



ACADEMIES

Notre Dame ACE Academies Program Overview Executive Summary

The Notre Dame ACE Academy initiative is an innovative university-school partnership program that effects comprehensive school excellence in regional clusters of partner schools. The Notre Dame ACE Academies represent a unique model of urban Catholic schooling, in which under-resourced schools serving low-income communities are supported by parental choice scholarships and the mobilization of the resources of the University's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) and partnering dioceses. In the Notre Dame ACE Academies, pastors and bishops delegate certain responsibilities to a regional board of specified jurisdiction, and ACE provides comprehensive school support that attends to multiple dimensions of schooling in the areas of Catholic identity, stewardship, and teaching/learning.

The Notre Dame ACE Academies exist to ensure that Catholic schools in the United States not only survive, but thrive, extending the Catholic school advantage to as many children as possible.

In 1972, the Catholic bishops of the United States recognized that traditional one-parish/one-school governance would eventually warrant revision, and they presciently noted that the Church “must be open to the possibility that the school of the future, including the Catholic school, will in many ways be very different from the schools of the past” (*To Teach as Jesus Did*). In particular, the bishops suggested that “new models of sponsorship and collaboration” may be desirable, and they encouraged Catholic schools to engage in “partnership with institutions of higher learning,” a request they echoed three decades later in their 2005 statement, *Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*. The Notre Dame ACE Academy (NDAA) partnership represents one such model.



Above all else, the Notre Dame ACE Academies provide a Catholic education of the highest quality to as many children as possible in under-served communities.

Notre Dame ACE Academy: School Support Model

ACE provides structured, comprehensive support to principals and teachers at Notre Dame ACE Academies through a unique, research-based school support model that is focused on the three pillars of ACE: educational excellence, the experience of community in Christ, and faith formation in the Catholic tradition. NDAA supports that model through numerous benefits to schools in critical areas, providing resources and support in each of several key domains.



Catholic Identity

ACE promotes a school culture of high academic expectations, Christ-centered community, and faith formation in the Catholic tradition. Teachers and principals participate in professional development, community building, and faith formation opportunities at Notre Dame each summer and together at their schools each month.

Stewardship

The regional Notre Dame ACE Academies boards oversee certain governance functions of schools, including the hiring and evaluation of principals and oversight of school finances. Partner schools use the Notre Dame and ACE brands to promote the school, and ACE facilitates connections between schools and Notre Dame and ACE alumni groups.

In order to ensure that Catholic schools can sustain their legacy of providing high quality educational opportunities to low-income communities, and to support the U.S. Catholic bishops' long-standing efforts to increase opportunities for parents to choose the best school for their children, ACE has limited the establishment of Notre Dame ACE Academies to cities and states with parental choice scholarship programs. ACE assists schools in accessing these scholarship programs and provides a regional advancement specialist to boost enrollment and increase scholarship funds.

Our Goals:

- College
- Heaven

Teaching and Learning

Notre Dame ACE Academies seek to ensure that Catholic schools serving under-resourced communities are of the highest educational quality. ACE supports a regional teaching and learning specialist and implements a professional formation program. ACE helps schools upgrade instructional resources and curricular materials and implements programming to enhance school leadership, professional capacity, instruction, community engagement, and school culture.



<http://ACEacademies.nd.edu>

The Notre Dame ACE Academies are characterized by their zeal – the great desire to do whatever it takes to educate children to live lives that make God known, loved, and served. In these schools, children are challenged to seek, persist, excel, love, and serve in all they do.

SEEK

Children are immersed in a culture of continuous improvement that instills a life-long love of learning.

PERSIST

Hard work is the key to success. Students learn to overcome challenges to achieve their dreams, and every teacher is committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that each child succeeds.

EXCEL

The Notre Dame ACE Academies set forth two goals for each child: College & Heaven. Students receive a rigorous, college-preparatory education as they develop a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

LOVE

Each Notre Dame ACE Academy is a family, providing a safe, loving environment where each child learns to thrive in community with others.

SERVE

To whom much is given, much is expected. Notre Dame ACE Academy students are prepared for lives of service to others, the community, and the Church.

The Notre Dame ACE Academies offer a re-imagining of parish school governance that accounts for contemporary challenges and leverages the assets – including the physical plant, financial resources, and social capital – of existing parish and diocesan schools. Together with visionary bishops, entrepreneurial superintendents, and collaborative pastors, ACE is building a model of urban Catholic schooling for low-income communities that is both sustainable and, over time, replicable. The Alliance for Catholic Education's goal is to establish ND ACE Academies as demonstration schools that illustrate what is possible when pastors, bishops, and Catholic institutions of higher education enter into meaningful and lasting partnerships in which all parties have a substantial stake in student success.



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