

School Mission

Falcon Ridge Charter School's mission is to develop students who are competent, confident, productive, and responsible young adults who possess the habits, skills, and attitudes to succeed in life and be offered the invitation of a post-secondary education and satisfying employment.

School Philosophy

Falcon Ridge Charter School is grounded in the belief that when there is low threat and content is highly challenging, accelerated learning takes place.

Harbor School Method

The Harbor School Method believes education should be child centered and built on high expectations for both student behavior and academic endeavor. Decisions on every level should be based on the question, "what's best for kids?" The method proactively sets up an environment that allows students to focus on learning, while in a safe, secure setting.

Focus on Kindness

The Harbor School Method provides a comprehensive plan for character education. Harbor schools employ the Harbor School Method character education plan with its focus on kindness and zero tolerance policy for teasing, bullying, and negative peer pressure. The Harbor School Method is a proactive solution for the violence that is all too prevalent in schools today. The name Harbor School Method comes from our total commitment to make schools a "safe harbor" for children entrusted to our care.

Academic Program

The Harbor School Method provides a comprehensive plan and rigorous program of core subject instruction. Harbor schools employ the Harbor School Method academic program that is built on high expectations for all students. Teachers who will not compromise the rigor of the program out of fear that some students "are not getting it" must be hired to teach the method. When taught correctly, the Harbor School Method ensures that students will "get it" without the need to slow the entire class down in the process. Direct instruction combined with individual student attention (provided by educational assistants, teachers, and parent volunteers) is the key to each student's success in a Harbor School. Ability grouping (leveling) is not used in the Harbor School Method. The Harbor School Method curriculum guide provides details in the specific curriculum prescribed for all grade levels and must be followed in its entirety by Harbor Schools.

School Leadership

The principal's role as a servant leader is central to the Harbor School Method. The principal's primary responsibility is daily supervision and support of teachers to ensure the consistent application of the Harbor School Method. During the instructional period of the day, the principal spends time in the classrooms and student contact areas and not in the office. Administrative paperwork and meetings with parents should be handled after school hours to allow the principal to focus on students and teachers during instructional time. For example, principals are required to directly supervise students before school, after school, and during the lunch hour.

Attendance

Harbor Schools must adopt an attendance policy of 96% and utilize Harbor School Method strategies to ensure the attendance goal is met. Those strategies include parental awareness training on the importance of high attendance, student awareness training with a school-to-work emphasis on the importance of attendance, a family friendly year round schedule, no personal days for staff to ensure they model our attendance policy, and grades that can be positively or adversely affected by attendance.

Financial Management

Harbor Schools adopt a budget plan that prioritizes top wages for teachers. It is our philosophy that each dollar must be maximized for the ultimate benefit of the student, and the most effective way to do that is to ensure those teachers are paid well. The Harbor School institute will provide budget consultation and oversight. Further, the Harbor School Method requires a high standard of checks and balances for all financial transactions.

Parental Involvement

Harbor schools must make every effort to educate parents about the Harbor School Method. All parents should have complete understanding of the method before enrolling their children, a thorough orientation before the first day of school, and ongoing opportunities to experience the method through classroom visits. Harbor schools encourage parents to volunteer in various ways to enhance the program's effectiveness, as research shows parental involvement can increase student achievement.

Board of Directors

When implemented in charter schools, the Harbor School Method requires a board of directors that thoroughly understands and believes in the Harbor School Method. The board of directors supports the staff and governs the school in a manner consistent with the Harbor philosophy. The board provides the checks and balances needed for financial and legal matters. They have direct involvement in hiring the principal who then is responsible for the educational and day to day operations of the school.

Summary

“When students are given a learning environment with low threat to their personal safety and self esteem and highly challenging academic content, the inevitable outcome is accelerated learning.”

The Harbor School Method establishes a school philosophy, embraced by teachers, the administrator, students, and parents, which hold that every student is valued and every student will succeed at a high level both socially and academically. The Harbor School character education plan results in a safe school infused with positive peer pressure as well as students who are ready to learn everyday, possessing the self-discipline needed to maximize theirs and others educational experiences. The academic program of a Harbor School is designed to meet the needs of students, and not to cater to the convenience of teachers, administrators, or the school calendar. All styles and rates of learning are taken into account, yet expectations for achievement are not compromised. The Harbor School Method is evidence that where expectations are high and supported with proper instruction in an environment conducive to concentration and comprehension, the results are outstanding.