

Public WaldorfSM Education

Public Waldorf Education holistically integrates the intellectual, practical, and emotional development of students.

Public Waldorf Education addresses child development in three differing stages: early childhood education focuses on practical, hands-on activities, and creative play; elementary education focuses on developing imagination, artistic expression, and social capacities; and secondary education focuses on developing critical reasoning and empathic understanding.

The overarching goal is to develop free, morally responsible, and integrated individuals equipped with a high degree of social competence. Qualitative and formative assessments of student work are built into the daily life of the classroom; standardized testing takes place as required by the locality and for college entry.

Public Waldorf Education seeks to create the most supportive conditions that enable a child to grow and mature into a whole person by freeing thinking, harmonizing feeling, and focusing intentions. It consciously brings all three into a complementary dynamic that supports learning and accomplishment throughout life.

The result is students who will be able to adapt and meaningfully participate in the creation of the emerging new society as it evolves around them – individuals who have the creativity of thought, integrity and purposeful strength of intention needed to navigate these times of accelerated change.

Phases of Child Development

Every human being is an individual living essence that enters life with inherent gifts and creative potential. During development, that essence dynamically interacts with physical, emotional, and cognitive constituents — integrating them into a maturing “whole” which allows each person to determine his or her unique path through life.

In each identifiable 7-year phase of growth from birth to adulthood a different constituent is the focal point for development. Hence, there is a corresponding learning modality specific to each phase. That modality is imitation up to age 7, pictorial representation (with artistic metamorphosis) from age 7 to 14, and thereafter, guided self-reflection and the exploration and discovery of patterns and inter-relationships.

Teaching Methodology

The following methodologies utilized in Public Waldorf are interwoven to create a holistic process at each age level:

- Creating an experiential foundation for learning;
- Proceeding from the whole to the parts and back again to develop flexibility;
- Using story, biography, metaphor, artistic metamorphosis, and other imaginative techniques to provide entry points for multiple learning styles;
- Using rhythm, repetition, and recall to strengthen memory and retention;
- Combining academic activities with movement, artistic activities, and purposeful work for balanced, comprehensive and integrated development;
- Providing a connection to the natural world and an introduction to contemporary societal issues to widen perspective;
- Intensifying learning through sharing a common learning focus amongst all lesson areas and/or immersion blocks of lessons over a few weeks at a time;

- Creating artifacts to deepen and embed understanding, e.g. main lesson books, drawings, completion of other art and craft projects, plays, and performances, etc.;
- Using formative and summative assessments consistent with the teaching methodologies, such as child observation, portfolio assessment, and written narratives, where process and outcome are viewed as equally important;
- Teachers modeling positive values, desirable character traits, non-judgmental attitudes, creative thinking and true interest in others; and
- Cultivating a school attitude that encourages and supports cooperation over competition and embraces diverse philosophical beliefs and values.

Developmental Curriculum

The curriculum utilized in Public Waldorf Education meets and supports the development of both the individual and the class as a whole. The content for a grade level is gauged for the cognitive capacities of that specific age. The experiences placed in the educational program for each grade relate to the personal and social dynamics encountered at that age. This age-appropriate composition, on a year-by-year basis, is a foundational principle of Public Waldorf Education.

Addressing the social aspects through the curriculum supports the growth of the class as a caring social group. It also provides a solid foundation for learning--freeing the teacher to focus more deeply on each student as an individual. This individual focus enables

- the unique gifts and capacities of each student to be recognized and strengthened;
- each one's individual learning styles, along with any hindrances, to be identified and supported in an inclusive and appropriate manner.

The music, movement, crafts, and arts contained in the curriculum go beyond those required by the state. All of these elements are critical in the development of the physical skills and capacities that are the foundation of all learning processes. Moreover, they support the formation of a harmonious "whole" person with flexibility of thought, sensitivity, compassion, and perseverance, combined with a wider breadth of perception and depth of understanding.

Public Waldorf Education is an instructional model that is universally accessible and effective in delivering differentiated instruction to a broad range of student abilities and learning styles in the least restrictive environment. Bringing this developmentally sound and inclusive education into the public realm, Public Waldorf Education seeks to expand its availability to all sectors of society.

[Core Principles](#) from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education