

# *ACCELERATOR SCHOOL FAQ*

## **GENERAL TOPICS**

### WHY ARE YOU STARTING A SOCCER SCHOOL?

We are starting the soccer school for the following reasons. We believe:

- Our soccer players need more training hours to be competitive at the highest levels.
- The educational experience can be greatly improved given changes in technology, teaching methods, and workforce needs.
- Family time is a high priority given our busy schedules.
- Energy management and sleep are critical to both athletics and academics.

The school was designed to overcome these constraints.

### WHAT ARE THE TARGET AGES FOR THE SCHOOL?

We are currently offering 4-9th grades for the upcoming school year beginning in August. If there is sufficient interest at other age groups, we will do our best to accommodate.

### WHERE WILL THE SCHOOL BE LOCATED?

We are still evaluating options for the best combination of soccer fields, classroom space, and locker room facilities in your area. The quality and proximity of these attributes will be priorities. We will announce them to you as soon as possible.

### CAN YOU PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ON TRANSPORTATION TO/FROM SCHOOL?

We are working on this and will hopefully make more information available as we see the final geographical distribution of the students. Until then, plan on dropping your student off at in the morning at 9AM and picking up in the late afternoon. We will do our best to meet your schedule.

We will certainly help arrange carpools. We know some clubs/teams start practice early relative to the other clubs. We have talked to them and assured them that their students will be released in time to make training. Those that can stay later in the classroom will stay.

### WHAT ABOUT THE STUDENT'S SOCIAL LIFE?

Social life at a smaller school is a common concern for parents. We believe that our kids will be better socialized given the collaborative learning, being in a learning environment with children of different ages, and establishing relationships with students from other countries.

### HOW MUCH DOES THE SCHOOL COST?

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We have yet to set the price in your area. We are gathering data on the local private schools and want to be somewhere just below the mean price. For evaluation purposes consider \$20K per year. This will include the school and the soccer instruction.

Fees are due biannually in August and February. There will be a non-refundable deposit of \$2,000 for first year students due in April/May, which will be applied to the first semester fees.

### IS THERE A DISCOUNT FOR SIBLINGS?

Yes, 20% off.

### HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE SCHOOL WILL BE AROUND?

The Accelerator School was formed by three Directors (please see [www.accelerator.school](http://www.accelerator.school)) with not only skin-in-the-game, but as we like to say: “Genes-in-the-game.” We each have a 12-year old in the AS Raleigh school.

## **EDUCATION TOPICS**

### WHAT IS BLENDED LEARNING AND HOW IS IT DIFFERENT THAN PURE ONLINE LEARNING?

Blended learning is a teaching model which combines online curriculum with face-to-face teaching. Students get most of their content online and often take short quizzes to monitor progress. Teachers and tutors monitor progress and direct their attention to areas where students have difficulty mastering. The goal is to use technology to maximize high-quality interactions between teacher/tutor and student.

Please view this video: [What is Blended Learning?](#) by a non-profit supported by the Gates Foundation. With personalized learning, the Gates Foundation is investing millions of dollars to help public schools transition to blended learning environments. The students are passionate about learning and take ownership of their own education.

At the Accelerator School, the technology allows for teachers to spend more high-quality interactive time with the kids in areas that matter. At most times of the day, there will be at least two teachers, along with other subject matter experts, for the 20-student class. The 1:10 instructor/pupil ratio will enable numerous high quality interactions.

### IS THE ACCELERATOR SCHOOL ACCREDITED?

Accreditation is a state-by-state activity. In most states, the school is required to be in operation for at least two years before being inspected. At the time, we will seek accreditation.

### WILL THE KIDS GET THE SAME SCHOOL HOURS AS REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOL?

The hours will be similar. Our semesters are longer but the school days are shorter to accommodate the soccer training. We will bring the teacher(s) so students will be studying on

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international trips. Our school time is more efficient because the students do not have to transfer from one classroom to another.

### WHO IS GOING TO TEACH AT THE SCHOOL?

We will start with the most qualified two teachers that we can hire in your area. One teacher will be a specialist in Math and Science and the other in English and Language Arts. We supplement the teachers by bringing in tutors and outside subject matter experts (SMEs). Some of the SMEs will teach Software Coding, Sports Psychology, Nutrition, and Spanish. These experts include college professors, practitioners and researchers. We will add teachers as the number of students grows.

### WHAT IS YOUR THOUGHT PROCESS ON MOVING YOUR CHILDREN FROM AN ACCREDITED TRADITIONAL SCHOOL?

Chris Mumford responds regarding the AS Raleigh: “I often get the question from parents on why I moved my children away from an accredited traditional learning environment?

Most parents find it surprising given that I teach at a top university, was on the board of the Public School Foundation, and moved back to North Carolina so my children could attend top public district schools.

First, I looked at the data:

- According to the 2012 International Student Assessment, the US ranks 35th in math and 27th in science out of the top 64 industrialized nations.
- According to Education Week, North Carolina public schools graded out at C+, 21st in the country, just above the national average.
- According to US News, Raleigh Charter High School (with a 1:13 teacher pupil ratio) is ranked 37th in public schools nationally. The only other Greater Raleigh school, Green Hope High School is ranked 336th nationally. All the other Wake County high schools are ranked below 1000.
- Private schools generally do not participate in rankings, so there are no national comparison.
- According to former US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the K-12 system “largely still adheres to the century-old industrial-age factory model of education.”
- According to a Gallup Student Poll, student engagement falls from 76% in elementary school to 61% in middle school and to 44% in high school.

While these facts are compelling reasons for change, the deciding factor in creating a new school has been my personal experiences on the board of the Public School Foundation and in education in general. Over time, I had candid conversations with many people in multiple roles in public and private schools:

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- Under-resourced teachers who have said that they teach to the annual test to meet regulatory and fiscal targets. Few thought that this form of teaching was optimal for the children's education.
- Teachers who struggle to keep up given disruptions due to "socialization" issues - bullying, drugs/alcohol, sex, family and mental health issues.
- A "Principal of the Year" winner who said that she has to convince one of her three children to go to school on every school day.
- A school district superintendent that said he needed another 7 years to get the necessary reforms in place. Change is too slow given fiscal and regulatory constraints as well as employee and institutional inertia.

My key takeaway is that there is room for tremendous improvement in accredited traditional learning environments. While the hard-working staff are well-intentioned, the obstructions to adapt best practices are huge.

Based on my years of research, teaching and curriculum development, I have given a great deal of thought on educational matters including: the purpose of education, adopting key habits and making pedagogical tradeoffs. Many of the recommended changes in the learning sciences have been around for more than a decade and are ready for implementation. Decisions to develop a new curriculum, consistent with these issues, have also been based on the recent changes in technology, learning sciences and the workforce. We have focused on adopting the best recommendations and practices in middle school education.

After years of research, the Gates Foundation has chosen to focus its efforts on teacher quality. I agree that high quality teacher-student interactions should be the key priority; the more, the better. Blended learning maximizes those opportunities, particularly if students participate in a school with low teacher:pupil ratios.

As for implementation experience, I have been teaching in a blended learning environment for several years. My children have been learning in a blended learning and experiential environment for at least 5 years. My wife and I have been pleased with the experience and importantly the results. My son has done well on annual tests and his projects have done very well in the Science Olympiad state competitions against schools with more resources on paper. My 11-year-old son struggled and then flourished in a small group writing workshop class where the deliverable was a 7000-word story. Traditional schools, public and private, would simply not have the resources to provide this level of support. I did not start writing papers of this length until college.

In the end, I am not willing to wait another 5-7 years for the public schools to make the reforms. Schools are already moving toward the blended learning environment. But, my son and daughter would have already graduated from high school by that time. I believe they and

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the other students will do well in a small group workshop environment like the Accelerator School where frequent, high quality student-teacher interaction is the norm. They will benefit from accumulated best practices in education, preparation for college and a changing, global workforce.

For reference, I suggest that you look at the following video which is based on the most popular TED talk of all time. I think you will find it one of the most thought provoking 12-minute videos that you will ever watch. [Changing Education Paradigms](#)

Moreover, I suggest that you also look at the [What is Blended Learning? Video.](#)

### WHAT ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION?

As our students track up thru high school, we will add curriculum and AP classes as needed to support your child's academic growth. Some of our current 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are taking high school classes.

### WILL AP CLASSES BE AVAILABLE?

Yes. Our students will be ready to take AP classes early in their high school years. We know this is important for college admissions.

### HOW WILL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICERS VIEW THE SCHOOL?

We have and will continue to review our curriculum with college admissions officers. ACT and SAT test preparation will be fundamental to college preparation and we will begin those programs with ready 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders. We are confident that first student class of 2022 will be well-prepared to apply for admissions.

## **SOCCER TOPICS**

### WHAT IS THE SOCCER PHILOSOPHY OF THE SCHOOL?

Mirroring our academic philosophy, our soccer curriculum focuses on ample technical training, individualized training programs, blended learning, and International soccer trips.

### CAN WE STILL PLAY WITH OUR CURRENT CLUB?

Yes. We are club neutral. Our mission is to provide supplement training through the school hours and let you train with your club in the evenings and play games with them on the weekends.

### WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PATEADORES?

We have been in close cooperation with the Pateadores in forming the school. As such, we will have the invaluable experience of watching their best teams train, up close, on a daily basis.

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### WHERE WILL WE TRAIN?

We will train on natural grass fields as much as possible and have access to both boys' and girls' locker rooms. During inclement weather, we will train on nearby turf fields.

### WHO IS GOING TO COACH THE SOCCER?

The Accelerator School will work closely with the local clubs to identify and hire the best coaches aligned to our soccer philosophy. Professional or A-level coaching licenses, international experience, and experience as a professional player will be key attributes of our candidates. We will communicate our coaching hires when we have them identified in your area.

### HOW MANY COACHES WILL THERE BE?

Our goals, and we accomplished them in Raleigh, are to have: at least two full-time coaches, at least one female coach, a part-time goalkeeper coach, and a part-time trainer.

In addition to the coaching staff, we intend to have guest coaches on an exchange program with clubs in Europe and South America.

### WHEN AND FOR HOW LONG WILL WE TRAIN?

We will train for 90 minutes first thing in the morning, Monday thru Friday, before school with slight adjustments due to weather and daylight in the winter months.

### HOW DO YOU PREVENT BURNOUT OR INJURY?

We monitor each player daily for soreness and club schedule to regulate the training load. We utilize FIFA recommended injury prevention techniques.

## **TRAVEL TOPICS**

### HOW IS THE TRAVEL ARRANGED?

The Accelerator School has signed a partnership with what we believe is the world's best educational soccer travel company in the world GoPlay ([www.acis.com/goplay](http://www.acis.com/goplay)). Prior to formation of the school, the Directors have been on numerous trips with GoPlay and we are extremely satisfied with the experience.

### TO WHERE WILL WE TRAVEL?

We have developed relationships with some of the best clubs in Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil. Those countries are producing the most exciting players in the world and we want to learn from them first hand. We plan to stay longer than the typical vacation/soccer package in order to immerse the players in the culture both on the pitch and off. And by the way, we are bringing the teacher on every trip. AS Raleigh will be traveling to Argentina and Uruguay this April.

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### DOES THE TRAVEL COST EXTRA?

Yes. Fundamental to our program is to travel Internationally as often as we can. We will synchronize the travel with the clubs to not disturb their season. It will however be optional.

### CAN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS HANDLE AN EXTENDED INTERNATIONAL TRIP?

In a word, yes. One of the main reasons we wanted to start the school was to have our players experience other cultures through soccer. We consider both the soccer play and the educational experience in everything we plan to do. By age 12, our sons have been on multiple extended trips already including to England, Spain and Scotland.

### HOW HAVE YOU CONSIDERED SAFETY ON THE TRIPS?

Safety is the most important consideration of any trip. We have been scouting travel destinations for some time and safety is always the first criteria. Coach Kerr has been to South America several times getting to know the local clubs. We are partnering with GoPlay, an experienced travel agency, whom we have used in the past on International trips.

### WHY SOUTH AMERICA?

It is not that we don't love European football, we do, and we might go there as well. However, Coach Kerr is very interested in bringing our players to South America because of their ability to produce some of the greatest soccer talent in the world (Messi, Suarez, Neymar...).

### HOW OFTEN WILL WE TRAVEL?

As for frequency, we will go slowly at first mostly due to finances. We know this is expensive and we will likely only go on one or possibly two trips the first year. As such, it has to be optional with no strings attached.

### WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT ACCELERATOR SCHOOL SOCCER TRIPS?

- We are trying not to be like the “soccer vacation” packages. We have done those and they are great. However, there are several major differences:  
We want immersion into the soccer and culture as much as possible and to do so requires more time.
- We also want the players to be learning about the destination culture and will research the trip prior to departure.
- We will bring the teacher on every trip to take advantage of down time and promote continual learning.
- We will be able to train with their players as opposed to just being coached by their coaches - big difference.
- We are also working on reciprocity for their coaches and players to enhance the quality of training here in the US.

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The clubs in South America that we talk to are eager to do this.

### CAN PARENTS COME ON THE TRIPS?

You bet, but it is not required. GoPlay will handle the itinerary and chaperone the trip but we know the kids are young and are likely to not have been overseas before. We are also parents and know exactly how you feel. The satisfaction of seeing your little guy or gal playing in that situation is indescribably great.

### DO THE KIDS STAY WITH PARENTS?

We highly discourage this. We want the players to experience what it is like to be a professional soccer player as well as building their confidence as world-travelers.

### IS THERE TRAVEL INSURANCE INCLUDED?

Yes. This is just one aspect of GoPlay that convinced us that they were the obvious choice.

### ARE WE THE ONLY GROUP GOING ON THE TRIP OR IS THERE GOING TO BE ANOTHER GROUP?

We will try and synchronize the international trips with other Accelerator Schools to reduce cost and build comradery with other highly talented players. Other requests, like siblings, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

More information regarding the Accelerator School can be found at our website:  
[www.accelerator.school](http://www.accelerator.school) Fill out the information form on the website and we will contact you personally.