



NSA West: A Preschool – 8th Grade Douglas County Charter School

Opening August 2010

An innovative, tuition-free public charter school that offers families a new choice in public education. NSA West offers the Core Knowledge curriculum, an integrated, content-based Spanish language program, and strong character education and service learning programs. The school is open to all preschool – 8th grade students living in the Douglas County area on a space-available basis.

The School

NSA West replicates the successful educational program of North Star Academy, located in Parker. Founded by the same startup team, NSA West will ultimately serve pre-school – 8th grade students in Highlands Ranch and the surrounding communities.

Spanish Language

When students study a language other than their own, they are initiating a learning journey which will provide them with many educational benefits, and will enrich and enlarge their appreciation and understanding of international cultures. Our program allows students to spend more time using and interacting with meaningful language, explore a larger range of topics, and make more connections between language and content.

Classroom Differentiated Instruction

NSA West believes that students develop an understanding for educational principles and acquire knowledge in a variety of ways. Teachers use a differentiated instructional approach in their classrooms making learning accessible to every student.

Benchmark Assessments

Students are tested up to four times a year so parents, students and teachers can monitor their progress. The testing occurs electronically and timely results allow for modifications in instruction that benefit each student.

The Academic Program

Reading

Open Court includes phonics instruction which provides the building blocks for students to develop a solid reading foundation. The curriculum is a literature rich, reading and language arts program that instills passion in children for lifelong learning, and a love of reading.

Writing / Language Arts

Shurley English is research-based, includes explicit instruction of phonics and word knowledge, comprehension skills and strategies, inquiry skills and strategies, and writing and language arts skills and strategies. Saxon phonics is used in grades K-2; Open Court in grades 3-6; and Realms of Gold Core Knowledge classic novels are read in grades 7 and 8.

Mathematics

The Saxon Math approach is designed to help students gain and retain essential math skills. Each concept taught builds on the foundation of the earlier concept allowing children to master one concept before moving on to the next related one.

Spanish

An integrated, content-based Spanish program is both time spent learning the language as well as learning content subject matter in Spanish. Students will acquire level proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Kindergarten – 6 receive instruction from the Viva el Espanol curriculum with 15 minutes of instruction daily for Kindergarteners, and 39 minutes daily for grades 1 – 6. Grades 7 – 8 receive 50 minutes of instruction daily from the Realidades curriculum.

Social Studies

Through engaging visuals, interactive technology, and first-hand accounts, the Core Knowledge curriculum brings subjects to life and educates students about our country and the world.

Science

The Scott Pearson curriculum aligns itself well with Core Knowledge covering Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, Scientific Reasoning and Technology, Biology, Chemistry and Physics. It provides students with science experiences that are appropriate to their stages of cognitive development with lab work for grades 7 – 8 and appropriate experiments in the lower grades.

Fine Arts, PE – alternates every third day

Music and art are essential components of a liberal arts Core Knowledge curriculum and provide students with a better understanding of history and language arts. PE focuses on life-long wellness activities and healthy life choices.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Rigorous curriculum based on the **Core Knowledge** series. Students are exposed to a variety of historical, scientific, and cultural topics that build from year-to-year in a sequential manner.

Integrated, content-based **Spanish language** program that begins in preschool.

Service learning projects to benefit both local and global organizations.

A directly taught weekly **charter education** program focused on developing a positive school culture and teaching students skills that will help them make responsible and intelligent choices.

Calendar year that follows a **traditional schedule**.

Multiple opportunities for **parent involvement** including classroom and at-home projects, organized events and serving on the school's Board of Directors.

Uniforms required for all students.

Technology-rich environment will include Smart Boards in every classroom and a technology lab.