ACE FAQ:

1. **Is ACE only for students who have been doing poorly in mainstream? Is it designed for a certain type of student?**

*No. ACE is for any student who is looking to have more control and agency over their education. It attracts students who may not be happy with traditional approaches to education and are seeking a smaller environment where they can go at their own pace (sometimes slower and sometimes faster). ACE students cut through any stereotype as they are very diverse in every way.*

1. **How is ACE different from OFC, the program that preceded it?**

*OFC, a program that had existed at BHS for 22 years, used the same space that ACE now inhabits at BHS. OFC was also a small and highly personalized environment. Some of the key differences are:*

*ACE is competency-based and OFC was not.*

*In ACE, students take 2 core academic classes at a time. In OFC, students were in one class, all day for two weeks straight before they moved on to the next subject.*

*In ACE, teachers are trained in project-based and blended learning and do a lot of real-life application in the way that they teach. They use more performance-based assessments (projects and presentations). In OFC, teachers taught in more traditional ways that resembled mainstream with reliance on test taking to gauge student understanding.*

*In ACE, students must choose the program. In OFC, students reported that they were often told by administrators or teachers that this program was their last chance to do well and did not always feel full ownership of the decision.*

1. **How well do colleges understand competency-based education? Does the transcript look different?**

*No, the transcript does not look different since the competency levels that students achieve in their courses get translated into letter grades. For example, High Competent = A, Competent= B, and Basic Competent=C. Nevertheless, colleges are beginning to hear more and more about competency-based education and some are also adopting this model of education too as they have recognized that it more closely resembles the way real-life learning takes place in our 21st century world.*

1. **Are ACE students able to get in to colleges?**

*Yes. All of our graduating seniors got into college. One of our graduate this year got a full ride to Brandeis.*

1. **If students don’t get grades, how do they know how they are doing in a class?**

*Students are always working to earn benchmarks which are the stepping stones to proving competent in the class. Every day, their teachers update their progress on Canvas and/or on their Google Roadmaps which track the benchmarks and competencies. This allows them to gauge how many they still need to do in order to graduate. Additionally, with every major assignment, students are given a rubric which tells them exactly what they need to demonstrate in order to earn the varying levels of competence.*

1. **Is the application process competitive? What are the requirements?**

*ACE is not academically selective and accepts students twice a year (for September and End of November). The only non-negotiable for coming to ACE is the a student must WANT to come to ACE and be able to tell us why they think it is a good match for them. ACE accepts students who are on IEPs as well as those who are not. (please see steps to applying to ACE)*

1. **Do students in ACE feel isolated from mainstream and their friends who are not in ACE? When and how do they interact with the rest of BHS?**

*No, ACE students do not report feeling isolated from mainstream. ACE students can see their mainstream friends during A or D blocks (when they take their electives, physical education and/or world language); during lunchtime; during X block when clubs meet; or before/after school.*

1. **The program is new. How do you know it is working?**

*Throughout this first year, we have been taking a close look at the attendance and student academic performance data. We have seen a dramatic increase in both areas when we compare students pre-ACE vs. post-ACE. (Please see graphs above). As mentioned above, our college acceptance rate is also very high for those ACE students who applied to college. Finally, in interviews with our students and parents, we have heard moving testimonials. (Please see testimonials)*