

- Conduct professional development for study groups before and after the laboratory classroom observation based on the district-developed professional development cycles.
- Provide feedback on the implementation of the curriculum to the writers and curriculum supervisor.

Responsibilities of the Core Curriculum teacher include:

- Co-teach one or two Core Curriculum classes.
- Meet and plan with the curriculum coach a minimum of three times per week.
- Submit lesson plans.
- Implement the Core Curriculum using the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School's approved curriculum framework.
- Establish a laboratory classroom for teachers to observe on a scheduled basis.
- Share with the curriculum coach the duties of record keeping, grading papers, determining quarterly grades, contacting parents, and maintaining discipline.
- Cover classes, if needed, in order for observations of the laboratory classroom to take place.
- Be the faculty of record for attendance and grades

The Benefits of Co-teaching

Co-teaching provides opportunities for coaches and teachers to:

- Model collaborative skills and increased teacher responsiveness to students.
- Capitalize on the unique, diverse, and specialized knowledge and skills of each co-teacher. These opportunities allow teachers to create solutions to classroom challenges.
- Exchange ideas, expertise, and grow professionally through reciprocal exchanges of ideas.
- Provide comprehensive feedback of the curriculum to the writing team.

- Provide laboratory classrooms for teachers to observe the Core Curriculum being implemented
- Provide powerful professional development and learning opportunities contributing to the Professional Learning Communities development in the building.
- Utilize collaborative planning between the coach and the teacher as a model of effective conferring for other teachers.

Potentially grounded in intellectual exponentialism, student learning and acquisition will be perpetuated through a co-teaching framework thus accelerating change on the student adaptive experience.

We will reach these goals by:

- setting academic standards
- coordinating states' policy regarding teacher quality and taking an active role in guiding and supporting professional development for high school teachers
- administering access to adolescent literacy coaches and supporting technology enhancement
- guiding educators towards establishing a research methodology to collect, analyze and report data so that they are comparable across the state.

Middle Level Teaching: Looping

Researchers posit that using looping in the middle school environment provides an opportunity to support meaningful relationships and learning (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; George & Lounsbury, 2000; Jackson & Davis, 2000; National Middle School Association, 2003; Nichols & Nichols, 2002; Simel, 1998; Westerfield, 2009) because it enables faculty and

students to develop long-term relationships where both parties are deeply invested in overall student achievement and growth.

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School intends to “loop” students through the entirety of their fifth through eighth grade years. Looping, as a variation of the Waldorf model, is an innovative multi-year placement that advances faculty from one grade level to the next along with his or her students.

Numerous studies (LAB, 1997; Walker, 2004; Ullman, 2005) point to the benefits of a looping instructional process model; especially within high poverty urban and minority areas where the opportunity to build long-term sustainable relationships through looping provides a multi-year anchor of support for students and families, who, too often, experience fractured support networks, underdeveloped relationships (McDermott, 2000), and inadequate resources.

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Looping creates a bridge between home and school and helps to create a family-like atmosphere (Franklin, 2002). With looping, students are able to rely on a core group of caring adults who work closely with one another towards the provision of well coordinated, significant, and demanding educational experiences for their students. Student anxiety, whether transitioning from year to year or the everyday interactions with faculty and peers, is lessened due to the non-

threatening and rich relationship with the adult faculty and academic peer group (Franklin, 2002; McCown, 2002; Thomas, 2008). Moreover, a teacher can implement a more coherent instructional plan appropriate to the child's academic needs (Grant, et al., 1996) while accumulating more in depth knowledge of students' personalities, learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses (Gaustaud, 1998; Lincoln, 1998).

Benefits of Looping

Benefits to Students

- Learning is enhanced with increased stability
- Develop predictable, meaningful relationships
- Stronger sense of security and belonging
- Stronger student friendships
- Reduced anxiety
- More individualized instruction because the teacher knows the students so well
- Support for students who need stabilizing influences in their lives

Benefits to Faculty -

- Staff partnership
- Longitudinal evaluation of students' learning style and abilities to compare with quantitative data
- More efficient use of time at the beginning of the year
- Decrease in disciplinary action discipline problems and
- Decrease in daily absences or periods of time away from school
- Curriculum is built upon knowledge of previous year, including objective documentation of student's strengths and weaknesses
- Productive, meaningful parent-teacher interaction
- Cooperative learning opportunities between students
- Increased job satisfaction
- Increased accountability

Benefits to Parents

- Develop stronger parent/student relationship
- Parents become school partners and are more likely to be involved with children's education
- Enhanced and more frequent communication between home/school
- Children are excited and enthusiastic about going to school

Benefits to School

- Increased instructional time
- Increased learning potential for student population
- The system fosters bonds between family and faculty
- Authentic assessment of student programs
- Increased parental involvement
- Fewer behavior problems as stronger peer relationships develop
- Faculty and staff cohesion

High school teaching: Authentic college preparation

There is considerable discussion about aligning high school graduation requirements with college admissions requirements, but little alignment has occurred to date (AASCU, 2006). The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School intends to establish a catalogue of course offerings that exceed state standards, are aligned with college admissions requirements, and involve strategically implemented courses that focus on student growth, acquisition, service learning, job skills, and behavior.

Further, the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will:

- Establish, maintain and review explicit academic goals that are aligned with and often exceed state standards and college admission requirements.
- Focus professional development activities supporting a culture of collaboration.
- Embrace broader learning objectives beyond the assigned discipline and use differentiation strategies to reach students at all levels.
- Interpret student achievement data to make decisions about teaching.
- Recognize student and faculty achievement within a context of support.

D. School Calendar

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School's 2011-2012 daily calendar parallels the school calendar of local education agencies. However, the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School's 2011-2012 daily calendar, at the middle level (5-8), reflects 195 days of instruction through a 15 day extension in June.

[insert Appendix A]

4. School Accountability

School

A. Methods of self-assessment or evaluation

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will utilize quantitative and qualitative research strategies by establishing a methodology for analysis, distribution of faculty and staff

surveys, parent surveys, and conducting open-ended interviews as well as public forums to evaluate school effectiveness against mission, vision, and goals. Triangulating data collected from parent and professional staff responses to survey, interviews, and public forums will reduce bias when evaluating the strength of the academic program. Once the data has been collected, categorized into predominant data chunks, conceptualized, and a cross comparative analysis conducted to identify emergent themes, the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will have established a scholarly means by which to identify the strengths and any weaknesses of the organization, management, instruction and associated programming.

B. Evaluation of faculty and administration

Faculty

Faculty will be evaluated on an annual basis using the *Semi-Annual Employee Evaluation Form for Instructional I Teachers* (Form # PDE-426) and the *Instructional I to Instructional II Assessment Form* (Form # PDE-427). Additional evaluative instruments or practice may be applied in the form of informal observations, student evaluations, peer performance review, student outcomes, and parent and community feedback using varied but reliable protocol.

Administration

The administrative staff of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School is expected to endure a rigorous evaluative process. The process entails scheduled and intermittent site observations and an agreed upon set of achievement measures, performance and operational goals that reflect the administrator's breadth of responsibilities.

C. School accountability

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will provide ample opportunities for active parent participation towards establishing accountability.

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will maintain transparency, strong communication, and developed relationships with parents of students by:

- Parent/Faculty progress conferences
- Parent climate surveys
- Public forums
- Meetings of the Board of Directors
- Fundraising activities
- Social networks
- Advancing 'family centered' programming
- Working collaboratively on community projects
- Maintain the mission of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School

D. Review of budget and financial records

Archie Redevelopment Strategies co-existing as the Founding Board of Directors of the Archie Preparatory Charter School will act within all regulations related to submission of formal documentation, annual audits, and annual fiscal reporting. Financial records will be securely maintained in such a way as to reflect current Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) standards and practice.

The business administration office will provide current documentation and periodic status updates as requested by the Chief Academic Officer/Superintendent and/or the Board of Directors.

The annual budget will be prepared by the business administration office and presented to the Board of Directors for [public] review, discussion, approval, and adoption.

E. School records and the dissemination of information

School records

Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School records will be maintained through a centralized data collection system with all digitally produced electronic records being stored through a non-volatile high capacity digital storage component. Documents transferred to the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School from a school district, private school, or charter school will be placed in a student inventory library for the purpose of security and systematically cataloguing hard copy student records.

Dissemination of information

In accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) providing for the protection of the privacy of student education records, the dissemination of student records will maintain compliance with the FERPA guidelines:

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records

- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school (US Department of Education, 2011).

F. Enrollment and notification

The Office of Student Services will be responsible for maintaining accurate student enrollment information. The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will utilize the required enrollment and notification forms published by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for use in Charter Schools. Standardized enrollment practices will be adhered to upon receipt of an enrollment form.

An electronic database of enrolled students will be established and the Office of Student Services of the Archie Preparatory Charter School will continually monitor the access of each student and their attendance.

Monthly enrollment reports will be presented to the Board of Directors by the Chief Academic Officer/Superintendent of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School and will be submitted to the Board. These reports will be used to generate tuition bills for submission to the LEA.

Enrollment information

The family must provide the Office of Registration and Enrollment with the student's current home, family email address and telephone number(s). When there is a change in contact information, a written notice shall be submitted to the Registrar or Director of Registration and Enrollment. Families will be required to update this information annually.

Student evaluation

A. Student performance

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will prescribe the use of formal assessments in the form of both norm referenced and criterion referenced assessments. The use of both forms of assessment allow for full examination of student achievement as well as acting as an reliable indicator of faculty effectiveness.

Formal assessments

Norm referenced tests are used as comparisons between one student and another or one group of students and another group. Schools must execute these tests under specific and similar

circumstances in each instance of test taking. The advantage of this is that students, parents, and teachers have the advantage of receiving feedback as to how each student compares to their peers when subgroup consideration is necessary. This provides stakeholders a valid analysis of what needs remediation or reviewed, as well as indicating what lessons and instruction were most effective throughout the learning term.

Because a criterion referenced test is able to measure skills with such meticulousness it is able to easily and very clearly identify a student's area of mastery. As one skill is tested against a standard, the student is measured against that standard and given an appropriate score. The school, faculty, student and family are left with a very succinct picture of whether the student has or has not mastered the desired skill.

School performance on formal assessments will be measured against statewide and national student achievement standards to further evaluate the vigor of the academic program.

Informal assessments

Informal assessments aid faculty and para-professionals by providing an intermittent snapshot of learning and understanding attained by the students.

Assessments

- The annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)
- Employee surveys and interviews
- Parent surveys and interviews
- Writing samples
- Homework

- Course examinations
- Student data
- Portfolios
- Experiments
- Inquiry
- Observation

B. Measure student development towards learning goals and objectives

Student development towards the overall learning goals and objective will be measured through formal and informal assessments against established standardized achievement, academic and non-academic goals.

- Annual benchmark achievement rate
- Student satisfaction and engagement indices
- Student retention and promotion rates
- Observation
- Intense site immersion
- PSSA
- Annual Basic Academic Skills Inventory
- Formative assessments
- Summative assessments
- Attendance rates
- Service learning criteria
- Discipline rates
- Grades/report cards

C. Student evaluations and student achievement

The results collected from evaluations and assessments will provide reliably valid data for analysis and consideration. The results of the research will present salient feedback relative to student achievement and the operational capacity of the school. The research findings will be presented to the Board of Directors as well as the community for review and member critique.

5. School Community

A. School and community relationships

Schools alone cannot prepare youth for productive adulthood. It is evident schools and communities should work closely with each other to meet their mutual goals. Schools can provide more support for students, families and staff when they are an integral part of the community. On the other hand, agencies can make services more accessible to youth and families by establishing partnerships with schools as they can connect with more efficiency and have an impact on hard-to-reach clients. Appropriate and effective collaboration and teaming are recognized as key factors to community development, learning and family self-sufficiency.

Partnerships should be considered as active connections between schools and community resources. The partnership may involve use of school or neighborhood facilities and equipment; sharing other resources; collaborative fund raising and grant applications; volunteer assistance; mentoring and training from professionals and others with special expertise; information sharing and dissemination; networking; recognition and public relations; shared responsibility for planning, implementation and evaluation of programs and services; expanding opportunities for internships, jobs, recreation and building a sense of community.

School-community partnerships can share resources and strategies to enhance communities that support children and their families. These partnerships will lessen the gap between schools and community, strengthen neighborhoods and lead to a noticeable reduction in young people's problems. Building such partnerships requires visioning, strategic planning, creative leadership and new multifaceted roles for professionals who work in schools and communities.

Partnerships

The following list reflects community resources which the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School intends to create sustainable partnerships:

- County Agencies and departments
- Municipal Agencies and departments (Parks & Recreation, library, courts, civic event units)
- United Way, Central PA Food Bank, Cancer Society, Red Cross, Salvation Army, volunteer agencies, health and human service agencies
- Service and philanthropic organizations (Lion's Club, Rotary Club, veteran's groups)
- Youth advocacy agencies & groups
- Sports/Health/Fitness/Outdoor Groups (YMCA, athletic leagues, local gyms, conservation associations, Harrisburg Boxing Club, Central PA Food Bank, etc.)
- Community-Based Organizations (Neighborhood and homeowners' associations, Neighborhood Watch/Patrol, block clubs, housing project associations, economic development groups, community development corporations, civic associations)
- Faith community institutions (Tressler Lutheran Services, Catholic Charities, congregations and subgroups, etc.)
- Artists and cultural institutions (Museums, art galleries, theater groups, TV & radio stations, literary clubs, art groups, writers' organizations, collector's groups)
- Businesses/Corporations (Neighborhood business associations, Chamber of Commerce, Goodwill Industries, restaurants, banks, AAA)
- Media (Local newspapers, TV & radio, local access cable)
- Family Members, residents, Senior citizens groups

B. Parent involvement

Parental involvement in school is defined as parent reported participation at least once during the school year in attending a general school meeting; attending a scheduled meeting with their child's teacher; attending a school event; or volunteering in the school or serving on a school committee.

Relevance

Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance, and are more likely to complete secondary school than students whose parents are not involved in their school (Henderson, 1994). Parental involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities, and to coordinate their efforts with teachers. Teachers of students with highly involved parents tend to give greater attention to those students, and they tend to identify problems that might inhibit student learning at earlier stages (Zill, 1994).

Parent involvement and shared responsibility within the mission of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will serve as a condition of enrollment. Responsible parent involvement is equally as important as effective classroom faculty and school organizational structure. The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School believes the success of the charter school will rely on frequent parent attendance, feedback, and participation in the day to day activities, initiatives, policy considerations, and outcomes of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School.

C. Complaints

Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School policy is to comply with applicable federal and state laws and regulations. The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School is the local agency primarily responsible for compliance with federal and state laws and regulations governing educational programs. Pursuant to this policy, persons responsible for conducting investigations shall be knowledgeable about the laws and programs which they are assigned to investigate.

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School recognizes two distinct types of parent complaints: Formal and Informal. For the purpose of providing additional insight as to the parameters, it is necessary to contextualize such within the following narrative.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint involves an alleged violation of law and/or charter. The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School's *formal* complaint policy will address the formal complaint process, clearly outlining the steps necessary to file a complaint, as well as who will review the complaint once received by the Chief Academic Officer or designee and approximately when a response might be expected.

A formal complaint must be a written, signed statement that includes:

1. allegation that a federal statute or regulation applicable to the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School program has been violated,
2. facts, including documentary evidence that supports the allegation, and
3. the specific requirement, statute, or regulation being violated

This complaint procedure is adopted to provide a uniform system of complaint processing for the following types of complaints:

(1) Complaints of discrimination against any protected group including actual or perceived, including discrimination on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability, or on the basis of a person's association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics in any Charter School program or activity.; and

(2) Complaints of violations of state or federal law and regulations governing the following programs including but not limited to: special education, Title II, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, consolidated categorical aid, No Child Left Behind, migrant education, and child nutrition programs.

The following instances are considered violations of law and are examples of formal complaints:

- Improper discipline of a special education student (violates IDEA)
- Billing the wrong district for a student (violation of Charter School Law)
- Child abuse in an educational setting (violation of Pennsylvania state law)

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School response to a formal complaint will be in writing, and will clearly set forth the reasoning of the person or entity handling the complaint for the school, and it should be given to the complainant within the time frame set forth in your school's Complaint Policy. In the absence of a specific time frame, a response will be given to the complainant within a reasonable amount of time; otherwise; the complainant will be within

Upon resolution of a formal complaint, the school must provide to the complainant:

1. a written determination, including any remedial actions to be taken;
2. a written notice to the complainant that he or she may file an appeal with the APACS Board of Directors if the complaint involves a violation of law or charter.

Procedures

The following procedures shall be used to address all complaints which allege that the Charter School has violated federal or state laws or regulations governing educational programs.

Compliance officers shall maintain a record of each complaint and subsequent related actions.

All parties involved in allegations shall be notified when a complaint is filed, when a complaint meeting or hearing is scheduled, and when a decision or ruling is made.

Step 1: Filing of Complaint

Any individual, public agency, or organization may file a written complaint of alleged non-compliance by the Charter School.

A complaint alleging unlawful discrimination or harassment shall be initiated no later than six months from the date when the alleged discrimination occurred, or six months from the date when the complainant first obtained knowledge of the facts of the alleged discrimination. A complaint may be filed by a person who alleges that he/she personally suffered unlawful discrimination or by a person who believes that an individual or any

specific class of individuals has been subjected to unlawful discrimination.

The complaint shall be presented to the compliance officer who shall maintain a log of complaints received, providing each with a code number and date stamp.

If a complainant is unable to put a complaint in writing due to conditions such as a disability or illiteracy, Charter School staff shall assist him/her in the filing of the complaint.

Step 2: Mediation (optional)

Within three days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer may informally discuss with the complainant the possibility of using mediation. If the complainant agrees to mediation, the compliance officer shall make arrangements for this process.

Before initiating the mediation of a discrimination complaint, the compliance officer shall ensure that all parties agree to make the mediator a party to related confidential information.

If the mediation process does not resolve the problem within the parameters of law, the compliance officer shall proceed with his/her investigation of the complaint.

The use of mediation shall not extend the charter school's timelines for investigating and resolving the complaint unless the complainant agrees in writing to such an extension of time.

Step 3: Investigation of Complaint

The compliance officer is encouraged to hold an investigative meeting within five days of receiving the complaint or an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the complaint. This

meeting shall provide an opportunity for the complainant and/or his/her representative to repeat the complaint orally. The complainant and/or his/her representative shall have an opportunity to present the complaint and evidence or information leading to evidence to support the allegations in the complaint.

A complainant's refusal to provide the Charter School's investigator with documents or other evidence related to the allegations in the complaint, or his/her failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or his/her engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in the dismissal of the complaint because of a lack of evidence to support the allegation.

The Charter School's refusal to provide the investigator with access to records and/or other information related to the allegation in the complaint, or its failure or refusal to cooperate in the investigation or its engagement in any other obstruction of the investigation, may result in a finding, based on evidence collected, that a violation has occurred and may result in the imposition of a remedy in favor of the complainant.

Step 4: Response

OPTION 1:

Unless extended by written agreement with the complainant, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the Charter School's investigation and decision, as described in "Step 5" below, within 60 days of the Charter School's receipt of the complaint.

OPTION 2:

Within 30 days of receiving the complaint, the compliance officer shall prepare and send to the complainant a written report of the Charter School's investigation and decision, as described in Step 5 below. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the compliance officer's decision, he/she may, within five days, file his/her complaint in writing with the Board. The Board may consider the matter at its next regular Board meeting or at a special Board meeting convened in order to meet the 60-day time limit within which the complaint must be answered. The Board may decide not to hear the complaint, in which case the compliance officer's decision shall be final. If the Board hears the complaint, the compliance officer shall send the Board's decision to the complainant within 60 days of the Charter School's initial receipt of the complaint or within the time period that has been specified in a written agreement with the complainant.

Step 5: Final Written Decision

The Charter School's decision shall be in writing and sent to the complainant. The Charter School's decision shall be written in English and in the language of the complainant whenever feasible or as required by law.

The decision shall include:

1. The findings of fact based on evidence gathered.
2. The conclusion(s) of law.
3. Disposition of the complaint.
4. Rationale for such disposition.
5. Corrective actions, if any are warranted.
6. Notice of the complainant's right to appeal the Charter School's decision within fifteen (15) days to the APACS Board of Directors and procedures to be followed for initiating such an appeal.
7. For discrimination complaints arising under state law, notice that the complainant must wait until 60 days have elapsed from the filing of an appeal with the Board of Directors of the APACS before pursuing civil law remedies.
8. For discrimination complaints arising under federal law such complaint may be made at any time to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

Informal

Many types of complaints do not involve violations of law or charter; rather, they are informal complaints. The APACS Complaint Policy will address the informal complaint process as well. Informal complaints should ideally be handled by school staff, not by the APACS's Board of Directors or Board of Director's designee. Unlike the formal complaint process, a multi-tiered review process is considered acceptable for informal complaints. For example, an informal

complaint may be handled in the first instance by a teacher, then a dean or assistant principal and then the principal, etc.

The following instances are examples of informal complaints:

- Conflict between students
- Grading
- Classroom placement

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School Complaint Policy will address responses to informal complaints and specify whether a written response will be generated. In all cases, however, Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will document all informal complaints and responses.

6. Extra-curricular activities (athletics, publications and organizations)

At the point of submission of this charter school application, no agreements have been entered into or plans developed with the local school district regarding participation in extracurricular activities. Due to budgetary and organizational restructuring, the local school district could not verify the degree to which extracurricular activities at the middle level or high school will be provided to students attending the local school district.

Nonetheless, the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School will provide several opportunities for students to gain knowledge and develop skills through programmatic initiatives that require the employment of differentiated research strategies and the application of sequential operations that commands commitment from students and incorporates all aspects of the core curriculum.

The Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School intends to provide an extracurricular activity specific to online digital publications culminating in the publishing of an online school periodical as a feature of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School website. We intend to publish the electronic magazine throughout the school year. The purpose of the online student publication is to foster an interest in online journalism which, as a communicative instrument, provides real world applications in terms of prioritizing relevant topics and current issues, conducting investigative research through appropriate strategies, and developing skillfully descriptive writers and creators of digital media as well as teaching students to differentiate between fact and opinion when searching the web for statistical or scholarly information. As a nation, we have a critical need for trained information technology employees that is not being met by our educational system. The use of digital media in the school setting provides a platform to consider the exploration of a technology based curriculum that will assuredly evoke interest in students and potentially alter the way many students perceive education (Barseghian, January 10, 2011).

The second extracurricular activity to be offered to the students of the Archie Preparatory Academy Charter School is the STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math)/Eco-Science Club, which intends to cultivate an interest in “green” projects such as school and community wide recycling programs, planning and establishing several vegetable and botanical gardens, investigation of sources of renewable and alternative energy as well as participation in a series of environmentally friendly projects established through partnerships agreements with state and county agencies. Further, students will study energy-efficient technology including building technology like energy-saving upgrades to existing structures. Students will also learn about the employment opportunities associated with this relatively new focus on science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics. To this point, we intend to challenge the students to become aware of how their actions affect the future of the world in which they live as they witness the cascading effect of purposeful engagement in their neighborhoods and global community through research and application. Additionally, fostering an interest in the field of engineering is of relevance in relation to current trends and global as well as domestic need.

The third extracurricular activity entails the participation in a micro-society where the middle level students gain understanding specific to the functionality and operational capacities of municipalities. Participating students will engage in a year long series of role play activities where relevant topics are discussed and problem solving is instrumental in the creation of the micro-society. Students will role play as citizenry, legislative officials, businesspersons, employees, and taxpayers for the purpose of enhancing their awareness and conceptualization of real-world complexities existing within a formal society.

Research indicates that project-based programs encourage students to make connections among different subject areas to answer open-ended questions, retain what they have learned, and apply learning to real life problems as well as reduce discipline problems and lower rates of absenteeism (Drake, 2004).