

# **CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC WALDORF EDUCATION**

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Members of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education are committed to the principles listed below. They ensure that Public Waldorf education is ever-evolving, and continuously renewed through practice, research, observation, and active reflection.

## **1. Image of the Human Being:**

*Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human being.*

- Each human being is a unique individual who brings specific gifts, creative potential, and intentions to this life. Public Waldorf education addresses multiple aspects of the developing child including the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, moral, and spiritual. Through this, each child is helped to integrate into a maturing whole, able to determine a unique path through life.
- Rudolf Steiner's educational insights are seen as a primary, but not exclusive, source of guidance for an understanding of the image of the human being.

## **2. Child Development:**

*An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program, to the greatest extent possible within established legal mandates.*

- Human development proceeds in approximate 7-year phases. Each phase has characteristic physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions and a primary learning orientation.
- The Public Waldorf educational program, including the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods, work with this understanding of human development to address the needs of the individual and the class in order to support comprehensive learning and healthy, balanced development.
- Our developmental perspective informs how state and federal mandates, including curriculum sequence, standardized testing, and college and career readiness, are met.

## **3. Social Change Through Education:**

*Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society.*

- Public Waldorf education seeks to offer the most supportive conditions possible for the development of each student's unique capacities and for engendering the following qualities to work towards positive social change:
  - A harmonious relationship between thinking, feeling, and willing;
  - Self-awareness and social competence;
  - Developmentally appropriate, academically informed, independent thinking;
  - The initiative and confidence necessary to transform intentions into realities; and
  - An interest in the world, with active respect and a feeling of responsibility for oneself, one's community, and the environment.
- Such individuals will be able to participate meaningfully in society.

#### **4. Human Relationships:**

*Public Waldorf Schools foster a culture of healthy relationships.*

- Enduring relationships -- and the time needed to develop them -- are central to Public Waldorf education. The teacher works with each student and class as a whole to support relationship-based learning.
- Healthy working relationships with parents, colleagues, and all stakeholders are essential to the well being of the student, class, and school community. Everyone benefits from a community life that includes festivals, events, adult education, study, and volunteer activities.
- Public Waldorf education encourages collaboration in schools, within the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, among all schools working out of a developmental approach, in conjunction with the broader field of education.

#### **5. Access and Diversity:**

*Public Waldorf Schools work to increase diversity and access to all sectors of society.*

- Public Waldorf schools respond to unique demands and cultures in a wide range of locations in order to provide maximum access to a diverse range of students. Schools work towards ensuring that students do not experience discrimination in admission, retention, or participation.
- Public Waldorf schools and teachers have the responsibility to creatively address the developmental needs of the students with the most inclusive possible approaches for all learners.
- The Public Waldorf program and curriculum is developed by the school to reflect its student population.

#### **6. Collaborative Leadership:**

*School leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal structures.*

- Faculty, staff, administration and boards of a Public Waldorf school collaborate to guide and lead the school with input from stakeholder groups. To the greatest extent possible, decisions related to the educational program are the responsibility of those faculty and staff with knowledge and experience of Rudolf Steiner's educational insights.
- Governance and internal administration are implemented in a manner that cultivates active collaboration, supportive relationships, effective leadership, consequential action, and accountability. A Public Waldorf school is committed to studying and deepening its understanding of best practices of governance appropriate to its stage of organizational development.

#### **7. Schools as Learning Communities:**

*Public Waldorf schools cultivate a love of lifelong learning and self-knowledge.*

- Public Waldorf education emphasizes continuous engagement in learning and self-reflective practices that support ongoing improvement. At the individual and classroom level, teachers reflect regularly on their observations of the students and of the educational process. Essential aspects of school-wide work and

professional development include self-reflection, peer review, faculty and individual study, artistic activity, and research.

- Rudolf Steiner is a primary, but not exclusive, source of guidance for developing an active inner, meditative life and an understanding of the dynamics within society.
- Public Waldorf schools encourage all community members to engage in active and ongoing ways to enhance their capacities as human beings through self-reflection and conscious social engagement.