff review Tier II and Tier III students to evaluate progress and modify interventions

- Quarterly Data Retreats: School-wide review of student performance, subgroup data, and intervention efficacy

- Parent Conferences: Data shared with families and students through student-led goal-setting sessions

5. Integrated Social-Emotional and Behavioral Supports

MTSS at AEPA extends beyond academics to include:

- DESE approved SEL instruction embedded in daily advisory and academic blocks

- Behavioral support plans for students needing Tier II or Tier III behavior intervention

- School-wide expectations for behavior, communication, and personal responsibility reinforced through etiquette training and advisory culture

- Family support through the "Parents at the Center" program which includes parent training in behavior strategies and adolescent development

6. Alignment with Special Services and Equity Goals

- AEPA integrates MTSS with special education (IDEA), 504 plans, and English Language Learner (ELL) services.

- MTSS data informs decisions for referrals to special education evaluations and ensures that all interventions are equitable and culturally responsive.

- Subgroup data is monitored to address potential disproportionality in academic outcomes or discipline referrals.

Use of Data to Improve Instruction and Interventions

AEPA uses data not only to place students in intervention tiers, but to:

- Inform lesson design and pacing for all students

- Tailor professional development based on student needs and instructional gaps

- Evaluate intervention effectiveness and adjust groupings, intensity, and strategies

- Revise curriculum and support resources to meet changing needs across cohorts

AEPA's MTSS model is a proactive, inclusive, and responsive system that ensures every student receives the support they need to succeed. By integrating academic, social-emotional, and behavioral interventions within a collaborative framework and using real-time data, AEPA fulfills its mission to develop students who are Always Ready and Future Fluent.

Professional Learning and Support for Educators

The AEPA prioritizes continuous professional learning as a key driver of academic success. AEPA's professional development plan is aligned with its innovative instructional model, grounded in the Next Education Workforce (NEW) framework, and designed to ensure educators are fully equipped to implement a rigorous, experiential, and mastery-based curriculum that meets or exceeds Arkansas Academic Standards.

Foundational Onboarding

All instructional staff participate in a mandatory multi-day onboarding institute prior to the start of the school year. This induction includes training in:

- The AEPA instructional model and vision

- Standards-aligned, mastery-based instruction and assessment

- Multidisciplinary project-based learning (PBL) unit design

- Embedded social-emotional learning (SEL) and power skills instruction

- Team-based collaboration and role alignment within the NEW model

This training ensures consistent implementation of the AEPA academic plan from day one.

Job-Embedded Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Educators engage in weekly PLCs organized by grade-level or content area team. These meetings are protected within the master schedule and focus on:

- Analyzing formative and summative assessment data

- Co-planning interdisciplinary units aligned to state standards

- Differentiating instruction to meet diverse learner needs

- Embedding SEL, power skills, and family engagement strategies

Instructional coaches and academic specialists facilitate PLCs to ensure alignment with AEPA's school-wide goals.

Instructional Coaching and Feedback Cycles

Each educator receives individualized support through a coaching and feedback cycle that includes:

- Regular classroom observations and non-evaluative feedback

- Data-informed instructional planning sessions

- Goal setting aligned to educator performance standards

- Opportunities for video reflection and peer collaboration

Instructional coaches are trained in culturally responsive teaching, trauma-informed practices, and experiential learning design.

Ongoing Professional Development

AEPA designates one early-release day per month for school-wide professional development. Topics include:

- Arkansas standards and proficiency scale implementation

- Formative assessment and data-driven instruction

- Project-based and experiential learning strategies

- SEL and classroom culture

- Etiquette and communication instruction

- Equity, inclusion, and restorative practices

Community partners, higher education faculty, and expert consultants enhance these sessions with specialized knowledge.

Leadership Development and Advancement

AEPA offers advancement opportunities and incentives for educators to deepen their expertise and assume leadership roles. Supports include:

- Stipends and time off for advanced certifications

- University partnerships for graduate coursework and action research

- Leadership roles such as team lead, PBL coordinator, or mentor teacher

High-performing educators may also participate in a teacher-leader pathway aligned with the school's long-term staffing strategy.

Workforce Model and Staff Wellness Supports

In alignment with the Next Education Workforce Model, AEPA provides:

- A four-day workweek for educators, with staggered staffing to ensure five-day student coverage

- Built-in planning and collaboration time during the school day

- On-site access to mental health and wellness resources for staff through external partnerships

- Regular check-ins and satisfaction surveys to inform retention strategies

This model enhances educator sustainability, collaboration, and morale.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

AEPA evaluates the effectiveness of its professional learning plan annually using:

- Educator self-assessments and reflective goal setting

- Student achievement and engagement data

- Professional practice observation trends

- Formal staff feedback and satisfaction surveys

Findings inform adjustments to the professional development calendar, coaching protocols, and instructional priorities.

AEPA's comprehensive professional learning system is deeply integrated into the school's operations and instructional model. By investing in educator growth, collaboration, and wellness, AEPA ensures that teachers are empowered to implement the academic plan with fidelity—resulting in improved outcomes for all students.
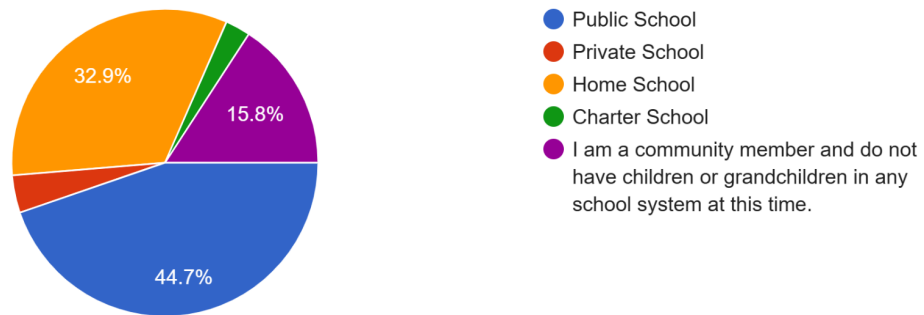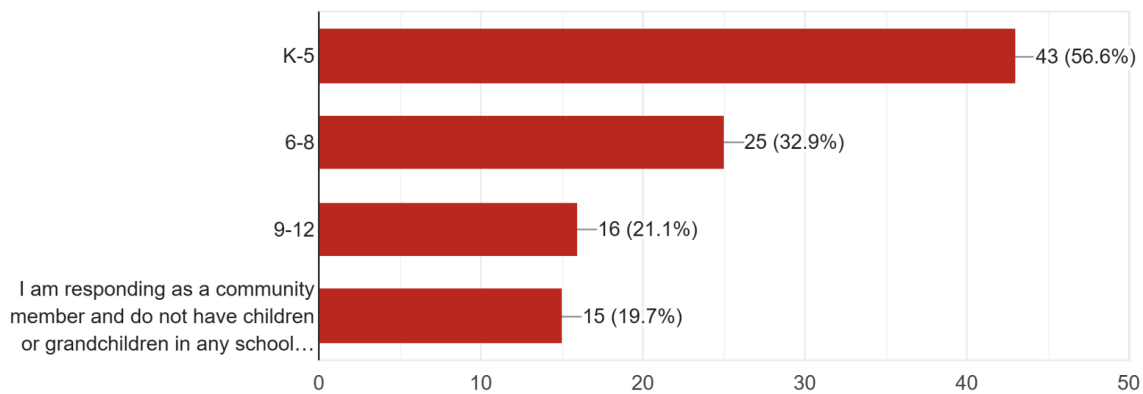
What is your age range?
76 responses

- 12-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 or older

22.4%
9.2%
23.7%
31.6%
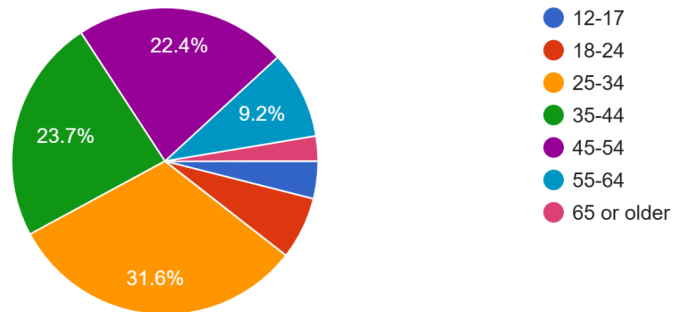
What type of schooling do you, your children, or grandchildren participate in?
76 responses

- Public School
- Private School
- Home School
- Charter School
- I am a community member and do not have children or grandchildren in any school system at this time.

32.9%
15.8%
44.7%

What grade(s) are you, your children, or grandchildren in?
76 responses

| Grade	Count
K-5	43 (56.6%)
6-8	25 (32.9%)
9-12	16 (21.1%)
I am responding as a community member and do not have children or grandchildren in any school…	15 (19.7%)

Do you believe parents/guardians in the Harrison area have a variety of choices when choosing how to school their children?

76 responses

- Yes
- No

94.7%
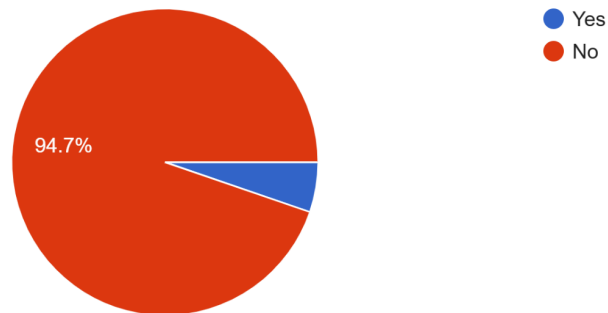
Do you believe the Harrison area needs additional choices for schooling other than public school?

76 responses

- Yes
- No

100%
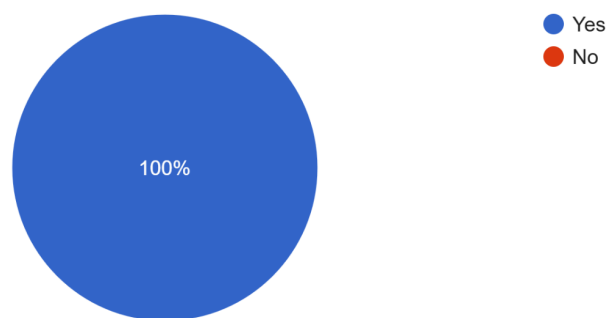
What does the ideal education setting look like?

Quit teaching the test and let the teachers instruct

Choice and some fun.

Prioritize personal learning experiences and integrate real-world skills

Choice of classes and choice to say pledge.

A place where kids are taught the skills of life and not how to take a test!!

A place where I can learn about how to be an adult and get a job. I am only preparing for the computer test now. My teachers are angry and stressed bc of the test. I don't like school.

Safe classroom rooms away from explosive behaviors

Fun, inviting and safe

Small classes and individualized learning opportunities. Not a one size fits all approach

Mom you don't want me to answer that. Hi it's me Ayden

Structured and safe

Calm, empathetic, diverse

Personalized to the students needs

God, family, friends

Customized for the child

Our daughter is requesting public school after being home schooled her whole life and we would love to see some other private or charter school choices.

Non traditional.

A place where every child is important.

A safe setting that us conducive to all learning styles

Safe, positive learning environment. Innovative with stem .

Life skills

Home schooling with additional optional classes together.

calm and helping

Micro school

Personalized educational learning with more options for students to excel.

A calm and loving learning environment where education is tailored to each student's needs and interests, with students held to high expectations for academic excellence and personal growth. Teachers foster a supportive atmosphere, challenging students to take responsibility for their learning while collaborating respectfully with parents as valued partners.

Small classes, no government oversight, flexible curricula, rules of conduct

Shorter than regular school hours but social interaction and teacher student education

Where kids are safe and not taking a back seat to mean kids who tear things up and disrupt.

My school is failing me. I am not prepared to graduate and don't think this year is going to change anything. I can't wait to get out of this place.

Homeschool but drop off for classes interested in

Learning pods, micro schools, farm schools, tech schools

Homeschool/ Micro school hybrid

Like the old days of schooling except with better instruction. Kids learn, teachers teach, and everyone behaves and leaves out the politics!

A place where my kid can go to school and not be afraid of the kid who beat the teacher up. I never expected to have to talk to my child about this topic especially not in kindergarten. If I could afford to homeschool, I would.

A happy and welcoming place where kids are happy about being at school and the teachers are to. The

test is killing the fun!

I just want a place where my kid is happy to be and I don't have to drag them out of the car everyday. I think he is bored and gets into trouble because of that. He is a good kid.

School should prepare kids for their lives and work.

Our square pegs that don't like sports need a place where they can thrive too!

Better than what we have now-the kids are unemployable.

Kids get a say in what is happening to them.

Learning and playing together. Less book work and more play for the little kids!

Christian background, safe, catered to excel each student and not just push them along to check all the boxes. Making sure we are addressing specific learning styles.

Opportunities for success for every child

Meets the needs of each child.

Preparation for life and getting good strong academics and overall experiences. I don't want my kids being held back because others aren't able to behave or learn. I'm sick of tests.

God centered without teaching kids how to worship and educating kids to read, write, do math, and think for themselves when they grow up.

God, country, and academics. Stop with the woke stuff!

Education that kids need to be successful in life is what we need. Reading, writing, and math must be strong before we start anything else. Kids need to be safe.

Safety first! Our child was not safe in public school. He got hit and bullied a lot IN CLASS but so did the teacher. My kid didn't learn anything because of the out of control behaviors.

My daughter has learning problems. Her school does not help her. She gets to go to a room for 15 minutes and get "support". She is in fourth grade and can't read. My girl deseres better! No one listens to me or has help for her.

Safe, free from bias and politics, no bullying, no teaching to a test and putting pressure on my kids to "beat the test"!!

Life education and not test education

Teaching life skills, how to get a job, and support a family. No woke politics. Just the facts!

The basic subjects and things kids need to live there lives.

A place for the ones who don't play sports but want to be successful to. Focus on children and not the test. If you don't play a sport you don't exist here.

My kid goes to private school on church scholarship because he was bullied every day at public school. I work and cant afford to homeschool. They have to keep kids safe from bullies.

Somewhere where there are no favorites and kids can learn about life. I didn't learn a thing that actually has helped me after school. Adult life is hard and they did not prepare me at all.

Support for all kids and teaching the basics. I don't want my future kids to go through what I went through in school here. I was just a kid and didnt play ball. no one cared if I was there or not.

bring God back to schools and no politics, reading writing and math and the real history and not the woke crap

A scool that gives kids more play time and lets the kids talk and socialize. I don't want my kindergartener taking compuetr tests and reading shakespear at 5. Let them be kids!

I love the programming proposed for this school. I think this would be a great place to send my children.

Academics directly connected to life and work. Kids having fun at school but learning wile they are there. There has to a balance.

I love the school I graduated from here but those times were different. They arent' with the times and my kids need something else like what you are saying in your school. Life education.

Nurturing and safe for kids and good teaching

Good teachers, good teaching, good students, fun activities, good learning

Safety first. I don't want my kids afraid to go to school, bullied by kids or adults, taught woke nonsense, or exposed to pedofiles. Once that is under control, some teaching that does not involve taking computer tests every other week would be great.

I want a school that my kids can learn in. I am a graduate of HHS and I didn't know half of waht I needed to get a job and be succesful with it. I had a great time at school, but I want more for my kids. Scoeity has changed.

This program is what we need.

This school program looks good. I would like to know more about it for my kids.

I like the whole child view of this. I think it could be a great school if it is done right.

This

Caring and safe

Safe, caring, not test driven

Your program matches my idea of a good school.

Not test focused for the love of God! Quit with the test stress on my kids!

Comments or questions?
Please bring this to our community!!
No

I would consider this option.

na

We need more STEM options here. The robotics programs through public schools are usually full. Harrison used to have an EAST program that would be great for homeschoolers.

I believe the Arkansas Executive Prep Academy is the solution for many families in our area.

So thankful for you

You need this.

Give us something good to choose from that is free!

Make the school safe! Don't let the bullies in!

I hope to see this come to Harrison.

We have needed this in our community for over 30 years.

Please let's do something different than what has always been done!

We hope this school comes to Harrison!

Please help my daughter.

We hope this works out. We would love to have this as an option.

I wish I had this option when I was a kid.

I am a business owner in town and would love to see this happen. We need it.

Help all the kids and not just the athletes and doctors and lawyers kids.

I am sad that our schools have not kept up with the needs of our kids.

I like what you are planning. I hope you come here.

I homeschool my kids because our school does not support my child's special needs for skipping a grade. He has shown that he is advanced but he was never pushed. He hated school. I hope this school can get started and with classes for advanced kids.