



Certified Content



Executive Summary - 2022-06-07 16:54:36

Executive Summary

Beaufort Jasper Academy for Career Excellence
Michael Lovecchio
80 Lowcountry Drive
Ridgeland, South Carolina, 29936

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
-------------------	---

Executive Summary

Complete this diagnostic and send to Workspace at least four weeks prior to your Accreditation Engagement Review.

Provide demographic information

Please enter the most up-to-date information about your institution. It's important to make sure you include ALL the information requested in this section, and that all the information you provide is correct.

Please provide updated contact and demographic information in the table below.

Name of Your Institution
Beaufort-Jasper Academy for Career Excellence

Telephone
843-987-8107

Head of Institution
Dr. Mike Lovecchio

Email Address
Lovecchiom@bjace.org

Grades Served (type N/A if you do not have grade levels)
10-12

Student Enrollment (for individual institutions) or Number of Schools (for systems).
If neither, type N/A.

Varies each Semester from about 160-210. 197 Students in Spring Semester 2023

Executive Summary

Cognia wants to know more about your institution. You can copy and paste your response from your workbook or type directly into the fields below. Your description of your institution should be 2,000 words (four to five pages) or less. If a particular prompt below does not apply to your institution type, simply do not include a response in your narrative. Consider composing a paragraph or two based on each these prompts to guide you in writing your first narrative:

1. Provide a brief description of the history of your institution.
2. Describe the community your institution serves.
 - Is the community urban, suburban, or rural?
 - What language(s) are spoken?
3. Describe how your institution is governed.
 - Is your institution independent, related to a special association or religious group, or under a state department or ministry of education?
 - Is there a board of directors or other governing authority?
4. Describe the mission, vision, and values of your institution.
 - When were these statements last reviewed and/or updated?
5. Describe the enrollment trends in your institution for the past three to five years.
6. Describe your institution's philosophy of education.
 - Is the philosophy traditional?
 - Is it based on a particular model (e.g. Dalcroze, Dewey, Emilia, Gardner, Glaser, Montessori, Piaget, Vigotsky, Waldorf) or is it a combination of multiple sources of research.
7. Describe your institution's curriculum.
 - Does your governing authority require a certain curriculum?
 - Do you have a traditional curriculum based on reading, writing, and mathematics?
 - Do you offer special programs such as STEM, music, and arts?
 - How and when is the curriculum updated?
8. Describe instruction in your institution.
 - Is it traditional lecture format, collaborative, hands-on, competency-based, on-site, and/or remote?
 - How much is technology integrated into instruction?
9. Discuss personnel management (such as hiring practices, evaluation, and supervision).
10. Give a brief description of student performance.
 - Are you required to give certain assessments at certain grades?
 - In what curricular areas do your students perform well?
 - In what ways do you tailor your assessments to the needs of learners?
 - What curricular areas need improved student performance?

- Does trend data indicate student performance is improving, staying about the same, or declining?

11. Describe current major improvement initiatives.

- Include progress and status on each initiative.
- Include the intended outcome or goal of each initiative.

The Beaufort-Jasper Academy for Career Excellence (ACE) was founded through South Carolina state legislation in June of 1975. The school was created with the vision of being a shared technical school serving students from both Beaufort and Jasper Counties. In the years that followed, ACE underwent multiple changes in both structure and format. The school has served as a comprehensive high school, a technical center and has housed an alternative school prior to its current design as a career center. Throughout the school's history, there have been many discussions related to closing the school, with the most recent discussions occurring in 2016. Since 2016, the school has experienced growth and success, which led to renewed stability and optimism from both feeder districts.

ACE currently serves eight feeder high schools from Beaufort (6) and Jasper (2) counties. Both counties cover a large geographical region and encompass rural, suburban and beach/tourist areas. Having a student body from such a vast geographical area has led to a diverse learning population in terms of socio-economic status, ethnicity, cognitive ability, and emotional intelligence. The majority of our population is of Hispanic descent (55%), followed by African-American (27%), White (15%) and, Multicultural (3%). Reflective of our demographic information, the number of multilingual learners attending ACE continues to grow each year, with our fall 2022 enrollment reaching a high of 61 students (or 39% of our learning population). In terms of socio-economic status, 52% of our population qualify for free lunch and 5% qualify for reduced lunch. Despite the challenges of serving a diverse learning population, ACE has strived to keep student needs at the forefront of our mission. The school's academic, attendance, and discipline data have reflected a student-oriented learning environment built upon high academic and behavioral expectations.

In August 2018, a new governance structure was created to increase communication between the two districts, provide additional support for ACE, and provide each district superintendent with additional voice in relation to the school. The new governance structure created a monthly governance meeting between the ACE Director and both district superintendents and chief financial officers. The ACE Board (made up of three members from each sending district's school boards) went from meeting monthly to meeting quarterly. The new format increased both district's support for ACE and allowed for additional voice from both districts' leadership. The new governance structure, in conjunction with increased academic achievement, resulted in a new auto-renewing contract between the two districts without a specified end date. The new contract has led to a renewed optimism towards the school from both districts which, in turn, has led to increased stability and growth.

Since our last accreditation visit, ACE has experienced a change in structure. Prior to the 2018-2019 school year, ACE offered instruction to students in grades 10-12 on a half-day basis (serving a morning cohort and afternoon cohort). The majority of our CTE programs were 2-years long with students attending two CTE courses in the morning (or afternoon) at ACE and the remaining half of the school day at their respective feeder schools. This format presented challenges, as it was difficult to schedule field trips and other off-site learning opportunities. In addition, ACE was losing a large number of students between the first and second years of each program as many failed core content/graduation requirement courses at their feeder schools and needed to return full time to their feeder high school to complete the graduation requirements. ACE collaborated with both districts leadership teams, feeder high school leadership, and other stakeholders to redesign the school structure to best meet the needs of our learners.

In Spring 2019, ACE welcomed its first cohort of students with the new format. Students began to attend ACE starting the second semester of their junior year. This allowed the majority of the students attending ACE to have completed the majority of their graduation requirements. During their first semester at ACE, students would take program levels I and II in addition to ELA 11. The ELA courses at ACE are tied directly to student CTE programs and focus on technical literacy and communication skills. In addition, during this time period, ACE added a special education teacher and multilingual teacher to support our diverse learning population.

Senior year, students return to ACE in the fall and complete CTE program levels III and IV as well as ELA 12, which focuses on communication through technology, resume creation, interviewing, and soft skills. ACE students complete their CTE program at the end-of-first semester senior year and are offered several options for their last semester of high school. Completing students have the option of returning to their feeder school for additional coursework, re-enrolling in a one-semester program at ACE (which is open to students in either grade 11 or 12) or participate in a work-based learning opportunity. The flexibility and opportunities offered to students with this structure allows ACE to increase student readiness for the workforce all the while meeting a variety of student needs.

The school currently has thirteen CTE programs and offers ELA 11 and ELA 12 in traditional and honors formats. Three of the programs, culinary arts, law enforcement and EMS are one semester programs. Students attending culinary arts or law can be in grades 11 or 12, while the EMS program is only available for seniors. Students attending a one semester program at ACE will meet state CTE completer requirements and test for industry certifications while attending. The remainder of our CTE programs are two semesters and are available to students during the second semester of their junior year. ACE offers the following programs:

- Auto Collision
- Auto Technology
- Barbering
- Building Construction
- Cosmetology

- Culinary Arts
- Electricity
- EMS
- Health Science
- Law Enforcement
- Marine Technology
- Nail Technology
- Welding

ACE has added both an EMS and Marine Technology program since our last accreditation visit. Both programs have been well received by students and industry partners and have led to a several employment opportunities for ACE students. The marine technology program is a state-innovative course with the goal of becoming part of the SC state CTE curriculum. EMS is a rigorous program that meets all four periods each day and leads to licensure as an EMT. Both additions align with ACE program offerings as they meet both local labor market needs and embrace cultural traditions of the Lowcountry. This fits with the school's effort to assure program offerings are relevant to our area.

The work that ACE staff and stakeholders have done to improve the school is based on a shared vision that puts students at the center. Structures have been put into place to support the whole child and create a welcoming environment that is supportive with high expectations. Recent completer data supports this vision. ACE works to ensure that each student earns certifications in CPR, OSHA 10 in addition to an industry recognized professional certification. ACE also works to ensure all our students pass ELA and are designated "college and career ready" by the state of South Carolina. The addition of our intervention period within the school schedule affords learners the time, support, and remediation necessary to increase achievement. Our guiding statements, which are reviewed in professional development and faculty meetings on a yearly basis, are as follows:

MISSION & BELIEF STATEMENT

The Academy for Career Excellence prepares high school students to become qualified workforce members by offering Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs leading to industry certifications, technical skills attainment and soft skills training necessary to support current regional and national business needs.

WE BELIEVE

- A curriculum integrating academic and career technology and training is essential for producing COLLEGE AND CAREER READY graduates.
- Work-based experience is essential for successful workplace entry.
- Instruction will encompass a variety of teaching methods for all learning styles.

- Educational programs will meet the needs of the business community.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of ACE is to be recognized as one of the nation's leading technical high schools, providing students who are ready to meet the global challenges of today's technical work force and world.

Enrollment for the 2022 Fall semester was 156 students with that number increasing to 197 students in the spring of 2023. The number of applications to ACE has steadily increased since the inception of the new structure. This past spring, ACE received over 300 new student applications leading to a waiting list for acceptance to some of our CTE programs.

The enrollment increase (growth for three consecutive years) can be attributed to a number of factors including a national increase in the popularity of CTE programs, an improved school reputation among stakeholders in both communities, and a revised recruiting campaign.

ACE is influenced by the constructivist educational philosophy. We expect our learners to build and discover knowledge and not be passive learners. This hands-on approach guides instruction at ACE. We strive for student focused lessons and teachers plan utilizing the gradual release model. To obtain mastery, ACE students are required to reach the higher domain of thinking skills for each standard, which is best accomplished through a constructivist approach. The staff, students, and stakeholders associated with the school are aware of our shared focus and our commitment to student success is evident in everything we do and in every decision we make. Examples of this include the school structure changes, the incorporation of relevant ELA courses available at the school and in the number of work-based learning opportunities in which our students have participated.

The ACE CTE curriculum is based on the South Carolina State Standards for each program in addition to state and national standards that align with student industry certifications and licenses. The ELA curriculum at ACE has taken the SC State ELA Standards and embedded CTE based competencies in addition to technical reading, writing and a communication component. The focus is a relevant curriculum that prepares students for employment, college, or the military. ACE delivers curriculum through the gradual release model to ensure proficiency. This model transitions students from foundational instruction to demonstrating learning while ACE teachers. This allows students to achieve higher order thinking skills and mastery in each classroom. School administration monitors both the curriculum and curriculum delivery in our observations to assure that students are getting rigorous hands-on experiences. ACE also offers support for all learners through special education services, multilingual learner support, and ILT (our additional learning block) interventions that align with our tiered support systems for students in the academic, social, and emotional domains.

ACE's personnel management also reflects our foundational philosophies. ACE seeks to hire industry professionals who are student-centric, innovative, and enjoy mentoring and facilitating students' mastery of standards and transition into the workforce. All staff must be able to empathize with our diverse learning population

and meet students at individual levels. Once hired, the goal is to provide ACE staff learning and growth opportunities that align with the school's core beliefs. Professional development focuses on ways to increase capacity to meet the needs of our learning population and interventions we can implement when students are struggling. Positive relationships with students is at the forefront of our personnel management, from hiring to retention and evaluation.

The ACE staff takes pride in the school's recent student achievement successes. ACE program completer and state industry certification data reflect a commitment to excellence. ACE has improved in both areas over the past few years and if a student remains at ACE, the program completion percentage is well over 95%. This has also been the case regarding industry certifications, as all of our completers have earned an industry certification the past three semesters. While satisfied with our overall data, staff is focusing improvement efforts on our state licensing programs (nursing, nail technology, cosmetology, and barbering) to increase the number of students who pass the state exams on their initial attempt and prior to graduation.

ACE also has accomplishments in a number of additional areas. Our school's food truck, "Taste of ACE", was reconditioned (and continues to be maintained) by our auto tech students, was painted by our auto collision students, rewired and had an A/C unit installed by our electricity students, and is manned by our culinary arts students. This truck has been a regular addition to many Lowcountry events such as the Hilton Head Island Seafood Fest, Port Royal Octoberfest, and feeder school football games.

ACE students continue to compete with the best students in the state and country. We have done well at SkillsUSA for the past two years and had four state champions this past year. Two of the students finished top 10 in their respective competitions at the National SkillsUSA competition in Atlanta. Our cosmetology and barbering programs have also won a number of local and state competitions.

ACE students are involved in our communities. Beyond participating in a number of Lowcountry festivals, ACE has assisted feeder schools with projects such as entrance signs, picnic tables and console tables. ACE has also helped community organizations such as our local Animal League (through the donation of handmade biscuits and dog houses), our local cultural center, churches and parks.

The ACE Innovation Lab is another collaborative project between programs that allows students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. A number of programs have assisted in transforming a former classroom into an engaging learning space modeled on the Google Innovation Lab. Students designed, built, and assisted in furnishing the lab, and it continues to evolve. Our most recent addition is a grant funded hydro-garden to provide fresh herbs to the culinary arts program.

Local and national partnerships are also an area of pride for our school. Our partnerships with companies such as Hilton Head Island Home Builders Association, several local automotive dealerships, Howell-Chase Refrigeration, the SC Ports Authority, and Yamaha have led to increased learning opportunities for our students as well as recruiting ACE students to join their respective workforces.

ACE does face challenges. As our enrollment continues to increase, upgrades to the facilities is becoming a major need. HVAC units, lighting, and classrooms, and shops are in need of repair or replacement. ACE is utilizing a facilities study completed in 2021, with the information being discussed among the two districts to determine next steps relating to capital improvements. The current facility is in need of a major upgrade (or replacement) to remain relevant with changes in the workplace and we have only begun to have discussions on next steps for the building.

Another challenge facing ACE is the decrease in enrollment of our Jasper County School District students. In the fall of 2020, Jasper opened its first CTE center. The programs offered differ from ACE (except health science). This provides additional choices for a school with a student population of roughly 600 total students. While the overall enrollment of ACE is on the rise, Jasper County student enrollment has been in decline for the past two years. Our goal is to increase enrollment from Jasper County through innovative initiatives, grassroots recruiting, and strong student results.

Serving two different districts does have its challenges. Each district operates under their own school calendar and as a result, teacher workdays, summer vacations, and holiday breaks do not always align. For the 2022-2023 school year, Jasper County School District has moved to a year round school academic calendar while Beaufort County School District remains on a traditional academic calendar. Our goal in this area is to have the differences in both school operations have no impact on students who attend ACE.

Despite the aforementioned challenges, ACE continues to move forward. By creating a student-centric learning environment with relevant programs and employment opportunities for our student completers, ACE has once again become a source of pride for Beaufort and Jasper Counties.