

# **Twin Peaks Charter Academy Guiding Principles**

Twin Peaks Charter Academy (TPCA) started when a group of parents were drawn together by the vision of a traditional academically rigorous school. In carrying out its mission, TPCA has relied on, and will continue to rely on certain guiding principles and founding philosophies. These principles and philosophies originated in the earliest meetings of over 100 founding families and the original Board of Directors. As parents and board worked together they determined the vision and philosophical direction of the school. Through committees and open meetings, the board drafted the specifics desired for TPCA's commitment to the community and students is reflected in these principles and philosophies, and they will be used to guide the academy's actions in educating its students. All proposals and decisions on policies, curriculum, etc. have been and continue to be measured against the mission statement, these guiding principles, and the original founding philosophies.

**Continuity of these philosophies depends on the board, administration, staff, and parents remaining faithful to and communicating the following:**

**Parents are the child's first teacher and the academy is a parent-run school.**

- Parents must assist their child in order for them to be successful in this rigorous academic environment.
- Parent participation in committees and other volunteer activities is critical to student and school success, volunteers in the classroom serve at the direction of the teacher.
- The school is governed by an elected parent board and this board is accountable to the parents.
- The parent contract is used to reinforce this principle.

**Academics are the focus of the academy.**

- We are dedicated to a content rich curriculum that builds cultural literacy.
- Core Knowledge is the basis of our K-8 educational philosophy.
- Classical Education is the basis of our high school and builds on Core Knowledge through the addition of rhetoric and college preparatory coursework.
- Reading is the foundation for all learning. We employ research based reading strategies, including a focus on the skills of phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Math is fundamental to understanding our world and the universe. We employ rote memorization of math facts/basic skills, the development of number sense and problem solving skills, and develop critical thinking and logic skills necessary for college and life.
- Analyzing and critically discussing classic literature and original historic documents at all levels of education are critical and necessary building blocks for developing articulate, contributing citizens.
- Extracurricular activities and electives support academic growth. While these activities do not replace academic fundamentals, we believe that they enhance the educational experience.

**The academy practices the traditional concept of teacher-led classes.**

- Core Knowledge K-8 and Classical Education aligned with state standards dictate the curriculum, but not the teaching methodology.
- Teachers are expected to use a wide range of teaching methodologies to meet the needs of different learning styles.
- Classes will not be student directed or include self-paced learning.
- Cross grade grouping in math and reading is utilized as needed.
- The primary role of the teacher is to teach and not just to facilitate.
- Technology should be used as a tool to augment the curriculum but not replace it. The use of such technology is not a substitute for textbook learning directed by the teacher.

**Character education is essential in developing productive citizens in an ever changing world.**

- The principles of good character are integrated into daily instruction. Children understand this instruction best if done within the context of areas they are already studying, rather than a stand-alone program.
- Teachers will develop lessons to incorporate the Six Pillars of Character into K-8 instruction, and a program such as Character First into high school instruction.

**Appropriate student discipline is necessary to ensure a learning environment that is free from disruptions.**

- Teachers and students should be free to focus on classroom instruction and learning, not on a disruptive student.
- In keeping with the focus on academics and character education, the academy has instituted a strict three-strike discipline policy, which both protects the classroom learning environment and sanctions students for inappropriate behavior.

**The academy establishes high expectations for academics and behavior within an encouraging environment.**

- We believe that children will rise to the level of expectation that is placed upon them.
- Real, concrete personal accomplishments enhance good self-esteem. Therefore, we strive to offer students opportunities for true academic success through hard work and mastery of a broad and relevant curriculum. A strict grading scale and required homework are reinforce these high expectations.

**The academy has instituted a student uniform dress code.**

- The purpose of a student dress code is to reduce distractions and negative peer pressure.
- A K-8 uniform dress code and high school dress code help to create an environment which is conducive to learning and reinforces our strong discipline code.

**Twin Peaks Charter Academy relies on these guiding principles which are reviewed and updated periodically to steer and direct all decision making.**

Approved November 29, 1999

Revised April 9, 2009

Revised February 20, 2014