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# ANNUAL REPORT

A year of joyful, interconnected learning



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*From the Head of School*

# JOYFUL AND INTERCONNECTED LEARNING



Dear Acera families and friends,

As we reflect on this past year, a theme of connection and innovation stands out. This year's annual report celebrates the vibrant spirit of our community and the exciting advancements we've made in gifted education.

In addition to academics, we've set our sights on the future of our physical space. We recently acquired the building next door at 1 Lowell Ave., and with the help of consultants, we've completed a feasibility study for its capital campaign. This study will guide our planning process and invite the entire school community to be part of it.

Inside these pages, you'll discover stories of students collaborating on projects, parents and teachers fostering a love of learning, and innovative approaches to science, technology, engineering, and math.

We're proud of the collaborative spirit that defines our school, and we believe this fosters the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed for future success. I invite you to delve deeper into the annual report and see firsthand how your continued support empowers our students to become the next generation of innovators.

With gratitude,

Courtney Dickinson  
Founder & Head of School





98%

Of Acera students are curious enough about what they are learning in school to want to find out MORE.



94%

Report feeling enthusiastic while at school.



97%

Say that they would try again if they didn't reach a goal the first time.



99%

Say that it is important to them to finish what they start, even if it is difficult.



99%

Feel accepted at Acera.



# OCEANS, TRADE & PIRACY

*What makes something valuable? Why would someone become a pirate?*

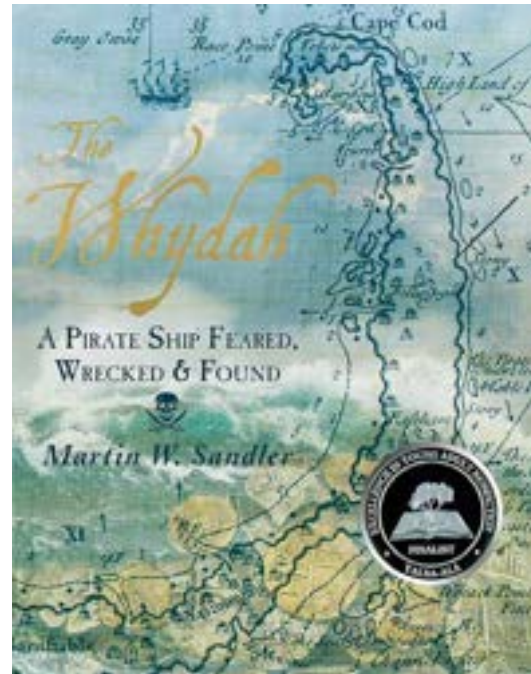
These questions were explored in depth by students in both of Alyssa Colby's and Anastasia Leyden's 4th and 5th grade classrooms. With a year-long theme of "Oceans, Trade & Piracy," both classrooms took a deep dive into the golden age of piracy, with a focus on the Whydah, a real pirate ship that sank off the coast of Cape Cod.

Over the course of a trimester, students read Martin Sandler's non-fiction book *The Whydah: A Pirate Ship Feared, Wrecked, and Found*. As they read, students practiced annotating to make meaning of a text, identifying main ideas and supporting details, and supporting their claims about the text with evidence.

Exploring big questions – such as "Why would someone become a pirate?" and "Were pirates bad or good?" – gave students the opportunity to practice systems thinking and ethical decision making skills to understand the different forces that would push individuals to engage in illegal behavior.

As a culminating project, the classrooms engaged in a simulation: they put the Captain of the Whydah, Sam Bellamy, on trial.

Part of their incentive to do this was the realization that in the 1700s, no one was willing to represent the pirates, because there was so much animosity towards them.



With students stepping into the roles of defense, prosecution, or witness, they were challenged to imagine what might have happened to Bellamy if he had survived; after learning about modern trial law from a visiting attorney and via research, they put it into practice in an imagined scenario in which some courts found Bellamy innocent and others found him guilty.

Students worked in groups to review their annotated readings from Sandler's book, examine both sides of the argument, and develop persuasive writing skills as they built cohesive and compelling arguments based on historical evidence they gathered. It was an exciting and collaborative effort for all involved!





One of the interesting discoveries students made in their research into piracy was that much of the “treasure” that pirates found on captured ships consisted of items that people today might consider mundane. That inspired students to ask the overarching question “What makes something valuable?” during an investigation into the New England fur trade. Students learned about basic economic concepts, like the relationship between price and supply and demand, opportunity cost, and different types of economic systems by completing non-fiction readings from *Economics for Beginners* and news articles.

In true “learn by doing” fashion, students participated in trade simulations, starting with small items that might be found in a classroom: fidgets, washi tape, new pencils, and fancy erasers. After several rounds, the students determined that what one person finds valuable, another may not; that common items felt less valuable; and that if you start with a low value item, it can be much harder to “trade up” – lessons that have practical applications in the real world.

All along the way, students felt motivated to take on teachers’ customized coaching into their writing and to develop their powers of persuasive argument!



# THE IMPACT OF IMAGINED REALITY

In his book *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Yuval Noah Harari writes, “an imagined reality is something that everyone believes in, and as long as this communal belief persists, the imagined reality exerts force in the world.”

Students in Vered Brook’s 6th and 7th grade class considered elements of our society that exert force on the world, but do not exist as a physical building or object; they are concepts that are larger than any single physical thing.

Starting with examples such as corporations or political borders, the students deepened their exploration by looking at the evolution of societal perceptions about disability, and how that “communal belief” impacted the world.

They began by researching the history of belief about disability, learning that in 1850 people were certain that people who were disabled should be kept in asylums for their own safety.

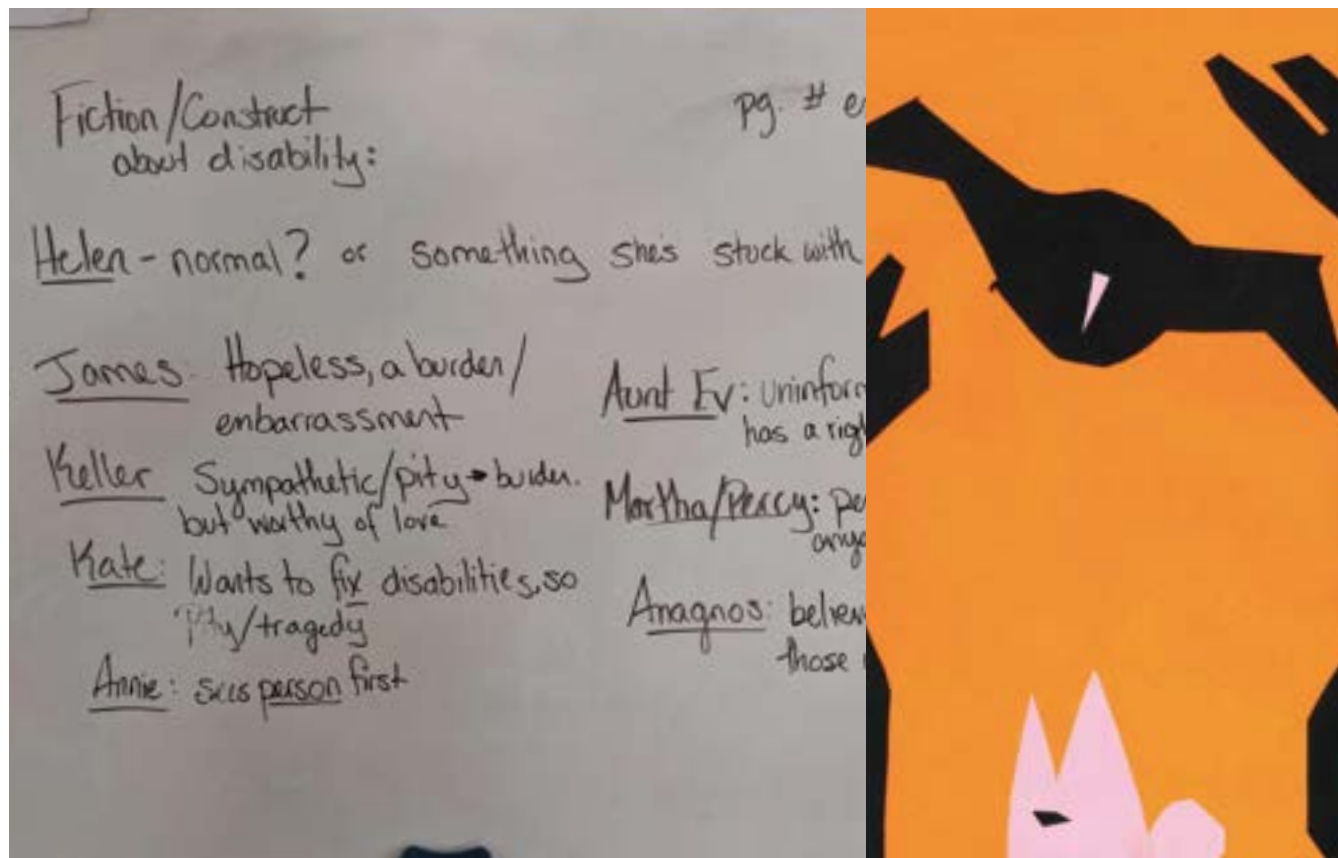


Later in that century, many became convinced that people with disabilities should not be able to have children, leading to forced sterilization laws in nearly half of the country.

Students then read William Gibson's *The Miracle Worker* as a way to both continue the exploration of the effect of the imagined realities about disability, as well as understand the crucial role that books, plays, art, and speeches have in shifting these societal beliefs.

Keeping in mind Harari's words on imagined reality, the students grasped that these beliefs were "true" for the people of that era, just as it is true in our era that people with disabilities deserve access to the same education, government, and services as people who are not disabled.

Building on inquiry into how our understanding can evolve over time, students leveraged their classes with Visual Arts Specialist Teacher Camila Garcia Enriquez to explore how activists use art and design to help change people's base understanding. They then took on the role of activists themselves, creating a visual design campaign to change minds in the Acera community – in this case about fundamental things such as what our responsibility is to our materials here at school.





# MATH AS A BONDING ACTIVITY

## THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF EDUCATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

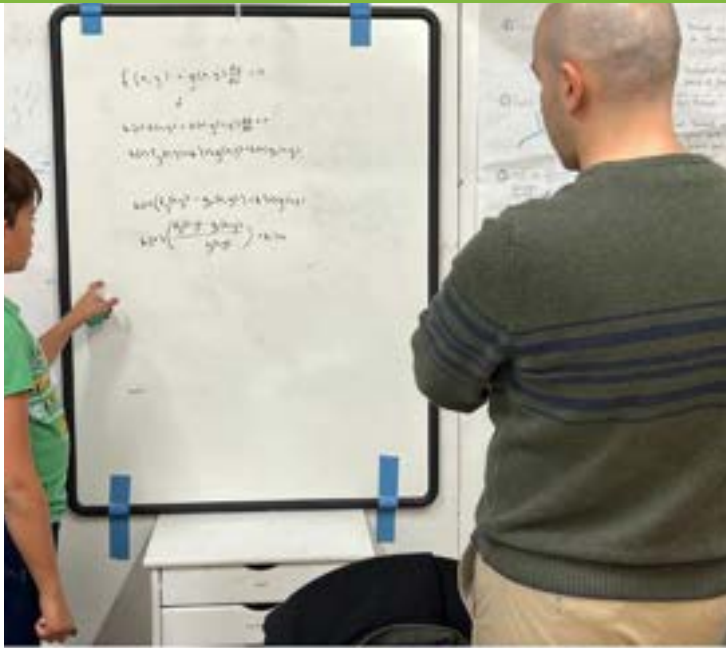
People tend to use the terms *learning* and *education* as synonyms, but there is one significant difference between the two.

Learning happens in different contexts: individually, in a group environment, concurrently with another activity. But ultimately it is the learner who does the learning. Education, on the other hand, is fundamentally about relationships: between students, between students and teachers and between student-learners and the knowledge area.

These three relationships are interdependent: when the relationships with the other students are not working, a participant in a class may feel out of place. When the relationship between the teacher and a student is not working, the trust towards the teacher as a guide in the student's learning exploration may suffer. And if the relationship that the student forms with the knowledge area isn't positive, the learning will be suboptimal, and the human relationships in the class will suffer as well.

On the other hand, an improvement in any of these relationships will positively affect the others. A teacher having a great relationship with their students will infect them with their enthusiasm for the subject matter; warm and working relationships between students will reinforce their identities as learners in that class and give them a deep sense of belonging and mattering. And when students have a positive relationship with the knowledge area, the human relationships in the class will only flourish due to the common interest. In other words, Math can be a bonding activity.

Ability Based Math is an anchor part of our program. We construct math classes to assure students are placed in a class that fits what they are ready to learn, and to assure strong teachers at myriad math learning levels.



At Acera, teachers understand and value this interdependence of relationships, and frequently leverage them towards students' growth as learners. In Viktor Grigoryan's – Acera's Math Curriculum Coordinator – Mathletes Creativity Station, students were so invested in the knowledge area, they wanted to share it with family and friends. They asked to bring the math challenges home with them, not because it was homework, but because they were eager to discuss it at dinner!

Over the course of several days, parents and students – even students who hadn't taken Viktor's Mathletes class – approached him to discuss the "Olga-Tanya" problem (see below). It was clear that the enthusiasm for math had sparked conversations and connections both at school and home.

After every Math contest we host, the hallways are abuzz with mathematical conversations. Students ask each other and their teachers about certain problems, and even continue to collaborate on some of those problems after the contest is over. Math is indeed a bonding activity, and that's another reason we math-enthusiasts enjoy it so much!

*The Olga-Tanya problem:*

Two friends, Olga and Tanya, live in separate towns some distance apart, which are joined by a single road. One morning at sunrise, the two women set out simultaneously to walk to the town of the other, each walking at her own constant speed. The two passed each other on the road at noon. Olga reached her destination at 4pm, while Tanya did not arrive until 9 pm. When was the sunrise?





## FROM BOSTON TO BARCELONA

### CONNECTING THROUGH ART, FILM, AND WOODWORKING

In January of 2023, eight Acera students – joined by three faculty and staff – boarded a plane for Barcelona, where they spent two weeks immersing themselves in the city and their peers at Escola L'Horitzo (ELH). The extended stay was the first of a two-part exchange program: when the Acera group returned home, nearly 20 ELH students joined them and were welcomed into Acera family homes.

Throughout the exchange, both Acera and ELH students collaborated on a series of thoughtful, place-based mixed media projects guided by the theme “Leaving Your Mark.” They began by researching the many forms of public art, including visiting local museums and other public spaces where these types of works are displayed. The students then banded into three groups – art, filmmaking, and woodworking – with the shared goal of documenting and expressing their experience in the exchange.

Under the guidance of Acera’s Visual Arts Specialist Teacher Camila García Enríquez, students focused on the medium’s representational and expressive possibilities, such as experimental shading, working with scale, creative cartography, paper circuitry and interactivity. In addition to creating self-portraits and individual drawings in ink and charcoal, the visual art elective culminated with a large, wall-mounted map displaying three key moments of the exchange: the experience of the American students while in Barcelona, the experience of the Spanish students while in Boston, and the shared experience of working together in both cities.







In the film elective with Upper School Core Classroom Teacher Jamie Schefen, students created digital videos or photo slideshows that depicted their individual experiences in the exchange. They learned how to operate a camera, the mechanical and artistic uses of exposure settings, and how to edit their work in Adobe software. Working in teams, the film students created cohesive digital products – one a film and the other an animation – that depicted the connection the exchange created between Barcelona and Boston.

Leaving Your Mark's woodworking students, mentored by Engineering, Woodshop & Math Specialist Teacher Josh Briggs, designed three-dimensional maps representing different cities, countries, and regions. After selecting the area of the world that was most meaningful to them, the groups combined their ideas and impressions of that place as a team before taking on the challenge of design and construction. The final projects consisted of solid pine wood lumber and plywood bases, and used relief carving, assemblages of stacked wood, woodburning, painting, and staining to represent design elements on their maps.

In February, when the ELH and Acera students presented their projects and said their goodbyes, there were as many smiles as there were tears. True connections were made during this exchange, with each school leaving its mark on the other.





*Democracy in Room 8:*

# ELECTIONS, DEBATE & CIVIL DISCOURSE

*Why do people vote? How do people learn to work together?*

Students in Room 8 – guided by Core Classroom Teacher Deborah Barolsky – explored these and other questions in a months-long investigation into democracy, elections, and civil discourse.

They began in early fall by expressing their hopes for the school year, both individually and as a class.

Using this shared vision as inspiration, the students moved from aspiration to organization. They set to work on a class agreement, or “Constitution,” the goal being to create a set of agreed upon guidelines to help realize these hopes.

For example, after working in small groups to brainstorm ideas, they discovered that all groups had emphasized the importance of cooperation. They agreed, by consensus, that “to cooperate” would be in the Constitution.



## Why do people vote?

Compiled by the students of Room 8

- To choose fairly
- To give everyone a chance to have their voice heard
- To stop fights for various things
- To choose a person to be in charge
- To choose the government and other things
- Because it's not fair if most people don't want what has been chosen by only a couple of people
- Because it's not fair if someone says they get to make all the rules



As the document evolved, the students compared the process they were undertaking with events in American history. They explored how, as the United States grew from 13 states to one country, it had to find a way to move from the hopes expressed in the Declaration of Independence (life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) to an agreement on how to work together to realize those hopes with the creation of and amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

November of 2022 offered a real world example of democracy, as people in the Commonwealth elected a new Governor. Students in Room 8 spent time discussing why people vote (see their list!).

With the *why* in mind, Deborah and her class incorporated elections into the classroom to better understand how the process is organized and implemented. Students used the caucus method to select a storage location for the classroom hole punchers. Three possible storage locations were nominated, and students sorted themselves into groups by preference. After each group presented their reasons in support of their nominated location, the children re-sorted themselves for a final vote.

After the caucus, students moved on to a higher-stakes decision: choosing the official name of the classroom mascot!

The process began with an open call for nominations – allowing everyone to have a voice. To narrow the field, primary elections were held, requiring a threshold of 1/3 of the class to qualify for the general ballot. The final election was conducted using ranked choice voting. The anonymous ballots were counted in front of the whole class, allowing students to see firsthand how, even when an option was eliminated, people still had a voice in the final decision. It was a nail biting decision and came down to a single vote, impressing upon the kids that very vote counts!

In the end, Room 8's plush puppy was named "I Believe I Can Fly." Everyone, both those who were happy with the results and those who weren't, were good sports and accepted the outcome. We think this bodes well for these future leaders and innovators.



# CHOICE AT ACERA: ELECTIVES

## MAKING REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS IN PHYSICS CLASS

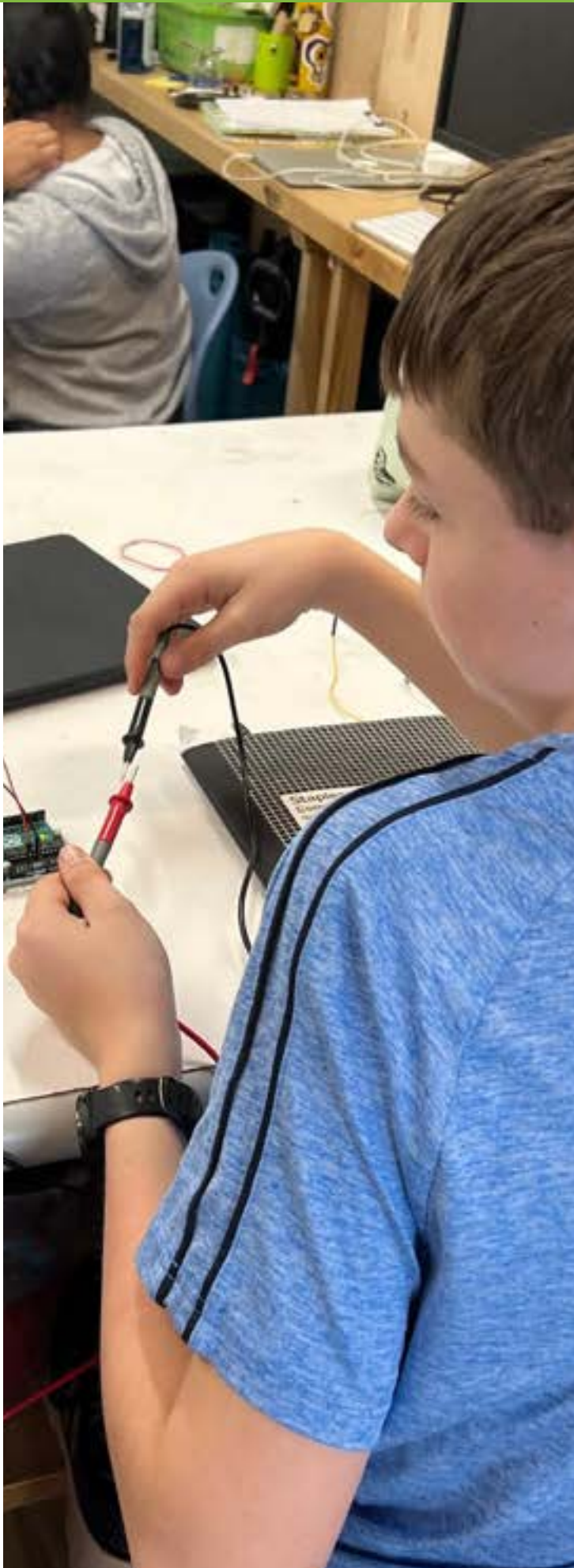


What is the interconnectedness of energy, electricity, and magnetism? How does energy move in and out of systems? These were the deep and thrilling questions students asked in Alexis Hibbler's Classical Physics elective, one of several classes this year that scaffolded engagement in physics for Acera's relentlessly curious Upper School students.

Alexis placed a strong emphasis on context-rich physics problems that simulated real-life scenarios. In the meteor lab, students explored energy transformation and transfer through hands-on activities. They simulated meteor impacts on the Martian surface using sand and potatoes, measuring impact speed, final kinetic energy, and crater size. Connections were made between the lab and NASA's research on crater features, highlighting real-world implications.

They also explored the movement of energy in and out of systems through constructing roller coasters and waterwheels. Students applied their creativity and problem-solving skills to improve upon a basic water wheel design, and conducted experiments to observe energy transfer and transformation.

Each physics investigation allowed time and space for students to analyze the systems, discuss their findings, and brainstorm ways to solve problem. This enabled the students to think critically and learn from each other while solidifying their understanding of the science.



In another elective, The Physics of Electricity, Alison Earnhart's students explored how we, as humans, use electrons to accomplish great feats of technology.

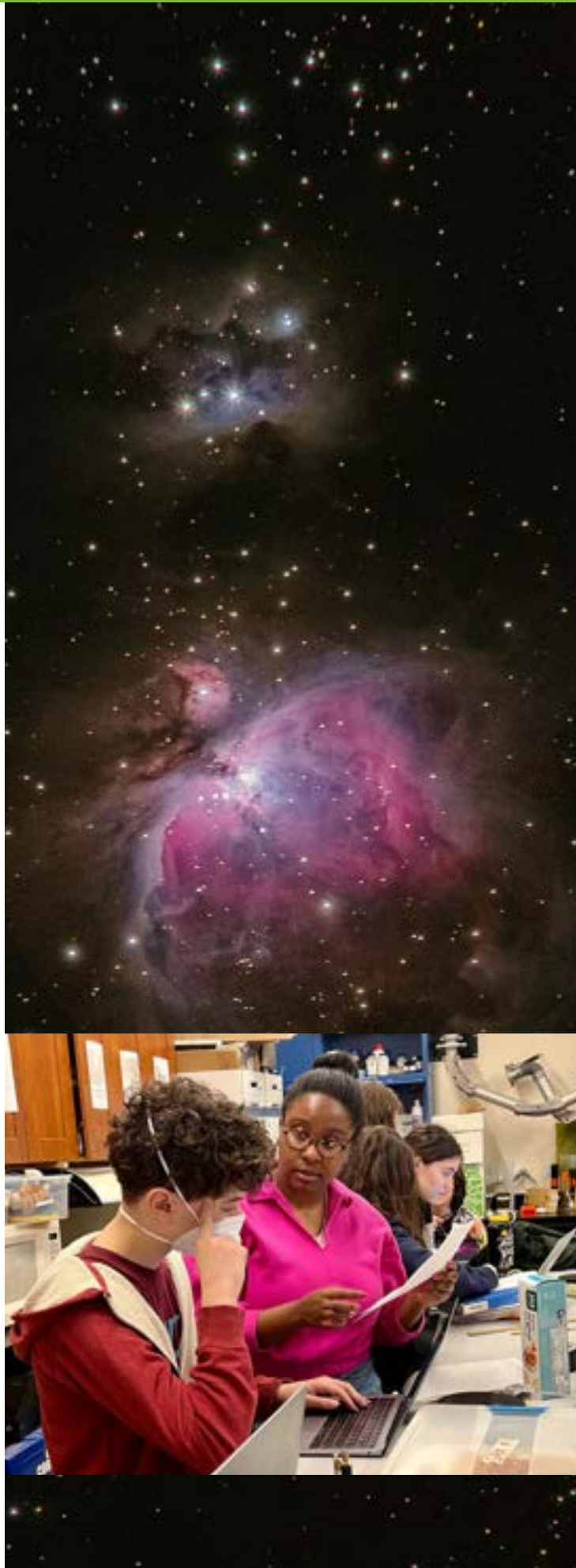
Using a blend of maker space activities and academically rigorous classroom discussion, students immersed themselves in topics such as charge, atomic structure, electrostatic forces, electric fields, voltage, current, resistance, power, Ohm's Law, circuit diagrams, and electromagnetism.

They also engaged in experimentation with breadboards, LEDs, resistors, capacitors, motors, and Arduino Uno microcontrollers, giving each student the opportunity to use their new knowledge to conceptualize, design and make their own unique electronic.

Through a combination of hands-on experiments, problem-solving activities, and practical applications, Acera's physics students engaged in true scientific inquiry, gaining a strong foundation in the principles behind the science, and sparking their curiosity to know more!







## ASTROBIOLOGY STUDENTS CONSIDER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN LIFE ON EARTH AND BEYOND

At Acera, asking deep questions isn't limited to the core classroom. Throughout the year, students choose from electives and creativity stations in natural sciences & math, art, technology & engineering, and social sciences & humanities.

In Astrobiology, Alexis Hibbler's students tackled profound questions surrounding life on Earth and its implications for life elsewhere in the universe through presentations, labs, debates, guided readings, and group discussions.

Focusing first on Earth, students undertook a group project on geologic times, assuming the roles of geologists, marine and terrestrial biologists, atmospheric scientists, and oceanographers. They focused on climate, mass extinctions, and the direct influence of Earth's conditions on the evolution of life during specific time periods. By actively researching to find reliable sources (and discount unreliable ones), they cultivated skills essential to the scientific process.

In the second theme, "The Existence of Life Beyond our Planet," students explored how scientists discover and decipher the properties of exoplanets by seeking biosignatures, and delved into the methodologies used to detect signs of intelligent life. To deepen their investigation, students read the latest scientific articles, explored the distinction between signal and noise in radio astronomy, and detailed climate conditions on exoplanets and their potential for life.

The elective culminated with a unique hands-on experience. Students constructed their own detectors and took on the challenge of decoding AI-generated sound waves from an imagined extraterrestrial "civilization." This exciting endeavor served as a fitting finale, allowing students to apply their newfound knowledge, skills, and scientific curiosity in a practical and imaginative manner!





## GENERATIVE AI AND THE FUTURE: HOW, WHY, AND WHY NOT?

In the humanities elective “Generative AI - How, Why, and Why Not,” led by Computer Science & Game Design Specialist Teacher Danny Fain, students explored the workings, benefits, costs, and risks of the current crop of generative artificial intelligence tools (genAI). The essential questions guiding their inquiry included:

- How do the technical aspects of genAI tools determine their benefits and limitations, and how are those technical aspects evolving?
- Why and how is genAI driving changes in social and professional practices in fields such as education, journalism, and the judicial system? What might be some economic and political effects of those changes?
- How are genAI tools affecting the way we think and behave as individuals and communities? What are some ethical considerations of those effects, particularly in regard to trust and fairness?

Using their critical-thinking and perspective-taking skills, students researched and analyzed newspaper articles, blogs, and scholarly-journal papers, experimented with genAI tools such as ChatGPT and DALL-E, and learned about the machine-learning mechanisms that produce biased outputs, particularly for image generation.

During the elective, students worked in pairs to create a multimedia representation of multiple genAI tools in one medium (text, image, or sound). They compared and contrasted these tools with each other as well as with similar products made using earlier technologies. Upon completion, students practiced peer-evaluation of each others’ project work, giving and receiving feedback in a structured way.

Broadening their view, students then collaborated to research and create a multimedia representation of the drivers and impact of genAI tools in one domain of professional activity (education, journalism, or law/justice), thinking deeply about the conflicts that can arise among stakeholders with differing values or interests. The elective culminated with an analysis of the costs and risks entailed in use of genAI tools in the students’ own community, considering impacts at the individual, group, and broader societal levels.

As genAI becomes increasingly used, Acera students’ deepened knowledge and capacity for systems thinking and ethical decision-making will empower them to be conscientious users of this evolving technology.

*Connecting problem solving and leadership*

## PEER MEDIATION AT ACERA

In the 2022-23 school year, Acera's Counseling Team started looking at how the school could augment the problem-solving supports available to students. They landed on the idea of peer mediation, during which trained student volunteers would help mediate conflicts that their peers are grappling with in a structured, neutral manner. At Acera, the program is overseen by school counselors Eileen Sauer and Neal Bottom, but the actual mediation and conflict supports are owned by our trained student mediators. In March of 2023, we graduated 21 new peer mediators.

This inaugural class of students, ranging from grades 5 through 8, completed their mediation training through Community Dispute Settlement Center (CDSC), a nonprofit mediation and training center dedicated to providing an alternative and affordable forum for resolving conflict. The training program was comprised of 18 hours of learning and role playing, and an official graduation ceremony during which they received their certificates and took an oath of confidentiality and objectivity as mediators.

In the program's first few months, they mediated four conflicts and began outreach initiatives to help their fellow classmates understand how they can use peer mediation to solve conflicts at school. We are so proud of our student mediators, and are thrilled to share that Acera and our new peacemakers were honored in the fall of 2023 with the Community Peacemaker Award at CDSC's Annual BASH!





## THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

# ACERA EDUCATION INNOVATIONS EXPANDS IN GREATER BOSTON

*Acera is the fiscal sponsor for AceraEI. AceraEI is funded separately from the school, through generous donations and foundations.*

The excitement was palpable as faculty and staff at Missituk Elementary School in Medford experimented with maker education during a professional development workshop facilitated by Acera Education Innovations (AceraEI), the public outreach division of Acera. The goal? Bring hands-on, creative, and STEM-infused curriculum to more Medford students.

In the workshop, nearly 80 Missituk teachers wove together technology, engineering, circuitry, coding and art to make critter bots, art bots, light-up story cubes, and more. At the end of the workshop, the teachers displayed their creations in a gallery walk, and discussed how they can incorporate these hands-on activities into their existing curriculum.

“Seeing the teacher’s creations, the story cubes, the art bots, and the integration of art, science and technology is wonderful. It’s engineering, it’s design, it’s math and science,” said Dr. Marice Edouard-Vincent, Superintendent of Medford Public Schools. “This is what our students need. This is the next level of learning and interaction and creativity.”

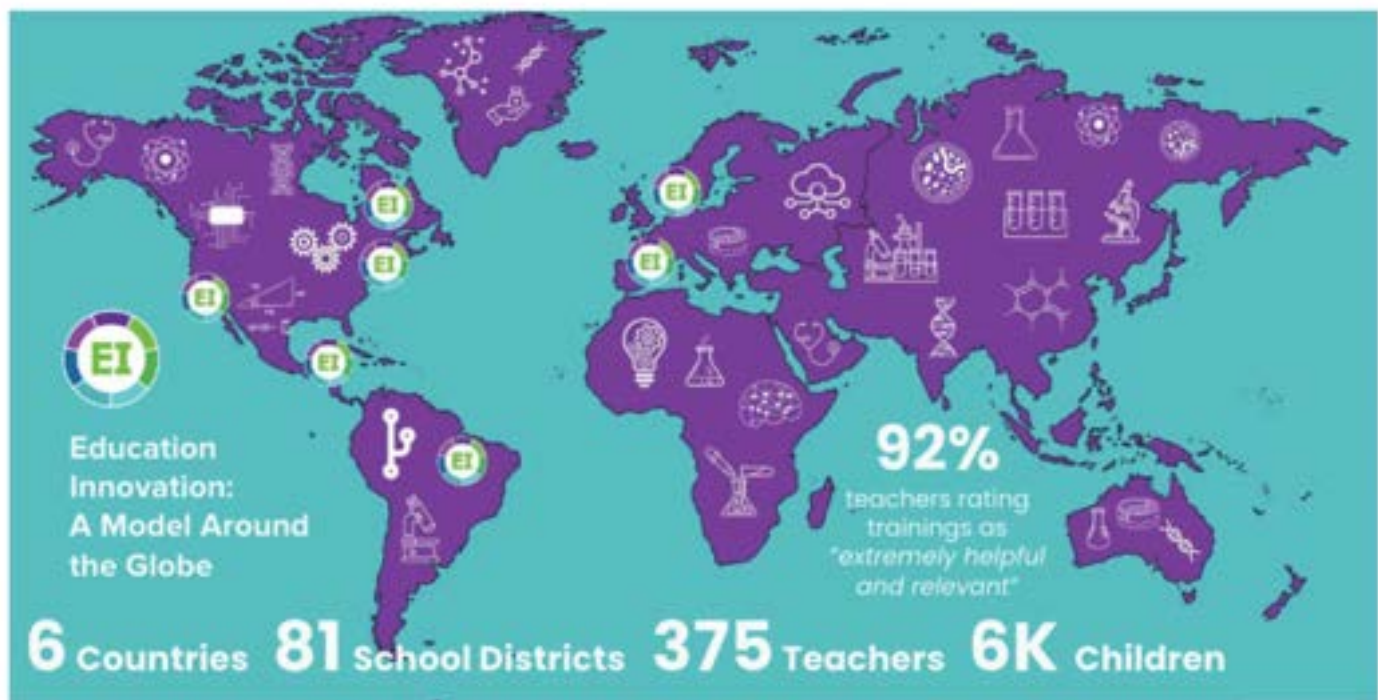
Maker education is the concept of using hands-on activities to support learning. For example, in critterbots activity, teachers designed a small robotic creature with craft materials, and experimented with a vibration motor, coin cell batteries and a battery holder with an on/off switch to build a simple circuit. With students, this activity serves as a pathway for introducing creative thinking and electromechanics.

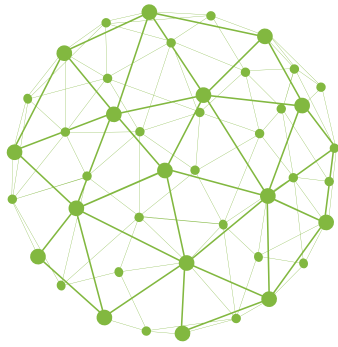




*I want to thank AceraEI for continuing to partner with Medford Public Schools to bring science and innovation in a truly practical creative way. I'm excited about this, and look forward to doing of more of this in the next school year.*

Dr. Edouard-Vincent, Medford Public Schools Superintendent





*From the Director of Parent Engagement*

## THANK YOU, ACERA COMMUNITY



Dear Acera Community,

As I reflect on the past year at Acera, I have great appreciation for our Acera community. Your support allows us to foster a truly unique learning environment, where gifted young minds can flourish in an atmosphere of joyful discovery.

This year, our annual fund had a singular focus: enriching our adventure playground into a space brimming with even greater possibilities for exploration and imagination. Thanks to the incredible generosity of the Acera community, we not only reached our fundraising goal, but surpassed it!

Whether through your annual giving, your participation in school events, or by volunteering your time and talents, you play a vital role in shaping the future of Acera. You are the foundation upon which we build a world-class education focused on the sheer joy of learning.

Thank you for believing in our mission. Thank you for investing in the potential of our students. Thank you for being a part of the Acera community.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Trent Ramsey  
Director of Development & Parent Engagement



## INCOME

**School Tuition (includes student support)**

**\$4,438,614**

**Other Revenue**

**\$544,864**

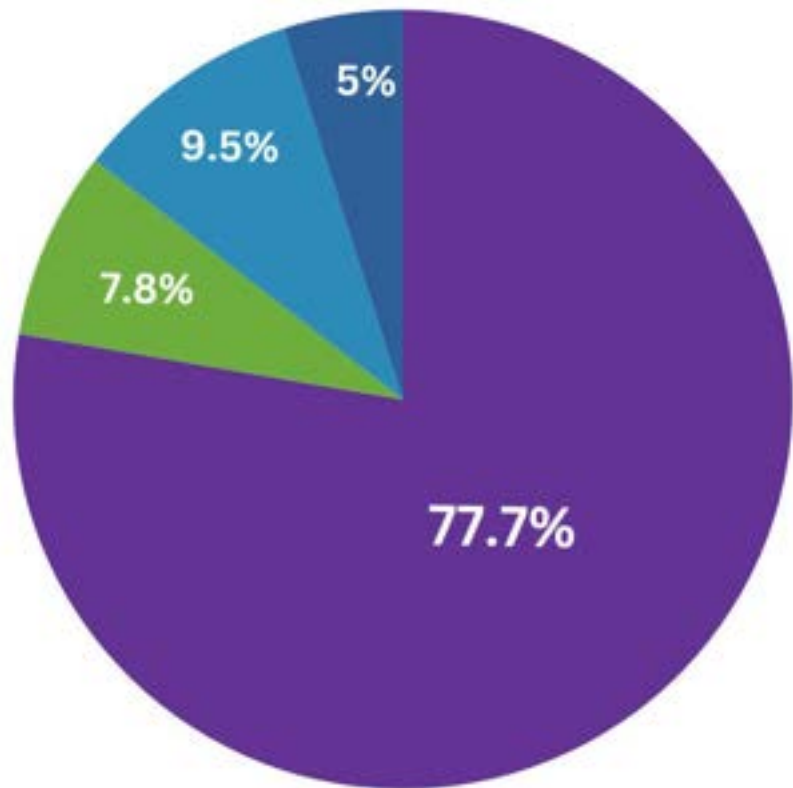
**Summer Camp Enrichment**

**\$446,476**

**After School & Vacation Camp Enrichment**

**\$282,952**

**Total: \$5,712,906**



## EXPENSES

**Salaries, Benefits & Taxes**

**\$4,526,436**

**G & A**

**\$347,168**

**Classroom Expenses**

**\$256,903**

**Facilities**

**\$152,622**

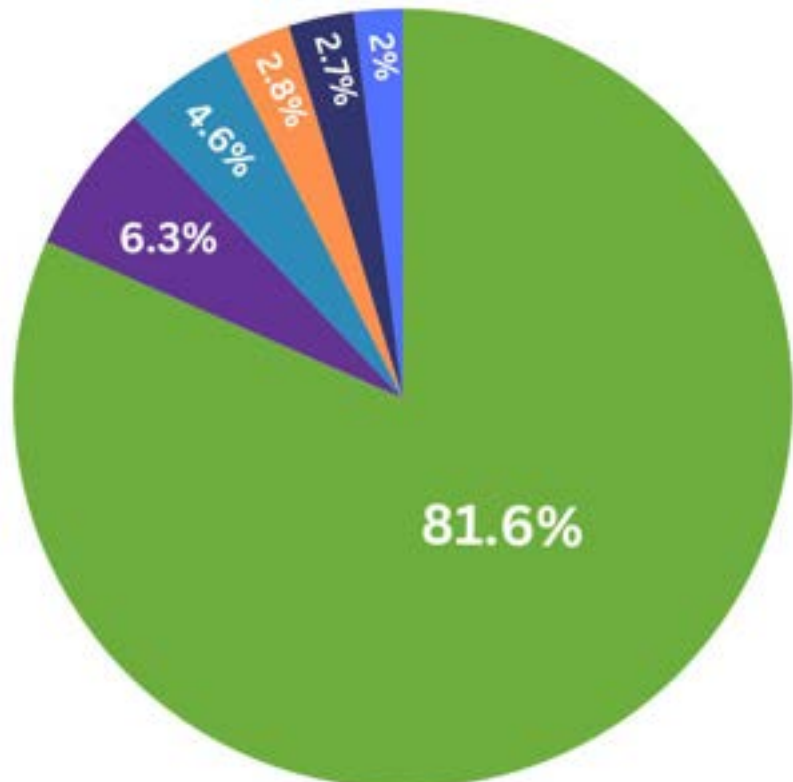
**Depreciation**

**\$151,158**

**Enrichment**

**\$111,927**

**Total: \$5,546,214**



# FACULTY & STAFF

*Full-time faculty and staff for the 2022-23 school year. Additional part-time staff not listed here include math, science, and creativity station teachers. A full list of staff is available at [aceraschool.org/people](https://aceraschool.org/people).*

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

Courtney Dickinson, Founder & Director  
B.A., Dartmouth College, Certified Teacher

Malcolm Campbell, Director of Lower School  
M.A., Counseling Psychology, C.I.I.S.  
B.A., Fairhaven College

Tami Cronin, Director of Admissions  
B.S.E., Bridgewater State University  
A.D.N., North Shore Community College

Carol Fallon, Director of Finance & HR  
Shawsheen Valley Technical High School

Sara Honeywell, Director of Ops & Administration  
B.M., Berklee College of Music

George Papayannis, Director of Upper School  
Ed.M., Harvard University  
M.A., Columbia University Teachers College  
B.S., Drexel University

C. Trent Ramsey, Director of Development & Parent Engagement  
B.A., Birmingham-Southern College  
Graduate Certificate in Grant-Writing, Fort Hays State University

Eileen Sauer, BCBA, LABA, Student Support Program Manager  
M.S., Simmons College  
B.A., UMass Lowell

Sarah Zuckerman, Director of Education & Innovation  
M.Ed., Harvard University Graduate School of Education  
B.A., Indiana University





## CORE CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Deborah Barolsky, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.S., Wheelock College  
B.A., Swarthmore College

Vered Brooks, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.Ed., Lesley University  
B.A., Bennington College

Alyssa Colby, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.A., University of Maine, Orono  
M.A., Brandeis University  
B.A., Wheaton College

Bob Defandorf, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.Ed., Lesley University  
B.A., Wesleyan University

Ruma Dutta, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.Ed., Lesley University  
B.A., Mount Holyoke College

Anastasia Leyden, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.Ed., Lesley University  
B.A., Williams College

Jenifer McGuinn, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.A.T., Tufts University  
B.A., Simmons College

Jamie Schefen, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.A., Columbia University  
B.A., Northeastern University

Emily Stefanich, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.Ed., Lesley University  
B.A., Merrimack College

Lisa Wilson, Core Classroom Teacher  
M.Ed., Southern New Hampshire University  
B.A., Lesley University



## SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Josh Briggs, Engineering, Woodshop and Math  
Specialist Teacher

M.S., University of New Hampshire  
B.S. and B.A., University of Notre Dame

Queenie Desulme, Assistant Teacher

Alison Earnhart, Maker Space & Physics  
Specialist Teacher

M.A, University of Texas at Austin

Danny Fain, Computer Science & Game Design  
Specialist Teacher

S.B., Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Camila García-Enríquez, Visual Arts Specialist  
Teacher

M.Ed., Harvard Graduate School of Education  
B.A., Instituto Superior de Arte, Havana, Cuba

Alexis Hibbler, Physics Specialist Teacher  
S.B., Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Stephanie McKay, Arts and Performance  
Specialist Teacher

M.Ed, Lesley University  
B.F.A., University of the Arts

Ashley Metz, Math and Science Specialist  
M.S., Lesley University  
B.A., Boston University

Carly Morin, Cross Classroom Enrichment Specialist  
M.A., Therapeutic Recreation

Kei Phillip, Mindfulness & Movement Specialist  
Teacher, High School Transition Coordinator  
M.A., Columbia University Teachers College  
B.A., Barnard College

## STUDENT SUPPORT

Neal Bottom, School Counselor

M.Ed, Rutgers University

M.S., Chapman College

B.S., California State University

Sigourney Hamilton, Student Support Provider

B.A., Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Laura Inglese, Literacy, Writing and Dyslexia  
Specialist

M.Ed, UMass Lowell

B.A., Keene State College

Pam Tricca, Literacy, Writing and Dyslexia Specialist

Certificate, Orton Gillingham Theory and

Techniques, The Carroll School

B.A., Emmanuel College





## ADMINISTRATION

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M.S., Boston University  
B.A., University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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M.S., Lasell University  
B.A., Lasell University

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B.S., Wentworth Institute of Technology

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Ph.D., University of Massachusetts at Amherst  
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B.S., Yerevan State University, Armenia

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B.A., Boston College

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B.S., Deakin University, Australia

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M.Ed., Lesley University  
B.A., University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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M.Ed., Harvard Graduate School of Education  
B.A., Trinity College

Irina Uk, Education & Innovation Program Manager  
M.Ed., Harvard Graduate School of Education  
M.S., DePaul University  
B.S., BSC, DePaul University

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*Acera's Board of Directors has as its foremost charter to safeguard the fiscal stability and sustainability of the school. Its approach is modeled more after the for-profit sector than the typical non-profit board approach, enabling the rapid and flexible growth of a start-up school.*

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***Acera's mission, across its  
core school, enrichment  
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to develop the next  
generation of innovators,  
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impact in the world.***

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