

Newsletter



ROOM TO GROW

When American Christian Academy moved from our Northport building into our present facility in 2002, we never dreamed that we would ever need more room. As we grew, we created classrooms out of every conceivable space. A band room was morphed into a locker room, we “found” an extra classroom in a weight room, and we remodeled the Fine Arts building into four K-4 classrooms. But finally, we had used every inch of available space.

In February 2015 the school board approved moving ahead with plans for a Science and Technology building for a total of nine high-tech classrooms. It took time to have the plans drawn, apply for and receive building permits, and begin the process.

Our staff, students, and families were very patient during the building project. The construction caused us to make a new afternoon pick up plan, which worked so well we continue to use it. Thank you for your understanding.

On June 29, 2017 we had a ribbon cutting and dedication service, sponsored by the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce. Several representatives of our local government attended the event, as well as a group of about 200 members of our ACA family. Just at the moment that the news people and guests arrived on campus, a deluge of rain greeted us. As we tried to decide if we should move the event into the gym, the sun burst through the clouds, the rain stopped, and the event began on schedule. It was beautiful. We celebrated with delicious appetizers provided by Heritage House Coffee and Tea.

(Continued P2)

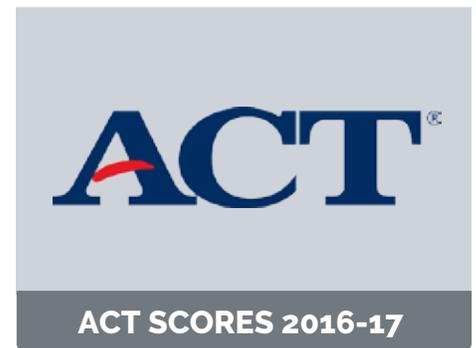
CURRICULUM CORNER PAGE 3

We strive to inform our families and stakeholders about what we teach through curriculum mapping, which began in a new format in 2016.



NAVIGATING ATLAS

ACT SCORES ARE IN PAGE 2



The ACT® test is the nation’s most popular college entrance exam accepted and valued by all universities and colleges in the United States. The ACT is based on what students learn in high school and provides personalized information about their strengths for education and career planning. Whether you’re





2016-17 ACT SCORES

35%

AMERICAN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY STUDENTS SCORED 35% HIGHER THAN THE STATE AVERAGE IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION.

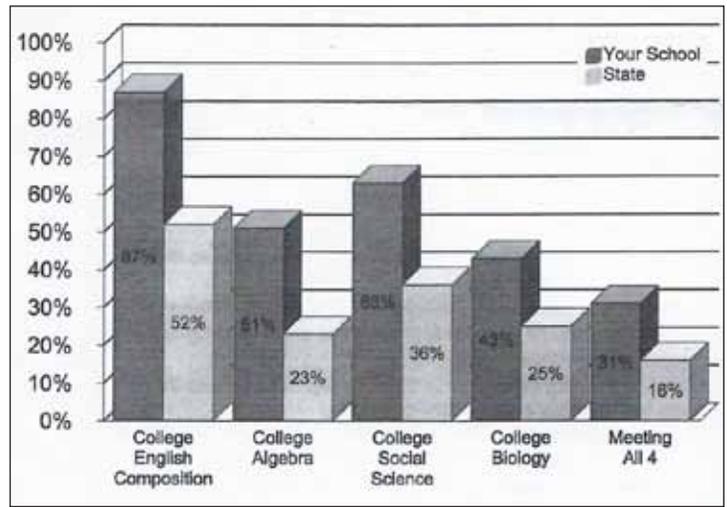
ACT (Continued from P1)

a proponent of standardized testing or opposed to the idea of an exam having so much merit, the ACT is a standardized test that matters today for college admissions and scholarship eligibility.

As a college-preparatory school, we take our ACT scores very seriously. Having a high ACT score does not ensure academic success in college, but it does provide college readiness benchmark scores that indicate the probability of success in designated college courses.

The cumulative scores for the graduating class of 2017 have been reported, and the 70 seniors tested last year at ACA scored well above the state average. In the bar graph (right), the scores for ACA seniors are shown in comparison with the state averages. We are pleased with our results.

We believe we always have room to improve and that is consistently our goal. Our reading scores clearly reflect that the AR program is working and improving students' reading comprehension and fluency. With the new science and technology building and up-to-date equipment, we expect our science scores to continue to rise. Mrs. April Morgan is teaching the ACT prep course that helps students learn test-taking strategies and also focuses on key concepts in the content areas being tested on the exam. Students are encouraged to sign up with Mrs. Jones, the Guidance Counselor at ACA, to take the PSAT early in their high school career. We also encourage all students to take the ACT early – perhaps even



(Above) This chart shows how ACA students' scores (the darker color) compare to the rest of the State of Alabama in ACT scores for the 2016-17 school year.

during their 8th grade year – to get a baseline score. Former ACA students have tutored during the summer to provide extended ACT preparatory time. With a diligent and focused approach, we continue to provide opportunities for our students to excel on the ACT exam.

For questions about the ACT, information on how to register for the exam, or to find out how best to prepare for success on the test, please contact Mrs. Jones at djones@acacademy.com for more information.

ROOM TO GROW

Continued from P1

If you haven't had a chance to tour our state-of-the-art Science and Technology building, we hope you will have a chance soon.

Dr. Carden says, "I love being the headmaster at ACA and seeing the next generation of academically and spiritually prepared students grow up and graduate from ACA. It is an honor to serve as your Headmaster."

Science & Technology Building
Dedication Service



Navigating Atlas

Academics are a priority at American Christian Academy, and our curriculum is diverse and rigorous. It is our belief that all students are capable of learning, and that we have the opportunity to touch the whole child - spiritually, academically, and socially.

We strive to inform our families and stakeholders about what we teach through curriculum mapping, which began in a new format in 2016. Even though we are still deep in the development of an articulated curriculum, and our teachers are in different stages of progression, we invite you to take a look at what our students are learning in grade K4 through 12th grade. The middle school and high school curriculum maps are very near completion; however, we will consistently and purposefully make adjustments as they are needed. The elementary maps should be finalized by the end of this school year.

Through the Atlas curriculum mapping site, parents can see course offerings and teacher assignments. Parents can also access parts of the unit planning template, including the course of study standards to which we are selectively aligning, the essential questions teachers are using to guide their unit design, the purposeful Biblical integration that is planned, the unit topics that are covered, and the overview of skills students will acquire. Many teachers are also using the Atlas site in conjunction with Renweb to post links to videos, websites, handouts, and resources.

The ACA Atlas curriculum site is password protected and may be accessed through the school website at www.acacademy.com. Select the "academics" tab and then click on "Atlas Curriculum." Next, click parents should click on the Rubicon Atlas icon and enter

the password: Patriots. (Notice that the "P" is capitalized.)

Once a parent is logged into the parent site, he or she can click on "Browse" in the upper left hand corner and then select the course to view by either the course title or the teacher's name. The next screen will take parents to the unit calendar and will include (at the top) a description of the course. Within that calendar are units listed in blue. By clicking on a unit, parents can enter the unit planner to see, in detail, what the teacher is developing for that unit of study.

Please do not hesitate to call or email us with questions. We would love your feedback! Parents can contact the Director of Curriculum, Christine Blakley, at 553-5963, Extension 28, or by email at cblakley@acacademy.com.

ART STUDIO RULE #1: SPEAK LIFE

One of my primary goals is teaching our young people that they are creative because God is the Creator, and we are made in His image. Usually, I spend the first few weeks of class trying to convince students they can create—that they have Art in their DNA. The more I think about it, the more I realize that we grown-ups struggle with this as well. How many times have I heard a parent say, "I don't have an artistic bone in my body!" Or, "I can't draw to save my life." There have even been times when I spoke negative things about myself and my creative abilities.

Don't get me wrong, we're not all Michaelangelo when it comes to painting the Sistine Chapel. But I do believe with all my heart that we are all imbued by God with creativity. This simply fleshes out in different ways for different people. And, just like anything else, Art is mostly a skill that can be practiced and learned. Artist Chuck Close said, "Inspiration is for amateurs. The rest of us just show up and get to work."

Rule number one in the Art Studio is, "Speak Life." When they pass under that threshold, there is no, "I can't..." or "I'm not..." Whether we are speaking about ourselves or our classmates, we are calling the very best out of them, just like Christ does for us every day.

Dear Parents: This year, let's speak LIFE to each other and to our children. Let's call out of them all of that potential that we know is there, whether it's



Still Life of Shoes
Camille Waltman, Grade 11

visible to them (or us) yet.

Art is like people. At a cursory glance, we almost always make judgments, interpretations, and decide "like or don't like," "good or not good." But there is always more underneath.

That is why I love teaching Art to your students and I am privileged to be part of the staff here at ACA.

Becca Godfrey
Pre-AP + AP Art Instructor