

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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INDEPENDENT REPORT EVALUATES ACE ACADEMY'S FIRST YEAR OF PERFORMANCE

Portland, OR – An independent report of The Academy for Architecture, Construction & Engineering (ACE) indicates that ACE has finished strong in its first year, and is poised to increase that success in year two. Overall, stakeholders feel ACE has been effective in meeting its mission. *(ACE's mission is to provide a contextual educational experience within the architectural, construction and engineering disciplines, leading to the achievement of rigorous academic benchmarks and additional post-secondary education for a diverse high school student body).* Many reported the career and technical education at ACE as “outstanding”.

The performance evaluation was commissioned by the ACE Academy Board of Directors and is required by ACE's Charter Agreement. The objective was to see if ACE was “making the grade” in delivering its innovative, credit-by-proficiency learning model.

The evaluation was executed by 20-year educational veteran, Karen Phillips, Instructional Coach/School to Career Coordinator at Sabin Schellenberg Professional Technical Center. Ms. Phillips is a recognized expert in small schools, having served six years as director of the Gates Foundation/Meyer Memorial Trust Small School Initiative in Oregon. Ms. Phillips' assessment tools included student focus groups, interviews of staff, parents and training center partners, online surveys and daily observations.

Finding Highlights:

- ACE demonstrated an unusual level of implementation of the school design for a first year, new school.
- Students rated their educational experience at 4.0 and their career preparation a 4.1 on a 5 point scale; noting that ACE was more rigorous than their home high school programs.
- Student GPAs were higher than their cumulative incoming GPAs. Students love this school – and the hands-on contextual learning has re-engaged their individual learning.
- ACE's staff is dedicated and committed – capable of implementing the school's vision for a hands-on, project based career charter school.

- ACE's contextual education experience received the highest mark.
- Parents gave ACE high ratings for its first year: 8.4; with extremely complimentary remarks during phone interviews ("He loves it!" was a common reaction about their child's experience of ACE).
- High level of student responsibility for their own learning.
- Strong integration of applied math.
- ACE provides an array of opportunities for further learning through its credit by proficiency model. In other words, committed students continue a lesson until they have really learned it.

The independent assessment provides ACE with valuable feedback and sets the tone for continual improvement at every level of the learning organization. As a result of Ms. Phillips' recommendations, ACE will continue to refine and build the teachers' skills and knowledge in project-based learning, credit by proficiency and integration.

Over 180 juniors and seniors from six local high schools will kick off the second year of ACE Academy this fall. "Back to School" night for students and parents is September 22nd, at ACE's main campus, 4222 NE 158th Ave. For more information about ACE, please visit: www.acecharterschool.org.

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