



ANKENY CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY



Annual **Report**

Connected to Christ

23-24

This was an exciting year at ACA with new students, new teachers, new staff, new trophies, and new school records. But one thing wasn't new—the focus on our students and our calling to give them a Christ-centered education through remarkable teachers and support from a caring school community.



Message From Our Head of School

We put words to the unique culture that has filled the halls of ACA for more than 30 years this year. We call it the ACA DNA, and it focuses on our emphasis on academic excellence, Christ-centered discipleship and authentic relationships. During my first year as Head of School, I was able to immerse myself into all aspects of ACA and truly see the ACA DNA at work in the lives of our students, teachers, parents and community. You'll also get to experience it through the pages of this year's annual report.

You'll read about many of our academic accomplishments, how we filled our students and staff with Christ's love, and deepened our relationships with parents, students and the community. You'll see highlights of our year including winning our second straight state volleyball championship and producing a Broadway musical. We celebrated 100% of our seniors getting accepted into a four-year college or university and 100% of our beginning gardeners continuing their education at ACA for kindergarten (for the first time in school history). We served as partners for many student teachers, raising up and educating the next generation of Christian educators.

We recognize, however, none of this would have been possible without God's continued favor and blessing. We give God the glory for the great things happening at ACA. We give thanks for your role in the many exciting things that happened in our ACA community this year and we celebrate them with you.

Brent Knoll

Head of School



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Top Row (left to right): Heather Dolbeare, Jared Bogaards (Treasurer), Dan Blakeslee and Seth Moore.
Bottom Row (left to right): Malori Khalil, Teri Saenz (Board Vice Chair), Leah Davenport (Board Chair) and Jill Huguen (Secretary).

OUR PURPOSE

Equip to Engage

MISSION STATEMENT

Equipping students to be Christ-centered disciples to engage the world with the Gospel.

OUR VALUES

Academic Excellence
 Christ-Centered Discipleship
 Authentic Relationships

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

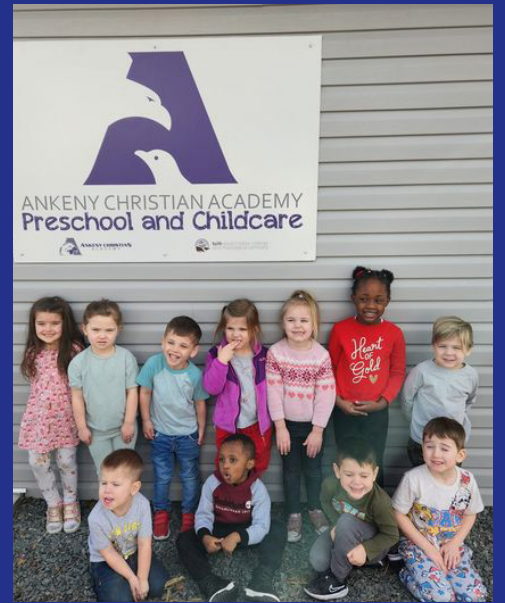
Intellectual growth, critical thinking, and lifelong learning

CHRIST-CENTERED DISCIPLESHIP

Reaching, teaching, and living out the Great Commission

AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Learn together, serve together, live life together





PRESCHOOL

STAYING CONNECTED AT ACA PRESCHOOL

ACA provided preschool and childcare for 63 students this year. ACA partnered with Faith Baptist Bible College to create two new classrooms for our preschool and childcare on their campus. Moving our preschoolers offsite allowed more space for K-12 classrooms at ACA.

There were four sections of preschool for three and four-year olds, with wraparound childcare. They use the Abeka and BJU curriculum and enjoy field trips, hay rides around Faith's campus, and hatching butterflies in the spring. Specific fundraising for the preschool supported the purchase of a new sign at our new preschool location.



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Having the opportunity to teach preschool has blessed me in countless ways. I love working with the younger students because they are full of love, joy and honesty! I also appreciate the excitement and energy the kids bring to the classroom. We have a lot of fun while learning!

—WENDY REITSMA, PRESCHOOL TEACHER

ELEMENTARY

STAYING CONNECTED AT ACA ELEMENTARY

The Elementary year was focused on the Fruit of the Spirit based on Galatians 5:22–23. Each month the students learned about a different fruit of the spirit and how abiding in Christ is the key to showing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self control in their classrooms, in their relationships, and in their walk with Jesus.

Connected to Learning

100% of our beginning kindergarten class will move into kindergarten for the first time in ACA history.

Speech Meet helps develop communication skills at a young age. 132 students received an Exceptional ranking. Fourth graders researched and presented their findings on many interesting topics like God's creation, computers, anatomy, and animals for Science Fair.

Our experienced, committed teachers have 261 years of combined experience.

Connected to Christ

Part of our DNA at ACA is to teach and model what it means to be a disciple of Christ and learn how important it is to disciple others. Students in 5th grade led class devotions and served as chapel buddies to 3rd and 4th grade students. Teachers studied the Bible with students outside class. 1st graders were encouraged to display the Fruit of the Spirit by being appointed "leader of the week."



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Authentic relationships don't just happen in the classroom. They happen on the playground, in the hallway, at lunch. It's in those moments where we get to know those students personally and invest in them even more. It's a joy to attend the volleyball or basketball game of my students on a Saturday morning, to know they want me there cheering them on outside of the classroom.

—KALAB SIDLINGER, 4TH GRADE TEACHER



Kingdom Kids

5th grade Kingdom Kids and Mrs. Hansen meet every Friday to learn about being a strong leader who serves others like Christ! Students eat lunch together in the lobby with Mrs. Hansen and then carry out various service projects to be the hands and feet of Jesus. They award younger children who have earned a compliment from a teacher with a certificate as well as offer a prayer of blessing.

Connected to Community & Each Other

ACA partnered with Faith Baptist Bible College welcoming 4 student teachers from Faith. Each elementary classroom completed a service project partnering with many local nonprofits including Alpha Women's Center, Wounded Heroes, the Ankeny Fire Department, and the Ankeny Police Department. Children also created cards for retirement home residents and people with disabilities.

Field trips included the Des Moines Playhouse to see a Charlie Brown Christmas, Pumpkinville, Reiman Gardens, One Room School House, Jester Park, Howells Pumpkin Patch, Living History Farms, the State Capitol and Terrace Hill.

Students participated and excelled at Junior Achievement BizTown.

STAYING CONNECTED AT ACA MIDDLE SCHOOL

ACA Middle School is a place where nearly 130 early teens are learning how to open up, ask questions, and make decisions in this transitional time of social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth. Homeroom connections, core classes, exploratory courses, Chapel and extra-curricular activities all play a role in the development of our Middle School students as we strive for academic excellence, Christ-centered discipleship and authentic relationships. This school year the Fruit of the Spirit has been the spiritual focus.

Connected to Learning

From collaborative problem solving in math to Science Fair presentations and scientific debate, to poem memorization, current event discussions, and Socratic circles to discuss novels, to building cell models and topographic maps, students are diving deeper as they learn to develop their critical thinking skills.

Our experienced, committed teachers have 126 years of combined experience.



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In Math, we do a lot of small group work at whiteboards where students use inquiry-based learning to solve real-life math problems. They love collaborating and they are able to share their thoughts and problem solve together in a way that promotes rich dialogue, increases critical thinking skills, and deepens understanding.

—MARCIA LOZADA, MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER



Connected to Christ

This year in Bible Class, each 6th, 7th, and 8th grade student created a presentation about a Christian organization, missionary, or Christian author providing a deeper understanding about what it looks like to be a disciple of Christ.

New this year, students shared their musical gifts by leading their peers in worship during chapel each week.

Connected to Community & Each Other

Faith in Action is a middle school class where students learn to be the hands and feet of Christ. They serve as buddies to our beginningergarten, kindergarten, and first grade students, building meaningful relationships as they learn the value of mentoring younger students. They also bless local community members through random acts of kindness. The Faith in Action class receives seed money which they build upon, bringing their talents back to the Lord helping organizations like Life 107.1, Mosaic, and Garden Gate Ranch.

The whole Middle School served the Ankeny community on Community Service Day, April 12.

STAYING CONNECTED AT ACA HIGH SCHOOL

Growth in Christ and academic education come together in the experiences and teachings at ACA's high school. These are the years where a student's learning is synchronized into action. And where better to do that than a place where a Christian worldview is continually modelled and encouraged. Project based learning, college credit classes, Socratic discussions and deep thinking assignments help students prepare for the day when they step out as adults into a world that needs strong Christian leaders. At ACA the heart is educated as much as the mind so the student can grow spiritually, academically, and biblically into the man or woman God is calling them to be.

Connected to Learning

Our experienced, committed teachers have 211 years of combined experience. Jenny Anderson was recognized as a 2023 Outstanding Educator by the University of Chicago. She was nominated by an ACA alumna.



I believe that the real purpose of education is to help young people answer the big questions of life: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? The content of the subject areas such as History, Math, Art, Science, Music, and Language serves as a tool to develop those answers from a Biblical perspective.

—JENNY ANDERSON, PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, FRENCH I-IV, ACCOUNTING

Connected to Christ

Chapel each week featured student led worship and chapel groups. Students also led bible studies for their peers and underclassmen. Personal testimonies reflected the Christ-centered discipleship taking place at ACA.

Connected to Community & Each Other

Students put their hands and feet to service during Community Service Day on Friday, April 12. Students served as teacher assistants helping younger students throughout the year.

28

students earned membership in National Honor Society

1st

place in the Ankeny Optimist Club speech competition (*Ava McReynolds*)

211

dual credits earned at DMACC, Cedarville University, and Faith Baptist Bible College & Seminary

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students received the Iowa Seal of Biliteracy (*Rebecca Hugen, Brody Hoefle, Mya McClintock, Mady Burris*)

1st

place in the Ankeny Optimist Club essay competition (*Emma Bussell*)

100%

of ACA graduates were accepted into 15 different colleges and universities



TOP SCHOOL HONORS

ACA won Top School Honors at the Bluegrass Conference Math Contest in addition to six individual awards!



CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT AWARD

ACA History teacher, Alli Hertz, accepted the **Carrie Chapman Catt Award** from Secretary of State, Paul Pate. ACA was one of only 22 schools in the state of Iowa who received this award with 96% of ACA eligible voters registering to vote!



AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

ACA Alumni

It was 20 years ago that our first alumni graduated from ACA. Here our alumni received a strong Christian education that helped prepare them for life beyond the walls of ACA. Our alumni continue to be a light for Christ at home, in their churches, workplaces and communities.



Caleb Fee (Class of '23) at Christmas Store



Elise Drew (Class of '23) completing her observation hours for college in preparation to be an elementary teacher



Lizzie Deo, Alli Hertz and Charity Smith, Alumni who came back to work at ACA

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

High Honor Roll (All A's)

Piper Ancell	Abigail Farrand	Macey Nehring
Kyson Bauman	Zachary Gardner	Meleinna Patterson
Andrew Blakeslee	Sophia Glenn	Jack Pedersen
Wilson Blakeslee	Macy Grandgeorge	Marcus Pedersen
Madison Burris	Thomas Hurst	Alyssa Phillips
Emma Bussell	Andrew Jacob	Luke Reitsma
Andrew Cathey	Kaylei Jacob	Daniel Schoening
Paige Cathey	Alyssandra Johnson	Emily Scott
Kathlyn Copley	Brandon Johnson	Joseph Sernett
Adeline Davenport	Olivia Johnson	Jackson Simone
Kayla Davenport	Amanda Knight	Lillie Simpson
Hayden Davis	Tyler Mahoney	Anna Weathers
Caleb Erickson	Anastasia Manwiller	Katelyn Weathers
Lucas Erickson	Mya McClintock	Lucas Weathers
Nalani Falco	Ava McReynolds	Kyle Weber

Honor Roll

Elijah Alhussaini	Riese Gjerde	Maya Maxwell
Aidan Beck	Gabriella Grannis	Emily McDermott
Emily Burris	Avah Herbel	Charlie McLaughlin
Ella Bussell	Lucas Herbel	Lawson Mulder
Jacob Carstensen	Cora Hessel	Trenton Myers
Avary Carstenson	Brody Hoefle	Campbell Oshirak
Eli Christensen	Eavan Howard	Garrett Pearson
Ava Clarkson	Rebecca Hugen	Hayley Peterson
Carley Craighead	Timothy Hugen	Kathryn Quick
Conner Crosby	Nathan Jack	Sydney Quick
Sophia Davidson	Emma Jackson	Lacie Reitsma
Alexander Davis	Marcus Jacob	Jed Rood
Hudson Davis	Ava LaBounty	Ava Sanchez
Samara Drew	Addison Lang	Jessica Schoening
Avary Dyjak	Ella Leever	Caden Suk
Morgan Fincham	Emanuel Lozada	Elyse Walmsley
Danil Gardino	Austin Lundberg	Matthew Welshhons
Bethany Gast	Sophia Manwiller	Avryana Williams



DISCIPLESHIP

Theme & Verse

This year's theme verse was "Abide in me, and I will abide in you. Just as the branch cannot produce fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me." John 15:4. This passage gives us the key to bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which became the focus of the chapels throughout the year. Each month, a different fruit of the Spirit was the focus. Only by abiding in Christ, the life-giving source, will the fruit of the Spirit be produced. At the end of the year, a special joint chapel was held where students were able to share how they saw this in action this year.

Retreats

Four Retreats were held for Middle School and High School students. Carl Kerby from Reasons for Hope was the keynote speaker for the high school retreat at Hidden Acres.

Discipleship

- » Members of the Student Council were trained to be spiritual leaders in the classroom and to lead chapel groups throughout the year.
- » Students of all ages were mentored and disciplined by fellow students and members of the faculty.

Community Service

Students worked with community organizations and partners to share the love of Christ:

- » Meals from the Heartland
- » Agape Pregnancy Center
- » Easter Seals - Camp Sunnyside
- » Freedom for Youth
- » On With Life
- » Ankeny Baptist Church
- » Habitat for Humanity
- » Ronald McDonald House
- » Joppa
- » Alpha Women's Center
- » Word of Victory Church
- » Independence Village
- » Mill Pond Retirement Community
- » Faith Baptist Bible College
- » Ankeny Fire Department
- » First Family Church
- » Ankeny E Free Church
- » Sunny View Care Center



Meals from the Heartland: Students packed 40,176 meals to feed 154 children for a whole year, which brings our total meals packed to 282,352 earning us a 250,000 Meal Club Award



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Teaching is an incredible gift to pour truth and knowledge into students, but what is even more incredible, is the awesome ability to disciple as Jesus would in our school. To disciple is to teach beyond the knowledge of what is good or bad but to instill how to live and think Biblically in all situations that arise. Students often ask me why they have to push themselves to understand and perform hard math concepts, and I answer the same every time: He has created it, He has asked you to do it, so we glorify Him in all we say and do. Discipleship is learning to take our eyes off of ourselves and worship Him in all things.

—HEIDI HEISTERKAMP, HIGH SCHOOL MATH TEACHER



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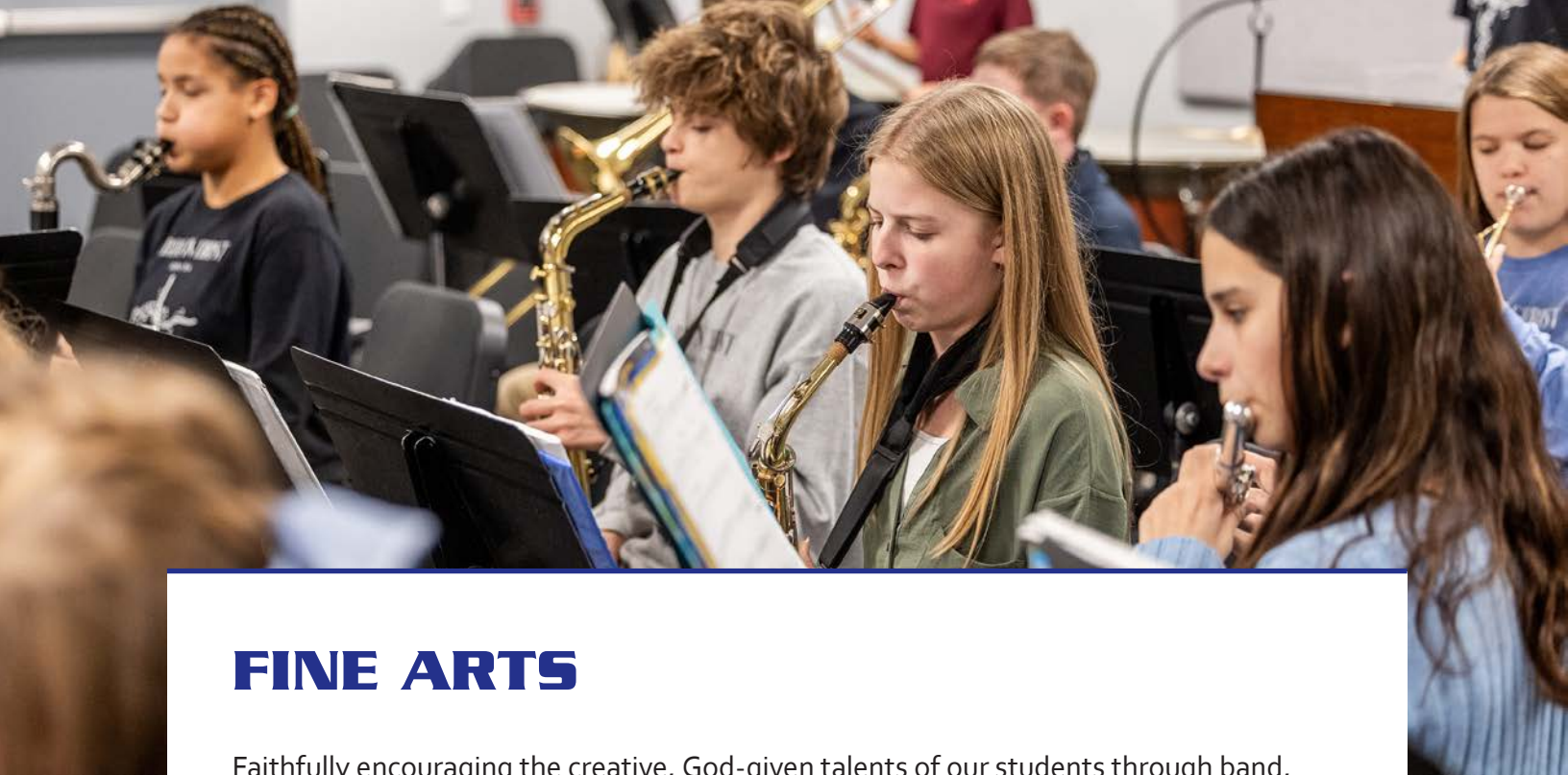
Thanks so much for arranging students to come help at On With Life for your Project Serve Day! What a great way to serve the community! The students were GREAT, and we appreciate their help cleaning up our memorial garden.

—SARA WILSON, ON WITH LIFE

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I appreciated the opportunity to observe at ACA this year. The school offers a fun, yet profitable way for kids to learn. I love watching Mrs. Burrows teach. Good teachers are passionate. Really good teachers demonstrate what they love and it rubs off on to their students. I see that at ACA.

—BAYLEE SAYLOR, FAITH STUDENT



FINE ARTS

Faithfully encouraging the creative, God-given talents of our students through band, choir, theater and the visual arts.

Band

56 Middle School and High School students and 12 Fifth grade students participated in Honor bands hosted by Drake University, Simpson College, Himie Voxman Honor Band, and the Bluegrass Conference.

Choir

The ACA high school choir had a 25% increase in participation. Mr. Gerber, a junior at Faith Baptist Bible College, was a guest conductor for the High School Spring Choir Concert.

The Middle School Choir welcomed a 20% increase in enrollment.

Visual Arts

ACA hosted the Bluegrass Conference Art Fair where 27 ACA students earned awards. Art students used their talents to design the Christmas cards and Gala thank you cards. They also designed and built the backdrop for kindergarten graduation.

Theater

This year ACA produced four school plays/musicals giving many children of different age levels the opportunity to grow theatrically.

- » **Fall Play:** *The Very Great Grandson of Sherlock Holmes*
- » **Winter Play:** *A Christmas Carol* (featuring academic administrator, Dr. Robinson, as Scrooge with a cast of 2nd through 8th grade students)
- » **Spring Musical:** *Little Women*, a full-length Broadway musical produced at ACA with a live pit orchestra for the first time in school history
- » **Children's Play:** *Bedtime Stories (As Told By Our Dad) (Who Messed Them Up)* performed by the theater class for our elementary school students



Little Women Musical



A Christmas Carol Musical



Honor Band



The Very Great Grandson of Sherlock Holmes Play



Middle School Choir



ATHLETICS

Athletics at ACA provides an opportunity to showcase the skills and abilities of our students in such a way that brings glory to God. Our athletes know that their talent comes from God and with every victory and defeat they have a chance to display Christ-like character. We have great coaches who emphasize growth both spiritually and physically. Prayer, devotion times, sharing, and caring for each other are a regular part of our practices.



For the first time in ACA history, Cross Country Boys qualified for the State Meet as a team. Daniel Schoening and Alex Davis qualified as individuals. New Track and Cross Country uniforms, along with a tent, and banner were purchased to increase our presence at the meets.



Due to increased sports participation, ACA was able to support the start of a softball team.



ACA was awarded the 2022-2023 Bluegrass Conference ALL SPORTS CHAMPIONS! This is a first time award for ACA for overall sports as combined for the best in the conference.



The girls and boys basketball teams were Bluegrass Conference regular season champions and the boys were Bluegrass Conference Tournament Champions.



Our Girl's Volleyball Team was ranked #1 for 1A schools for the entire season and finished as 1A State Champions for the second year in a row! Katie Quick was nominated for Athlete of the Year in Volleyball through the Iowa High School Sports Awards.



Two Club Sports were started to encourage elementary and middle school students to play recreational basketball and volleyball together.

ADVANCEMENT

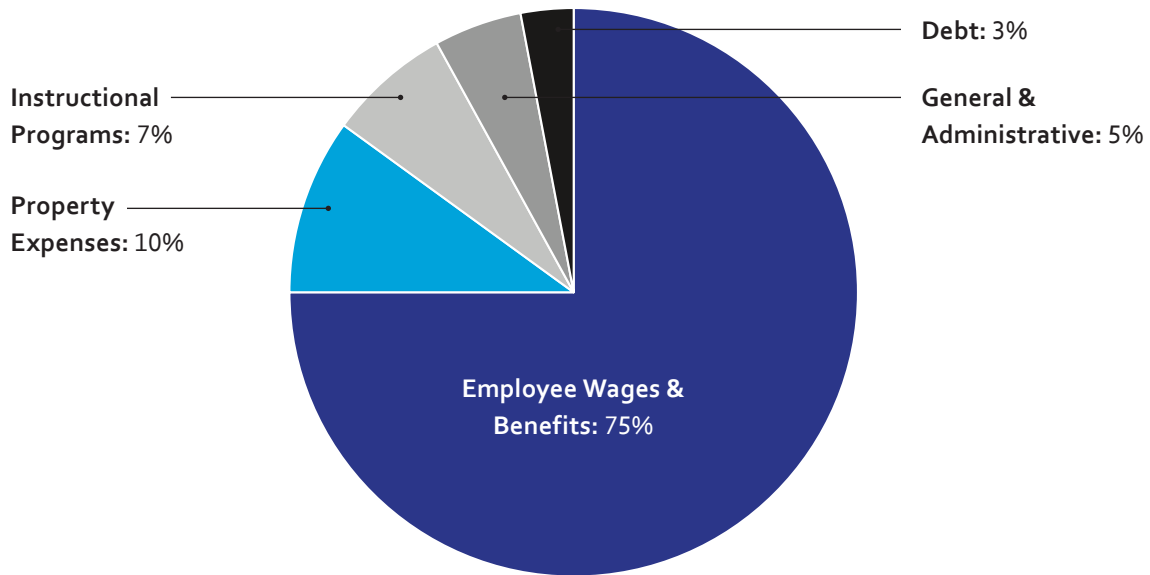
Advancement is the process in which Ankeny Christian Academy takes the story of our academic excellence and our Christ-centered discipleship out into the community to create authentic relationships. These relationships help the mission of the school grow and expand to allow us to provide even greater opportunities for our students and help God's Kingdom flourish in central Iowa.

Debt Reduction	\$200,000
Legacy Gala	\$138,000
Project Serve	\$100,000+
School Security	\$100,000 <i>(security grant)</i>
Other Funds	\$62,000
TOTAL FUNDING	\$600,000

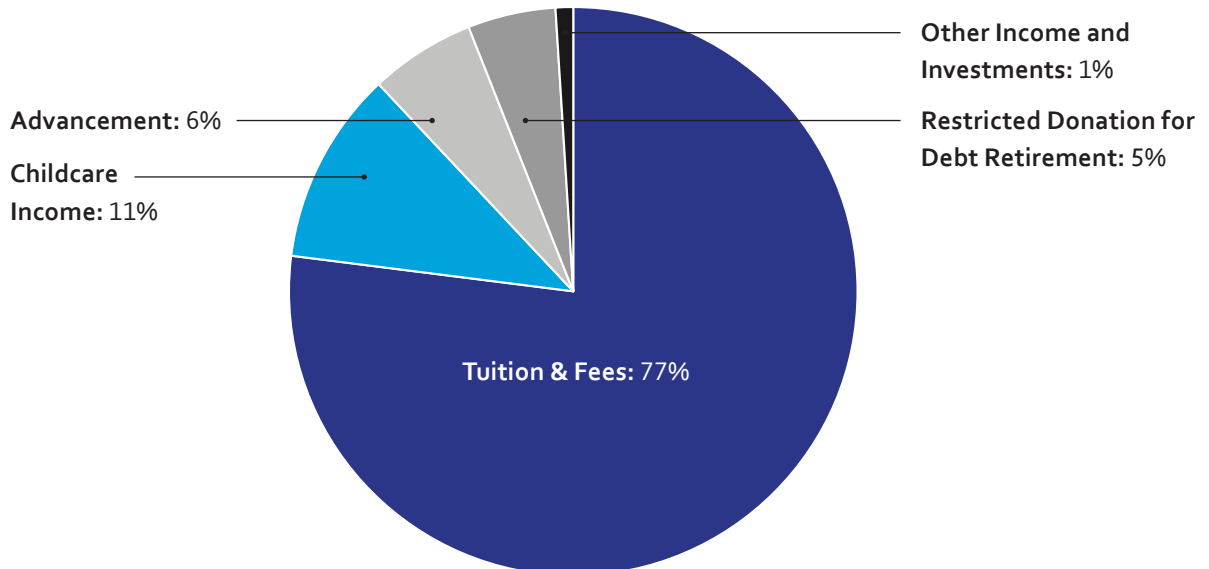
FINANCE

We have seen God’s hand at work in many ways at ACA during the 23–24 school year, in our students, our staff, our programs, and in our finances. Ankeny Christian Academy’s strong financial year enabled the school to fully cover all expenses. ACA invested in increasing teacher pay and implementing a retirement plan option for all staff, including a contribution from the school. A generous donor pledged to help the school pay off our remaining one million dollars of debt over a five-year period. The Board of Directors developed an in-depth tuition forecast for the next three school years that allows for further salary increases, additional staffing and investing in our academics and facilities. Mostly funded by donations, the school was able to complete the school auditorium, chapel, main lobby renovation project, and add several staff offices.

OPERATING EXPENSES



OPERATING REVENUE





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We are so proud to be the parents of ACA students knowing, while we're not with them during the day, they are still being taught the love of Jesus. As alumni of the school, we know the kind of opportunities, friendships and community that can come out of their years at ACA. It's rewarding to see our kids already seeing the same value as they are excited to go to school every day not just to see their friends but also the teachers and administrators and, more importantly, to learn. That is really rare and we count ourselves fortunate to get to be a part of it.

—MARY SNYDER, ACA ALUMNA



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We have two grandchildren at ACA and feel so blessed that they continue to grow both academically and spiritually at ACA. They both have Christ in their hearts and are never afraid to share it with others. It gives us great comfort that their faith-based schooling has helped them overcome the struggles and insecurities they encounter in their lives. For these reasons and the fact that so many other children receive the same well-rounded education at ACA, we are proud to support and donate to ACA so they can continue their mission and outreach.

—SHELLEY & JEFF WANGSNES, ACA DONORS



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God has opened our hearts to many new friendships and serving opportunities through ACA. The past two years at ACA I have seen a huge amount of growth academically, emotionally and spiritually for my daughter. I am so thankful for the community and family involvement here at ACA.

—KENZI JOHNSON, ACA PARENT



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As a parent, community member, and business owner in Ankeny my goal is to support community organizations that provide growth and opportunity to the community and families of Ankeny. ACA is a long standing beacon in Ankeny providing an outstanding educational atmosphere and environment for students. ACA's continued growth speaks volumes to the need and importance of the school. I'm a proud supporter and grateful they are a part of Ankeny.

—LAURA R. MURPHY, MANAGING PARTNER, LAMBERTI, MURPHY & STRONG, P.C.



**ANKENY CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY**

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