



Triple-E: Enhancing Elementary Excellence

AACPS' **Triple-E: Enhancing Elementary Excellence** pilot project is designed to engage elementary students in rich, thematic student-centered learning that is project-based, and exciting, while simultaneously addressing the long-standing issue of a lack of collaborative planning time for teachers. Through rigorous and relevant instruction, increased access, and enhanced opportunities, the project also is aimed at accelerating the pace at which the school system is elevating all students and eliminating all gaps.

The addition of a fifth non-core instructional period will allow students to work in teams to collaboratively ask questions, creatively solve problems, and enthusiastically learn through hands-on exploration. Teams of students will work on real-world problems alongside their teachers and other professionals from the community. Technology tools will be available as needed for researching a topic, calculating a budget, measuring distance or time, creating artistic works, programming robots, and preparing presentations. Foundational learning in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and cultural arts will be enhanced through the project-based thematic work conducted by students during their weekly, hour-long Triple-E project time.

Students will rotate to Triple-E time in the same way they receive cultural arts learning time within the elementary school schedule. While students in a particular grade are taking part in non-core classes (Triple-E, physical education, the arts, music, etc.), core content teachers in a given grade will be collaboratively planning as a team to enhance instruction and increase student achievement.

There are four themes being offered within the Triple-E project: Arts & Humanities, Global Studies, STEM In Society, and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme.

They will be offered at schools as follows:

IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) theme at Overlook Elementary School

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) at Overlook Elementary School will provide a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning that focuses on the whole child as an inquirer in the classroom and in the world outside. This includes a global focus through student-centered problem/project-based learning that addresses the academic, social, physical, emotional, and cultural needs of all students while also igniting a passion for learning a second world language. Students at Overlook will be offered the opportunity to learn German as their second language. This world language will also be available to them as they move to Lindale Middle School and North County High School.

In the PYP program, core subjects are studied in transdisciplinary themes of global significance, allowing students to explore important issues that have meaning for all of us. Teachers and students design units for exploration and study, creating a dynamic and energizing learning environment that is intellectually provoking, reflective, and responsive.

IB PYP combines the best research and practices from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools around the world. The curriculum framework incorporates concepts, skills, attitudes, actions, and knowledge. These elements are part of three inter-related questions: What do we want to learn? How best will we learn? How will we know that we have learned?

Like all elementary students in AACPS, children in IB PYP-themed schools will continue to develop a solid foundation in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and physical education. Overlook will become AACPS' ninth IB PYP elementary school in Anne Arundel County Public Schools in August 2014.

STEM in Society theme at Ferndale Early Education Center and Hilltop, North Glen, and Park elementary schools

Focusing on education through innovation, STEM in Society Schools ignite the passions of students and teachers as they study challenging and meaningful questions related to our world in the 21st Century. AACPS STEM in Society schools utilize a transdisciplinary approach to education by making connections across academic content areas and applying that content to authentic learning experiences.

There is a strong emphasis on STEM methodologies of study, including engineering design, scientific inquiry, computer coding, Maker methods, and more for children studying within a STEM in Society-themed school. In a world that is changing faster than ever before, the STEM in Society class creates an environment that allows our students to take risks with new ideas and to become inventors, problem-solvers, and innovators whose solutions make a positive impact on the world around them.

The natural curiosity of children will be fostered as students work together on projects and problems found within their homes and communities. Like all elementary students in AACPS, children in the STEM in Society-themed schools will continue to develop a solid foundation in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts and physical education.

Arts & Humanities Theme at Belle Grove and Brooklyn Park elementary schools

Focusing on education through creativity, Arts & Humanities-themed schools offer children opportunities to develop creative, innovative ways of thinking, learning, and showing what they know.

Arts & Humanities schools place an emphasis on the arts as essential to learning. In an Arts & Humanities elementary school, much of the regular classroom curriculum is taught through arts-integrated instruction. Students may learn math concepts by studying music and dance or reading through a lesson involving visual arts and theatre. Arts & Humanities school students participate in Arts & Humanities class one hour per week in addition to an hour per week of art, music, and physical education instruction.

Through an interdisciplinary approach and curriculum that emphasizes connections and collaboration, Arts & Humanities elementary schools nurture the qualities of intelligence and imagination necessary for success in the 21st Century. Rigor and relevance are enhanced for all children through the arts and humanities lines of thought, avenues of exploration, and vehicles for showcasing student understanding.

The Arts & Humanities-themed class explores how people process and record the human experience through the arts and literature. Dance is a kinesthetic art form that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through movement of the physical being. Music is an aural art form that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through singing, listening to and/or playing an instrument. Theatre is an interdisciplinary art form that satisfies the human need to express thoughts and feelings through written text, dramatic interpretation and multimedia production. Visual Arts is a spatial art form that satisfies the human need to respond to life experiences through images, structures, and tactile works.

Like all elementary students in AACPS, children in the Arts & Humanities-themed schools will continue to develop a solid foundation in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts and physical education.

Global Studies theme at George Cromwell and Linthicum elementary schools

The Global Studies thematic program brings a powerful lens for examining and understanding the world's people, places, and problems. Focusing on world issues, students will examine other nations and societies. Through inquiry-based learning, they will research big concepts across the disciplines such as literacy, ecology, economics, technology, government, equality, and culture. This interdisciplinary perspective will connect children to the world around them, encourage their natural curiosity, help them develop essential thinking and learning skills, and guide them to become stewards of the environment and responsible global citizens.

Students will develop a sense of responsibility as global citizens, caring about issues that affect humankind, being open to new ideas and other perspectives, and reflecting on processes, skills, and knowledge. Flexible approaches and activities will offer many different learning opportunities, including groupings across grade levels and subject areas, when appropriate. Students will participate in service-learning projects, field experiences, guest speakers, and co-curricular activities while developing the technology skills vital in the 21st Century.

Instruction in all Anne Arundel County schools is built around the same core curriculum which is designed to meet all state and national standards. Like all elementary students in AACPS, children in the Global Studies-themed schools will continue to develop a solid foundation in reading, language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and physical education.