

# Constellation Q&A 2/7/23

\*also hosted on zoom

## Logistical Questions

**Q: What are the school hours?**

**A:** 8:15 am to 3:00 pm for 4th and 5th grades, and 8:30 am to 2:30 pm for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. Dropoff begins 15 minutes before each start time.

**Q: Will you have before and after care? Are there planned activities?**

**A:** Before care will begin at 7:15am and aftercare will end at 6:00pm

**Q: Will there be transportation provided?**

**A:** The possibility exists at a different time in our future - we will need funding for transportation and funding for insurance to cover transportation. We hope families will help each other with transportation by arranging carpools.

**Q: Will you have a middle school? How soon will that be?**

**A:** We are chartered for grades 1 - 8 and it is our intention to add the middle school grades as soon as all is in place to do so. To add the middle grades, we need to have appropriate classroom space and are actively exploring if other spaces on this property meet the health and safety requirements for classrooms.

**Q: Will school lunches be served? What kind of food for lunch and are there other snacks during the day offered to the children?**

**A:** Depending on the makeup of the student body we may qualify for free school-wide meals. More information will be forthcoming.

**Q: Are there field trips planned?**

**A:** Some likely future field trips include:

- Farm study
- Music performances
- Cultural events
- Nature, ecology, zoology

**Q: Will there be a short day?**

**A:** Our current plan is to have the third Wednesday of each month be an early release day at 12:30, and we will have aftercare available for families.

**Q: When will school start?**

**A:** Constellation will follow the Alachua County public school calendar.

**Q: How can families enroll their students?**

**A:** Our website has a link to the online enrollment application form but families may request a paper form at [info@constellationchartergnv.org](mailto:info@constellationchartergnv.org). Enrollment will remain open, with periodic enrollment periods to place students and hold lotteries for the waitlists.

**Q: How long is the wait-list?**

**A:** The waitlist is grade dependent, and enrollment will remain open as students apply and withdraw throughout the summer.

## **Instructional Questions**

**Q: What does a typical school day look like? How much time will be dedicated to outside? Academics? Art?**

**A:** There is a defined rhythm for each grade based on their developmental needs.

- The rhythm is based on the concept of “in breath, out breath”. So, for example, for activity that is “brain work”, there is a corresponding activity to bring the students into their body, often through movement.
- There will be outside time in the morning to start the day, recess midmorning and in the afternoon.
- The heavier academic work takes place in the morning, especially for the lower grades. Some subjects are also taught in lesson blocks. This creates the ability to go in great depth into the subject in a short period of time.
- Interspersed are subjects such as music, handwork, world language, PE
- Art is interwoven through all the subjects, every day. There are also times set aside everyday for a different form of art for the sake of building capacities within the students. Watercolor, form drawing, modeling (beeswax and clay).

**Q: How does a Waldorf curriculum support students with the pressures of testing?**

**A:** We are legally required to follow state guidelines with testing, but we will not be emphasizing test preparation as such. Our teachers will be continually monitoring their students’ academic progress but will also be preparing them to be able to successfully complete the tests while not placing undue emphasis or stress on the tests. Waldorf pedagogy emphasizes developing a love of learning.

**Q: Are parents permitted in the classroom?**

**A:** Any parents or guardians are very welcome with prior arrangements, and are required to pass a security check.

**Q: What are the expectations of parental involvement?**

**A:** Most charter schools request familial involvement, but as an invitation instead of a requirement. We hope to build strong relationships between staff, faculty, students, and families.

**Q: Which second language will we teach?**

**A:** Spanish will be taught as it is the language most commonly spoken in our region

other than English.

**Q: Where are we in the process of hiring teachers?**

**A:** We have begun the hiring process; our website has more information for prospective teachers.

**Q: What kind of homework should families expect?**

**A:** Any assigned homework would be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and not onerous; as opposed to traditional worksheets, busywork or work that takes a lot of time on a regular basis. We believe home life after school to be extremely important.

**Q: Will teachers follow students through the grades?**

**A:** We hope to have teachers willing to follow their students throughout their time at Constellation.

**Q: What if a child doesn't have a good relationship with their teacher?**

**A:** As they move through the years together they will be building and working on their relationship, and families can also participate to create a positive dynamic. It is the responsibility of the school and the teacher to look closely at a challenging relationship and, alongside the family and the student, find an appropriate way forward..

**Q: How do teachers get trained in Waldorf education?**

**A:** We must hire teachers who are certified (or in the process of being certified) in the state of Florida, and there are many Waldorf-oriented teacher training [options](#) available. In addition, Constellation offers guidance through the year.

**Q: What about the teacher enrichment program?**

**A:** There is an ongoing teacher arts enrichment program at the moment. We will have more programs in the future and will keep the enrichment opportunities cycling.

**Q: How is Constellation different from other schools?**

**A:** Charter schools were created to offer an innovative approach to education, thereby creating better outcomes and bridging educational disparities in Florida.

First, it is in how we are present with the children and for what purpose.

- Quote:

Receive the Children in Reverence  
Educate them in Love  
Send them forth in Freedom

- Freedom is the sense of being capable of actions motivated solely by love. This requires teachers and others who work at the school, to be able to receive the students with a sense of awe for who they are and for the potential that lies within them.

Second, it is how the curriculum is unfolded, not just in content, but in methods that encourage students' healthy development.

**Q: How will the state standards be met with Waldorf pedagogy?**

**A:** Charter Schools are required to meet all state standards and demonstrate high performance on FAST progress monitoring in order to keep their charter. We do so in an enriching and developmentally appropriate manner. There is also data that shows students from Waldorf charter schools being a little behind the average or on par at third grade, and then progressing until students far surpass the average by 8th grade. We are following in the footsteps of very successful Waldorf charter schools across the United States. There is also an organization for public Waldorf schools, APWE (Association for Public Waldorf Education), of which we are a member. Other existing Waldorf charter schools have mapped the Waldorf-inspired curriculum to the various state standards and we have the benefit of their work.

**Q: How will your school work with kids with special needs?**

**A:** As with all charter schools, we are required to meet the needs of all our students. We welcome all students and will accommodate 504s and IEPs. We will have a tiered system for students who need extra support, and are recruiting an ESE teacher. Our goal is to keep children with their cohort in the classroom as much as possible. If a child needs to be pulled out of the classroom we are able to do so. As is the case in most school districts in Florida, there may be specific schools in the district that better meet the needs of certain students.

**Q: How will your school work with kids who don't speak English as their first language?**

**A:** We are required to follow the state's ESOL guidelines to support these students. This includes having a teacher with an ESOL endorsement if there is a need.

**Diversity Questions:**

**Q: How do the curriculum, the festivals, events, family integration and the faculty and staff show a commitment to diversity?**

**A:** Our school is committed to providing our students with an inclusive curriculum representing the diverse society to which we belong. We believe in preparing today's children for tomorrow's world by instilling the importance of social justice and inclusivity from within the curriculum to the classroom, and beyond. We are committed to community building and diversity within our staff and school culture.

**Q: How will this school integrate Latino, Black and Asian cultures into the school?**

**A:**

- Our Vision Statement expresses our commitment to honoring the diversity found in our communities. We will listen and learn from the families enrolled at Constellation.
- We have a choice of content when unfolding the curriculum. As are other schools around the United States and around the world, we will source from

multicultural perspectives, and perspectives that are relevant to the students and families enrolled in Constellation, reflected in our stories (fairytales, fables, etc.), festivals, and heroes.

- We are actively recruiting students from a variety of local communities - they will reflect the diversity of our district.
- We are actively recruiting staff from these local communities.

**Q: Who are the teachers for each of the classes? What are their ethnic/linguistic backgrounds and educational training?**

**A:** We are currently beginning the hiring process, and we will work towards our staff reflecting our richly varied community. We will also bring honored community members into the classroom when possible.