



---

# Higher Learning Academy

## PARENT & STUDENT

## HANDBOOK

---

Mission & Vision Statement

Board of Directors and GCC  
Administration

Site Council and Parent  
Faculty Organization

Faculty and Administration

School Rules and Policies

Criteria for Expected  
Educational Progress

General Information

Academic Information

Co-Curricular Activities

Home/School  
Communication

Parent Involvement

Medical Procedures

School Safety

School Right to Amend  
Handbook

# 2014-15

## Educational Progress

Higher Learning Academy's most fundamental expectation is that each student put forth his/her personal best effort to learn. The benchmark for educational progress is the student achieving his/her personal best as measured each trimester on the student's report card. Personal best is measured by the student meeting grade-level standards or higher on each trimester's report card in all academic areas (Math, Reading/Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies, and Science).

Higher Learning Academy recognizes that not every student progresses at the same rate, or in a linear manner. There are several ways the student may get additional help. This can occur with afterschool tutoring or with in school intervention support. This is done in a pull out fashion where the student works with the schools para-educator on the remediation. If a student is still not meeting these minimum academic progress requirements or is showing a lack of progress, a review of the student's situation will be initiated to determine what could be causing the lack of appropriate academic progress. Based on that review, a remediation/acceleration plan will be created in partnership with the student and his/her family to assist the student in making and maintaining educational progress, this process utilizes a Student Study Team (SST). Part of a student's assistance can include intervention during the school day, as well as during the afterschool program. The student must show improvement the following trimester if he/she is to continue to be on course for promotion to the next grade level. Continued failure to meet the educational progress and/or failure to adhere to the remediation/acceleration plan will jeopardize the child's promotion to the next grade level. Students with an IEP or a 504 Plan are expected to make progress toward the goals listed in that IEP or the 504 Plan.

## Family Partnership

Higher Learning Academy firmly believes that family partnership is vital to student success. As the primary educators of your children working in partnership with the school, parents agree to support their child's education at home as outlined in the Three-Way School Pledge signed by the parent(s) each year your child is enrolled at Higher Learning Academy. This involves, but is not limited to, making sure any assigned homework is complete, supporting and enforcing the behavioral and academic policies of Higher Learning Academy, attending Back to School Night, Parent/Teacher Conferences, and keeping an open line of communication with the staff throughout the year.

Higher Learning Academy is a Core Knowledge school. In order for our curriculum to be successful, parents need to participate in the learning process. To facilitate this, HLA expects that parents will read the Core Knowledge Series book What Your (insert appropriate grade level) Grader Needs to Know by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. This allows the learning to continue at home. This book may be checked out/borrowed from the school office/local library or purchased at any local bookstore.

Higher Learning Academy requires thirty(30) hours of volunteer service per family per year as outlined in the Parent Commitment Contract. This parent support to teachers includes in and out of classroom activities; this support may be provided before school, after school or in the evening. Listed below is a partial list of ways that parents can meet their agreed upon commitment to show support of HLA programs:

- Attend and support PFO planning meetings
- Be a regular teacher assistant in the academic classroom
- Take work home to complete for your child's teacher
- Serve as a room parent
- Be involved in specific school fundraisers
- Act as a field trip planner and chaperone

- Provide office assistance on a regular basis
- Organize and lead after school clubs
- Arrange for/or be a special speaker for the HLA classrooms
- Provide weekly lunch or recess yard duty
- Volunteer during our school clean up events
- Other... What personal strength or interest can you offer to your child's teacher? (demonstrate a musical instrument, demonstrate an art or craft student project, read a favorite child's story to a reluctant reader, bring a community cultural event leader or activity to your child's classroom per approval by principal, etc.)

## Behavioral Expectations/Social Contracts

Higher Learning Academy's teachers have all gone through the Capturing Kids Hearts training model. Every teacher/class will build a social contract with his/her students. This means that the students will be involved with how they want to be treated and how others will treat them. Each student is accountable not only to the teacher of the class, but also as a constructive member of the class; that comes with being responsible about their own behavior and how it affects others. More information will be provided by your child's teacher about social contracts and other Capturing Kids Hearts aspects with which students will be involved during the year.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend school daily. Please review our attendance policy on pages 8-10.

## Tardiness

It is imperative to a child's learning that they be to school on time each day. Please review our Tardy/Late Arrival policy on page 9.

## Dress Code

Higher Learning Academy is a Uniform School. We believe that a student's appearance has an impact on his or her attitude and behavior as well as safety. Students demonstrate respect for the school community and for themselves by dressing appropriately. All Higher Learning Academy students are expected to adhere to a dress code that enhances the educational environment at all times, as described below.

1. Students are to wear a Higher Learning Academy uniform everyday, Monday through Friday, and during off-campus school functions, unless otherwise specified.
2. The Higher Learning Academy uniform consists of the following:
  - a. **White** or **hunter green** polo shirt.
  - b. **White** or **hunter green** button-up dress shirt or blouse.
  - c. All shirts must have a collar unless they are Higher Learning Academy t-shirts or **pre-approved** school event shirts (i.e. cowl neck and turtle neck collars).
  - d. Plain (no print-especially relating to sports teams, gang colors, etc.- unless they are Higher Learning Academy sweat-shirts) sweat-shirts or coats may be worn when the weather is cooler
  - e. **Khaki, dark blue, or black** pants, shorts, skirt, uniform dresses/rompers, jeans, or skorts. (These items, too, must be plain and without any embellishment, including but not limited to, glitter, paint, studs, or jewels)
3. Students may not wear inappropriately tight or short shirts, pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts. ("Too short"

## Student Placement

The Higher Learning Academy administration makes every effort to ensure that each teacher demonstrates high quality research based instruction and develops exemplary learning experiences for all ranges and levels of students. Through ongoing staff development and classroom observations of teaching and learning, the Higher Learning Academy administration maintains the quality and equity of instructional techniques, pedagogy, and strategies utilized by the teaching staff. Through careful monitoring and rigorous hiring practices, Higher Learning Academy's board and administration are confident that each teacher is capable of meeting the needs of all students.

## Field Trips

The student's ability to participate in field/study trips is a privilege to be earned. Students who fail to consistently demonstrate appropriate behavior and maintain adequate academic progress will be excluded from the field/study trips at the discretion of the teacher and/or site administrator.

Bus transportation is required for all field trips. HLA teachers and administration arrange all bus transportation details. While transportation is provided free of charge<sup>1</sup> to the students of HLA for any approved field trip, parents/ must complete and sign the HLA information and permission form (includes medical information and permission to provide emergency treatment) before their child is eligible to participate. Siblings will not be allowed to attend school-sponsored field trips due to school insurance restrictions. **Student Study Team**

The Student Study Team (SST) process brings together, as needed, a team of educators and parents to discuss the best options to assist individual students in meeting the challenges they are facing. Teachers, as well as parents, can request a Student Study Team to discuss a student's academic and/or behavior progress. Student Study Teams normally consist of the child's current teacher, administrator, and the parent(s) of the child and are usually scheduled before or after school. Parents are given prior notification of these meetings so they can attend and be involved.

## Achievement Testing

Students in grade 2 and above will take the California STAR Tests in the spring. Results are mailed to the student's home as soon as they are available, typically in August or September.

## Promotion/Retention

Students are required to demonstrate that they have mastered grade-level expectations in order to be promoted to the next grade. Grade-level expectations are based on the following:

- Academic achievement marks from 1-4 (4 is highest)
- Scores on achievement tests
- Teacher evaluation of student's abilities and effort
- Student's motivation level
- Proficiency assessments
- Parental involvement and family commitment to supporting the student's academic achievement
- Attendance

---

<sup>1</sup> The school will accept donations to help cover the cost of the trip.

## Higher Learning Academy Three-Way School Pledge

---

It is important that families and schools work together to help students achieve high academic standards. Through a balanced educational approach we can ensure success. The following are agreed upon roles and responsibilities for teachers, students, and parents. Your signature signifies support of these actions.

### FAMILY/PARENT/GUARDIAN PLEDGE

I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Read and refer to the Parent/Student Handbook.
- Get my child to school regularly and on time.
- Ensure that my child attends school dressed in uniform every day, gets adequate sleep, regular medical attention, and proper nutrition.
- Provide a quiet time and place for homework and monitor TV viewing.
- Read to my child and/or encourage my child to read every day.
- Communicate with the teacher or the school when I have a concern.
- Communicate with my child about homework, classroom agendas, behavior contracts, and check backpack as necessary.
- Look for and read communication from the school (including The Wednesday Weekly and teacher communication).
- Regularly monitor my child's progress in school.
- Volunteer 30 hours per year (including PFO meetings, helping at the school, taking work home, etc).
- Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- Respect my school, staff, students, and families.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### STUDENT PLEDGE

I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Come to school on time, ready to learn, and work hard.
- Bring necessary materials, completed assignments, and homework.
- Wear my complete uniform.
- Know and follow school and class rules.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Talk to my parents and teachers about my school experiences so that they can help me to be successful in school.
- Show my parents my homework folder, classroom agendas, behavior contracts, or anything else sent home.
- Limit my TV watching and video game playing and instead study or read every day after school.
- Agree not to harass or bully my schoolmates, teachers, or staff.
- Respect my school, staff, students, and families.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### STAFF/TEACHER PLEDGE

I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction.
- Have high expectations and help every child develop a love of learning.
- Endeavor to motivate my students to learn.
- Communicate regularly with families about student's academic and social progress.
- Provide a warm, safe, and caring learning environment.
- Provide meaningful, daily homework assignments to reinforce and extend learning.
- Embrace professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning and support the formation of partnerships with families and the community.
- Actively work with families and colleagues to make HLA an accessible and welcoming place for our families.
- Respect my school, staff, students, and families.

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_