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An option of middle school years at AKCS would provide a continuation of social and emotional nurturing, while adding opportunities for inquiry-based and learning exploration experiences. The multi-age classrooms would evolve into teams, with professional facilitators (teachers) guiding high quality middle school education. Parents, community members and mentors will partner for the benefit of transition to high school.

Rationale:

Middle School is a time of unique development challenges inherent to early adolescence. Students often feel a sense of fear, low self-esteem, less-connection to “school” and increased peer conflict during this important time. It is critical that we provide a safe place to nurture relationships, gain deeper understanding of essential skills needed for secondary and post-secondary work, and opportunity to choose exploratory classes in STEM, art, music, computer skills, sports and foreign language options.

Strategies/Best Practice includes:

- Relationships with peers become all important. Collaborative learning and problem-solving become important tools to gain and maintain healthy relationships.
- Students must feel safe, physically and emotionally. Adopt comprehensive model based on social and emotional learning.
- A high quality learning environment is key to student engagement and exploration opportunities. Hire and retain highly qualified teachers and administrators who embrace the AKCS mission.
- Teachers and administrators must advocate for more collaborative, inquiry and problem-based learning on relevant academic tasks. Hold sacred our in service (teacher planning) days.
- Students will enjoy the learning process. Basic needs in student achievement include survival, belonging, power, freedom and fun. Smaller teams of students will allow faculty members to better know individual abilities, needs and interests.
- Community as evidenced in our school culture embraces individuals with strengths and challenges, and how we effectively work together. Continue with the AKCS mission of full-inclusion and multiage philosophy.
- AKCS sense of community in the classroom extends to the entire school body (grades K-8) and external community, allowing students to contribute to decisions leading to positive changes in the school and to experience leadership opportunities. Find external and internal work-study options.
- Administration will continue to emphasize collaboration and faculty ownership. Students and families contribute to a favorable learning culture. Continue to build relationships with all stakeholders.