



WESTLAKE CHARTER SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN 2014

VISION

Westlake Charter School will be known for its creativity, innovativeness, level of student engagement, and for its connection with the global world. Our school will provide diverse offerings including specialty classes, after school enrichment, technology integration, and support programs to serve the diverse needs of our students and families. Collaboration will be at the center of what we do, keeping us focused on a path of continuous improvement.

Our school's facility will reflect the level of engagement and collaboration found in our program. Our facilities will provide small meeting and work spaces and encourage students and teachers to get to know one another well. Rather than only being organized in classrooms, school spaces will offer areas for small group instruction, collaborative work, and provide an area that can accommodate the whole school to gather for assemblies and meals. There will be space for students to display their projects and exhibit creative works. Green space and eco-friendly features will be maximized in this facility allowing the school to take advantage of the most innovative design elements. Our parent partners will have a space to gather resources and meet with our professional staff. Our facilities will provide spaces for our specialty classes and support personnel.

Our students will be leaders of their own learning. Choice and creativity will be incorporated into units of study. Rigorous, project based activities will be integrated to support meaningful learning and advance critical thinking and problem solving skills. Access to dynamic technology resources will enable our students to be college and career ready.

Our amazing team of innovative educators and support staff assisted by our parent and community partners will share a commitment to meeting the needs of all students. Through professional development and forward thinking, staff will continuously hone their craft as they develop and deliver a powerful curriculum that is engaging to all students.

What we expect to happen in 1-5 years...

- Engaged students benefiting from project based, focused learning activities
- Further development and articulation of specialized programs (specialties, project based learning, special population support, Special Education, GATE, global awareness)
- Create an environment that allows parent to feel comfortable participating as a school partner.
- Successful integration of technology as a tool for learning
- Compensation package that continues to attract highly talented and innovative educators
- Increased collaboration and professional learning communities that promotes student success within a culture of excellence
- Completion of a single K-8th grade facility that maps to our academic, community and student needs
- Create partnerships with other successful schools around the world

What we expect to happen in 6-10 years...

- Continued excellent school reputation for high quality teaching and learning
- Leader in the areas of project based learning and global mindedness
- Increased funding from grants and awards received for innovative programs
- Increased capacity for and demonstration of serving diverse student populations
- Maintain demand that exemplifies WCS as a beacon of the community

What we expect to happen in 11-20 years...

- Exploring options for expansion and/or extensions of our successful program(s)
- National reputation for outstanding, innovative teaching and learning
- Creation of global teacher/student exchange program
- Regular visits to countries and educational programs outside of the United States

MISSION

Westlake Charter School, in partnership with our families and community, equips its students with the skills and appreciation necessary for lifelong learning through the implementation of our Four Educational Pillars: Our Place in a Global World; Enriched Educational Opportunities; Personalization; and Teachers as Designers.

SCHOOL DESIGN PILLARS

Westlake Charter School identifies Four Pillars of a Successful School Community. These values play an important part in building and supporting the school's culture. By focusing our school on these principles, our school creates a learning community in which students can develop the skills necessary for future success in any endeavor.

1. Our Place in a Global World

Westlake Charter School focuses on *Our Place in a Global World* by providing our students with the skills necessary to embrace cultural diversity. We use the strength of our families and their cultures to enrich the learning that happens in class. Students are involved in a spirit of mutual respect on and off campus. Students also attend Spanish class starting in kindergarten and they study diverse cultures and religions in a collaborative manner throughout our program. All community members are actively involved in discussing and understanding current events and global topics. We also participate in global, regional, and local community and philanthropic events. Students at Westlake Charter School are citizens of the world and are empowered to embrace the mindset that they can make a difference in the world.

2. Enriched Educational Opportunities

Westlake Charter focuses on *Enriched Educational Opportunities* by recognizing that all students benefit from experiences that go beyond the core subject areas. We provide art, physical education, and Spanish instruction through specialized teachers. Classroom teachers also implement lessons that integrate character traits and social development. We offer quality after school enrichment programs and provide activities that are hands-on, technology infused, and student centered. Our families are also key partners by enhancing the experiences offered with their time, talents, and fundraising efforts. These enhanced educational opportunities cultivate globally minded, reflective students.

3. Personalization

Westlake Charter School focuses on *Personalization* by providing a rigorous and challenging program for all students based on their individual academic and social needs. Our teachers have a vested interest in the development of each student and strive to incorporate a wide array of teaching techniques to support individual learning. Student assessment data is used to guide instruction, and teachers incorporate small and collaborative grouping to modify activities for individual students. We utilize the skills and talents of our parent volunteers to support differentiation within our classrooms. Our program is student-centered, thematic, and project based.

4. Teachers as Designers

Westlake Charter School focuses on *Teachers as Designers* by empowering shared leadership among its staff in order to build a culture of high expectations. Within a collaborative work environment teachers strive to ensure the success of each student. Teachers are expected to be reflective practitioners and work in Professional Learning Communities to develop an innovative, authentic, and rigorous learning environment. Through thoughtful instructional design, teachers create curriculum and learning opportunities that support Common Core Standards while incorporating a thematic and project based approach.

CORE IDEOLOGY

WCS's Core Purpose

Expanding Opportunities...Connecting Children to the World

WCS's Core Values

- Respect
- Excellence
- Responsibility
- Reflective
- Global Perspective
- Stewardship
- Perseverance
- Inquisitive
- Joyful Learning
- Gratitude

~ *OUTCOME-ORIENTED GOALS* ~

“The following thinking represents goal areas for the next three to five years. They are areas in which the [charter school] will explicitly state the conditions or attributes it wants to achieve. These outcome statements define ‘what will constitute future success.’ The achievement of each goal will move the organization toward realization of its Big Audacious Goal. The goal areas are not in priority order. “

GOALS

Goal Area - 1: Academic Excellence

Westlake Charter School has a rigorous educational program/curriculum that has narrowed the achievement gap and resulted in its student body achieving excellence as defined by broadly accepted standards.

Objective 1: The organization will use Common Core and State Standards as a foundation to develop and enhance curriculum/thematic units of study, which will result in meaningful, visionary, project-based activities.

Objective 2: The organization will use assessment data and strategic intervention to advance the abilities of all students, close achievement gaps, and prevent gaps from increasing.

Objective 3: The organization will provide students with differentiated instruction and activities that address strengths, needs, and the readiness of individual students.

Objective 4: The organization will work to enhance our Special Education and Response to Intervention models.

Goal Area 2: Educational Philosophy

Westlake Charter School's educational philosophy is based on our Core Values, the understanding that each student has unique interests and needs, and the belief that engaging students in diverse cultural activities strengthens their academic ability and global understanding.

Objective 1: The organization will focus student learning by infusing its Core Values throughout various aspects of its operations.

Objective 2: The organization will invest in high-quality, strategic professional development to ensure staff are prepared to implement its academic vision.

Objective 3: The organization will provide instructional staff time to work collaboratively and participate in professional learning communities to reflect upon practice, achievement of students, develop curriculum, and grow professionally.

Objective 4: The organization will refine its curricular programs to foster and promote global awareness and cultural understandings.

Goal Area 3: School Culture

Students, teachers, administrators, and parents associated with Westlake Charter School are proud to be part of a community of committed individuals who trust each other to contribute to the achievement of the school's goals.

Objective 1: The organization will attract and hire highly qualified candidates for each position and develop a working environment that motivates, competitively compensates and retains staff.

Objective 2: The organization will work with WAVE to facilitate opportunities which engage and strengthen the organization and community.

Objective 3: The organization will seek volunteers to provide support services, to the benefit of all students.

Goal Area 4: School Infrastructure

The Westlake Charter School has effective administrative and operational structures in place that ensure its ability to:

- **Remain nimble and flexible,**
- **Remain financially sound while providing the resources necessary to achieve its goals,**
- **Manage technology, and**
- **Obtain its own school site**

Objective 1: The organization will retain financial capacity to support evolving and desired educational outcomes.

Objective 2: The organization will plan, manage, monitor and report financial information that allows stakeholders to make goal-aligned, effective decisions.

Objective 3: The organization will develop a technology plan that incorporates long-term needs, and describes its use of technology as a tool for learning and support.

Objective 4: The organization will facilitate the development of a permanent facility that reflects and enables its vision.

Goal Area 5: Community Perception

Westlake Charter School is broadly recognized for its academic excellence, its involvement within the community, and as the school of choice.

Objective 1: The organization will demonstrate our Core Values by participating in global, regional, and local community and philanthropic events.

Objective 2: The organization will expand and enhance the community's knowledge of the unique opportunities available at its schools by participating in strategic marketing, outreach, and community events.

SCHOOL ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions describe a common, agreed upon understanding of the decision makers that influences decision-making and/or planning. Assumptions can be about past or current occurrences or may be based upon best predictions about what may happen in the future.

Global Assumptions

1. Significant innovations and advances in technology will increasingly be developed by countries other than the US
2. Evolving technology, politics, and transportation will make the world "smaller"
3. Our economy will become increasingly global in nature
4. Demands on our environment and natural resources will necessitate increasing cooperation among nations to develop environmental awareness and effective conservation efforts
5. Increases in immigration and relationships between individuals of different nationalities, ethnicities, and backgrounds will result in increasing ethnic blending/diversity in our country and internationally
6. There will be many opportunities to learn valuable lessons from actions/events of other societies/cultures

Educational Assumptions

1. There will likely be certain economic and political pressures that make it increasingly difficult for teachers to succeed. It will be important to maintain /develop revenue resources.
2. There will likely be a continued focus on standards/test scores as a continued measure of success, but parents and educators find other critical factors to be measured.
3. The primary consideration for renewal is increases in student achievement both school-wide and in reportable subgroups.
4. Parents, teachers and students will be increasingly open to non-traditional methods of education including technological advances
5. Schools are in a period of change and uncertainty with regard to accountability
6. Charter schools will be forced to compete using varied measures of success including but not limited to student access to specialty classes, diversity, special programs, positive and safe environment and reputation

Student Assumptions

1. Increasing number of special education students at the middle school level
2. Increasing amount of economic diversity in our incoming students
3. There is a wide variety of family backgrounds and cultures/ethnicity and home environments
4. Students will have a wide range of their foundational educational skills and backgrounds
5. Westlake students tend to be less transient than the District as a whole but there is an increase in student transient levels
6. There is a broad array of attitudes and expectations toward education based upon prior experience
7. There is an increase in families who choose Westlake as a "fix" for prior experience in a different education setting
8. The school has an increasing English Learner population
9. The creation of the middle school may continue to increase the diversity and educational background of incoming students which is reflective of the District
10. There is an increasing population of students who are low socio-economic and/or who may receive their

main meals at the school

11. Students have varied amount of parental support

Economic Assumptions

1. School budgets and class size are dependent upon enrollment and attendance
2. Increased difficulty of fundraising due to current state of economy
3. California is potentially exiting a period of fiscal crisis for public school funding
4. The School needs to efficiently manage the resources it has and continue to look for additional sources of revenue to ensure fiscal stability and accountability
5. Recruiting, retaining and rewarding high quality teachers/staff is increasingly challenging
6. California has chosen to concentrate its funding in schools where there are high concentrations of low income/at risk populations of students which could impact funding
7. The long term agreement for District property with the future need to build a facility continues to drive fiscal decisions for Westlake
8. There is an increasing cost of technology to deliver educational programs but there is the potential for cost efficiencies in curriculum costs in the future

Societal Assumptions

1. Access to information is changing at an increasing rate
2. Most individuals will have multiple careers/geography in their lifetimes

Implications for the charter school: If these assumptions hold to be true, several implications could be drawn for the school including:

- A significant degree of understanding, and respect for other cultures/nations will be required for individuals to function effectively in the future
- A great amount of creativity will be needed to facilitate effective educational experiences and necessary parent involvement
- Educational programs need to ensure children master critical skills, and also how to work effectively with diverse types of individuals, how to think, how to communicate and how to learn throughout their lives.