



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025





OUR VISION

The vision of ACPA is to sustain a progressive teaching and learning culture that thrives on safety, acceptance and inclusion, rigorous academics, a commitment to the arts, and college preparedness.

The Arts & College Preparatory Academy

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A Note from Carinne Blackwell

As we begin this year's journey together, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible year we've just completed—a year when our theme, "Take to the Sky," inspired us to dream big, take creative risks, and rise above challenges together.

And rise we did! Even when the skies literally opened up during ChalkFest, our students and staff didn't let the rain stop their creativity—they adapted, collaborated, and filled our campus with color and joy despite the weather. Our Fall Play took flight with bold performances that showcased not only talent, but teamwork and courage. WinterFest filled our halls with music, art, and community, reminding us that our creativity shines brightest when we come together. And our Spring Musical lifted us even higher, showing just how far our students can soar when they believe in themselves and each other.

Now, as we turn the page to a new school year, we carry that same spirit forward into our 2025/26 theme: "Arts in Action." This year, we'll focus on how creativity moves beyond the stage, studio, and classroom—how it becomes a force for connection, compassion, and change in the world around us.

We can't wait to see what our students will create, perform, and bring to life this year. Together, let's keep the momentum going—transforming ideas into impact, and dreams into action.

Here's to a year full of learning, laughter, and Arts in Action!

Sincerely,

Carinne Blackwell
Middle School Principal



WHO WE ARE

The Arts & College Preparatory Academy (ACPA) is an independent charter school in Columbus. Our mission is to actively maintain a climate and culture that is based on a trailblazing arts and college prep curriculum in an environment that encourages all to strive, thrive, and take to the sky every day.

ACPA provides a tuition-free college preparatory education to approximately 500 7th-12th graders representing over twenty districts in Central Ohio. ACPA proudly welcomes students from all socio-economic, racial, and religious backgrounds, and of all genders and sexual orientations.

ACPA provides an arts-focused curriculum and believes in recognizing student voice to make a positive contribution to the greater community. Combined, these principles encourage student investment in their own education. ACPA teachers offer varied learning styles and foster creative problem solving skills essential to student achievement and effective communication.

ENROLLMENT

Grade 7	46
Grade 8	56
Grade 9	90
Grade 10	76
Grade 11	104
Grade 12	93
Total	466





Kindness



Respect for Diversity

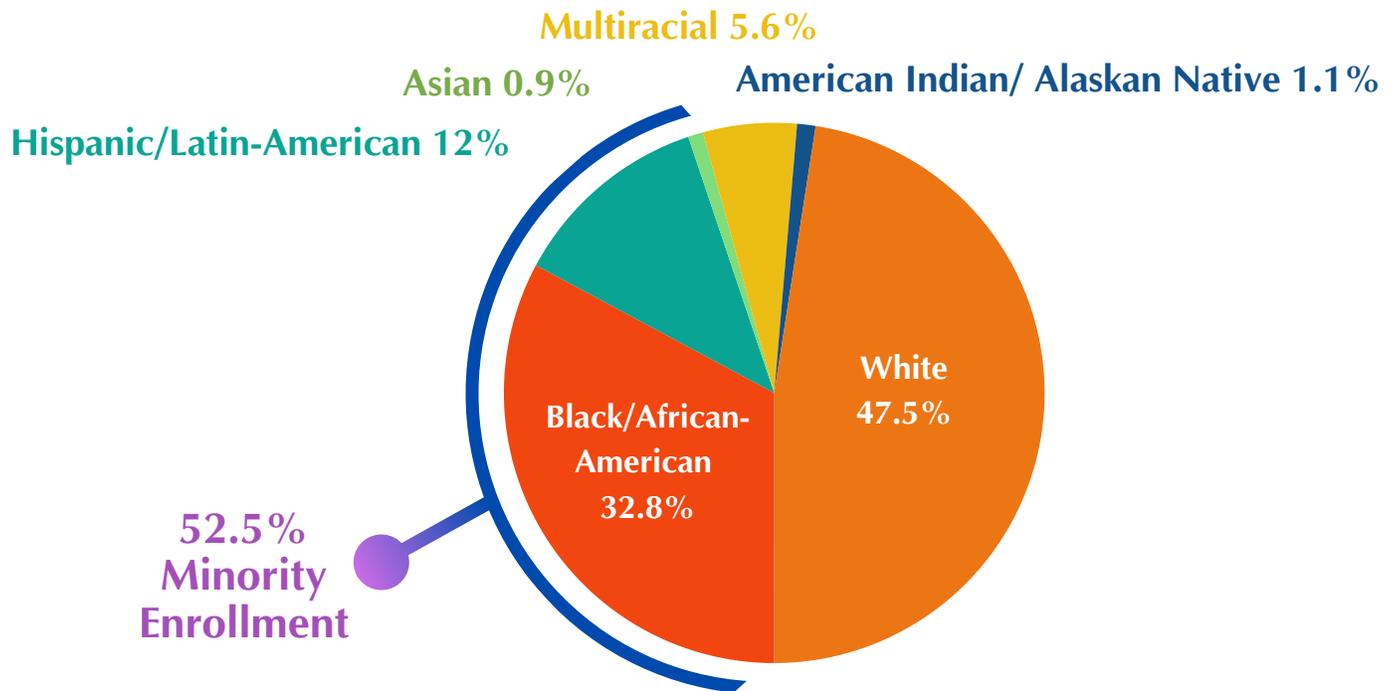


Awareness



DIVERSITY AT ACPA

The demographics of the student body are diverse; ACPA proudly welcomes students of all socio-economic, racial, and religious backgrounds, and of all genders and sexual orientations.



40% Special Education & 504 Accommodations
55.4% Economically Disadvantaged

Event Highlights

ARTS & CULTURE

Black History Month Showcase & Open House

ACPA's biannual Open House combines student performances, classroom exploration, and community engagement into one event. Organized by students, staff, and board members, Our Black History Month Open House features a student showcase, highlighting performances from our Black and African-American students, as well as opportunities for Black-owned businesses from the community to participate.



Hispanic Heritage Month Market

Last year's Hispanic Heritage Market was a vibrant celebration of culture and community, organized by an ACPA family. The event featured authentic Latin American dancing, delicious traditional foods, and local vendors showcasing handmade goods and art in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month.



Event Highlights

CHALKFEST 2024



As the official kickoff to the Arts Events season and a gathering of our entire community, Chalkfest has become ACPA's rendition of Homecoming. Students, staff, families, and community members come together to celebrate our diverse community through chalk art, music, student businesses, and other activities.



2025 REPORT CARD

ACHIEVEMENT ★★ ★

This is measured using performance data from Ohio's State Tests.

PROGRESS ★★ ★

This is measured by comparing students' academic performance to the expected growth on Ohio's State Tests.

GAP CLOSING ★★

This reflects how well students are meeting expectations in English language arts, math, and graduation performance. This also shows how schools are helping reduce chronic absenteeism, identifying and serving gifted students, and increasing language proficiency.

GRADUATION ★★ ★★

This measures ACPA's four and five-year graduation rate.





Problem-Solving



Honesty



Communication



Participation



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

End of Course Exams (EOC) are taken by students in the following courses at the end of each school year. ACPA met indicators and significantly outperformed state averages in five subjects.

High School	Percent of Students Who Are At Least Proficient or Higher	State Comparison
Government	89.4%	72.6%
US History	81.7%	71.2%
English II	66.2%	60.4%
Biology	67.6%	65.4%
Algebra I	42%	59.4%
Geometry	47.8%	42.8%

Middle School	Percent of Students Who Are At Least Proficient or Higher	State Comparison
English 7	57.1%	62.9%
Math 7	10%	50%
English 8	49.1%	54.4%
Math 8	6.4%	47.6%

Performance Index measures levels of student achievement on the End of Course Exams. ACPA received a grade of C for Performance Index.

	2025 Percentage
Advanced	12.3%
Accomplished	16.5%
Proficient	30.7%
Basic	11.7%
Limited	7.2%

ACPA's full 2025 Report Card can be found at <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/school/overview/143610>

Event Highlights

Winterfest



ACPA's premier arts event and one of our most treasured traditions took place at the Southern Theatre and Westin Grand Ballroom on December 17th, 2024. ACPA and CAPA worked together to transform an unanticipated venue change into a stunning evening for both our visual and performing arts students.



COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

ACPA's 2025 graduating class is attending the following universities: The University of Akron, Capital University, Columbus College of Art & Design, Columbia College of Art & Design, Howard University, Kalamazoo College, Ohio University, Ohio State University, Wright State University, and more.

21.5% of students received honors diplomas

99% **ACT**[®] Participation

Four-year graduation rate

93.1%

State Average 88.3%

Five-year graduation rate

95.3%

State Average 89.7%



FY25 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

On average, community schools in Ohio are funded at 2/3 the total funding of traditional district schools. ACPA accounts for this funding disparity with programmatic grants, careful and precise budgeting, and the help of generous donors. While being one of the community schools with the lowest per pupil allocations, ACPA is also historically one of the highest performing academically in Ohio, and offers a full arts curriculum when other schools are cutting the arts - in short, ACPA does more with less.

Operating spending per pupil	\$12,461 (State \$12,723)
Classroom Spending	\$7,146 (State \$8,564)
Non-Classroom Spending	\$5,314 (State \$4,159)
Federal Funds	\$636 per pupil (State \$826)
State and Local Funds	\$11,825 per pupil (State \$11,897)
Beginning Cash Balance:	\$3,223,957.87
Ending Cash Balance:	\$3,058,055.36



ACPA spends 57.4% of operating expenses on classroom instruction.

Event Highlights

DRACULA



HEATHERS The Musical



ACPA's annual fall and spring productions were full of bold storytelling, dark humor, and overflowing talent from ACPA's thespians. Almost every showtime of each production was sold out, thanks to the support of hundreds in the ACPA community.



CURRENT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Ronnie Brown	School Director
Carinne Blackwell	Middle School Principal
Catherine McMillin	High School Principal
Demetrius Pate	Dean of Students
Sarah Bostelman	Director of Operations

CURRENT BOARD ROSTER

Jami Goldstein (Board President)	Chief Creative Officer, Greater Columbus Arts Council
Sandra Dawkins	Dedicated education leader and ACPA Parent
Al DiLorenzo	ACPA Alum '15 and Realtor for NAI Equities
Dan Gerdeman	ACPA Parent, retired art educator, and actively engaging the Columbus community through art
Kysten Palmore	Deputy Director of Community Engagement and Reentry, Ohio Department of Youth Services
L'Erin Price	ACPA Parent and Regional Human Resources Generalist for OH, MI, DC

COMMUNITY SCHOOL SPONSOR STATEMENT

Ohio Council of Community Schools (OCCS) uses various methods to evaluate the school's performance including published tests and other academic scores such as the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce Local Report Card and supporting data. OCCS regional representatives visit our partner schools regularly ensuring compliance with federal, state, and contractual requirements.



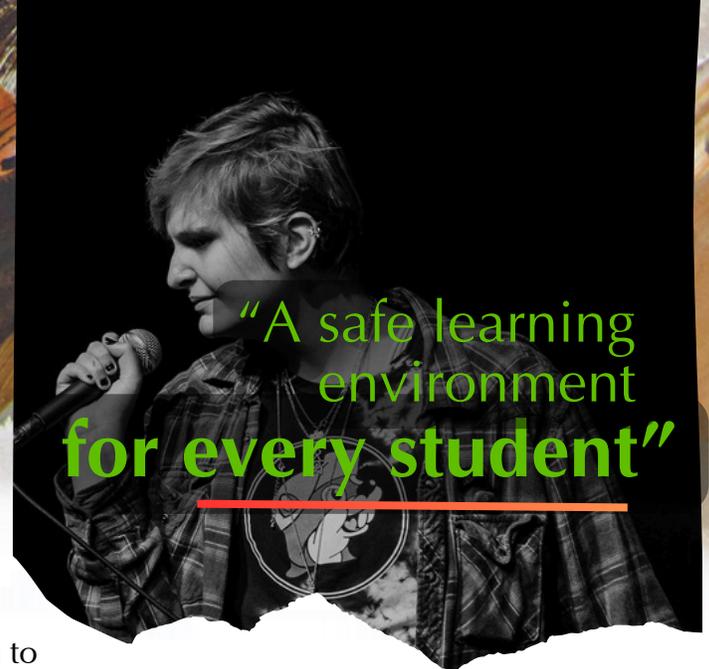


Visual Arts at ACPA



Visual artwork isn't just commonplace, it's part of the colorful landscape that makes ACPA magnetic. Art galleries take place formally in the fall, spring, and at Winterfest, but appear throughout the building during the school year.

Testimonials & Accolades



"A safe learning environment for every student"

"My child graduated from ACPA. The staff supported my kiddo through some very challenging times. The academic experience was top notch and they went on to receive a 4 year full tuition scholarship for college. I am truly grateful for social, emotional, and cultural support my child received to move from survive to thrive." - ACPA Parent

"I've been at ACPA since the 7th grade and I'm now currently a Junior; I've had a lot of moments and experiences...I think the best way to describe the way that I've grown at ACPA is I've grown as a community member and as a communicator. I highly struggled with communication in my first couple of years here and with expressing myself...as a junior, I feel more inclined to express my emotions respectfully and without the need to be 'over-the-top' to be heard. I feel confident and I feel powerful in the word choices I use" - ACPA Junior



Thank you for your support!

ACPA relies on its students, parents, staff, board, community partners and sponsors to help define the climate and culture of the school. Without contributions from all stakeholders, ACPA would not be the high-performing, arts-focused learning community it is today. Each voice, talent, and act of support helps sustain an environment where creativity thrive and students feel empowered to make meaningful change through the arts.

For information on how to support ACPA or make a donation, contact Fayth Pennington at pennington@artcollegeprep.org or click 'Donate to ACPA' on our website, artcollegeprep.org.