

AZURES INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A SERVICES MARKETING PLAN FOR AZURES INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (PRE-SCHOOL)



MATEKO AKOWA AZU

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ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A SERVICES MARKETING PLAN FOR AZURES INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL,

PRE-SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

By

[MATEKO AKOWA AZU]

[Applied Project Report submitted to the Department of Business Administration Ashesi University College. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration]

[DECEMBER, 2012]

DECLARATION PAGE

I hereby declare that this Applied Project Report is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:.....

Candidate's Name:.....

Date:.....

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the Applied Project Report were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of applied projects laid down by Ashesi University College.

Supervisor's Signature:.....

Supervisor's Name:.....

Date:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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My utmost gratitude goes to Mr. Spio, my supervisor, for being very critical and tough on me to get this work done very well, within the stipulated time. You made this work possible, thank you very much.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Azures Pre-school aims to prepare its students to excel as young leaders of tomorrow by combining an exclusive collegiate-based curriculum tailored specifically for children with enhanced, first class child care services. Unlike their competitors, they offer advanced technology programs, after-school tutoring, and activities such as arts and crafts, dance, theatre and gymnastics, all in one location.

This is a services marketing plan for Azures Pre-school. Their target customers are dual-income families, high and middle-class families, foreign families, working parents and any parent who values the quality of education and child care that is provided for their children, ages 0 months to 5 years. Their value proposition is ***Premium pricing for Quality Education.***

The school has opened for business starting with an initial enrollment of 15 students. They project healthy revenues by the end of the first year, and expect to nearly triple that by the end of Year 3. Their biggest operating expense comes from the high cost of paying highly-qualified teachers. The school would like to grow into an international school with primary and junior high school, eventually; but growth is planned conservatively, to be financed from existing cash flow as it grows. They anticipate a net profit beginning in the second year.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Ghana is an English-speaking country that was colonized by the British. Formal education was introduced in Ghana during colonial rule. During their stay, they built high schools in the country that was meant to educate the locals. Examples include; Mfanstipim high school built by the British Colonial Administration. This generated an interest and understanding for education. Over the years, formal education in Ghana has grown and become diverse. There are different levels one has to go through to get a formal education. It starts at the Pre-School level, which includes Nursery and Kindergarten; then the elementary school level, which begins from grade 1 through to grade 6; then the high school levels, which are broken in two levels; junior high and senior high; and finally the tertiary level. After the tertiary level of education, one can go on to do a Master's Degree and later a Doctorate Degree (PhD) if one so desires.

1.2 PURPOSE OF PROJECT

Azures Pre-School has been in existence for about two months. The school has been working for only one and a half months. After speaking with the principal, there was the need to draw up a marketing plan for the school as it was new in the community. A brief description of the school can be found below. This project will mainly focus on Azures Pre-School and discuss its marketing strategies, its existing competitors and its unique value proposition. The conceptual framework that would be used in this project will focus on the 7Ps of services marketing. The framework will be discussed in full in chapter two. The whole project will follow through the theory to build a unique marketing plan for Azures Pre-school.

1.3 VISION

The vision of Azures Pre-School is to be a second home for the children where they can develop emotionally, academically, socially and physically through learning and playing.

1.4 MISSION

The mission of Azures Pre-School is to provide a sound and serene environment where children can learn and play peacefully.

1.5 VALUES

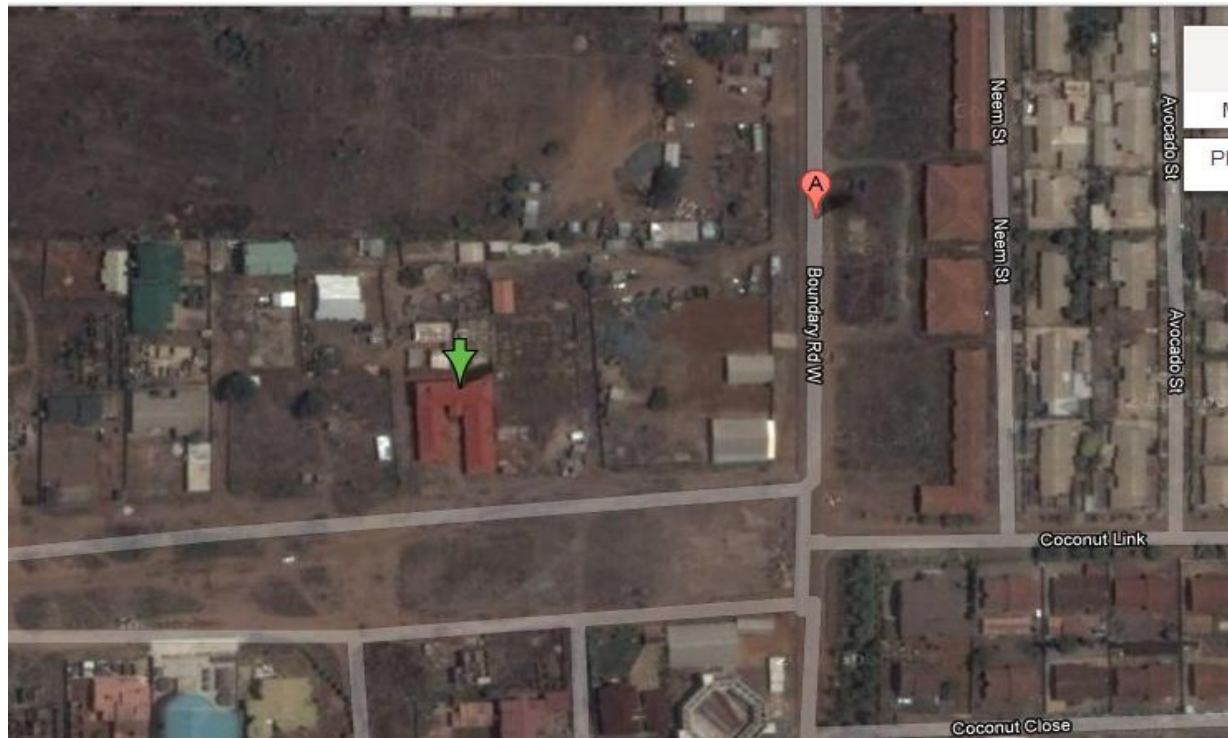
The following are the values Azures pre-school operates by:

- Equal Learning Opportunities
- Child-Centred Focus
- Respect and Collaboration between child and teacher
- Compassion

1.6 ABOUT AZURES INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

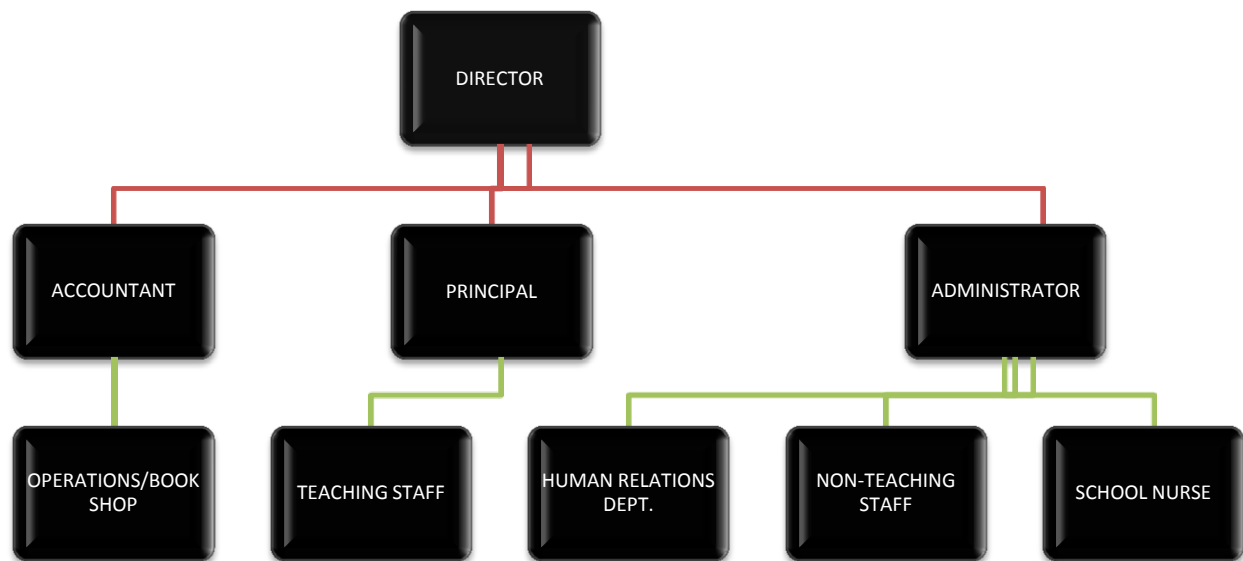
Azures International School is a purpose-built, well-equipped School; the pre-school department of Azures International School is already running. It was established by Co- directors Mr. Samuel Azu and Mrs. Marian Azu. They started with an initial capital of GHC ,000. The directors of the school built the school and started running it from their savings account. As such, the school was not liable to any bank when it started operations. It is situated at Community 20, Lashibi; a suburb of Tema and very close to the Tema Motorway Roundabout and thus confirms the proximity for parents to bring their wards and get to work on time. The figure below; Figure 1; shows a graphical view of the school. From Coconut

Link, Turn right onto Boundary Rd, take the second left turn; the school is the second completed building on the right. The green arrow points to the school in figure 1 below.



The School was named 'Azures' because the word has the surname of the directors as the first three letters and according to the oxford dictionary, means 'bright blue colour' usually referring to the sky. After thinking through, the idea of a neighbourhood Pre-School became more appealing to the proprietor. The people living in this community consist mainly of the upper-middle and elite citizens. The quality of this purpose-built institution and the proximity to major roads will relieve parents from driving into the city for a very good school for their infants. The organizational chart below shows the management team of the school. The Director is responsible for the overall operations of the school; the Accountant is responsible for all procurement transactions in the school, banking related issues and accounting purposes; the Principal is responsible for academic related issues, human resources, admissions etc.

FIG. 1: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF AZURES PRE-SCHOOL:



Azures Pre-School is purpose-built for infants and so everything in the entire school, speaks the language of the children. It has a computer lab, kitchen, assembly hall, bathrooms, changing rooms, baby nurseries children's clinic and well-spaced out classrooms. The school targets children between the ages of three-months and five years. The main reason for building a Pre-School is to provide the infant with a very good foundation on which to build the rest of their educational life on. The school's motto is Faith, Intellect and Endurance. The administration of the school believes that an individual needs to have faith in God and themselves to even make it in life, they also believe that with Intellect, the child will be open to opportunities and finally they believe that Endurance to push through to the end without giving up will get them to the finish line. They say these three characteristics will help develop the child at a developing stage to take life by the horn to reach the target set.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 THE SEVEN (7) P's OF SERVICES MARKETING

The conceptual framework that will be employed in this study is the Seven (7) P's theory of services marketing. "This original theory was based on the four marketing mix; product, price, promotion and place; introduced in the 1964 Neil Borden article." (Kokemuller, 2012)

According to Kokemuller, the 7P's of marketing refers to an extended marketing mix built upon the four original marketing mixes. "A number of variations of the extended marketing mix have been introduced since the latter part of the 20th century. The most prominent came from Bernard H. Booms and Mary J. Bitner." (Kokemuller, 2012) the original four as stated above are; product, price, promotion and place. The four original mixes were designed mostly for the marketing of products. But as years went by, companies started offering products as well as services to their customers. The need to expand the original four became necessary. In addition to the four; people, process and physical evidence; were added. Each of the components are going to be discussed in detail below.

2.1.1 THE EXTENDED MARKETING MIX (SEVEN P'S):

- **PRODUCT:**

As seen in the goods-service continuum, a product can have both tangible and intangible aspects, and is the thing that is offered to satisfy customers' wants and needs. Within this element, there is the need to consider such things as the product range; its quality and design; its features and the benefits it offers; sizing and packaging; and any add-on guarantees and customer service offerings.

- **PRICE:**

Sound pricing decisions are crucial to a successful business and should be considered at both long-term strategic and short-term tactical levels. Within this element of the mix the list price and discount price; terms and conditions of payment and the price sensitivity of your market should be considered. What is worth remembering is the connection of price to your position in the market – specifically that: only one operator in any market can be the cheapest. Jostling between competitors for this position is rarely necessary.

- **PROMOTION**

This is the element of the marketing mix that most people mean when they talk about ‘marketing’. But jumping straight into decisions about what promotional tools to use without considering their relationship to the rest of the mix can be a sure-fire way to waste money. There are many different promotional techniques, each with their own strengths but essentially they can be broken down into four broad categories: Advertising; Public Relations; Sales Promotions; and Direct Selling. These techniques are used to communicate the specific benefits of their product to their customers.

- **PLACE**

Marketers love models that explain the way they work; they love it even more when elements of each model begin with the same letter – hence the use of the word ‘Place’ to describe distribution channels. Their choice of such channels is important, as is the variety of channels they use. For example, a common issue for businesses beginning to trade on-line is how that

will affect their off-line business, for example selling directly through the web could alienate retail outlets that have been the mainstay of the business in the past.

- **PEOPLE**

The impact that the people in a company can have on their marketing cannot be underestimated. At its most obvious, this element covers a company's front line sales and customer service staff who will have a direct impact on how their product or service is perceived. There is the need to consider the knowledge and skills of your staff; their motivation and investment in supporting the company's brand. Any element of the marketing mix will also have its impact on other elements of the business, but the people element is one where the importance of regarding marketing as an integral part of the way business is done is crystal clear.

- **PROCESS**

The process part of the mix is about being 'easy to do business with'. If you've ever been annoyed when you can't buy something in a shop because the computerized till doesn't recognize that it exists, even when you can see it on the shelves, you'll know how important this element can be. The more 'high contact' your product is and the more intangible it is; the more important it is to get your processes right. Remember to look at this from your customers' point of view. The process problems that are most annoying to a customer are those that are designed for the provider's convenience, not the customer's.

- **PHYSICAL EVIDENCE**

When you sell tangible goods, you can offer your customer the chance to 'try before they buy', or at least see, touch or smell. With services, unless you offer a free trial, your customer will often be buying on trust. And to help them do so you need to provide as much evidence of the quality you will be providing as possible. So physical evidence refers to all the tangible, visible touch points that your customer will encounter before they buy, from your reception area and signage, to your staff's clothing and the images you include in your corporate brochure. Think about how all the elements of your marketing mix hang together. Does your pricing reflect the quality of your product? Does your choice of promotional tools reinforce your choice of distribution channel? Do your people understand how to implement your process?

3. REVIEW OF CURRENT MARKET

3.1 MICROENVIRONMENT

There are many factors that affect the educational sector in Ghana. These factors are mostly related to the educational policies that are directly related to the teaching methods and syllabus of education in Ghana. “The Ministry of Education in Ghana has overall responsibility for education sector policies, planning and monitoring. For Ghana, education delivery and implementation is devolved to institutions, Districts and Regions through various agencies of the Ministry of Education.” (Ministry of Education, 2003) Of these, “the Ghana Education Service (GES) is the agency that implements the Basic and Senior Secondary education components, including Technical and Vocational institutes.” (Ministry of Education, 2003) Due to the increase in middle-income earners, there has been an increase in the demand for good, quality education for all children over the past few years. This was not the case a few years ago when the girl-child was not allowed to go to school. Because of this increase in demand, many schools have sprouted up and this is causing the industry to be diluted and has reduced the quantity of good results. Also, “changes in government bring about differences in policies pertaining to critical issues in the sector” (Casely-Hayford, 2011) and therefore affect the result that is supposed to be gained. For example, during the rule of the previous government, the senior high school system was changed to four years due to many reasons such as inadequate time to fully go through the syllabus, the inability for students to finish their course and have enough time to study. But when the existing government was voted out, the New Democratic Party changed it back to three years. This has affected many senior high schools as well as

students as they have to change their strategies to accommodate the changing system. On the other hand, because the demand has increased, and many schools are sprouting up, the essence of quality keeps the schools on their toes. If another school is seen to be offering the best, the school will lose its student.

3.2 MACROENVIRONMENT

In Ghana, the educational sector is a very important one because of its major influence on other sectors especially the health sector etc. The educational sector has especially aided in the development of the health sector by providing information on health issues to the general public. The success of the health sector can be attributed to the improvement in the educational sector. According to the World Bank data, education formed 5.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the year 2010. This is a very low rate because education affects most sectors in the country. The main issue of the sector is inadequate infrastructure and lack of incentives for the schools and teachers especially in the remote areas. Many schools in the country are under trees and most also lack the equipment needed for a smooth learning process. These issues need to be addressed in order for the sector to grow. The government of Ghana has proposed free basic education for basic education in order to allow more students who cannot afford the school fees attend school.

The portion of population that needs critical attention and education are between the formative ages of 0-5 years. This is because if the foundation of a child is weak, the child cannot build upon it and will be struggling to grasp concepts taught in later years. This is also another

problem that is affecting the educational sector. Therefore the government of Ghana has proposed that free basic education for all children in Ghana should begin from infancy.

4. COMPETITOR REVIEW

Azures' has a number of competitors in its immediate environment. These competitors are described below.

4.1 BEAUTIFUL BEGINNINGS

Beautiful Beginnings is a privately owned pre-school that is located at Coastal Estates, Spintex Road. It has a relatively small class size with the maximum number of students being 30. It has six classrooms, a playground, a TV room, a kitchen, a changing room and a baby room. They have after school hours in addition to normal school hours for any parent who cannot pick up their children in the afternoon. The age bracket for this school is 2-5 years. No child below the age of two (2) years is accepted.

4.2 QUEENSLAND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (PRE-SCHOOL)

Queensland International School is a privately-owned school that has a pre-school department, elementary school department and a junior high school department. It is located at Regimanuel Estates, Sakumono. The pre-school department has six classrooms, a playground and play room, a video room, a library and a sick bay. Their daily schedule includes regular school hours, after school hours and vacation programs. Children aged 2 years and above are admitted.

4.3 MORNING GLORY MONTESSORI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Morning Glory Montessori Child Development Centre is a school that starts from the nursery department right up to the junior high school department. It is located at Teshie-Nungua Estates. Their facilities include classrooms, a computer laboratory, playground, a library, a kitchen and a sleeping bay for the children during rest hour. Their normal school session starts

from 8:00am till 3:00pm. They also participate in field trips to get the hands-on experience for their students. The age range for this school is 3 years to 15 years.

4.4 CARING ARMS PRE-SCHOOL

Caring Arms Pre-School is a modern pre-school that uses the Montessori approach. It is located at HFC Estates, Community 25 in Tema. Caring Arms Pre-School has a kitchen, classrooms, a library, multi-purpose hall, playground and a play room. Apart from their normal working hours, they organize field-trips for their students; have vacation school for parents who cannot be around during vacation and after school sessions. Their normal session starts from 9:00am and ends at 4:00pm. The average age-range for this school is from 0 years to 6 years.

4.5 AFTER-SCHOOL DAY CARES

These are centres that see that do not fit in the ‘full-time school’ category but they are also educational institutions. These day cares mainly engage in after-school activities and take away the market of pre-school or nurseries. They often target full-time working parents, whose children attend schools without after-school programs for the children and encourage the parents to bring their children there. These usually have an extensive program for the children for after-school such as drumming and dancing, piano lessons, Tae-Kwando etc. The children are also helped with their homework from school.

5. SERVICE REVIEW:

5.1 ASSET OF THE FIRM

- Frequently updated website
- Compassionate and qualified teachers and non-teaching staff (should have at least 5 years of experience in the teaching field and must have a certificate from a well-established teacher-training Institution)
- Contact numbers for enquiries
- Computers
- Sick bay
- Multi-Purpose Hall (for assembly and watching videos)
- School Bus
- Library
- Playing Equipment/Toys
- Kitchen
- Training for the teachers
- Special needs facilities (e.g. ramps, low seating, lower than usual toilet facilities etc)
- Special Dining Area

5.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><u>STRENGTH:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The only purpose-built pre-school within 5-kilometer radius• Uses the Montessori and South African pre-school models• Situated in a peaceful environment which enhances learning. | <p><u>WEAKNESSES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a new school• Huge investment capital put into the building of the school• Admission rate is about 50% on the average, which is below the expected number |
| <p><u>OPPORTUNITIES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's a new environment with feeder roads connecting to major roads and town (e.g. Spintex, Motorway; Tema, Ashaiman, East Legon, Adenta etc.)• The residents in the area are well-educated.• An opportunity for growth as the school has intentions of expanding into an International School. | <p><u>THREATS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Another purpose built pre-school can develop due to opportunities in the area.• Smaller nurseries are springing up faster and they can dilute the market as they may serve as substitutes |

5.3 KEYS TO SUCCESS

- **Safety**: We ensure that all children are always safe and will not be allowed to anybody who is not authorized by their parents. Also, a fake carpet grass is laid on the sandy pit to help the children avoid accidents.
- **Convenience**: Parents of potential students can research about the services of the school from the website, wherever they are located.
- **Reputation**: maintaining a high reputation for excellence in child care and education; and being the best choice in the market for child care and educational talent.
- **Respect**: The parents as well as the children will be treated with utmost respect by both teaching and non-teaching staff.
- **Marketing**: the main aim is to distinguish Azures' educational services from traditional day-care and nursery services.
- **Service Quality**: only certified and experienced teachers will be employed in order to ensure that the best care is giving to the children. Also, the teachers will undergo training to improve the level of quality of teaching in a technologically advanced environment.

5.4 KEY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Azures' are to:

- Provide children with the highest quality education in Ghana.
- To become the best School in Ghana by the year 2015.

- To maintain a high standard of qualified teachers and low student to teacher ratio (of not more than 25 children to one teacher)
- To provide the best educational equipment and best practices needed to educate the children

5.5 KEY ISSUE

5.5.1 PROFITABILITY

The management of Azures' has targeted to break even within the first two years of operations. This target has been set because as can be seen below in the budget in appendix 1, the initial costs incurred is very high due to building expenses and the price of the bus as it was custom-made for the school. Also, the startup capital as well as its operational expenditure before the service will be launched increases expenditure in the first few years. Therefore, it is expected that profit will not be enjoyed until after two years of operation. Furthermore, in the school's bid to maintain quality, the school will incur high costs and this will in turn affect pricing. The only way the school will become profitable is to charge a premium price for its quality services. That is use the best-cost strategy. Therefore, the cost will be split between the customer and the company; where the fees per child will include some percentage of the total cost.

6. MARKETING STRATEGY

6.1 TARGET MARKET AUDIENCE

Azures Pre-school is targeting mainly the middle and high class customers (both local and foreign), full-time and part-time workers to purchase the services. The main targets among them are the foreign families and Ghanaian families that seek to invest in quality education.

6.1.1 THE UPPER MIDDLE AND HIGH CLASS

Late last year, Ghana was announced as the fastest growing economy. This was due to the single digit inflation announced. This means that many more Ghanaians are moving up the social ladder to the upper middle class and high class. These groups of people are the customers that understand the benefits of quality and excellence. They are ready to spend more on services that satisfy their needs. Azures Pre-school is prepared to ensure that the needs of parents and students are met, irrespective of the cost. The school will ensure that the best, quality education is delivered and that excellence is not compromised. The upper middle and high class will then patronize the services once they have been satisfied.

6.1.2 FOREIGN FAMILIES

In the year 2007, it was discovered that oil was found in Ghana. Because of this discovery, many foreign investors will be attracted to invest in the country. This will cause many of them to relocate their families to Ghana. These families will be looking for good, quality schools to take their children to. Furthermore, the oil discovery will boost up the economy in such a way that it will end up attracting non-oil visitors who would relocate their families to the country

because of increased economic development. This means that there will be an increase in the demand for the educational industry. Therefore, Azures Pre-school will be targeting the foreign investors and foreign re-locaters who have moved because of work and other reasons that need the services of a good quality school for their children. The School will provide the basic amenities that will be needed to ensure that the school runs smoothly.

6.1.3 GHANAIAN FAMILIES

Azures Pre-school is also targeting many middle to high income Ghanaian families that are ready to invest in their children's education without compromising on quality. Also, these families will demand for better every time, because they know the essence of quality, and so the school will always be put on their toes to do better. These families are usually the young adults who have just started their families and so they will always want the best. Therefore the school aims for excellence and quality to attract them.

6.1.4 FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME WORKERS

The pre-school will establish a significantly large, full-time, consistent customer base in order to establish the constant revenue base which will ensure solidity of the school. Interactions with the parents are very important as that will foster relationships and ensure that they keep their children in the school. Another segment of the school's business will be the after school care. This will increase profit for the school since teacher-to-student ratios are higher, and the students require more educational services, which are the primary focus of the school. By offering tutoring, and advanced studies in technology, theatre, arts and sciences, the college will attract these profitable business clients, producing significant supplemental revenues.

6.2 POSITIONING

This refers to the distinct, meaningful and valued place that the companies brand occupies or seeks to occupy in the minds of its customers as well as its competitors. Azures Pre-school will differentiate itself and position its self in the minds of its customers, prospective customers as well as its competitors.

6.2.1 ROOT STRENGTH:

The root strength of Azures Pre-school and on which we would want to build are

- **Quality:** quality and excellent education
- **Security:** the children's safety and security is on the top of the list for the school.
- **Consistency:** the level and standard set will be maintained over the years.

6.2.2 COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

As discussed above, the competitive environment consists of nurseries, mainstream schools that have the pre-school attached in Ghana. They already exist in the market and so have already positioned their brand. After-school daycares are the next best alternative because they offer a service that most schools do not and they are reliable.

6.2.3 TARGET

The target market for Azures Preschool include; parents that seek quality, excellent education for their children. Also, the school is targeting parents who want a good foundation for their children's education. This service is a premium service and so they offer the best there is. No one beats Azures Pre-school because the children are the most important people to them.

6.2.4 INSIGHT

There are many pre-schools that are already in existence. But most of these schools do not put the children's needs above theirs. Many of the schools offer the basic facilities needed for running a pre-school, but Azures Pre-school will go over and above in getting the most needed facilities and ensuring that the most qualified teachers educate the children.

6.2.5 BENEFITS

Azures Pre-school will be positioned in the minds of customers as the only school in the community and Ghana as a whole that maintains its standard of operations, puts the security of the children first and do not compromise on quality. This will be done by ensuring that customers get value for the money they are investing in their children.

6.2.6 VALUES, BELIEFS AND PERSONALITY

They believe in respect for their teachers as well as the children. They seek to offer a service that cares for the child.

6.2.7 REASONS TO BELIEVE

The students will be offered the opportunity to experience Azures (Pre-school) in many ways. Parents of prospective students can access the schools website to know more about it. This will be a more convenient way of finding out more about the school. Also, there will be different sessions during the day (i.e. school sessions, after-school care) with different activities.

6.2.8 DISCRIMINATOR

It is a premium brand that seeks to satisfy all the needs of students and parents. The students will enjoy the state-of-the-art facilities as well as have access to the American curriculum that

will run in the school. Also, the students will engage in extra-curricular activities when school is in session, after-school and during vacations. Parents will engage in organized sessions that will help them understand their children better.

6.2.9 ESSENCE

Azures Pre-school will offer the best learning experience you can ever have. The experience will be one that cannot be replaced. And at the end of the journey their students will come out as the best.

6.3 VALUE PROPOSITION

The value proposition for Azures Pre-school is '**premium pricing for quality education**'. Research has shown that people are willing to pay more once the quality of their service is exceptional and they have great end results. The school will provide quality education from the beginning years as research has shown that a good foundation for a child; most of the time; affects them positively and becomes easier for them as they go high up the ladder. But a weak or no foundation at all usually leaves the child struggling all through their academic journey and most times suffers with basic things. (Wensel, 2012)

6.4 PRODUCT AND SERVICE ELEMENTS

6.4.1 CORE SERVICE

Azures Pre-school offers a pre-school and kindergarten that aims at becoming the best in Ghana. The school is already offering normal school sessions that usually starts from 9:00am and ends at 2:00pm. It then continues with after-school activities that start at 3:00pm and involve a lot of extra-curricular activities and play. With this the children can relax and learn through play. Also, weekend classes should be organized for children who are about to write a major entrance exam or whose parents are not going to be around over the weekend. In this case, Sundays should not be included; because the school believes that the children have to rest and spend quality time with their parents. This will foster their relationship. These extra-classes must be registered for at the beginning of the school term so that provision is made for it. These form the core competencies of the school.

6.4.1.1 CLASSROOM AMENITIES

- Air conditioning and Fans
- Televisions and DVD Players
- Curtains
- Chairs and Tables
- White Board
- Projectors
- Toy Box

6.4.2 SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES:

Apart from the core service of providing quality education for the students, Azures Pre-school would be offering other supporting services that will enhance or facilitate the core service.

6.4.2.1 FACILITATING SERVICES:

6.4.2.1.1 INFORMATION

Recently, the use of technology has increased. And for the sake of convenience and time, a website must be created with adequate information. So that a parent will not have to be physically present to make a decision about bringing their children to the school. The website must contain information on prices, school facilities, directions to the school, downloadable application forms and other forms that will be necessary for admission and special discounts waived on the early payment of school fees. The website should be updated frequently in order to keep customers abreast with any changes to the services. There should also be information made available with the use of brochures at the school's reception in order to attract and inform customers about the services being offered. Direct mail could be used to inform prospective parents as well.

6.4.2.1.2 ORDER TAKING

Just like some existing schools, the school must make available the option of registering your baby even before it is born to be guaranteed a spot once their children can start school. In this way, the child gets an 'easier' access to the school. Also, those who do not register from the beginning can fill up a form and submit it electronically. Once their ward is picked they would

be informed and the school will reserve a spot for them up till one term. After that the spot will be given away.

6.4.2.1.3 BILLING

For the school, billing should entail every expense made on the child during the academic year and fees that need to be paid. Billing is either done electronically or done manually. Hard copy billing statements will be given to the parents on vacation days when they come to pick up their wards. For those parents who are not in the country at whatever point in time can receive the electronic version of their children's bill. For back-up purposes, the school will forward an electronic copy of the bill to parents who may have lost their hard copies.

6.4.2.1.4 PAYMENT

Azures' has two accounts one is foreign and the other local. This is to aid parents who are abroad to pay their children's fees. Also, parents or guardians can pay through bank transfers from their bank accounts to the school's account or pay cash to the bank and submit a bank receipt to the school or pay online with their debit cards on the website and email the receipt to the school. Either of these modes of payment may be done depending on which ever is convenient for the parents. This payment system is a good one and the school must maintain it.

6.4.2.2 ENHANCING SERVICES:

6.4.2.2.1 HOSPITALITY

In order to ensure that the children are happy and satisfied with the services of the school, the school should have very pleasant staff that will treat the students with utmost respect. The friendly staff will receive the students from the gate with warm and welcoming greetings which

will make them feel comfortable and excited. Also, the parents will be treated with utmost respect. The school aims to maintain a strong relationship with them as both the parents and teachers play major roles in the development of the child. The children should be fed properly and given utmost attention. In the case of a parent-teacher meeting day, the parents should be refreshed with drinks and snacks because they may be tired from work.

6.4.2.2.2 SAFEKEEPING

Firstly, every parent must give a detailed list of persons that should be allowed to pick up the child. In the case of changes, the school should conduct follow-up calls at the beginning of every semester to ensure that there is no kidnapping situation. Also, the school has provided beach sand and additional carpet grass to cover the compound with. This will reduce the risk and rate at which they may get brutally hurt.

6.4.2.2.3 EXCEPTIONS

The school provides an early discount option for customers who choose to pay their ward's fees earlier than the normal date. This percentage should be waived and reviewed yearly based on the school's expenses and revenue. Those who pay later than the stipulated time must also pay an additional surcharge for their delay. Also, in the case of accidents, caused by the negligence of the teacher or the school at large, the school should bear all costs associated with the accident. Finally, in the case of missing children, the school should bear all costs associated with finding the child.

6.4.2.2.4 SCHOOL BUS

The school should offer a bus service that will pick-up the children and drop them off after school. The school encourages parents to drop off their children and pick them up at the end of the day. This service is a solution to the problem of many parents, who have raised issues concerning dropping-off and picking up their children. However, for parents with very tight schedules, this is becoming problematic. Therefore, the school should decide to offer these services to reduce the stress of parents.

6.5 PRICING AND OTHER USER OUTLAYS

The pricing system of the school should be done based on the traditional method; that is, it should be set based on all financial costs. The cost schedule; revenue schedule; start-up costs and income statement for the first year can be found in appendices specifically appendix 2. The revenue for the year is derived from the school fees, bus services, feeding charges and after school services. The pricing of these components were based on the entire cost involved in starting up the school. The pricing strategy that is used is the best cost strategy. Best cost strategy is a costing strategy that offers a premium price or premium quality services. Apple Incorporated offers this sort of strategy. Azures' Pre-school aims at achieving and maintaining quality, excellent education without compromising on anything. The prices that are charged will match the quality of service delivered. All supplementary services; such as feeding, bus services, sick-bay; are also charged at a premium because we offer the best that can be. And in cases where the school is incapable of helping the children are taking to the best paediatrician for assistance. Therefore, the start-up costs, and the other expenses of income are going to be charged to the student. If a child is rushed to the hospital, they will be covered by the school's insurance and then the parents would pay later.

6.6 DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY: PLACE

Azures' Pre-School is a people processing type of service. It is a high contact service therefore customers have to be present for the service delivery. The standard of this type of service is basically that the client will need to go to the service outlet (which is the school) in order to enjoy the service. However the service is slightly different. It is different in the sense that the school bus would always be available to pick up children to the school.

In order to inform parents and prospective parents about the school's services, the school should make available all the information needed on the school's website. This will include all the information that would differentiate us from our competitors. On the website they can fill forms and submit it, pay for the form and submit an electronic receipt and also receive enough information about the school bus schedules, feeding costs, after-school services and any other programs for the term that will be offered by the school. Brochures will also be made available for prospective students at the reception and at already established elementary schools so that new parents will be exposed to their services.

The school bus should serve as the physical facility for the delivery of students to the service site (School).

6.6.1 DELIVERY OF CORE SERVICE

For the core service of the school to be delivered, the students will need to be present. No virtual learning scope has been created yet therefore the learning process will be done face-to-face. Also, because of the age bracket (0-5years), it is better to have personal interactions. On

the other hand, for convenience payments and billing could be done electronically. The parents do not have to be physically present to make enquiries or payments.

6.6.2 DELIVERY OF SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES

The delivery of the supplementary services; such as reserving a spot for a child, information, payment, billing and counselling; will be delivered online via the website or by visiting the school. The telephone numbers of the school will be available for the parents and prospective parents, to contact them for any assistance or information. Other supplementary services such as safety and hospitality will be delivered to the children, right from when they are received.

The school bus service should run every morning from 8:00am to 9:00am when school starts and when school ends at 2:00pm and 5:00pm. The service should use this schedule because even though school ends at 2:00pm many more students attend the after-school program, therefore it is safe to say that some of the parents whose children take part in the after-school program may not be able to pick up their children and so the bus will run for this schedule. Also, the school bus should be available and used when they go for class trips. In the case of an emergency, the bus should be used to 'deliver' the children to the right place for assistance.

The other significant supplementary service is the presence of a sick bay and a nurse. Because children are fragile, they are more prone to sicknesses. They also end up getting infected by airborne and water borne diseases. They need to be checked very often and so they babies will be regularly checked by a paediatrician and even be taken for weighing where needed. Particular care will be given to children who come to school sick and will be taken to the school hospital with permission from the parents. In case the parents are not reachable, the children

will be sent to the hospital on the school's insurance package and their parents will be notified later.

As stated earlier, the channel partners should be: already established schools that do not have a nursery. This is because they are in the best position to recommend the services of the school to their customers and advertise the nursery for parents with younger children.

6.7 PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

The school has not got a concrete marketing strategy. They should include: client referrals, community involvement, advertisement, sales brochure, partnerships and direct mail campaigns as their main way to reach new clients. As the school changes strategies, however, they need to change the way they promote themselves:

6.7.1 ADVERTISING

This will involve television and radio advertisement as well as billboards, banners and posters. The television and radio adverts will consist of messages that inform the general public about the school. The billboards will be mounted across Accra with information about the school as well. Posters will be pasted around town at vantage points and banners will be hung at major roads leading to other communities that are surrounding the school.

6.7.2 SALES BROCHURE

This is a booklet that is very colourful and displays the school's activities, fees and other supplementary services. It must also include the curriculum which will inform prospective customers of what the school will be teaching their children. A proposed brochure is shown in Appendices.

6.7.3 DIRECT MAIL

The school should send quarterly direct mail campaigns to the email addresses of customers and prospective clients. By partnering with the established schools, they can have access to their parent database. They can then send emails to prospective clients whose children are not

in the school. The school should also offer monthly calendars for parents and the community as well, noting weekend family days, open day and other school activities.

6.7.4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The school should engage in community projects such as; community clean-up campaigns, affording scholarship to at least one needy child per year and many other community engagements. This will increase awareness of the school in its community.

6.7.5 PARTNERSHIPS

As mentioned earlier, partnering with good existing schools will give the school leverage in gaining more students. Also, the parents will be excited that their children are going to those schools after their stay at the pre-school.

6.8 PEOPLE

Azures' pre-school has a lot of people working in various roles but have not designated their roles and so some of the people do everything whilst some others do not do anything at all. The main responsibilities of the individuals responsible for delivering the core and supplementary services and their designated roles are well defined and discussed in this section. The process they go through to assume the role is also discussed in full per participant. Forms filled by the participants are shown in appendices.

6.8.1 DIRECTOR

This person is the overall head of the school. They often have the vision of the school at heart. They can also be known as the owners of the school. All other heads must report to this person. They are either the owners of the school or appointed by the owners of the school. They must explain the vision of the school to the other participants. They have the ability to hire and fire the heads of the departments. The director fills a form and signs a bond that the school will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners. They must also coordinate with the principal and work together. This position is only filled by one person.

6.8.2 PRINCIPAL

This person is the overall head of the academic department. The position is usually filled by a woman who has teaching and management experience of over fifteen years. She needs to know how children are handled and must have at least a master's degree in teaching kids of all ages and special needs children. She is appointed by the director with consent from the owners of the school. They have the ability to hire and fire the teachers. The principal fills a form and

signs a bond that they will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners and the director. She takes decisions concerning everything academic.

6.8.3 ADMINISTRATOR

This person is the head of everything non-academic. He is in charge of the human resources manager and all other issues related to the school other than academic. This person is in charge of raising the schools image and branding as well. They are also appointed by the director with the consent of the owners. They must have experience in management and should have worked in that field for not less than ten years. They must also have worked with children before. They must report to the director and coordinate with the principal on what the school needs and how to get the school to its ultimate. They have the ability to hire and fire the human resource manager, the school nurse and non-teaching staff. The administrator fills a form and signs a bond that they not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners.

6.8.4 ACCOUNTANT

This person is in charge of monetary issues in the school. They are responsible for the issuing and receiving of issues. They also supervise the Accounts staff and provide and maintain relevant, accurate and timely financial information. They must report to the director and coordinate with the principal and administrator on what the school needs and how to get the school to its ultimate. They should have at least five to ten years working experience. The accountant fills a form and signs a bond that they will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners.

6.8.5 PROCUREMENT OFFICER

This person is in charge of procuring goods needed by the school to deliver the services. They are in charge of providing the needs of the school and this has to be done with the accountant, administrator, principal and director. This person should have at least two years working experience. The procurement officer fills a form and signs a bond that they will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners.

6.8.6 SCHOOL NURSE

The school nurse is the person who is in charge of the health care of both students and employees. This person should have at least five years' working experience in the field and should have worked with children before. They are responsible for all issues related to the health and well-being of the children. The school nurse fills a form and signs a bond that they will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners.

6.8.7 TEACHING STAFF

They are responsible for caring for younger children while teaching them various things along the way. They are usually the first teachers to provide instruction to the children. They have many different general responsibilities and specific duties in their daily teaching roles. They must have worked with younger children for not less than ten years and they must fill a form and sign a bond that they will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners.

The general responsibility of the teacher is they must provide a wonderful learning environment for the children, teach them how to interact with others and help them with their daily needs.

Specific Duties Include, but are not limited to:

- It is their job to make sure that every child has the opportunity to experience success and learn according to individual needs, styles, and levels of ability. Move about the classroom and the outdoor area while the children are playing. Watch, listen, and talk with the children during their play.
- The teachers should be teaching politeness and courtesy: when they say “please” and “thank you” to the children and other adults in the room.
- They are to represent safety and security for the children to feel safe around them.
- Be a team player to teach the children how to work in teams.

6.8.8 NON-TEACHING STAFF (CLEANERS AND SECURITY)

These are people who are not directly linked to the core service but they play a major role in the generalities. They are the cleaners who ensure that the environment is clean for service delivery and security that ensures that the school is safe for the employees and students. They also must have worked with children and must fill a form and sign a bond that the school will not undertake any major decision without the approval of the owners. They report to the administrator.

6.9 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

In order to make the students and employees feel at home, it is essential to make the physical surroundings appealing to enable them approach and deliver their services well. This will be done by enhancing the ambient conditions, space and functionality, signs symbols and artefacts.

6.9.1 AMBIENT CONDITIONS

6.9.1.1 COLOUR SCHEMES

The exterior of the school has different pictures of different cartoons that are colourful and attracting to the young child. They should always want to come to the school and force their parents to switch schools. Also, the wall has been used with bricks so that the school can save on painting and re-painting costs. They have painted the outside of the school sea-blue and inside the corridors a lighter shade of sea-blue. The back of the school is painted with peach and light yellow. This is the case because the children need to appreciate the different colour schemes and how to mix them up. I believe the school has done a good job at that.

6.9.1.2 MUSIC

Azures' Pre-School will play calming music during sleeping hours and louder, fun music during their music and dance classes. There will also be a television and DVD recorder per classroom that would be used to entertain the children.

6.9.1.3 TEMPERATURE

The school has put in place one air conditioner and a fan per classroom. But the windows in each classroom are sliding so that when the temperature becomes too cold they can open them up for fresh air and when it is too warm they can turn on either the air conditioner or the fan. The school must note that children are very fragile and so they must be careful with the temperature settings on the air conditioner. Also the fan must not be used often to prevent respiratory illnesses.

6.9.1.4 SCENTS

As part of cleaning, the classrooms will be sprayed with nice smelling fragrances that will make the classroom and its environment smell nice. Any toxic smell must be dealt with and replaced with nice smelling fragrances.

6.9.2 SPATIAL LAYOUT AND FUNCTIONALITY

The classrooms can take up to 20 children. Each of the classrooms will be very spacious to enable free movement of the students and teachers. Unlike the normal arrangement of a classroom, the room will be arranged like a flower; where the children seat at a round table that goes round the teacher's desk and so it is shaped like a flower's petal. This also helps the teacher see every student and interact with them face-to-face. Also, there are only four tables in a class and five students round each table. Every class would have two teachers and a teaching assistant to increase the teacher-student ratio. As seen in the diagram below, the students will face each other as well as the teacher enhancing interaction and there would be a restroom that is in the corner of the school and not very far away from their classrooms.

The classrooms will have a partition where the library is for reading and where they learn. It also has a TV and a DVD player that is used for entertainment. The seats in the classrooms must not be too hard or too soft. They must be suitable for a child. They must also have straight back rods to help them sit down correctly. This will aid in reducing serious back problems when the child grows. In addition, the classrooms must have bag holders where the children can keep their bags. This teaches the child organization. In addition the school bus will have purple-pink coloured curtains. This will prevent the sun from disturbing the children on very hot days. A picture of a typical interior can be seen in the picture below



6.9.3 SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND ARTEFACTS

At the entrance of the classroom, there will be a sign that reads “Welcome Celebrities”. This would communicate to the students that they are celebrities. Also, in order to communicate explicit and implicit signals to the students we will have certain signs and symbols. This will guide students clearly through the process of service delivery. The signs will be very clear and precise for easy understanding by students as well as employees. Examples of signs and artefacts to be used on Azures’ Compound are:

- No banging of Doors
- Emergency exit
- Fire extinguisher
- Sick Bay
- Stairway

These signs will be used to reinforce rules and guarantee the safety of the children.

6.9.4 STAFF GROOMING

Since the first impression of prospective parents is very crucial it is essential to make sure the frontline personnel are properly groomed and trained. To implement this, the bus driver, the receptionist, teachers, and senior management will be costumed in uniforms that are consistent with the service scape in which they will be working. The driver will be in a neatly ironed black and silver checked shirt with a black bow tie, black trousers and polished black shoes. The receptionist however, will have a special badge attached to their outfit. All senior management staff will dress appropriately.

6.10 PROCESS

In managing a service, it is important to generate an underlying process in delivering the service especially when consumers act as co-producers. Consumers need to know the part they play in the service delivery in order to obtain the highest value from it. Another reason why it is necessary to design a process is because this will ensure that customers enjoy a fast and efficient service. Designing a process using a service blueprint for a people processing service is especially necessary because it clarifies the interactions between customers and employees and how these are supported by backstage activities and systems. It also helps the service provider to identify the failure points and work at improving them.

In creating a valued experience for the students and parents, the school has developed a service blueprint to outline the various steps involved in the service delivery. Since the target market of the school is the parents of children who need quality education in Ghana, the beginning of the process for the customer is to access the website of the company in order to book a place for their unborn child. The website is used because this is the simplest and easiest way of enabling people on a broad spectrum to have access to their services. Payment can be made using a debit card online or at the school before the child is admitted. The school will provide supplementary services such as feeding the children good, healthy food and bus services to pick them up and drop them off. There will be a snack break in between class times and a lunch break as well. These snacks will preferably be locally made snacks such plantain chips, soobolo (bissap), natural fruit juice, biscuits and sandwiches. After the service experience, parents are made to fill out an evaluation form which the school will use to assess

its failures and weaknesses in the process and work at improving it. These are all front stage activities that occur between the parents, students and the school staff.

There are backstage activities that support the front stage activities. These are activities which are not known or seen by the employees but play a major role in the delivery of the service. Activities such as: the cleaners cleaning the school and security personnel watching over the school day and night. The driver also ensures that bus is in good conditions by regularly taking the bus for servicing. Employees also redesign their services based on the feedback from parents to improve on their services to meet the parent's needs. All these activities performed behind the scenes ensure that the educational service being provided to the parents fully satisfy their needs.

ACTION PROGRAMME

| # | Start Date | Action/Task | Completion Date | Responsibility | Resource | Complete/Incomplete |
|-----------|------------------|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Stage I | 08 January, 2013 | Identify faults in existing system | 16 January, 2012 | Director | Human resource | Incomplete |
| | 18 January, 2012 | Teacher training | 28 January, 2012 | Director | Online | Incomplete |
| | 28 January, 2012 | Procuring the needed products for starting a school | 30 January, 2012 | Administrator | Physical Location | Incomplete |
| Stage II | 1 February, 2012 | School is in session | 10 May, 2012 | All employees | School | Incomplete |
| Stage III | 20 May, 2012 | Summer school begins | 5 June, 2012 | Azures Pre-School | Principal | Incomplete |

CONTROLS AND EVALUATION

The quality of the services provided by the school will be its utmost priority. Therefore procedures must be put in place to check the performance of the services. This way they will be able to constantly try and find ways of improving and maintaining the quality of service provided in order to attain customer satisfaction which is the main aim of their service. Parents will be encouraged to fill out evaluation forms based on their children's results and their personal encounters with the staff of the school. These evaluation forms will be made available on the schools website. The feedback received will enable the school know their strengths and shortcomings. This way they will be able to put measures in place to reduce their weaknesses. This will help in producing a quality service which will attain the level of satisfaction that parents seek for their children. Upon completing a year at the school, children will be able to voice out any complaints they may have to their teachers and the principal and this should be dealt with immediately.

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APPENDICES

1. School Brochure



2. A Sample Application form for Students

REGISTRATION FORM

STUDENT INFORMATION

Student's Legal Name:

Last.....

First Middle.....

Gender..... Age.....

Date of Birth.....

Street Address.....

City.....

State & Zip Code.....

Mailing Address (if applicable).....

PARENT INFORMATION

1. Father's Name.....

Home Phone..... Cell Phone.....

Occupation.....

Place of employment.....

Business Phone..... EMAIL.....

Married ☐

Divorced ☐

Dead ☐

2. Mother's Name.....

Home Phone..... Cell Phone.....

Occupation.....

Place of employment.....

Business Phone..... EMAIL.....

Married ☐

Divorced ☐

Dead ☐

Student Lives With: Mother ☐ **Father** ☐ **Both** ☐ **Guardian** ☐ **Other** ☐

All Previous Child Daycare Programs and Schools Attended since Birth (if none attended,
please indicate not applicable (N/A))

.....
.....

Other Children in Family and Birth Dates

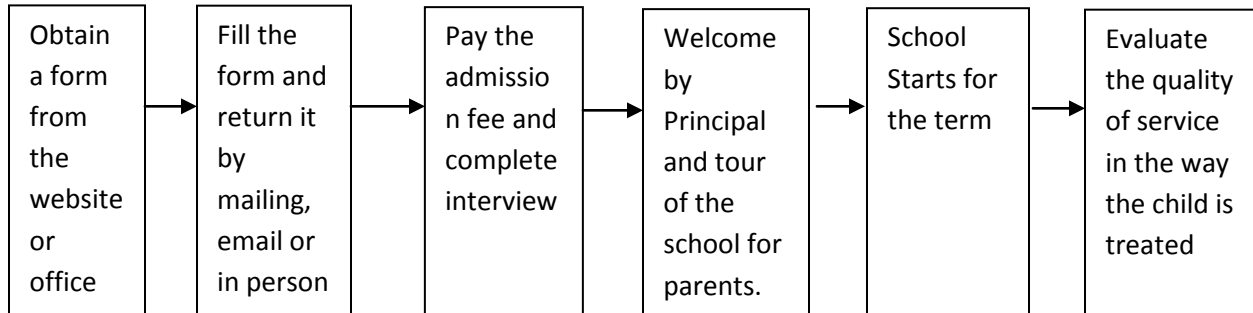
.....
.....
.....
.....

I certify that all the above information on this student's application form is true and correct to
the best of my knowledge.

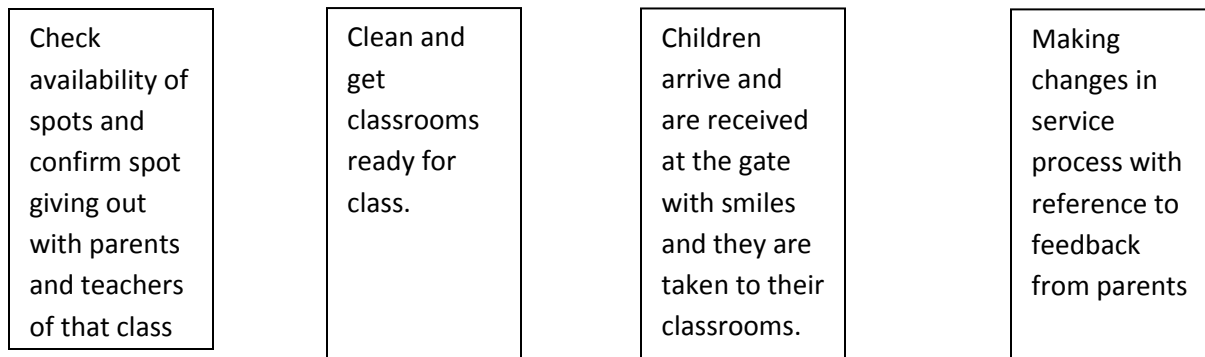
Parent's Signature..... Date.....

For Office Use Only:

3. Service Blue Print



Line of visibility



4. Start-up costs

| Items | Units (Qty) | Unit Costs (GHS) | Total Cost (GHS) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| School Bus | 1 | 17,500.00 | 17,500.00 |
| <u>School Equipment</u> | | | |
| Laptops | 6 | 1,000.00 | 6,000.00 |
| Desktop Computers | 25 | 800.00 | 20,000.00 |
| Printer & scanner | 2 | 148.00 | 296.00 |
| Photo copier | 2 | 100.00 | 200.00 |
| Phones(land lines) and Internet | 8 | 34.00 | 272.00 |
| Air conditioner | 12 | 500.00 | 6,000.00 |
| Miscellaneous | | | 800.00 |
| <u>Furniture</u> | | | |
| Administration Furniture | 4 sets | 500.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Sleeping Bay beds | 20 | 100.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Reception furniture | 1 set | 1,065.00 | 1,065.00 |
| Sick Bay Beds | 10 | 100.00 | 1,000.00 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|----------|-------------------------|
| Classroom Dividers | 10 set | 1,000.00 | 10,000.00 |
| Tables and chairs | 6 set | 1,092.00 | 6,552.00 |
| Classroom Tables and Chairs | | | 3,000.00 |
| <u>Start Up Costs</u> | | | <u>76,685.00</u> |

5. Revenue Schedule for Year 1

| Items | Number of Children | Costs per Term(GHS)/Child | Total Cost (GHS)/Term | Total Amount (GHS)/Year |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| School Fees | 120 | 1,500.00 | 180,000.00 | 540,000.00 |
| Feeding Charge | 120 | 300.00 | 36,000.00 | 108,000.00 |
| School Bus Service | 120 | 300.00 | 36,000.00 | 108,000.00 |
| After-School Services | 200 | 500.00 | 100,000.00 | 300,000.00 |
| <u>Total Revenue</u> | | | <u>352,000.00</u> | <u>1,056,000.00</u> |

6. Salaries for Year 1

| <u>Salaries</u> | <u>Number of</u> | <u>Amount per</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| | <u>workers</u> | <u>worker (s)/month</u> | <u>Amount GHS</u> |
| Director | 2 | 3000 | 72000 |
| Administrator | 1 | 2500 | 30000 |
| Principal | 1 | 1800 | 21600 |
| Human Resource Manager | 1 | 2500 | 30000 |
| Accountant | 1 | 2500 | 30000 |
| Lawyer | 1 | 3000 | 36000 |
| Procurement Officer | 1 | 800 | 9600 |
| School Nurse | 1 | 800 | 9600 |
| Receptionist | 1 | 800 | 9600 |
| IT Manager | 1 | 1000 | 12000 |
| Teachers | 25 | 800 | ((800*12)*25) |
| | | | = 240000 |
| Non-Teaching Staff (Security, Cleaners) | 15 | 500 | ((500*12)*15) |
| | | | = 90000 |
| Total Salary | | | <u>590,400</u> |

7. Income Statement

| | YEAR 1 (GHS) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Revenue | 1,056,000 |
| Cost (Initial Costs) | 76,685 |
| Gross Profit | <u>979,315</u> |
| Expenses: | |
| Salaries | 590400 |
| Advertising | 10000 |
| Insurance | 10000 |
| Utilities | 7000 |
| Rates | 5000 |
| Miscellaneous | 20000 |
| Profit Before Tax | 642400 |
| Tax (25%) | 160600 |
| Net Profit | <u>481,800</u> |