

We welcome you to Woodrow Wilson Academy!

Thank you for your interest in Woodrow Wilson Academy. We are a Jefferson County charter school located in Westminster. We were started by a dedicated and passionate group of parents within the northern Denver communities. These parents were looking for an educational choice for their children and when confronted with extensive wait lists at other charters in the area, they decided to collaborate and move forward with a dream and a vision of creating an additional school of choice for the community.

Woodrow Wilson serves Arvada and the surrounding areas, which makes our student population unique and diverse. We are a public institution and there is no tuition associated with student enrollment.

Our curriculum consists of Core Knowledge content and the Open Court reading program. Core Knowledge is an academically rigorous program that helps students establish a strong base of knowledge for higher levels of learning. This foundation will be continually built upon as students move through the grade levels. Open Court reading provides explicit phonics and comprehension skills instruction that is balanced with extensive reading of both decodable texts and high quality literature. Both of these programs are proven and effective educational programs that provide a content-rich, high expectation, back to basics learning environment for all students.

Woodrow Wilson is committed to thoroughly educating the children of our community, while fostering a love of learning through our curriculum and dedicated staff. The following materials will provide you with an extensive look into our Academy. We invite you to call or stop by with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Andrea Peña, Principal

Vision Statement

The vision of Woodrow Wilson Academy is to join students, parents, educators, and the community to produce an educational environment that nurtures, excites, and motivates children to learn. The Academy empowers students to become independent and responsible thinkers, fosters academic and moral excellence, and promotes creativity.

Mission Statement

The mission of Woodrow Wilson Academy is to provide a school where students thrive academically and socially. This mission will be accomplished through a strong

educational program based upon a structured curriculum supported by discipline and mutual respect. The commitment of the students, parents, educators, and community will be utilized to achieve these goals.

What is a charter school?

A charter school is a public school of choice, founded by a group of parents, educators or community members. Charter schools must be approved by their local district and student enrollment is limited only by space availability. The district and charter school negotiate a contract or "charter" based upon a proposal by the originating group. The philosophy and operation of a charter school are independent of the school district, reflecting the beliefs of the founding members. Charter schools do however carry a public obligation and overall are accountable to their local school district. Charter schools are non-religious, non-sectarian and do not discriminate in their admission policies.

Fundamental Beliefs

A traditional approach to education...

Woodrow Wilson Academy emphasizes teaching the "whole" child, using traditional and conventional approaches. Our goal is to provide a rich and balanced educational opportunity for all our students, as well as maximizing their learning potential while making education "come to life" for all students. Classes are led by skilled teachers; instruction emphasizes the skills of reading, writing and speaking, mathematics, critical thinking skills, science and history/geography. The Academy seeks to instill a foundation of integrity and moral development, through a character education program, that will be a part of our students' life journey. Learning is a lifelong endeavor; through the cultivation of our programs, along with a high degree of parental involvement, our overall goal is to see our students become productive and contributing members of our society.

History

In April 1999, a parent wishing to get proactive in her child's education sought the advice of the founder of Jefferson Academy as to what could be done to further expand the availability of a Core Knowledge school in her local area. This prompted flyers being distributed within the community to recruit other parents who wished to participate in the founding of another Core Knowledge Charter School. One month later, on May 21st, 1999 an informational meeting was held and a Steering Committee was formed. Eventually, this group was comprised of eleven voting members. They held

meetings every week to ten days, for up to three hours, at the home of the Chairman of the committee.

Consultants in the development process included representatives from Jefferson Academy Board members, local business executives, State Senators and Representatives, the Colorado Department of Education, and the Core Knowledge Foundation. Steering Committee members attended the New Charter School Leadership Workshop on July 10th, 1999, and the Colorado Annual Charter School Conference on Oct. 28th – 30th, 1999. One parent on the committee wrote and was approved for a ten thousand-dollar start up grant from the Walton Family Foundation. The Steering Committee worked diligently for eight months to form Woodrow Wilson Academy, and on December 9th, 1999, the Charter Application submitted to the Jefferson County School District was unanimously approved and found to be "flawless" by their Board of Directors.

Curriculum and Content -What We Teach

Core Knowledge...

What is Core Knowledge?

An Idea...that for the sake of academic excellence, greater fairness, and higher literacy, elementary and middle schools need a solid, specific, shared core curriculum in order to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge, grade by grade.

Core Knowledge Is:

Solid – Many people say that knowledge is changing so fast that what students learn today will soon be outdated. While current events and technology are constantly changing, there is nevertheless a body of lasting knowledge that should form the core of a Preschool-Grade 8 curriculum. Such solid knowledge includes, for example, the basic principles of constitutional government, important events of world history, essential elements of mathematics and of oral and written expression, widely acknowledged masterpieces of art and music, and stories and poems passed down from generation to generation.

Sequenced – Knowledge builds on knowledge. Children learn new knowledge by building on what they already know. Only a school system that clearly defines the knowledge and skills required to participate in each successive grade can be excellent and fair for all students. For this reason, the Core Knowledge Sequence provides a clear outline of content to be learned grade by grade. This sequential building of knowledge not only

helps ensure that children enter each new grade ready to learn, but also helps prevent the many repetitions and gaps that characterize much current schooling (repeated units, for example on pioneer days or the rain forest, but little or no attention to the Bill of Rights, or to adding fractions with unlike denominators).

Specific – A typical state of district curriculum says, "Students will demonstrate knowledge of people, events, ideas, and movements that contributed to the development of the United States." But which people and events? What ideas and movements? In contrast, the Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by its specificity. By clearly specifying important knowledge in language arts, history and geography, math, science and the fine arts, the Core Knowledge Sequence presents a practical answer to the questions, "What do our children need to know?"

Shared – Literacy depends on shared knowledge. To be literate means, in part, to be familiar with a broad range of knowledge taken for granted by speakers and writers. For example, when sportscasters refer to an upset victory as "David knocking off Goliath," or when reporters refer to a "threatened presidential veto," they are assuming that their audience shares certain knowledge. One goal of the Core Knowledge Foundation is to provide all children, regardless of background, with the shared knowledge they need to be included in our national literate culture.

Open Court Reading...

Research in reading has shown that effective classroom instruction in the early grades by well-prepared teachers is the most powerful method for preventing reading and learning problems. Further, the most effective instruction for early reading involves a combination of explicit instruction in word recognition skills and reading comprehension strategies with opportunities to apply and practice these skills in literature.

In Open Court reading, explicit phonics and comprehension skills instruction is balanced with extensive reading of both decodable texts and quality literature. In other words, students learn to read through a balance of literature integrated with explicit skills instruction in areas such as comprehension, fluency, decoding, writing, reading, research and inquiry. SRA's Open Court reading approach to initial reading instruction relies on the explicit teaching of sounds, on the blending of sounds into words, and on the leverage of using this knowledge for reading and writing. There are no assumptions about prior knowledge, so students do

not fall through the cracks. Students are exposed to and read a wide array of genres in both fiction and non-fiction. The focus is always on building knowledge and deeper understanding. The intent is to engage students in reading, thinking and problem solving that are typical of real-world situations. Students need to know how to gain information, to critically evaluate it, and adapt it for different purposes.

SRA Math Explorations and Applications...

Math Explorations and Applications is based upon the idea of making math real for students. It builds upon what children already know. It helps children see that math is useful and important in their own lives, and it makes learning math enjoyable.

In each grade the program emphasizes thinking skills, problem-solving strategies, real applications, mental math, estimation, approximation, measurement, geometry, organizing data, probability, statistics, and algebra. In addition, computational skills are introduced at appropriate levels and are reviewed in a continuous manner until they become part of a child's working knowledge.

Core Virtues...

Core Virtues is a literature-based program focusing on character education. It is a practical, non-sectarian approach to moral development. The goal of the program is to cultivate character through the promotion of basic moral, civic, and intellectual virtues. The virtues are introduced and emphasized through such vocabulary as: respect, responsibility, diligence, honesty, generosity, perseverance, courage, faithfulness, compassion, openness to inquiry and reason and humility in the face of facts. This curriculum seeks to cultivate in the young the desire to act rightly and to discern virtue in striving towards being a person of high quality character.

Location

The location of Woodrow Wilson Academy is 8300 W. 94th Ave. in Westminster. We obtained the building in August of 2001 and after extensive renovation, we moved from our temporary location in October of 2001. Our building consists of 10 classrooms, a kitchen (which is not currently in use), some small storage areas and a fenced in playground area for our students.

Board of Directors

Woodrow Wilson Academy is governed by an eight-member board of directors, which has complete responsibility for the long-term planning & development

of the school. Six members are parents of children in the Academy; one member is a community member at large (who may or may not be a parent), and the Academy's Principal sits on the board as an ex-officio member. The Principal is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Academy. Except for the Principal, parents elect all board members.

Parent Teacher Organization

The Academy highly encourages parental involvement within the school. It is the belief of the Academy that parents who are involved and take an interest in their child's education, foster a strong love of learning and provide support for their child's academic career. Woodrow Wilson Academy's Parent Teacher Organization is very active and strong. They are committed to excellence in education for all and support the Academy with fundraisers, committee representations and a high level of hands on daily assistance with playground, lunchroom and parking lot duties.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a charter school?

A charter school is a school of choice that is a public entity. Charter schools are considered part of their local public school system because they accept federal education dollars through their district.

A description of the relationship between the district and the charter school...

Charter schools write a contract with their local school district and agrees to or waives out of certain policies and procedures the district normally operates under. This gives the charter school the freedom and flexibility to operate according to the specific vision/mission of the school.

Who can enroll in a charter school?

Anyone. Charter schools are schools of choice and do not discriminate against any student on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, or need for special education.

Are charter schools subject to state and federal laws?

Yes. The Charter School Act says, "A charter school shall be subject to all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination..." Charter schools may apply for waivers from specific state and federal statutes and school district regulations and policies.

Is there tuition?

No. We are a public institution and money to educate our students comes from state funding (per pupil

allotment), grants, foundations and other outside sources.

Does the Academy have a religious affiliation?

No. We have students from a wide variety of religious faiths attending the Academy. We want everyone to feel comfortable with their own beliefs and be proud of their families values.

Is transportation provided?

Transportation is the responsibility of each family, however, we do encourage car-pooling.

What is the birth date deadline for an incoming Kindergarten student?

Kindergartners must be 5 years old by September 15th in order to enroll.

Policies

Enrollment Policy

Any parent wishing to enroll their child in Woodrow Wilson Academy must fill out an "Intent to Enroll" form.

- ◆ A child must be born and have a name to be placed on the enrollment list.
- ◆ To remain on the enrollment list, you must reapply in February of each year. Future kindergarten parents must reapply in February of the year their child will be in kindergarten. **If the parent does not come in to reapply during that time, the child will be removed from the enrollment list. WWA is not responsible to remind parents of the resign time or requirements.**
- ◆ Enrollment priorities are provided to children of Steering Committee Members, Inaugural Board Members, founding families, staff, and siblings of current students.
- ◆ Random selection (lottery) process will occur once the priority list of applicants has been conducted during the first week in March. Subsequent lotteries may be performed as necessary.

An official WWA Letter of Intent needs to be submitted for each child by the child's legal parent or guardian.

Letters of Intent must be submitted in person at the school's office (7100 Wadsworth Blvd.), they may not be mailed or faxed.

- ◆ It is the parent's responsibility to inform WWA of any address, or phone number changes.
- ◆ A child must be 5 years of age by September 15th of the year they are entering Kindergarten. There are no exceptions to this policy.
- ◆ If a class spot is offered, parents have 48 hours to accept or reject the position. If the parent rejects the

opening, that child's name is withdrawn from the lottery pool.

- ◆ If a student is placed on the enrollment list and it is later determined that the student needs to be placed in a another grade, that student will be placed on the new grade's enrollment list with the same lottery assigned number. In which case that number is higher than the number of children on the new list, he/she would be placed at the bottom until a new lottery is performed.

Dress Code

Woodrow Wilson Academy students should dress in a manner that is proper and denotes good taste. It is recommended that clothing be durable, comfortable and designed so as not to cause undue attention to itself or the person wearing it. *In order to provide a conducive learning environment for all children, clothing that is distracting to the wearer or others around him/her is not acceptable. Anything that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment, derisive, or derogatory comments will not be allowed.*

- ◆ Clothing should be clean, neat and in good condition.
- ◆ Muscle or mesh shirts, tank, tube, half or halter tops, cut-offs, spandex, excessively baggy clothing, inappropriate graphics, or text on clothing are not to be worn to school.
- ◆ Shorts/skirts mid-thigh or lower may be worn throughout the school year, as weather permits.
- ◆ Face/body glitter and temporary tattoos are not permitted.
- ◆ Wearing hats or coats inside the building is not permitted.

The question of appropriateness of an item will be at the discretion of the Principal. If an item is deemed unsuitable, the student will call home and the parent/guardian will have to bring a change of clothing for the child before he/she can go to class.