

CHARTER

OF THE

WILLITS ELEMENTARY
CHARTER SCHOOL:

A CALIFORNIA PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL



Especially in the early grades when reading and mathematic skills are being introduced, teachers need to address many skill levels within one classroom. By providing individualized attention, varied forms of instruction to meet the needs of multiple learning styles (auditory, visual, tactile/kinesthetic), and supporting the idea of multiple intelligences, the needs of each individual student are met. As students grasp concepts and master skills, they become more confident and engaged in their learning.

Children participate in a well-rounded curriculum that includes instruction in academic fields such as science, language arts, mathematics, social studies, and foreign language. Arts such as music, drama, dance, drawing, sculpture, painting, crafts, handiwork, and gardening are also an integral part of the curriculum. Practical life skills are integrated into the curriculum. Time for play and physical movement are structured into each school day. Students have opportunities to use technology in the classroom but care is taken to introduce technology in such a way that it supports, not supplants, creativity and the development of academic and interpersonal skills. An effort is made to introduce cultural diversity into all core academic subjects, arts, and physical education.

Foreign language instruction is treated as a core academic subject, with partial Spanish immersion as part of all students' education. Spanish is the primary language of focus because we believe that fluency in Spanish is essential for success in the changing demographics of California. Other languages will be brought into the classroom when appropriate to the cultural heritage of the student body or topics of study.

Our charter school has a strong emphasis on community. Students develop the skills needed to relate to others, listen effectively, and see themselves as part of a larger entity. Students are encouraged to be involved in their school, local, regional, and global communities. Students have opportunities to participate in positive, structured interactions with area middle school students, high school students, college students, professionals, and community members.

Parents are actively involved with their child's education through parent participation hours. At the time of enrollment, the school, the parents and the students sign a school agreement. This agreement includes the understanding that the parent or guardian will contribute a specified number of hours of volunteer service to the school. WECS recognizes that parents are a student's first teacher and play a vital role in their child's educational progress. It is widely acknowledged that students with involved parents are more academically successful. It is with this understanding that WECS parents are expected to volunteer.

THE WILLITS CHARTER SCHOOL
FAMILY & STUDENT HANDBOOK
2013-2014



Willits Charter School

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2013-2014 Parent Participation Policy

Our school was founded on the principle of family involvement, which benefits both the school and our students. By giving time and effort to the school, parents/guardians show that they value education, which encourages students to value it as well. Parent presence also helps many students feel more comfortable at school and gives families a chance to be active in their children's academic life.

Willits Charter School seeks to make education a community passion. We believe that parent participation is essential to the success of the education process. The Charter's mission is to develop students who are competent, confident, productive and responsible young adults. This mission cannot be accomplished without the active and ongoing support of the entire Charter community.

We depend upon the help of parents/guardians in practical ways: as class parents, groundskeepers, repair persons, classroom aides, tutors, event organizers, fundraising support, drivers for field trips, maintenance etc.

Parent Participation responsibilities will include the following specific items:

- Each family will agree to participate in the following number of hours annually:
 - One child - 40 hours
 - Each additional student - 20 hours per student
 - Independent study student – 20 hours per student
- (Families with children attending WCS & WECS may fulfill their parent hours at either site)**
- Parents should attend Charter school-wide meetings each year (hours count toward parent participation commitment).
 - Recording the hours & meeting the yearly obligation is the responsibility of each Charter parent.
 - Volunteering for a specific duty or task requires total dependability. Educators & other parents must be able to plan & schedule events or courses based on reliable volunteers.
 - Families having difficulties meeting the participation commitment should contact an administrator to discuss special arrangements (see Exception Procedures below).
 - A signed Parent/Student/School Agreement needs to be on file with the school as part of the enrollment requirements.

Active Participation

WCS parents/guardians agree to be active participants in the school community and to attend school functions such as parent-teacher conferences, student study team meetings, back to school night, and special celebrations.

Volunteer hours can be spent on activities involving the students, educators, or the Charter site.

Education - coordinated with the educators directly

- In-class support as an educator aide
- Outside research in support of specific school projects

- Substitute teaching
- Driving/chaperoning on field trips
- Coaching an intramural/intra-district after school sport
- Organizing or supporting a community service project for students

Administrative support - coordinated with the Administrative staff

- Supervision at the Charter School – brunch/lunch periods, front desk, library
- Operation support

Committees/Teams

- Committee/Team involvement

Maintenance - coordinated with the Administrative staff

- Maintenance of the Charter School site

Participation hours may be fulfilled by the following people:

- Parents/Guardians
- Other family members (grandparents, siblings)
- Childcare providers, co-workers
- Sponsors (a volunteer, related or unrelated to the student, who will fulfill the parent participation commitment in lieu of the parent/guardian)

Participation hours are to be regularly logged (daily, weekly, or monthly) onto the parent participation clipboard located in the front office. Hours are tallied weekly. Reports will be sent home to families notifying them of their status with the first semester report card and the third quarter progress report.

Buy-out Options

Monetary participation can be made in lieu of 50% of a family's obligation. The “buy-out” is credited at \$10.00 per hour. Monies collected from buy-out options will be restricted for use for payment of classroom assistance or classroom materials. Buy-out arrangements need to be at the beginning of each semester of the school year to allow for the scheduling of in-class assistance. Arrangements can be made through the Administrative staff.

Exception Procedures

As with any endeavor, exceptions need to be made for families who cannot fulfill their commitment due to special circumstances. Families can request exceptions for any period of time deemed necessary (i.e., one month, one quarter, full school year). Exceptions can be made in full or in part (i.e., 10 hours, 50% of hours, etc.). Exceptions for a full school year need to be arranged within the first month of school. Partial exceptions can be made up to April of each school year. All records will be kept confidential.

Parent participation is an essential part of the existence of Willits Charter School. Cooperation and commitment by WCS families ensures that there is adequate classroom assistance for the learners and educators, that the implementation and execution of all curriculum and site plans is adequately covered through teams and committees, and that there is a safe, nurturing, consistent educational experience for all students.

Family service hours are coordinated by the Office Manager or individual teachers for specific needs—**let them know how you will fulfill your service hours to the school.** We do our best to accommodate every schedule and every individual's talents and interests.