



2022-23 Annual Report

Mission & Overview

Wasatch Charter School is a K-8 tuition-free charter school in the Salt Lake Valley guided by the principles of public Waldorf education that provides a comprehensive education program integrating academics, arts, movement, nature, and social responsibility into everyday learning. Through a culture of holistic learning and dedication to the optimal development of each individual child, WCS nurtures intellectual, social and emotional, and physical capacities through an artistic, hands-on, interdisciplinary approach to core academic subjects which enables each student to blossom into an imaginative, engaged, competent, life-long learner. Our students, teachers, faculty, and families emerge as confident, creative, strong critical thinkers and environmental stewards, empowered to act positively in their own lives and communities.

OVERVIEW

The 2022-23 school year marked the seventh operational year at Wasatch Waldorf Charter School and also a resumption of typical activities after the Covid-19 pandemic. We resumed school five days a week, along with a full music program. We enjoyed gathering as a community and devoted resources to re-building community.

With the settling that was experienced, we took up self-study and the accreditation process with the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education. This process provided a structured way to involve faculty, staff, and school leadership, including members of the school's Governing Board, Wasatch Family Foundation Board and the Family Council. Working groups reflected on the school's history and current operations in relation to the Alliance's Core Principles and helped create documentation of their observations. In addition, the School's Pedagogical Advisory Committee compiled the information and provided an overall analysis of strengths and weaknesses and strategic next steps. All of this information was shared with the site visit team and all of the stakeholder groups. The Site Visit team added their observations, and, subsequently, Wasatch Waldorf Charter School was approved as only the fourth full member school in the nation in the Alliance. A copy of the final report, including the Site Visit team's observations, is included within this report as a representation of a significant focus, achievement and record of the year's activities.

Site-based leadership was also increased through the activities of the Pedagogical Advisory Committee, an additional summer deepening course and APPEL courses for teachers. Students made continued progress and received engaged, quality instruction. Overall, it was a year filled with the realization of many long-standing intentions and significant growth.

Emily Merchant
Executive Director

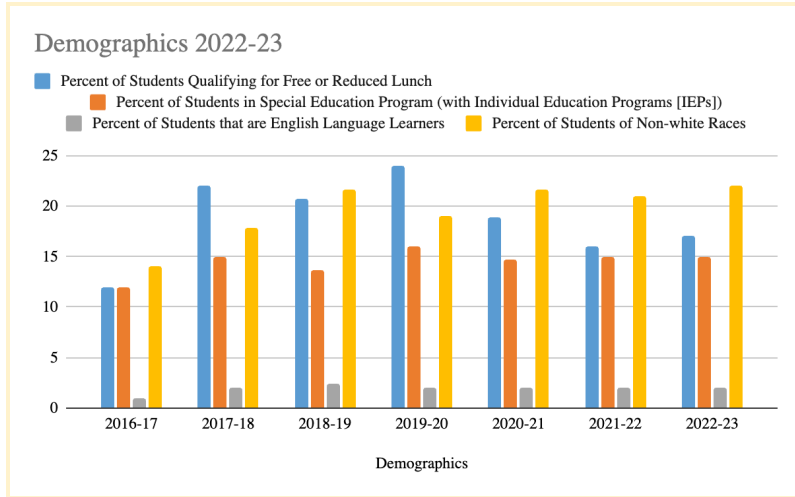
2022-23 Key Accomplishments

- ★ Approval of full membership from Alliance for Public Waldorf Education.
- ★ School resumed a five day a week schedule and typical activities, including school breakfast and lunches.
- ★ Demonstrated “Exemplary” Growth on the State Performance metrics, with “High” percentages of growth for both English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- ★ Provided quality training to teachers, including additional summer offerings, on-site math workshops, LETRS reading training, and curative training.
- ★ Continued growth of innovative “Special Class” in special education, our “Lotus” class. Developed unique movement-based approach to working with students.
- ★ Exceptionally high student and staff retention.
- ★ Academic growth and progress was made across most grades as measured by internal assessment metrics.
- ★ Met all early literacy goals.
- ★ Fundraising engagement and revenue was high.
- ★ Governing Board leadership and processes were strengthened.
- ★ Continued low number of disciplinary actions, including suspension for behavior that violated the school’s Code of Conduct.

Our Community

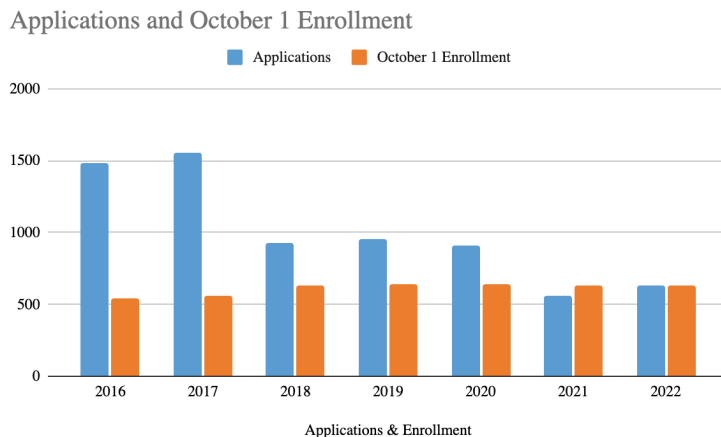
Demographics

In our seventh year, all demographic measures remained relatively close to the previous years, as demonstrated below. The data on economic disadvantage is likely low as it is based on free and reduced lunch which may continue to be an under-representation as we work to get students re-enrolled in the program after several years of federally-supported free lunches.



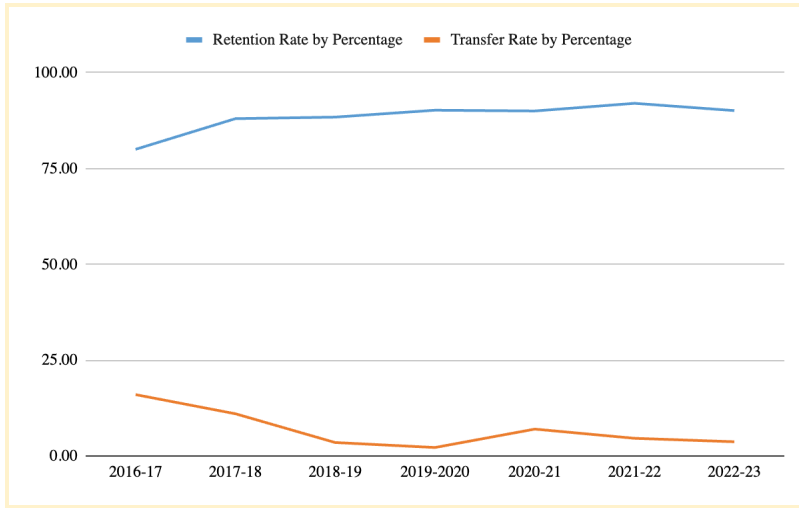
Enrollment

WCS maintained consistent interest in enrollment, once again enrolling close to our maximum and maintaining sizable waiting lists throughout the year.



Retention

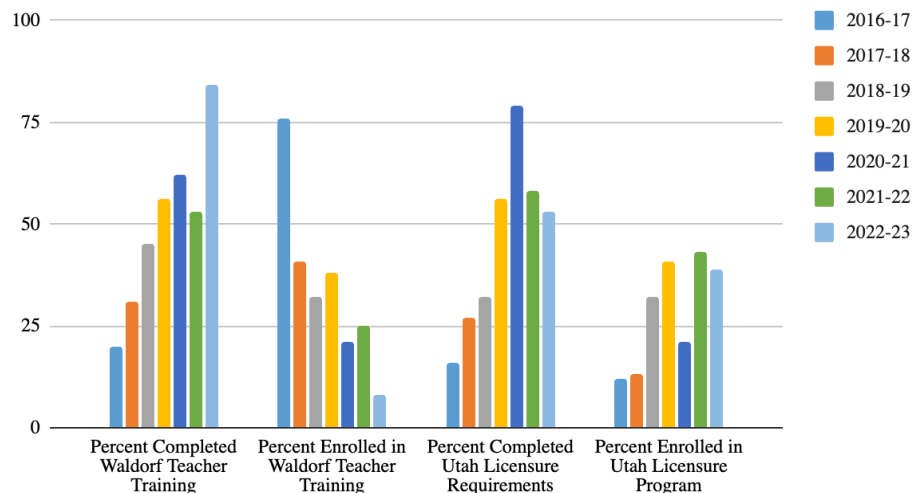
WCS maintained year to year with a 100.6% enrollment trend. Our student retention was at 90.1% of our students returning for the 2022-23 school year. The within year transfer rate (the number of students who withdraw *during* the school year) was lower than the previous year at 3.1%. On all measures, WCS outperformed the State average for all charter schools and the State's target goals of 95% enrollment trend, 80% retention and less than 15% transfer rate.



Employee Qualifications & Training

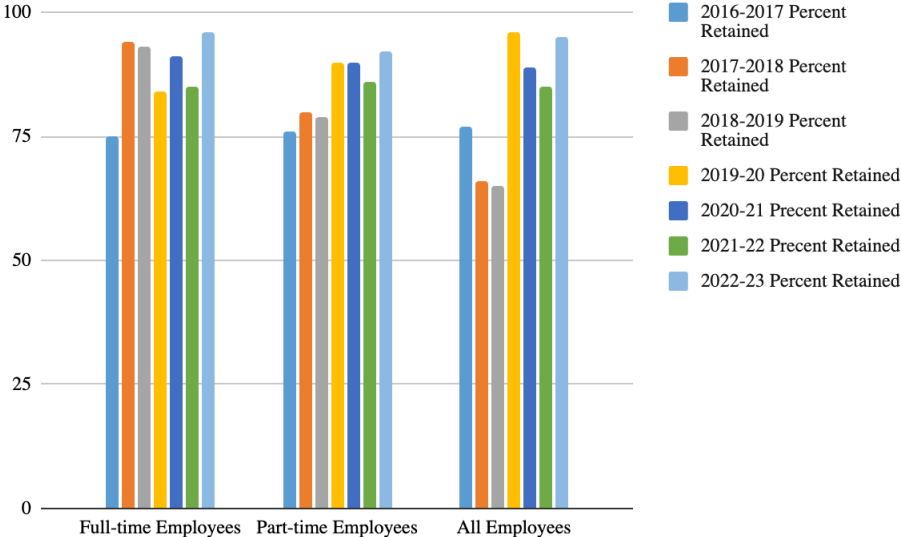
Additional teachers completed Waldorf training in the summer prior to the 2021-22 school year, and many teachers began or continued training programs as well. A significant increase occurred in the number of teachers with Utah teaching licenses, as well as those involved in a licensure training program. Overall, a far greater number of teachers have been with the school for multiple years and have completed State licensure and Waldorf training.

Teacher and Administrator Credentials



Employee Retention

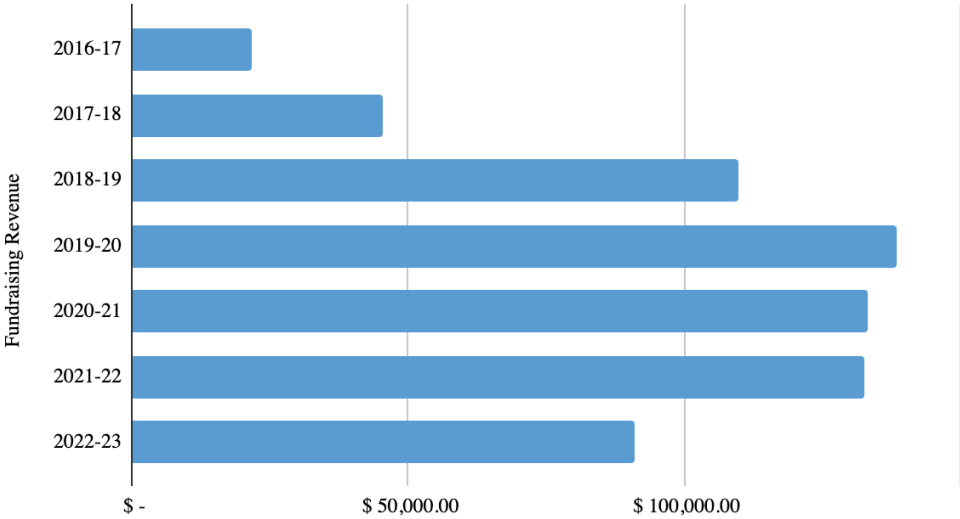
WCS had very strong employee and teacher retention again with an overall retention of all employees was the highest yet at 95%, with 96% of full-time Faculty and 92% of part-time staff returning from the previous school year.



Fundraising

WCS continued to have significant community investment in our programs and mission, with revenue from various fundraising activities holding steady, even during the pandemic. Our total funds raised was \$91,020, a reduction of about \$40,000 over the previous year based on lower revenue from both the Sustainer program and the Spring Gala.

Fundraising Revenue



Family & Community Engagement

Community engagement was an area of focus in the 2022-23 school year with significantly more involvement than in the preceding pandemic years. The Family Council helped to recruit and maintain very engaged Parent Coordinators to work with each class. They also tracked 219 individual volunteers who contributed to the school during the year.

Key Elements

These aspects of our original charter application and agreement with the State Charter School Board have been deemed to be central to fully implementing our mission and vision of a fully realized Waldorf school within the context of the Utah Charter School system. Annually, we review progress to help re-center and prevent mission creep.

Maintain a large enough student population to offer all programmatic elements listed in the approved application.

Meets: Enrollment has remained steady, with consistent interest allowing WCS to continue to grow and develop all program elements intended. Wasatch enrolled 635 students as of the October 1 student count and maintained an Average Daily Membership of 629 students throughout the school year.

Be based on a developmental approach to curriculum which uses Waldorf methods and partners with public or private Waldorf associations.

Meets: Teachers and administration are utilizing developmental approach to curriculum, Waldorf methods and working with a variety of trainers and mentors to deepen faculty knowledge and work. WCS is officially a full member of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and also attends events and trainings associated with the Association for Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA).

Teachers actively participate in a Waldorf teacher training within 2 years of employment and complete training within the expected timeframe for the selected program.

Meets: As noted above, 84% of teachers and administrators have completed Waldorf training and another 8% were actively enrolled during the 2022-23 school year.

Integrate the Utah Core Standards into the existing Waldorf curriculum to seamlessly teach competencies and material.

Meets: Guides for teachers, professional development and alignment documents are all developed or in process to support the seamless integration of standards into the Waldorf curriculum. This is a matter of on-going effort and development, as it relies, in part, on teacher experience and competencies. Courses and training for teachers exists and is provided annually in mathematics, science and language arts.

Integrates arts and hands-on activities into curriculum to promote human development and brain development, including all five of the key methods through which children build neural connections: music, art, handwork, movement, and forming personal connections to adults.

Meets: Arts, hands-on activities, music, movement, handwork, and connection continue to thrive in WCS. These elements are clearly demonstrable in classroom observations. Professional development and collaboration is being facilitated to continue to support teachers in growing their own expertise in these areas.

Offers specialty classes taught outside Main Lessons and practice periods that further integrate and reinforce curriculum content and holistic development.

Meets: Specialty classes have been able to build on curriculum in all areas. Class teachers and specialty teachers continue to collaborate more and more each year.

Use a holistic approach of formative assessment.

Meets: WCS provides narrative-based reports for parents on student progress and uses portfolio reviews to highlight student growth and learning in grades 6-8.

Teachers loop with students, staying with same group of students for multiple grades, when possible from grades 1 – 8.

Meets: Many teachers have been able to loop with their classes, although individual needs and circumstances and changes in staffing often create exceptions and always will.

Includes a Family Council that meets regularly, typically monthly during the school year, to coordinate efforts to involve families, build school culture, participate in committees, and provide advice to governing board regarding family and student needs.

Meets: Family Council leadership has been strong. Regular meetings are held, the Chair collaborates with the Joint Committee and school administration, and Parent Coordinators offer real support to teachers and the community.

Has a garden and farming program which partners with local farms and gardens, outdoor education programs, and local natural resource organizations to provide educational experiences to students, including instruction in gardening and cooking.

Meets: WCS leases 11 acres of county farm land near the school. Additional gardening and farming opportunities have emerged through this collaboration, including a CSA. Work continues towards including items from the garden in the school lunch program. Gardening

classes have included more cooking and stewardship for the school grounds.

Students receive regular foreign language instruction.

Spanish classes began again for lower grades. It is the commencement of working to rebuild a stronger foreign language program.

Students receive consistent musical instruction through their class activities and specialty classes (in grades 4 – 8).

Meets: Lower grades 1-3 have music classes. Students from grades 4-8 have string and/or orchestra twice a week. Singing and recorder playing in Main Lessons has been resumed.

Incorporates movement into Main Lesson activities and into the school day through games and eurythmy classes.

Meets: Movement is alive and well in WCS and is a part of the beginning of all classes Main Lessons. Classes from 1-8 grade have games class and part-time eurythmy. All teachers are receiving more training on bringing movement into their classrooms, particularly therapeutic movement throughout the day.

Incorporates sustainable living practices, environmental stewardship, and experiential learning through outdoor experiences and sustainable practices.

Meets: Many outdoor experiences occurred, including nature walks, hikes, time outdoors, gardening and camping trips. Continued work occurred on gardening program, recycling program, and farming, as well as supporting teachers in developing an understanding of how to teach outdoors.

Uses a community-wide approach to discipline, including offering training to teachers, parents, and community members on the “3 streams” (or an equivalent) approach to working with students on discipline, social inclusion, and Rtl processes

Meets: The 3 Streams program is robust and includes an effective referral process for promptly addressing student needs and teacher and parent concerns. This included online meetings with students and lots of innovative supports during the pandemic. The Rtl process is formalized with referral forms and format for Support Circle meetings with parents, 3 week follow-ups and SPED referral process. Progress monitoring is formalized and supported by the Assessment Coordinator.

Parents and families are involved in a community of learning, including regular festivals, classes, and activities that connect to the purposes and mission of WWCS.

Meets: A Parent Education program commenced in the 2022-23 school year to help provide more consistent experiences for all parents at the school to learn about the curriculum and child development. Many activities are occurring regularly, such as parenting classes, Family Council Meetings, Back to School Night, Panel Discussion & Class Parent Nights.

Charter Agreement Performance Measures

Upper Grades Local Performance Measures

These charter performance measures were reviewed with the State Charter School Board (SCSB) during our 5 Year Comprehensive review in 2021-22. Given the lack of annual assessment data from numerous years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, evidence was not clear on the trajectory towards meeting these goals. In consultation with SCSB, it was determined that the charter-specific goals set prior to the school's opening were not the best reflection of the school's priorities and duplicative of other state and local goals. Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, these performance measures will no longer be part of the charter agreement, and thus, they are not tracked here.

Percentage of students in grade 3 reading on grade level at the beginning and end of the year: 90%

2016-17: **88%** of students in third grade that were proficient at the beginning of the year remained proficient at the end of the year.

2017-18: **100%** of students in third grade that were proficient at the beginning of the year remained proficient at the end of the year.

2018-2019: **100%** of students in third grade that were proficient at the beginning of the year remained proficient at the end of the year.

2019-2020: No data available for school year; State end-of-year assessments did not occur due to Covid pandemic and closure of in-person schooling.

2020-2021: **100%** of students in third grade that were proficient at the beginning of the year remained proficient at the end of the year.

2021-2022: **100%** of students in third grade that were proficient at the beginning of the year remained proficient at the end of the year.

2022-2023: **100%** of students in third grade that were proficient at the beginning of the year remained proficient at the end of the year.

Percentage of students in grade 3 not reading on grade level at the beginning of the year who are reading on grade level at the end of the year: 40%.

2016-17: **10%** of students who were not proficient at the beginning of the year reached proficiency by the end of the year.

WCS met its UNIFORM GROWTH GOAL as set and calculated by the Utah State Board of Education.

2017-18: **6%** of students who were not proficient at the beginning of the year reached proficiency by the end of the year.

WCS again met its UNIFORM GROWTH GOAL as set and calculated by the Utah State Board of Education.

2018-19: **29%** of students who were not proficient at the beginning of the year reached proficiency by the end of the year.

In 2018-19, the State's cut score for the UNIFORM GROWTH GOAL increased from 48% to 60% and shifted to include not only 3rd Grade students, but all of 1st-3rd. WCS scored 59% and just missed the newly increased standard as set and calculated by the Utah State Board of Education.

2019-2020: No data available for school year; State end-of-year assessments did not occur due to Covid pandemic and closure of in-person schooling.

2020-2021: **29%** of students who were not proficient at the beginning of the year reached proficiency by the end of the year.

WCS again met its UNIFORM GROWTH GOAL as set by the State (Goal: 60% of Grades 1-3 make typical or better progress). WCS had 74% of our students make typical or better progress. 9% higher than the State's average.

2021-2022: **26%** of students who were not proficient at the beginning of the year reached proficiency by the end of the year.

WCS again met its UNIFORM GROWTH GOAL as set by the State (Goal: 60% of Grades 1-3 make typical or better progress). WCS had 67% of our students make typical or better progress.

2022-2023: **57%** of students who were not proficient at the beginning of the year reached proficiency by the end of the year.

WCS again met its UNIFORM GROWTH GOAL as set by the State (Goal: 67% of Grades 1-3 make typical or better progress). WCS had 68% of our students make typical or better progress.

Percentage of students in grades 1 – 8 missing \geq 10% of school days: 14% or less.
2016-17: 15% of students missed over 10% of the school year.
2017-18: 22% of students missed over 10% of the school year.
2018-19: 12% of students missed over 10% of the school year.
2019-20: 6.4% of students missed over 10% of the school year.
2020-21: 6.79% of students missed over 10% of the school year. However, numbers were hard to track based on Covid pandemic and extensive quarantines / remote learning.
2021-22: 26.3% of students missed over 10% of the school year. These numbers reflect significant absences due to the Covid pandemic and extensive quarantines without a remote learning option for the year.
2022-23: 37.5% of students missed over 10% of the school year.

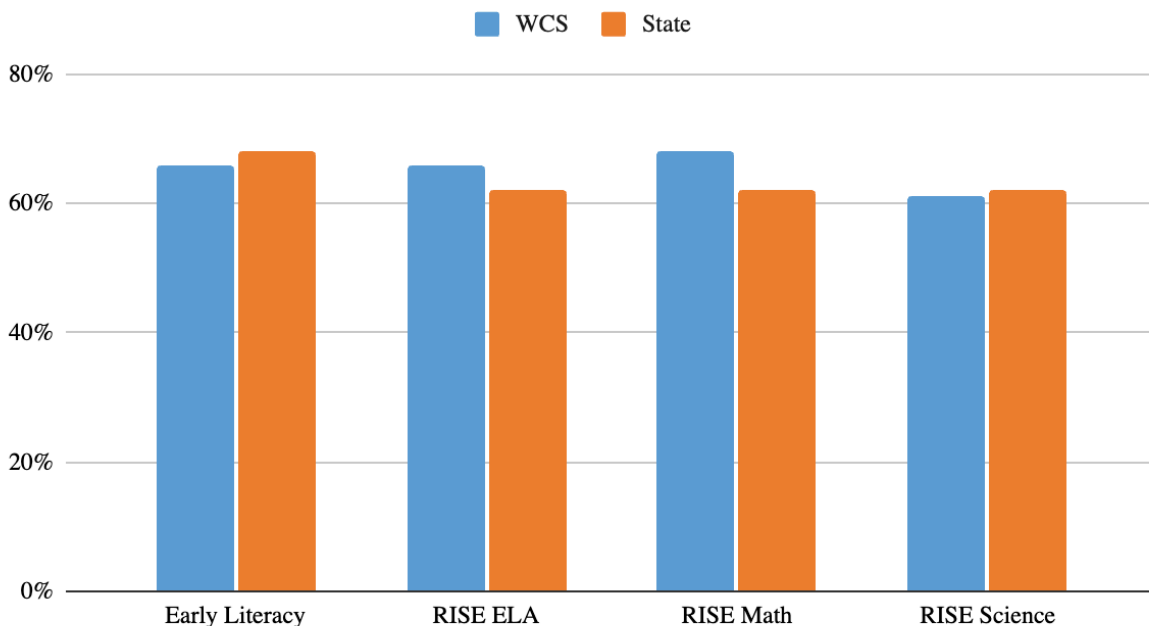
Student Achievement Scores

Growth

Overall, students were assessed using three tools: Acadience (a state-required indicator of early reading and math used in grades 1-3 and administered three times a year), NWEA (a benchmark assessment used internally for students to track progress in ELA and Math administered 3 times a year), and RISE (a state-required summative assessment used in grades 3-8 and administered only at the end of the year).

At WCS, we focus on **student growth** overtime, recognizing that all students learn and progress at their own, individual paces. Consequently, we find the most critical piece of state data to be our growth percentiles, or the number of students who increased their level of proficiency from one year to the next. In this measurement, the State's School Report Card scored WCS as "Exemplary." In particular, in nearly every area, we were at or above the State's average for growth. Of particular note, for our students who had been in the lowest 25th percentile or lower, 70% of them made growth, even higher than 62% in 2021-22.

WCS and State



READING LOWER GRADES

Overall, reading scores for students in grades 1-3 have increased over the course of the years that the school has been operating, as shown on the charts below. As we expect within our Waldorf model, these numbers look lower because our first graders have a slower start to reading. However, we consider to see significant growth overtime and have consistently increased third grade proficiency to exceed that of the State overall. Below is a summary of state and local literacy goals for the 2022-23 school year.

State Goal

The State Growth Goal requires 60% of first through third grade students to make typical, above typical, or well above typical growth from beginning of year to the end of year as measured by Pathways of Progress on the Acadience Reading assessment. **WE MET with 68% OF 1ST-3RD GRADE WHO MADE TYPICAL/BETTER GROWTH. We also had the highest level of growth yet for our third graders.**

Local Goals

By EOY of 2023, we will move 50% of third grade students who are below benchmark composite score at BOY to at or above benchmark composite score at EOY as measured by Acadience Reading correlation report. **We moved 100% of our third graders who were Below Benchmark at the beginning of the year to At or Above Benchmark by the end of the year.**

By EOY of 2023, we will increase the percentage of first grade students at or above benchmark on Acadience Reading Nonsense Word Fluency Whole Words Read from BOY to EOY by 5%. **We increased our first graders scoring At or Above Benchmark on whole word read by 11%, double our goal. WORD READ (NNW) BY 11%. Doubling our percentage.**

	Beginning of the Year % Proficient	End of the Year % Proficient
FIRST	12%	19%
SECOND	24%	27%
THIRD	62%	78%

Acadience READING PERCENT PROFICIENCY by GRADE						
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1st	39	11	14	28	18	21
2nd	50	32	29	53	54	27
3rd	63	59	65	61	76	78

Acadience READING PERCENT PROFICIENCY by COHORT						
	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
1st-3rd	39	32	65			
2nd-3rd	50	59				
1st-2nd		11	29			
1st / 3rd			14	60.7		
2nd-3rd				53	76	
1st-3rd				28	54	78
1st-2nd					18	20
1st						27

MATH LOWER GRADES

Overall, math for the lower grades is still emerging. Part of this is due to the nature of the assessment. (The math assessment does not have an option to read aloud to students, so students who struggle in reading cannot do well on the mathematics exam, even though they may if it were administered differently.) In addition, we have put tremendous focus on improving literacy instruction and training teachers. That focus is not moving to mathematics in the lower grades, and it is expected that there will be demonstrable increases as a result. Overall, 21% of first through third graders were At or Above Benchmark on the Acadience Mathematics assessment.

State Goal

The State Growth Goal requires 60% of first through third grade students to make typical, above typical, or well above typical growth from beginning of year to the end of year as measured by Pathways of Progress on the Acadience Mathematics assessment. 19% of our first through third graders met this metric.

Local Goals

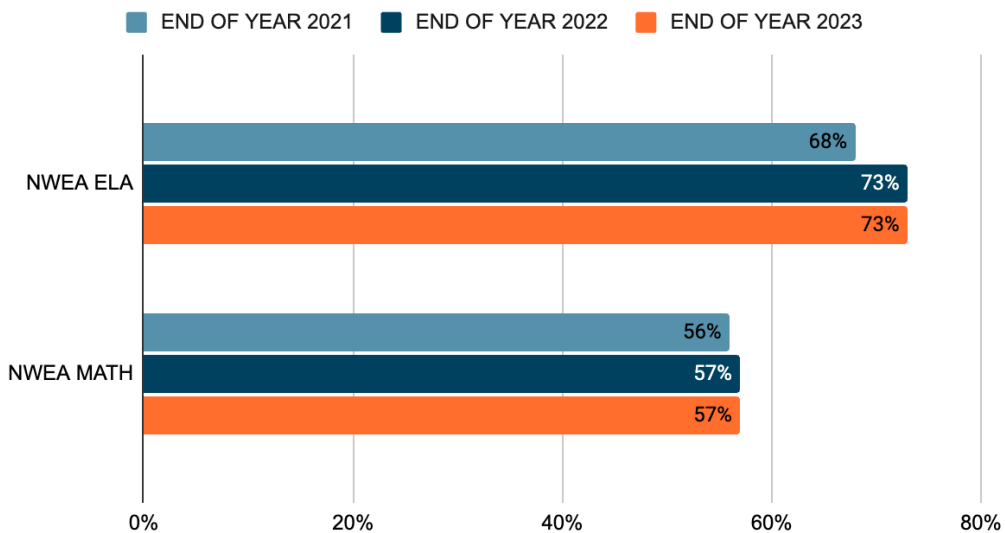
End of year 2023, we will move 6% of our second grade students scoring well below or below on the measure computation at the BOY to at or above benchmark by EOY as measured by Acadience Math. **We had 5% of our 2nd graders who scored well below or below at the Beginning of the Year move to At or Above Benchmark on the measure Computation.** These small percentages are really hard to make meaningful for our school. The State requires these types of goals and they are more valuable for large school districts with much larger cohorts of students. For a school our size with only 85 students in second grade, and less of them in the category being targeted, 1% can be less than 1 student. It is subsequently hard to say that the goal was really “missed” it was off by less than one student who met the requirement.

	Beginning of the Year % Proficient	End of the Year % Proficient
FIRST	26%	18%
SECOND	18%	12%
THIRD	40%	39%

UPPER GRADES

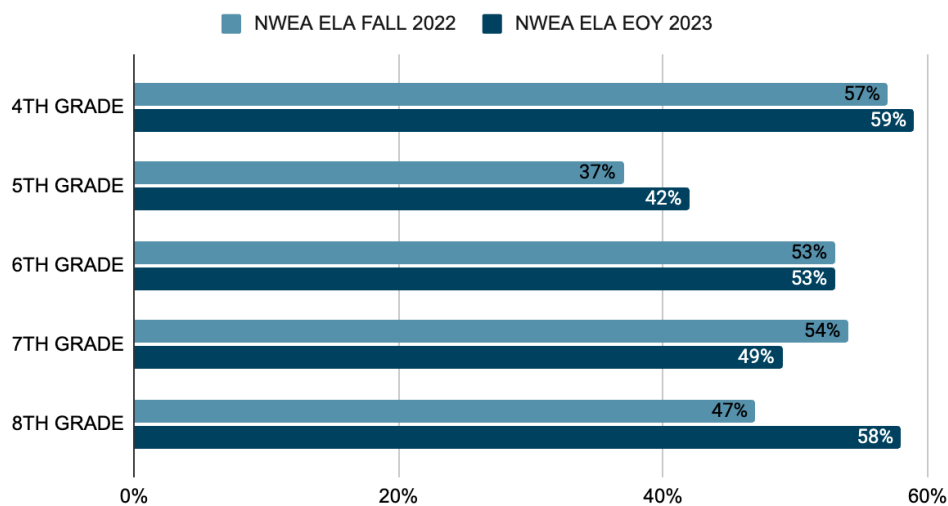
In the upper grades, nearly every grade showed increased proficiency in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics from the beginning to the end of the school year. Some grades showed dramatic increases (note a statistically significant and achievable increase in proficiency is typically supposed to be 2-3%). Many grade cohorts showed even greater than typical increases on NWEA when measuring proficiency in ELA and math. These proficiency rates are captured in the charts below.

NWEA MATH AND ELA BY YEAR



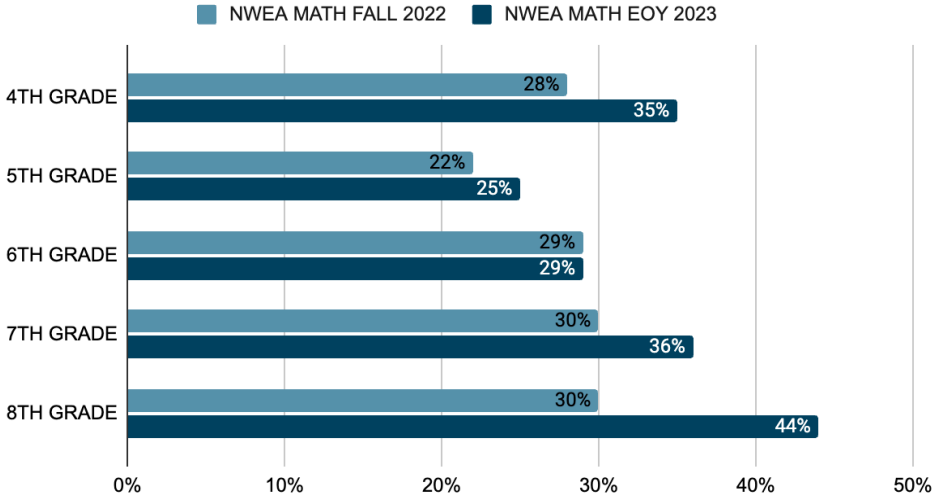
English Language Arts

NWEA BOY TO EOY 2023



Mathematics

NWEA MATH BOY TO EOY 2023



RISE

On the State required RISE assessments, 41% of students in 3rd - 8th were proficient on RISE ELA (and increase of 4.2% from the previous year), 27% in math (an increase of 2.5% from the previous year), and 37% in science for grades 4-8 (an increase of 3.8% from the previous year).

In order to contextualize the data, it is also helpful to look at the progress of cohorts of students over time on RISE. It is also important to note that we are missing the 2020 data, as assessments were not administered and that the 2021 data was less complete due to lower participation of online students and a year of very disrupted learning.

Disaggregated Proficiency on RISE

WCS Percent Proficient on RISE	ELA 41% Math 27% Science 37%
State Percent Proficient on RISE	ELA 46% Math 44% Science 50%
Male Students Proficient on RISE	ELA 38% Math 29% Science 35%

Female Students Proficient on RISE	ELA 44% Math 25% Science 38%
Caucasian Students Proficient on RISE	ELA 42% Math 28% Science 38%
Other Racial Groups Proficient on RISE	ELA 44% Math 30% Science 37%
Students with Disabilities Proficient on RISE	ELA 12% Math 5% Science 11%
Economically Disadvantaged Students Proficient on RISE	ELA 33% Math 16% Science 31%

RISE English Language Arts

SAGE / RISE ELA by GRADE							
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
3rd	20	28	18	N/A	24	44	41
4th	17	23	39	N/A	24	23	47
5th	35	16	33	N/A	16	30	28
6th	40	32	42	N/A	40	37	28
7th	40	32	37	N/A	38	48	48
8th	60	48	41	N/A	27	36	53
School-wide			34	N/A	33	37	41

SAGE / RISE ELA by COHORT						
	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
PK-3rd						41
PK-4th					44	47
K-5th				24	23	28
1st-6th				24	30	28
2nd-7th			18	16	37	48
2nd-8th		28	39	40	48	53
3rd-8th	20	23	33	38	36	
4th-8th	17	16	42	27		
5th-7th	35	32	37			
6th-8th	40	27	41			
7th-8th	40	48				

RISE Mathematics

SAGE / RISE MATH by GRADE							
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
3rd	8	10	14	N/A	10	32	15
4th	17	25	10	N/A	22	16	25
5th	33	33	9	N/A	12	26	16
6th	0	11	24	N/A	15	8	18
7th	40	27	32	N/A	18	40	40
8th	19	57	10	N/A	29	24	42
School-wide			15	N/A	17	24	27

SAGE / RISE MATH by COHORT						
	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
PK-3rd						15
PK-4th					32	25
K-5th				11	16	16
1st-6th				22	26	18
2nd-7th			14	12	8	40
2nd-8th		10	10	15	40	42
3rd-8th	8	25	9	18	24	
4th-8th	17	33	24	29		
5th-7th	33	11	32			
6th-8th	0	27	10			
7th-8th	40	57				

RISE Science

SAGE / RISE SCIENCE by GRADE							
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
4th	N/A	6	6	N/A	N/A	26	39
5th	14	22	10	N/A	N/A	19	26
6th	39	32	27	N/A	32	38	32
7th	15	18	23	N/A	18	41	29
8th	15	60	23	N/A	14	37	55
School-wide			16	N/A	36	33	37

SAGE / RISE SCIENCE by COHORT						
	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023
PK-4th						39
PK-5th					26	26
K-6th					19	32
1st-7th					38	29
2nd- 8th			6	32	41	55
3rd-8th		6	10	18	37	
4th-8th	14	22	27	14		
5th-7th	39	32	23			
6th-8th	15	18	23			
7th-8th	15	60				

Our Operations

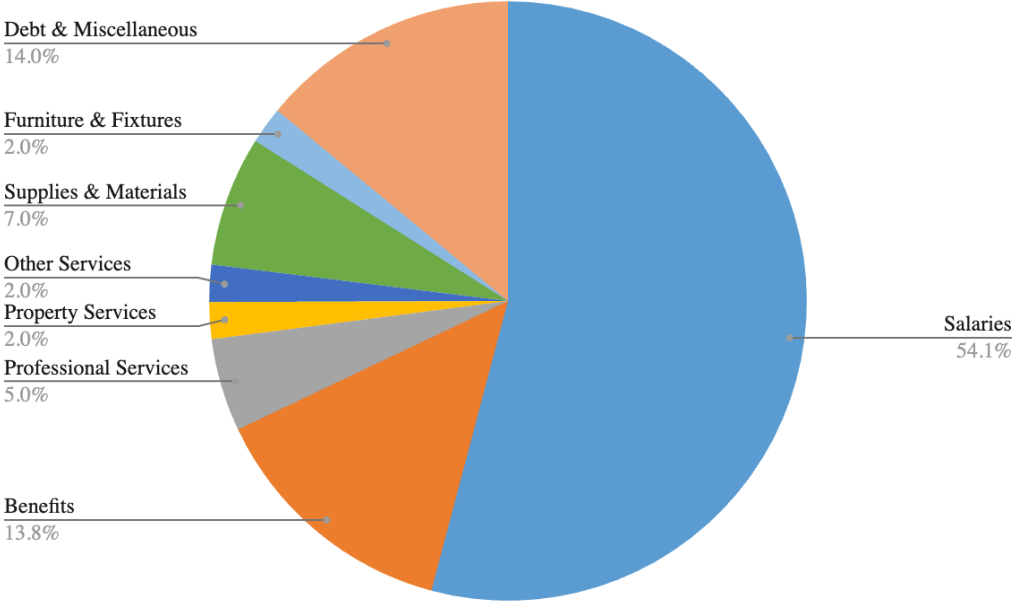
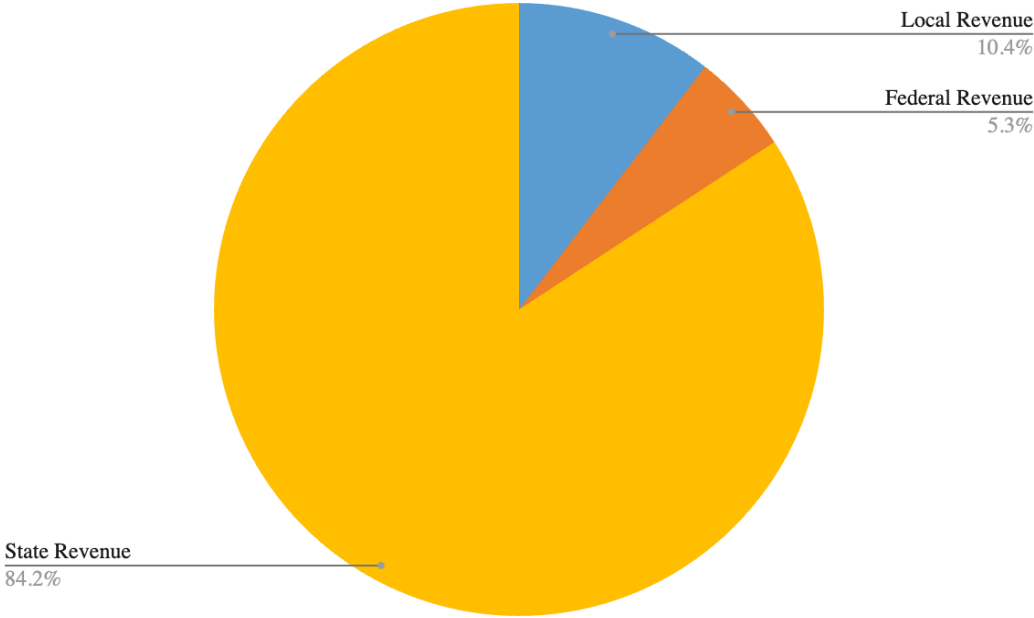
Governance

Governance of the school is overseen by a 5-11 member Board of Directors and their appointee, the Executive Director. Over the course of the 2021-22 school year, the Board of Directors has increased in professionalism, received helpful training, and reviewed policies, as well as maintaining ongoing responsibilities for oversight of budgets, operations, and fundraising. The Board continued to refine a formal Executive Director Evaluation and Board Self-Evaluation process as well as improving Board handbooks, agreements, and on-boarding processes.

Key required functions that have been complied with include:

- ❖ The Governing Board has instituted policies and programs to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Charter Agreement as well as compliance with all governing laws, regulations, and rules.
- ❖ The Governing Board has a website with the content requirements found in R277-482, Utah Administrative Code, posted at least 180 days prior to the opening day of school. In addition, the SCSB requires the website contain links to school data and accountability reports maintained on other websites (e.g., student assessment, audited financial statement, etc.); links to Governing Board meeting dates, agendas and minutes; and reports created by the Governing Board to provide evidence of how the Charter School performed compared to the assurances and school accountability measures in this Charter Agreement.
- ❖ The Charter School's Governing Board has submitted such reports as required by state and federal law, this Charter Agreement, and as may be requested by the SCSB.
- ❖ WCS protects the rights of students with disabilities.
- ❖ WCS has all full-time class teachers with a current license or temporary authorization to provide that they are State Qualified. Details on qualifications are above.
- ❖ WCS complies with Governance Requirements and the developing Governing board policies, including those related to oversight of an Education Service Provider, if applicable and governing board by-laws, Utah Open & Public Meetings Act, Governing board code of ethics, Governing board conflicts of interest, and Governing board composition and/or membership rules (e.g., requisite number of qualified teachers, restriction on employees or contractors serving on the board, etc.).

Finances



WCS is carefully managing state, federal, and local funds to meet all priorities and needs. State funding comprises 84% of all revenue to the school, with Federal funds providing 5%, a reduction from previous years and local revenue and fundraising making up about 11%, an increase from the previous year. Federal funding was higher than typical in the 2021-22 school year due to additional Covid relief funds being allocated. The vast majority of funding

is used to pay salaries and benefits, comprising 68% of all costs. Building expenses (including maintenance, grounds care, and other costs) comprised 16% of expenses.

Pursuant to U.C.A. § 63G-7-604(4) and Rule 37-4, U.A.C, the WCS obtained and maintains insurance through the Utah State Division of Risk Management or other suitable insurance carrier (with a general policy holder rating of not less than A and a financial rating of AAA as rated in the most current available “Best Guide” Insurance Report) coverage to insure against all claims up to and including the limitation of judgements established by statute and rule. Such coverage shall include but not be limited to:

- 1) General liability;
- 2) Employee dishonesty bond;
- 3) Workers’ compensation, as specified by federal law;
- 4) Comprehensive/collision consistent with cash values of vehicles if applicable;
- 5) Liability insurance specific to the School’s Governing Board’s financial officer or treasurer or business administrator consistent with coverage designated in USBE rule.

SCSB is named as an additional insured under any and all general liability insurance policies required by this section.

In terms of State Financial Metrics, the following information provides details by metric.

Number of Material of Significant Audit Findings, Current Year
2016-17: No findings on enrollment audit. Two findings on financial audit which have been addressed and formal response is being sent to USBE by May 30. 1. Need to increase coverage on Treasurer’s Bond 2. Need to formally appoint Records Officer (Ms. Merchant and Ms. Salisbury had been identified and attended training, but training was in December 2015 and there had not been a formal Board vote. That has been remedied for the coming year.)
2017-18: No material findings.
2018-19: One finding related to additional spending from a project fund part of bond that was not listed in the original budget as “revenue.”
2019-20: No material findings.
2020-21: No material findings.
2021-22: No material findings.

2022-23: No material findings.

Number of Unresolved Audit Findings from Prior Year

2016-17: N/A

2017-18: See Above. All findings have been addressed.

2018-19: N/A

2019-20: N/A

2020-21: N/A

2021-22: N/A

2022-23: N/A

Maintain bond covenants

2016-17: N/A - School does not have a bond.

2017-18: Covenants were maintained for the months in which they existed.

2018-19: Covenants were maintained.

2019-20: Covenants were maintained.

2020-21: Covenants were maintained.

2021-22: Covenants were maintained.

2022-23: Covenants were maintained.

Adherence to Operational Budget: Within 5%

2016-17: Current projections are for less than 1% deviation from budget projections. Final budget will be accurate.

2017-18: Yes.

2018-19: No.

2019-20: Yes.

2020-21: Yes.
2021-22: Yes.
2022-23: Yes.

Occupancy Costs: 28% or less
2016-17: 17.5%
2017-18: 17.5%
2018-19: 19%
2019-20: 19%
2020-21: 19%
2021-22: 17%
2022-23: 16%

Debt service coverage ratio: 1.1
2016-17: 1.39
2017-18: 1.31
2018-19: 1.24
2019-20: 1.32
2020-21: 1.25
2021-22: 1.5
2022-23: 1.1

Cashflow: Positive
2016-17: Meets. Cash flow has remained positive all year.
2017-18: Meets.

2018-19: Meets.
2019-20: Meets.
2020-21: Meets.
2021-22: Meets.
2022-23: Meets.

Total Margin of Net Income to Revenue (for 3 years aggregated): Positive
2016-17: 5.3%
2017-18: 4.2%
2018-19: 3.8%
2019-20: 4.7%
2020-21: 3.58%
2021-22: 6.9%
2022-23: Positive

Enrollment Variance (October 1 count compared to projections): 95%
2016-17: 100%. October 1 enrollment was 540 (as verified on audit). Projections for 2016-17 were 540.
2017-18: October 1 count was 558. Budget was 540.
2018-19: October 1 count was 628. Budget was 634.
2019-20: October 1 count was 640. Budget was 640.
2020-21: October 1 count was 641. Budget was 640.
2021-22: October 1 count was 631. Budget was 640.
2022-23: October 1 count was 635. Budget was 640.

Unrestricted Cash on Hand: 30 days with a positive trend.

2016-17: 48 days cash on hand.
2017-18: 44 days cash on hand.
2018-19: 61 days cash on hand.
2019-20: 42 days cash on hand.
2020-21: 67 days cash on hand.
2021-22: 73 days cash on hand.
2022-23: 175 days cash on hand.

Ratio of Assets to Liabilities: 1.0 with positive trend
2016-17: 2
2017-18: 1.0
2018-19: 1.01
2019-20: 1.04
2020-21: 1.02
2021-22: 1.05
2022-23: 1.08

Debt to asset ratio: less than or equal to .9
2016-17: Meets -- more assets (cash and property) than debt
2017-18: Meets
2018-19: Meets
2019-20: Meets
2020-21: Meets
2021-22: Meets
2022-23: Meets

Our Plans for Success

Framework for Success

Based on State requirements and school-level leadership, WCS has developed a comprehensive “Framework for Success.” This document represents analysis of the root causes of challenges, areas of strength and opportunities for growth. This document synthesizes many elements with a desire to weave together State mandates and required goals with the mission, vision and culture of WCS as a Waldorf School.

This document includes:

- An Overview of the Paradigm and Definition of “Success” at WCS
- Strategic Priorities for the 2020-21 School Year
- A Long-term Vision / Strategic Plan
- Required State & Federal Plans

This document is available on the school’s website at:

<https://www.wasatchwaldorf.org/governance#compliance>

Self-Study & Report of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education Mission & History

Mission Statement

Wasatch Charter School (WCS) is a K-8 tuition-free charter school in the Salt Lake Valley guided by the principles of public Waldorf education that provides a comprehensive education program integrating academics, arts, movement, nature, and social responsibility into everyday learning. Through a culture of holistic learning and dedication to the optimal development of each individual child, WCS nurtures intellectual, social and emotional, and physical capacities through an artistic, hands-on, interdisciplinary approach to core academic subjects which enables each student to blossom into an imaginative, engaged, competent, life-long learner. Our students, teachers, faculty, and families emerge as confident, creative, strong critical thinkers and environmental stewards, empowered to act positively in their own lives and communities.

Beginnings

Wasatch Charter School was founded by a diverse group of individuals with varied first-hand experiences with Waldorf education. Each founder came to WCS with a passion for the beauty, curriculum, methods, and successes of Waldorf education. As parents of Waldorf students, former students in Waldorf schools, former teachers and assistants in Waldorf schools, and individuals seeking training in Waldorf education, each sought to replicate the success of the Waldorf model and make this type of educational experience accessible to students in the Salt Lake Valley in Utah.

From a humble gathering of 10 individuals in November 2013, to a formalized proposal and application to the State Charter School Board in the summer and fall of 2014, to approval by the State Charter School Board in January 2015 and the State Board of Education in April 2015, to opening in August of 2016, each step of the creation of Wasatch Charter School was infused with inspiration and vision, optimism, and the conviction that children are innately curious about themselves and the world, inherently wanting to learn, discover, and create. Subsequently, the role of the school is to nourish and guide this natural exuberance, energy, and delight in the quest for meaning and knowledge through a developmentally appropriate approach to teaching and nurturing all children.

Early on the founders of WCS recognized the possible tensions that may emerge between Waldorf pedagogy, anthroposophy and the operation of a public charter school. However, they were committed to opening a school that would realize the fullness of all aspects of Waldorf education within the public sector, placing central in their intentions the accessibility of this educational methodology to all students. This commitment to fully public and fully Waldorf education guided early decisions, such as:

- Finding training options and requiring full Waldorf teacher training for all new hires
- Ensuring resources and staffing for robust specialty programs to grow
- Engaging in anthroposophical study and conversations as part of faculty enrichment
- Welcoming all students and families and looking for how we could build on Waldorf pedagogy and innovate to learn *from* more challenging students and develop what was being called for by their presence
- Hiring an experienced Waldorf teacher as Pedagogical director and bringing in experienced mentors regularly in the early years
- Hiring an experienced chef to create a wholesome school lunch program with fresh foods and vegetarian options that would also qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program

In addition, the realities of opening a charter school in Utah dictated that the school open fully enrolled at a number of students (over 500) that was considered a critical number for financial stability. Three years of planning and preparation went into organizing school documents, handbooks, policies, procedures, processes and curriculum resources. A site was identified and through collaboration with a developer purchased. The house that had occupied the location was demolished, and a custom designed school building that would maximize natural light and views of the trees was built. Over 75 individuals were hired for part-time and full-time positions and training commenced. Furnishings and supplies were ordered and delivered, and unpacked. 540 students were enrolled through word of mouth, website updates, and monthly information sessions held at public libraries throughout the city. Students and families came from fourteen different school districts, some driving over an hour to attend the school during our first year. They ranged from Kindergarten to eighth grade, most with no previous experience in a Waldorf school.

In addition, a separate non-profit organization, the Wasatch Family Foundation, was incorporated to provide preschool, aftercare, and other enrichment opportunities that would charge tuition and were not authorized under the WCS charter. This organization has a separate Board, finances and legal structure, but is operated as a supportive organization in concert with the charter school.

Growth

The first day of school was chaos, and the first year continued to blend moments of chaotic learning and forming with beautiful and lovely surprises. Teachers, students, and parents all learned together what forms and agreements and processes were essential to our stability and building community.

Over the first years, the needs of teachers and students led to many innovations and areas of growth, many of which will be discussed further in detail. Some of these included the creation of our hearth program, the formation of Lotus class, refining the role of Family Council, the creation of the Pedagogical Advisory Committee, the development of a robust Rti process and support systems for students, curative training and refinement in the structure of our SPED program, and the development of guides and annual times for training to support math and ELA instruction. In addition, based on needs, in our second year we were able to increase our number of students to 640, purchase our building from the developer and acquire a second building to house our early childhood program.

By our fourth year of operations, 2019-2020, it felt like many aspects of the school's operations and culture were well established, and our student, faculty and staff retention all exceeded over 90% from year to year. Then, significant in our school's biography, just as we seemed to be finding more equanimity, we had to shut our doors in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and overnight pivot to an online model of delivering instruction. We spent the end of the school year entirely remote, and then the subsequent year offering both in person and online options, hiring more teachers to teach just online, calming fears, and having our administrators and (previously very part-time) nurses spend countless hours on calls and in response to Covid-related concerns. Our faculty and staff pulled together, flexing every day to cover for one another as individuals were unable to come into school with symptoms.

Present

The 2021-22 school year was the sixth operational year for Wasatch Waldorf Charter School. It was also the third academic year in which we experienced significant effects from response to the Covid-19 pandemic. During the year while we no longer offered an "online only" program for students and families, we continued to work with a four day in-person school week and Fridays online. We maintained sanitation practices, some aspects of social distancing and changes in programming(such as limited singing and playing of flutes and recorders). We also experienced on-going absences for students and staff with Covid symptoms and confirmed Covid cases, including a need to still track Covid cases and respond with notifications and quarantines based on the guidelines established by the Health Department. We noted effects from these measures, as well as pressure around the increasingly polarized sentiments within the larger society and our community related to mask wearing. Relational tensions were felt throughout the school as we worked to address varied concerns and take responsible, measured approaches to complex challenges.

Despite these pressures and the toll that they took on faculty, students, and families, we also experienced some beautiful moments of settling and growth. We saw great progress in our

lower grades reading program and exceptional student growth. Teachers continued with training, including launching our on-site APPEL licensure program and professional development courses in math and assessment. We gathered again, after two years of a break, at the end of the year for our Spring Gala. And, we experienced tremendous support and devotion from our community. Much of the successful navigation of such challenging years early in our school's biography is to be credited to devoted, capable, flexible, resilient faculty and staff.

Core Principles

Image of the Human Being

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

Waldorf education at WCS is a holistic approach that views the human being as a threefold entity comprised of body, soul, and spirit. The body, seen as the physical vessel that allows the individual to experience and interact with the world, is developed and strengthened through physical education, practical and artistic activities, and movement. It is also the seat of the will, which we are continually working to build in the children. At Wasatch Charter School, our curriculum is infused throughout with activities that strengthen the will, whether it is movement work, creating individual main lesson books, or doing handwork. Classes such as Eurythmy, gardening, and developmentally appropriate games classes are offered to foster a sense of balance, coordination, and self-expression. In Eurythmy, a form of movement therapy that combines elements of dance, gymnastics, and drama, students learn to choreograph movements that correspond with spoken words, music, or poetry, which helps bring harmony to the body and mind. Gardening classes build the will and help students learn about plants, soil, and how to care for them and develop an appreciation for nature. Developmentally appropriate games classes provide children an opportunity to learn and play in a fun and engaging way, while also helping them develop social skills, problem-solving abilities, and teamwork.

The soul, referred to as the "feeling life" of the human being, is nurtured through the arts such as music, drama, and painting. These subjects allow students to express themselves and gain insight into their own emotions and those of others. Additionally, storytelling is also emphasized as it is believed to have the power to touch the soul and awaken the imagination. At Wasatch Charter school, the arts are an integral part of the curriculum, and students have the opportunity to explore their own creativity and imagination, and to gain an understanding of the emotions and feelings of others.

The spirit, seen as the driving force behind a person's development, is the ultimate goal of education. At Wasatch Charter School, through a developmentally appropriate curriculum, students develop a strong sense of self, a deep connection to the world around them, and a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. The curriculum is designed to foster the development of the child by encouraging them to explore the inner world, to develop a sense

of reverence for life, and to gain an understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things.

In summary, at Wasatch Charter School, the aim is to foster the individual's overall well-being by addressing the child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs. This holistic approach prepares students for a fulfilling and meaningful life by developing the body, soul, and spirit. The curriculum is designed to be developmentally appropriate and to meet the unique needs of each child, providing them with the tools they need to live a happy and fulfilled life. At Wasatch Charter School, the students are provided with a unique and holistic education that aims to develop the whole child, including their intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

Wasatch Charter School is a leader in innovative education in the Salt Lake Valley, known for its unique and holistic approach to learning. The school integrates academics with the arts, movement, nature, and social responsibility to create a well-rounded and comprehensive education for students. This approach encourages students to think critically, be creative, and become environmental stewards, with the goal of developing the confidence and skills necessary to make a positive impact in their own lives and communities.

The school's curriculum is designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for success in today's rapidly changing world. The integration of the arts, movement and nature into the curriculum, provides students with opportunities to explore and express themselves in ways that go beyond traditional academics. Additionally, the school's commitment to social responsibility helps students develop a sense of civic engagement and a desire to make a positive impact in their communities.

Moreover, the school's innovative approach extends beyond the classroom, with an emphasis on experiential learning, community service, and outdoor education. These opportunities allow students to apply their learning in real-world settings, develop leadership skills, and gain a deeper understanding of their place in the world. The school also encourages family involvement and regular communication to ensure that students are supported not only in school but also at home.

One example of Wasatch's innovative approach is the Wasatch Lotus Class, which blends the work of Curative Education with Public School Special Education regulations, rules, and standards that apply to all students in the school. This innovative approach allows Wasatch to provide a unique and tailored education experience for each student, taking into account the individual needs of the student and providing the necessary support to help them succeed. The Curative Education approach focuses on the whole child, including their emotional, physical, and social development, and it is integrated with the traditional academic curriculum to provide a well-rounded education.

Additionally, the school has adopted the Three Care Streams of Student Support process, based on the work of respected worldwide expert Kim John Payne, to provide as much support as possible for students who are experiencing social, disciplinary, or learning challenges. This process helps students to navigate challenges and conflicts, and provides support for them in a variety of areas, including emotional regulation, behavior management, and social skills development. Furthermore, this process is not only beneficial for students but also for the parents and teachers, as it creates a positive and supportive learning environment for all. This approach fosters a more holistic and integrated view of each child that permeates conversations about challenges that may emerge in learning, behavior, or the social environment. By looking at overall development, individual interventions and supports are creatively generated and implemented. Overall, Wasatch's innovative approach to education is designed to empower students to be their best selves and make a positive impact in their own lives and communities.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

Wasatch Charter School is a public Waldorf school that faces the challenge of balancing its unique and holistic approach to education with state regulations and standards. This requires the school to find a way to meet the state's academic standards while preserving its core principles of integrating art, movement, nature, experiential learning, and community service into the curriculum. The school has to make adjustments to its curriculum, assessments, and teacher training while collaborating with the administration, teachers, and state officials to meet the needs of the students while also meeting the state's requirements. In particular, we have consciously brought activities, such as:

- Introducing typing skills in third grade before our students have to take assessments that require typing
- Planning our weekly and daily schedules to include regular practice periods for English Language Arts and mathematics in all grades and correlating these times across grades to support intervention and special education pull-out services (without students missing main lesson)
- Incorporating specific programs for phonemic awareness in kindergarten
- Aligning literacy and numeracy standards with traditional block plans

However, more importantly, it has required conscious attention to bring such skills or programs with an awareness of the developing human being. How we held and introduced ideas of state-required assessments, the timing and format of digital literacy curriculum, the deliberate decision to not introduce written letters until first grade, the use of story, music and art to create imagination in the introduction of literacy or numeracy standards – all of these help to

humanize the curriculum. The thoughtful and careful choices made in response to possible challenges actually strengthen our school and community.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

Over the last seven years, Wasatch Charter School has made a significant investment in building a strong team of teachers and staff with a focus on academic interventions. This dedicated team, composed of highly skilled interventionists, works to ensure that the school meets its state-mandated goals for academic achievement and state assessments. These individuals are equipped with the necessary tools and resources to support both teachers and students in their academic journeys. Furthermore, the interventionists are responsible for reporting to state leaders, freeing up Waldorf teachers to concentrate on what they do best - teaching in a developmentally appropriate and holistic manner. The combination of a well-supported team of interventionists and teachers who are free to focus on the art of teaching creates a dynamic and effective learning environment that benefits every student at Wasatch Charter School.

In addition, the school has provided ongoing learning and training, study in meetings, faculty sharing, outside mentors, and annual professional development help to keep the image of the human being alive in our school. As we regularly deepen our understanding as a faculty and individuals, the image of the human being lives more deeply within us as individuals and in the culture of our school community. We can adeptly speak out of and work out of anthroposophical ideas and indications that help us to prioritize overall human development and not become too formulaic or process-driven which can deaden our sensitivity to the spiritual dimensions of caring for the human being. This year, we look forward to sending a delegation to the World Teachers Conference in Dornach, having a cohort completing training in Curative education, working with visiting mentors who are long-time Waldorf teachers, and studying weekly in team meetings, our pedagogical advisory committee meeting, and in faculty meetings.

Child Development

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program, to the greatest extent possible within established legal mandates. The school staff through their understanding of Rudolf Steiner's lectures, functions with the understanding that human development proceeds in approximately 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, works 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.

The school is fully committed to approaching education in relation to child development. The child's changing consciousness is the foundational understanding that guides pedagogical decision-making. The faculty are required to have continuing education around child development and are required to be certified Waldorf teachers or have commenced training within three years of full-time employment. Mentors and staff regularly study and focus on child development. The practice of teachers looping through the grades encourages teachers to have a deep understanding of the stages of child development that children go through.

The Wasatch Family Foundation is a private organization that is attached to the school, in which preschool, parent education, and parent/toddler class are able to hold principles of child development without compromise to state education requirements. The Foundation provides parent education and outreach to help develop a picture of healthy child development within the community.

The school staff and programs strive to protect childhood by cultivating an understanding of healthy child development. Through the Three Streams Student Support program social inclusion and discipline work is brought to the children with an attention to overall child

development. The robust specialty team and class offerings are also integral to child development in addition to an in-house, part-time position for speech arts to support and further individual student, teacher, and class development

The uniqueness of Lotus class for students in special education allows the teachers to meet the needs of those students purely through curative indications which align with public school requirements.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

The way that this concept lives in the school is also part of the reason for innovations. Ongoing study, practice intertwine to provide the following supports that foster the developmental approach to education:

The Hearth Program in structure, function, and purpose provides multi-faceted support for the well-being of the child. The Hearth meets the children where they are and gives them a place to regather and have some of their needs met either through movement breaks, talks with an adult, quiet work time or to help with chores like washing dishes.

Lotus class and the curative approach to education is a deepening of Waldorf education. Lotus class helps to support the differentiated needs of child development; in a small classroom setting, Lotus is able to more effectively meet the needs of children at differing stages of development

The Farm and Garden Programs are a support to the entire school, especially Lotus class and the kindergartens which spend Fridays at the farm and the third and fifth grades which connect work on the land with their curricular studies.

The robust specialty team helps to hold and teach students in their fields of mastery, expanding main lesson and the gesture of the class teacher.

Our school has a full support **special education department** in order to more fully serve all of the students' needs at our school and the Waldorf approach informs how the special educators instruct students.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN

RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

The largest compromise our school has to make is to meet state standards, including introducing and using technology at an age that is not developmentally supportive. In addition, the pandemic presented our Waldorf teachers with the compromise of having to meet with their students online and to try to bring them an enlivened education through screens and other creative methods. Students are allowed to begin Kindergarten if they turn 5 before September but starting school at a younger age than is traditionally done in Waldorf private education, therefore our students are typically younger for each grade than in private schools. As with almost any school, space limitations are a challenge especially when so many classes do morning movement, but also because we have many specialty classes, SPED services and other student support services.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

In the past the school has had to determine and adjust how we progress monitor the children via tracking personal growth instead of total school achievement. The focus is on understanding each individual child and how they might be making strides through touch points of the whole as opposed to single subject academic test scores.

Plans for the future include continuing a strong eurythmy/movement program and expanding the speech arts to help balance the effects of early introduction of academics and screen time, fostering parent and community involvement will be fostered in an increasing manner to help parents understand and discuss the challenges, and retaining teachers and staff who understand the child development approach. Finally, the Three Streams program will continue to train staff and evolve its practices in order to support children in healthy development and address issues as needed.

Ideally, an exemption from 3rd grade state assessments and advocating for a shift to being rated based on student growth in academics and other areas could be pursued in the future if the political and education climate is open to it.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING EACH
CORE PRINCIPLE AND A DISCUSSION OF PLANS TO
ENHANCE THE WORKING OF THE
PRINCIPLE IN THE SCHOOL

STRENGTHS

Continued support for teachers to attend trainings and workshops to improve their understanding of child development and renew their interest and engagement as they stay with their class each year

Math and Reading specialists who come and support the class teachers to help the students be able to stay in their classrooms for instruction

Mentorship program for the teachers to have veteran teachers to support them

Teachers staying with their class for many years helps to support the full developmental journey of the children

As a public Waldorf school that accepts a variety of children, we are able to broaden our understanding and practices to meet a variety of needs of child development

CHALLENGES

The state requirements for the start age of kindergarten.

State requirements for meeting proficiency in specific academic areas by specific ages that don't align with the Waldorf Pedagogy.

Implementing Curative Education, based on Steiner's 12 lectures, to students with special needs while still complying with special education laws and regulations.

DISCUSSION & PLANS

Our seventh year has involved many conversations around how we deepen our practices. How can we be more intentional about choices that may have been made out of necessity earlier and ensure they are still meeting our needs and picture of what serves the developing child. Maintaining this reflection and these conversations helps to guide practices and choices as we continue to meet challenges where our understanding of child development differs from cultural and societal practices and expectations.

Social Change through Education

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

We support the child's unique and individual development with an understanding that this important work should lead them to meaningful contributions in society.

Faculty and staff work to provide a true education for the children in which their thinking, feeling, and willing capacities are equally and intentionally attended to and nurtured. We plan main lessons, specialty classes, festivals, and community events that are socially and culturally diverse, with the whole child in mind.

Curative work and our Three Streams model of support are integrated on a school-wide level. This guides and supports students' ability to self-regulate, become self-aware, and grow in their own social competence and capacity.

We foster independent thinking by allowing the students opportunities to explore concepts, activating and challenging the mind, heart, and will forces. By allowing them this process, they become engaged and invested in their own education. This creates space for them to then apply their understanding in meaningful ways, not only applicable to themselves, but to the world around them.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

We have a real awareness of our students' needs for a deeper social competence and understanding. We make great efforts to immerse them in the richness of various cultures around the world in order to give them a sense that they are not only an individual, but part of something much much greater. This happens not only in the main lesson, but is a focus of specialty classes, extra-curricular activities and community events as well.

To strengthen social development, we have built out programs school-wide in which children are able to witness, practice, and initiate their own conflict-resolution skills. Social circles are part of every classroom in grades 4-8, where students practice identifying their emotions, learning what that means and what to do with it.

We strive to mix ages in various ways. We offer peer tutor support to the lower grades, facilitate buddy classes, and create work spaces in upper grades classrooms for younger children who are struggling for one reason or another in their given classroom.

We utilize a program designed by Robyn Brown in which students with high emotional, academic and curative needs move from the main classroom, to a smaller group together. Here, in what is called the Lotus class, they are able to grow and develop according to their very specific needs. The goal of this program is to give these students the tools they need in order to re-integrate in the larger classroom when they are ready. We often witness students returning to their classroom after several years in the Lotus class with great success. They are thriving when integrated back into their class.

These opportunities for integration between classes and for individuals of varied ages, abilities, and backgrounds provide an authentic context in which students develop. As they resolve conflict, serve one another in meaningful ways, and engage with the curriculum, they develop the sense that they are part of a larger social organism in which they have a meaningful role to play.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges we face as a charter school is complying with state requirements while remaining in integrity with the principles of Waldorf education, especially as they relate to the social and emotional well-being of the students. We sometimes find ourselves introducing certain concepts to the children before they are ready. While we want them to have an understanding of the state-assessment content, bringing it only for the sake of a state requirement is a challenge. This challenge hinders our efforts to bring them enriching, developmentally appropriate academic experiences that would deepen their relationship with themselves and capacity to contribute to a greater community.

While digital literacy and technology have a place in our ever-changing world, regular computer use in the classrooms is not ideal. Again, this is in an effort to familiarize the children with testing platforms so that they can focus on responding to the answers according to what they know, rather than stressing over not knowing how to navigate the format.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

We have a very dedicated assessment team who goes to great lengths to bring testing, progress-monitoring and computer programs to the children in the least intrusive, and healthiest way possible. They also work to minimize pressure on teachers, support the proctoring process, and take on a lot of the responsibilities that would normally fall on a class teacher in any other public school setting. This support allows for teachers to keep their focus on the children, and teaching to the whole child.

We have been very thoughtful, when given a mandate, regarding how it is implemented and working with the state on developing a plan that feels like we can work on our own timeline.

We continue to find creative solutions as we comply with state requirements, as discussed above.

We see our school as an entity with great capacity to effect social change. We affect the larger social environment as we create a community which fosters social and emotional accountability and health, as we demonstrate academic and organizational success with very approaches and methods that are unlike any other school in our community, as we engage middle school leaders in authentic care and leadership experiences, and as we hold rhythmic and seasonal festivals. We create a counter-current to much of the culture that surrounds our school and affects the lives of students, teachers and families. Part of our mission is to offer such a distinctive and meaningful choice that it helps to validate the role of holistic, Waldorf education in serving the development of all children.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING EACH
CORE PRINCIPLE AND A DISCUSSION OF PLANS TO
ENHANCE THE WORKING OF THE
PRINCIPLE IN THE SCHOOL

STRENGTHS

School-wide implementation of social/emotional programs

Lotus class

Compassionate Campus Crew

Well-crafted lesson plans rich in cultures and civilizations from around the world

No-blame meetings

Minimized computer work

Robust Three Streams team

Successful community events such as Harvest Festival and Spring Gala

CHALLENGES

State requirements

“School-hoppers” not really looking for Waldorf education

Being such a large school it is very difficult to instill values/all be on the same page/penetrate fully

Parent support

Middle school

- knowing your students are launching into a different system and working to bridge that gap
- trying to find a balance between the world we insulate them from while also bringing it to them before high school comes...
- conflict in figuring out how to still protect them/ and also know what's coming and try it out in a low-stakes context before being held to those expectations

DISCUSSION & PLANS

Many of our future plans are based on deepening. We have done a lot of expanding of our processes and programs over the past seven years, and now we have the chance to deepen these practices. As our faculty enriches and stabilizes, many of the challenges become less frustrating. There is more consensus, more shared understanding, more confidence in the choices we have made, and more confidence in our abilities to meet the challenges.

We also are beginning to expand our reach as we engage our larger Utah community. We have commenced an Introduction to Waldorf Education two-week summer training that has included not just our employees, but also employees at newer public Waldorf schools in our area. We are providing a site where college students can fulfill their student teaching requirements and learn more about our pedagogy. We are inviting elected and State officials for visits to learn more about our activities. Expanding these activities in the future allows our school to have a larger impact in the educational landscape and advocate for educational and social change.

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

Wasatch Waldorf Charter School was built on the principle of human relationships, and it continues to be alive and well in our school. We teach through relationships - through seeing each individual child, understanding them within the context of an anthroposophical view of the human being, celebrating their strengths and holding high expectations of them as students. Our work flows out of this relationship with the children, with each other, and with the larger world around us.

From the beginning, our school has stayed committed to the vision of class teachers journeying with their classes from first through eighth grade, fostering long-term, enduring relationships between students and their teacher. Even when this isn't possible, departing teachers collaborate with the new teachers taking their classes, bridging the transition and passing on the teachers' understanding of their former students. This is just one aspect of the culture of communication and collaboration between staff at the school, where staff in all different roles are directly working with the children. Whether it is office staff helping homesick children, or our handyman working with student "assistants" that are in need of one-on-one guidance, the children experience a network of adults working together to hold them, teach them and provide safety to them. It is a safe, supportive community, which creates a container where healing is possible for the children, who feel seen and accepted, knowing they are "enough."

Relationships between children of different ages are fostered through peer tutoring, our Compassionate Campus Crew and through the buddying up of older classes with younger ones. These different groups work to provide collaboration among peer groups. It also helps to build communication between staff, communication between staff and students, and communication between students and students.

Our school strives to maintain a culture of healthy relationships between the members of our staff as well. Our teachers are highly supported by such roles as our hearth keepers, math and reading specialists, and student support staff, among others. We foster connections through regular meetings of mentoring pairs, grade clusters in team meetings, specialty team meetings, interest and study groups in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), faculty meetings, all-staff meetings, and our Pedagogical Advisory Committee meetings. Our physical space also encourages our staff's informal gatherings throughout the day. Our commitment to human relationships can also be seen in our approach to healthy communication in conflict resolution amongst faculty and staff. A unique strength of our school is the way we so often maintain relationships with staff, even if they find that their position is not a good fit—many

have changed roles within the school, finding a place where their skills and strengths are most needed and welcomed.

The principle of human relationships can also be seen in our work with our parent body. We strive to keep communication open with our parents through regular newsletters from the school and from individual teachers. We encourage not only parent-teacher conferences at school, but also visits to children's homes. We offer regular parent evenings, conducted not just by class teachers but by specialty teachers and experts on Waldorf Education and child development. We also offer social gatherings for parents and families throughout the school year, including our Harvest Festival and Spring Gala. If parents have concerns or students experience difficulties, we have a robust student support system in place through our Three Streams program, which strives to create a nonjudgmental space of listening to and working through issues together with parents and children.

We have been expanding our collaboration with other schools, and look forward to more in the future. Although it has been limited in the past due to the distance between our school and other Waldorf schools, we began our school's journey by hosting Gradalis teacher training at our site and hosting many other teachers from Waldorf schools throughout the country and making many friendships. We have also hosted a Greek Olympiad for the 5th grade students annually and included other schools from Idaho and Utah. In recent years, we have included neighboring Waldorf schools in our summer trainings and professional development opportunities; our middle school athletics program competes with other local charter and private schools, and this year, we will host our first Medieval Games and hope to include neighboring schools.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

One important and unique innovation we have created here at Wasatch is our arrangement into hearths. In four corners of our campus, we have 2-3 grades clustered together around a common space, which is watched over and staffed by our hearth keepers. Each one has an open area with tables for children, and a kitchen that contains an area for staff to gather. The physical layout itself fosters relationships, but the true magic lies in the support given by the hearth keepers. Whether making snacks, handing out bandaids, leading reading groups, or giving a quiet study space to children needing a break from the hustle and bustle of the classroom, the hearths and hearth keepers maintain a space where individual needs can be met within a context of relationship.

Similarly, our commitment to staff in all capacities working with children creates many options for meeting children's needs through relationship. This applies to our office staff, who

regularly help children who need self-regulation practice, and to our beloved handyman, who is in high demand for the understanding ear and meaningful work he gives to the children working by his side. These are invariably unique solutions coming out of our relationships with particular children and our understanding of their educational journey.

Other innovations built upon the principle of human relationships include our Three Streams Program, our Peer Tutoring Program, and our extensive SPED and student support program, which includes varied options to meet children's needs. This includes both traditional SPED interventions and the Curative work that lives throughout the school and within the Lotus Classroom. The principle can also be seen in the evolution of our PLC's and our system of meeting in both small and large groups as staff.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

The beginnings of our school saw many growing pains, but it was also a time of intense involvement and a tight community bond. Those bonds appear more loose now, as the school grows and more families come that do not always have the same commitment to the ideals of Waldorf Education. This brings with it the need for more parent education. On the other hand, with time the community has evolved to a place where there is more participation from a broader range of families, not just a small core of founders. The challenge now is how to consistently educate and connect with new families, and to reach the ones that fly under the radar.

In parent work as well as other areas of the work of the teacher, one challenge has been balancing the individual needs and freedom of teachers, with a desire for consistency throughout the school. In the school's early years, there was more guidance around expectations for teachers, but this has evolved in the direction of more freedom and less expectation of consistency. This can mean that the way one class is held looks very different from another, and parents have sometimes found this difficult to understand. Similarly, they have had issues with different children being treated differently. But both have come out of a desire to meet each human being as a unique individual, out of seeing who they are and understanding their unique strengths and weaknesses. Another realm that could use more consistent expectations is that of how we bring the Waldorf curriculum. Our team meetings once included more curriculum conversations, which would still be beneficial to us. Similarly, there have often been movements to compile resources for teachers, but this project still has not gotten off the ground.

The pandemic brought many challenges with it, including how to continue to hold human relationships front and center, even in the face of online learning and multiple absences. In

addition, it made collaboration with other schools more difficult. As a school with very few other Waldorf schools nearby, we feel the lack of significant collaboration with other, more mature schools, and would like to create more connections with other schools.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

Out of a desire to offer more opportunities for educating and connecting parents, we have worked to find a more effective way to structure our parent nights. We now offer grade specific parent nights held by both class teachers and specialty teachers, as well as monthly social gatherings open to all families. We would love to create more educational materials and resources for our parents as well.

We have endeavored to meet the need for teacher support and education by making our team meetings more formed, with a team lead guiding weekly conversations, with elements of study, child and class studies, sharing of best practices and personal check-ins. Similarly, in our Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), we have more opportunities to study and care for particular aspects of the school. There has also been more collaboration between teachers growing out of this, and we would like to create space for even more of that to occur.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING EACH CORE PRINCIPLE AND A DISCUSSION OF PLANS TO ENHANCE THE WORKING OF THE PRINCIPLE IN THE SCHOOL

STRENGTHS

- Teaching through relationship
- Long-term relationship with teachers
- Adults in different roles working with children
- Seeing and meeting individual needs
- Different aged children working with each other

CHALLENGES

- Parent Education:
 - how to educate and connect with new families
 - how to reach the families that don't show up to offerings
- Balancing individual freedom for teachers with consistent expectations throughout the school
- More conversations about curriculum in team

Many different forms of support for staff, including our hearths and hearth keepers

meetings

Many opportunities to foster relationships and learning between staff

Collaboration with other, more mature Waldorf schools

Commitment to finding the right role for each staff member

Frequent communication with parents

Curricular Parent Evenings and social gatherings for families

Collaboration with other schools through our sports program

DISCUSSION & PLANS

The school is working on many of the areas that we find to be lacking and will continue to refine these areas into the future. This is occurring through more intentional parent evenings and plans for parental engagement, through more thoughtful team meetings, through planning quarterly times for teachers to check in with specialists on curriculum planning and needs. We continue to explore ways to enrich our collaboration with other Waldorf schools and look forward to post-pandemic opportunities for greater interaction.

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

As a public Waldorf school, we intentionally positioned our Waldorf school within the public sphere because of a commitment to access and diversity. Like the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, we seek to serve a broad spectrum of students and adapt as needed to ensure that their growth and well-being are prioritized. In fact, many aspects of school operations were developed in order to extend access to the school to a broader cross-section of Utah families. We developed an all-natural, homemade lunch program that also meets federal lunch guidelines (a true feat thanks to Chef Erin Arrigo!) that provides wholesome food for all of our students, including the 25% that receive free and reduced lunch, and honors various families' dietary preferences, offering GF, vegetarian and vegan options. Wasatch Family Foundation offers extended day kindergarten and aftercare for students to make school more supportive of working parents' needs, and we are located directly on a bus line, allowing easy access to our campus for students and families needing public transit.

Because we exist in a legal space in which we do not turn any students away, we have found that our diversity of students has been the greatest impulse in our innovation and program development. We have created programs, such as the hearth, Lotus class, interventions and SPED programs, morning movement support, etc. out of necessity as we have learned from and responded to individual student needs.

Access:

"Every child in front of you is the curriculum," and so we customize the curriculum to the students before us. Just by being a public Waldorf school we are more accessible than private Waldorf schools, because we cannot turn anyone away regardless of their needs. In Utah, charter schools cannot limit the number of students in special education for example and each charter school is its own Local Education Agency (LEA).

Our main school building is accessible to all bodies. The main building is ADA compliant. There is an intention of inclusion and accommodation, and so adjustments are made when needed, to serve individual needs.

Diversity:

Like with access, as a public Waldorf school we take whoever gets drawn in the lottery to enroll in the school, so there is little possibility for exclusion of anyone on the basis of race or other factors of diversity. However, our student base has a more diverse representation of demographics than in the surrounding population base. This suggests that our educational approach is more widely appealing and inclusive than the alternatives.

Our curriculum reflects cultural diversity through the grades. In social studies and language arts, the teachers can choose the stories that they use (fairy tales from any culture in the world, for example). As a result, our students are exposed to a broader swath of cultural ideas and beliefs than is typical in public education.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

Access:

The Lotus class is one of our most unique and successful innovations. The school created a special class based on curative education for students who have moderate and severe disabilities within our special education continuum of services. This class provides a much smaller student-teacher ratio with mixed-age and mixed-ability classrooms. Students work first and foremost in developing their will. This happens, first, through movement activities that come out of Steiner's indications in Curative Education. Chores, social activities, and individualized main lesson instruction also support student growth. Our Lotus class has been located in our Kinderhouse, and it is always a joy to see Lotus students providing support and peer leadership for our kindergarteners. In this program, students are growing in all dimensions as they are educated with individual care each day.

Holistic intervention programs throughout the school address mainstream issues like labels, such as ADHD or autism, that are prevalent in the school. Morning movement has been a valuable pedagogical tool for many classes and students, and also happens in smaller pull-out groups for students who need additional support. Small main lesson groups are held, as needed. Study hall offers help for sixth-eighth grade students needing additional coaching.

The Three Streams of student support is a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that allows for an anthroposophical and child development-based approach to the social/emotional, discipline and remedial learning in the school. This is an area that was developed in consultation with Kim John Payne and is both a committee structure and regular meeting time when experts in these fields ensure that the public school requirements are met but with a constant influence toward truly Waldorf-based educational provisions.

These varied programs and supports help every student to access a full educational experience that also meets their individual needs. But, we do not limit the scope of our nurturing to children or the physical school door, but instead adopt a more holistic definition of communal education extending beyond school grounds to the home. For example, we strongly promote community involvement, offer parenting classes and parent enrichment throughout the year, and even pay for parent mentoring and coaching, when needed.

Middle school athletics are accessible for any student. Efforts are made to ensure students with identified disabilities can participate in athletics with any modifications and adaptations they need in order to participate. Fee waivers are available for students who have low socioeconomic status. Outdoor education trips are innovative in that we, for example, try to provide additional life experiences for all students, ensuring everyone can go whitewater rafting, etc. regardless of ability, needs, or income.

Diversity:

Our teachers can bring stories and information from any culture in the world, in language arts and social studies, rather than being required to stick with the traditional Waldorf curricular stories. We continue to build a teacher library with resources from different cultures (especially for teaching language arts and social studies).

We intentionally recruit teachers from all over the world and currently employ five full time teachers whose second language is English (teaching classes, handwork, Lotus class, and Spanish), and we are currently finalizing contracts and visas with three other teachers from Kenya, India and Czech. Our school community of staff, families and students include many races and ethnicities, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and sexual orientation and gender identities.

This year the school has started a program of bringing multiple different languages in different grades (Hebrew in 3rd grade, German in 4th grade, Ancient Greek in 5th) in addition to Spanish which is taught in the other grades. We invite families in our community to share aspects of their cultural lives with the school, such as parents speaking out of their experiences and bringing stories of Korean New Year or Diwali directly to classes.

We seek translators, as needed, to ensure we can communicate with and connect with families who do not speak English as their primary language.

Finally, the full time school staff meet every morning at 8am to share diverse ideas for movement and music with their colleagues. This helps to share various cultural traditions and diversify the offerings brought to students.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

The population of the school is predominantly caucasian, but more diverse than the surrounding community, which is predominantly caucasian. The school is conscious of bringing a world based curriculum to its students. Like many organizations, the school Pedagogical Advisory Committee is discussing the possibility of bringing in a consultant to help determine what might be done to improve access and diversity.

The school currently provides “sheltered instruction” for second language learners, a small portion of students (18), which has grown each year. Sheltered instruction means the students are provided with services under the current curriculum and educational programming. Many students who struggle with English as a second language are provided instruction during the reading intervention times of the day. While the school is consciously low tech, it has compromised on that front by offering computer based programs for students whose second language is English and finding time and space in the building to deliver this additional support.

Space challenges are very common when looking for areas in our building to provide many of the services we desire, including more services for students who are learning English, speech and occupational therapy.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

In the past, as stated in the previous sections, the school has chosen to provide things like free and reduced cost lunches, after-care, a special class for students with severe disabilities and special computer based programs for students learning English as a second language. Fee waivers are available for any cost-based activities in the school and school supplies are provided to all students regardless of their family’s contributions.

We seek to be aware of when there may be cultural differences that may affect interactions with parents or between staff members. We seek to develop a warm environment and look to build connections and understand different approaches and belief or value systems.

We have discussed, in the near future, intentionally doing community outreach in neighborhoods that are more socio-economically diverse to raise awareness and gather feedback on where further improvements may be needed and or impactful.

Increased Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for staff is also currently being discussed and explored.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING EACH
CORE PRINCIPLE AND A DISCUSSION OF PLANS TO
ENHANCE THE WORKING OF THE
PRINCIPLE IN THE SCHOOL

STRENGTHS

Three Streams Student Support
Lotus Class - Curative Education

CHALLENGES

Time and space for specialists to work with students who have special needs, and second language learners.

DISCUSSION & PLANS

We continue to innovate every year and find a schedule that is most supportive to working with students individually and also not having them miss key times in class. We have acquired four yurts which we plan to have functional next year and are constantly working on creative spaces and staffing to support individual and group needs.

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

Wasatch Charter School is built upon a three-fold structure of leadership that works in collaboration to support and strengthen the growth and development of the school and greater community as a whole. These three bodies of leadership include; the Governing School Board, the Family Council, and the Pedagogical Advisory Committee. Each of these three groups work independently to hold responsibility for specific areas of accountability and growth, while simultaneously overlapping with the other two groups to ensure that they are moving the school forward in unison with a shared vision and purpose.

The Governing Board of the school holds responsibility for the financial, strategic, and regulatory well-being of Wasatch Charter School. It is where policy is developed, it is the group that attends to matters of audits, grants, and trusts. The Governing Board is made up of individuals who believe in the mission and purpose of the school, but who are not involved in the day to day function and administration of the school. They are the entity with legal accountability to the Utah State Charter School Board, our authorizer.

The Family Council is actively involved in building up the social well-being of the Wasatch community. Comprised of parents and other community members, the Family Council acts as a liaison between the parent body and the school staff to ensure adequate support, secure volunteers and donations when needed for school events, and to create a general connection between families and faculty. The Family Council helps guide parental involvement in the school and foster a strong culture of volunteerism and collaboration.

In addition, the Wasatch Family Foundation is supported by both the Family Council and the Governing board, working as a separate entity that provides services to the community such as pre-school, aftercare, parenting classes, and summer camps. The Wasatch Family Foundation provides an avenue to bring even more resources and opportunities to the community than Wasatch Charter School would be able to provide on its own.

The third structure of leadership is that of the Pedagogical Advisory Committee. It is within this group that the cultural, structural, and educational health of the school is upheld. This group is comprised of teachers and administrators who are actively involved in the daily operations of Wasatch Charter School. On an annual basis this group oversees the processes of hiring new staff, mentorship, professional development, and teacher evaluations. On a weekly basis the Pedagogical Advisory Committee meets to discuss and plan support for current needs and concerns within the school community. On a daily basis, members of this group are involved in

all aspects of daily life within the school including education, assessment, discipline, schedules, lesson planning, and teacher support.

The creation of the Pedagogical Advisory Committee with Team Lead roles was an intentional shift when our founding Pedagogical Director retired in our fourth year. This change was intended to create a more collaborative and supportive feeling amongst the faculty, providing opportunity for teacher leadership and increasing the voices of faculty in school-wide decision-making. This committee has weathered very challenging initial years during pandemic response and is ever-increasing the feeling of a larger part of our community with a vision for and capacity to hold the whole of the school.

Collaboration between the Pedagogical Advisory Committee and the Family Council supports parent enrichment activities, school wide events, staff wellness opportunities, and community building experiences. Whereas the overlap between the Pedagogical Advisory Committee and the Governing board is where a shared responsibility for finances and strategic planning takes place. Overall, it is clear that not one of these groups would be successful without the shared success of each of the other entities. Together they form a beautiful balanced image of the head, heart, and hands of the Wasatch Charter School Community, working together in collaboration and support of one another towards our school's continued growth.

Leadership from each of these entities meets together monthly in a Joint Committee Meeting to collaborate and discuss school-wide needs and communications. This process has provided added strength and cohesion to the school community.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

Innovation of collaboration has been a true key to growth at Wasatch Charter School. Consistent flexibility and willingness to change as needed to meet the needs of the students, staff, and parent community has been present since day one of operation.

The Wasatch Family Foundation was developed alongside Wasatch Charter school as a completely innovative way to provide additional programs for students and families that were beyond the capacity and legal realm of the school. Our pre-school and aftercare programs have allowed more families to be a part of our existing community by providing necessary services beyond traditional school age and outside of the regular school day hours. Parenting classes have helped to develop a strong understanding of Waldorf Education among the parent body, while summer camps have extended the learning opportunities that we are able to bring to children each year.

Innovation has been exemplified by the growth of the Family Council from a small group of interested parents in year one to a robust and active community of parent representatives for each class in the school in year seven with regular monthly meetings and a clear agenda for support and independent projects that carry them rhythmically through the school year.

Practically speaking, innovation was a necessity for all schools in navigating the Covid-19 pandemic through the school years that spanned 2020-2022. In the realm of leadership, Wasatch Charter School was willing to take some risks during the pandemic to expand leadership in new ways that have ultimately strengthened the school community and remained in effect even as schools have returned to normal. The advent of remote opportunities changed the way in which Wasatch Charter School viewed many roles within the school and opened the door to allow many individuals to support the school in leadership positions from a distance. Through this innovative approach, Wasatch Charter School has been able to retain strong leaders in teacher mentoring, professional development, student support on an organizational level, and leaders in curriculum development who would otherwise have needed to leave the school simply due to their physical location limitations.

In addition, the school has faculty-based leadership structures where teachers lead-out in areas of personal interest. These include committees, such as Festivals, Supplies, Traffic, and Outdoor Education. It also has included Professional Learning Communities that provide support and enrichment for staff in areas of interest, such as music, plays, movement, storytelling, visual arts, etc. Specialty Team leads assume leadership within their areas and work to strengthen programs and engage parents.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

First and foremost, the challenge of any public Waldorf School will continue to be finding the balance pedagogically between state and federal requirements and the needs of each individual school, classroom, and child. Leadership is a key piece of finding that balance as we need to bring individuals into our community whose strengths support the state and federal mandates and ask that they work together in collaboration with individuals who have a deep understanding and knowledge of Waldorf Pedagogy. In turn, these individuals need to have the capacity and the desire to work together to find a balance that will bring a beautiful and holistic education to each child while ensuring that state standards are achieved as required. At present, our pedagogical support teams are built with this collaboration of leadership in mind.

In addition, many roles within the leadership of Wasatch Charter School are multi-faceted and they overlap and integrate with the roles of other staff and leaders within the school. In many

ways this is highly supportive and ensures that as many needs as possible are being met throughout the school. The challenge at times can be a lack of clarity in regards to who is ultimately responsible or accountable for things within the leadership structure. Clarity of leadership roles and responsibilities within job descriptions and in staff communications are areas in which we are continually developing and growing as a school community.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

Previously, we have launched and refined a variety of structures, such as the PAC, the Family Council, PLCs, and Committees. We have refined meeting schedules to support meeting times for these groups and councils. We have also launched regular monthly Joint Committee meetings and bi-monthly Communications meetings to facilitate coordination between these leadership groups. This year, we held a collaborative training on the Threefold Social Order and strategy session for the Governing Board, PAC, Family Council, and Foundation Board. This time to connect and reflect on the roles of each organization within the whole, as well as the opportunity to socialize, was very supportive.

These forms and meetings will continue to be refined as we build greater capacity and collaboration into the future.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING EACH CORE PRINCIPLE AND A DISCUSSION OF PLANS TO ENHANCE THE WORKING OF THE PRINCIPLE IN THE SCHOOL

STRENGTHS

CHALLENGES

Regular meeting times to support collaboration

Strong investment in community by faculty and parents and volunteers

More form in Governing Board Meetings and processes

Increasingly shared vision

Turnover in Board members, the need to re-build connections each year

Large community size

Finding time for faculty to meet during school days

DISCUSSION & PLANS

We continue to work on ways to increase connection and involvement between organizations. It can be challenging with over 100 employees, over 700 children, and over 350 families to engage everyone and ensure that all views and needs are being heard. For leadership, this makes processes for connecting and involving individuals more consciously even more critical. This is happening through various processes and forums, such as monthly Family Council meetings, Joint committee meetings, faculty Pedagogical meetings, quarterly community building conversations, and many committee meetings.

Schools as Learning Communities

HOW IS THE PRINCIPLE LIVING IN THE SCHOOL?

Wasatch Charter School is a place of pervasive learning! Though Waldorf curriculum has its roots in a curriculum that began over 100 years ago, it is expected that an education that a child receives is relevant to their geographical location and the times that they are living in. Therefore, though there is a strong framework in place that is carefully built around human development, much of what is brought as curriculum to the children is specifically designed by the school community and class teacher who studies the children and the activities in the world to bring students learning that is alive. This specific class curriculum will, in many aspects, never be repeated for another class, though the teacher may teach for decades.

Teachers have the freedom and responsibility to create their lessons out of a relationship to and understanding of the children they carry on with each year, traditionally from grade 1-8. Additionally the teacher must stay abreast of what is happening in the world, so as to have relationship with what is present in their lives and in the lives of the families that enter the school community. Each year the teacher must look at the curriculum, study the students' developmental stage, meditate on the specific children in front of them and learn aspects of the subject to be taught that will be relevant and healthy for those children. This means a teacher is constantly learning!

All adults in a child's life are teachers and it is important that they give thoughtful attention to themselves, the world, the children, and the curriculum; therefore all adults that are part of our community are learning anew each year, because a human lives and grows and so does the world of which they are a part. This learning includes parents, and our school is unique in its level of parent involvement and parent education. All programs at the school live in the same vein of aliveness, growth and healthy action. We have strong roots in Rudolf Steiner's philosophies, and we certainly also look at other schools and philosophies, seeking to understand what is in the world and setting that within a thought to the specifics of our school community needs, abilities and challenges.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL EXPLORED INNOVATION IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

Wasatch Charter School takes a relationship based approach to research, a word which literally means “to search again”. The relationship of the human to the world and all of its aspects is a central value. Children learn in active social environments and the classroom benefits from the honest sharing of each child’s strengths and challenges. Movement, art, singing, group work, hands-on projects and explorations are part of each class that a child is in everyday. The child’s learning is guided by the teacher, but they learn from their peers, from nature and from every creation they put themselves into. WCS students are constantly creating things, putting their hearts and minds in action. Children in older grades spend time tutoring or mentoring younger students in the school. They help with school maintenance and repair, and all students work on the school farm. The children learn that all learning is collaborative in nature, it is all based on relationship and love of the world.

WCS teachers come together in weekly, often bi-weekly, meetings to discuss their well-being, the health of their class and exchange ideas about curriculum. Through this peer-to-peer support structure among colleagues, much is done to meet the needs of the community and enrich the learning of the teachers and students. Every 2-4 years team leads are nominated and decided upon by the Pedagogical Advisory Committee, which is partially made up of these team leads. A team lead is responsible for organizing these weekly meetings of 2-3 grades of teachers or a specialty team. They are also the voice for these teachers in the Pedagogical Advisory Committee and help to notice and care for the well-being of the school. Many social challenges are met and wrestled with in these touchstone meetings of teams which foster learning and development. Another aspect of these meetings can be that teachers observe and meditate on the children they teach, coming together to do something called “child study” to hold the child in collective attention. The child study can be formal or informal, and in both cases the teachers learn about the child in a way that most often has some noticeable effect on the teachers and the child, though the child is not present for the child study.

In school-wide meetings and after school meetings, which are open to parents, we learn from our wider family of colleagues and community members. Three Streams, our remarkable student support program, will bring information about social health and development for various age groups and update us on current challenges that the school may have been facing in this regard. They work with us to support students in unique and holistic ways throughout the school day as needed. We work together to make a plan that is based on collective knowledge and best practices. We communicate collaboratively with our board members and family council (parent community support). Our administrative team presents internal policy ideas and outside policy requirements (state or federal laws and mandates). All

is done in a way that is collaborative and very little is decided at our school without group thought and study. Our learning and research begins in relationship, going through thoughtful exchange and exploration, and is applied through individual and intentional action for the benefit of our community and the children.

Parents are integral to the success of our school, not in the least because they are integral to the health of the children we are here to support. Class teachers hold at least 4 parent education evenings during the year where we discuss the many aspects of child development, the curriculum, and work on an artistic project. The goal is to inform parents of the education their child is receiving, learn from them about their ideas, concerns and needs, and build community within the class and the school, which both benefit from the gifts that each family can bring. The school, as a whole, also holds parent education evenings that have much of the same intention on a broader, school-wide scale. Specialty class teachers, Three Streams staff, and people from outside our school community may host these gatherings.

Aside from our internal learning communities, of which there are almost too many to mention here, as each child is also teaching us, teachers are presented with many opportunities to attend classes for their personal growth and development. There is a certain stipend for this each year, and a teacher may request a class that they feel will be beneficial to them. These classes can be from many sources and do not come from an approved list of continuing education courses. We are also currently developing a sabbatical model for teachers who have gone through the 8 year cycle and this includes time off and funds to support extended learning. Because class teachers teach a new grade each year, the summer months include grade level training classes to prepare for the new developmental stage and new material that will be taught. Teachers can choose their course for this as well. We also offer a Waldorf immersion program which is open to the public for two weeks each summer. We aim to extend the healing of Waldorf education to all who wish to access it.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE SCHOOL FACED CHALLENGES OR MADE COMPROMISES IN RELATION TO THE PRINCIPLE?

As a fairly young school there have been challenges to building robust learning communities. In the first several years the challenge was one of consistency and communication. The teachers were new, the families were new, and we were in a community that had never seen a Waldorf school before, nevermind a public Waldorf school. New teachers were intimidated by presenting to parents, as they were just learning by themselves; many of them were in a Waldorf teacher training program that would last 3 years. The urgent need that the children were presenting took precedent and collaboration was limited to crisis management. The healthy implementation of Waldorf education lies solidly on rhythm and routine. This took time

to establish. Administration and seasoned teachers took on a huge load of teacher support and family communication that is now spread out amongst the school.

Currently there is an issue of time and availability in building our learning communities. Overall the classes are doing well and teachers feel established, but we hope to have a regular rotation of peer observation and feedback. This is a challenge because all of our teachers have full schedules and lesson planning is a very self-created process, taking daily hours of work. We also have a mentoring program that struggles with the same challenge. Another challenge to this is that all classes 1-8 are in main lesson, at the same time each day.

In the classroom, we are challenged by state standards and testing that can be at odds with the Waldorf model of teaching to the developmental stage of the child, and not ideal for overall health and well-being. There are other aspects of State mandated teacher trainings and required testing scores for the younger children that cause distress and discomfort due to child development concerns and the valued time of the teacher being spent on training that meet a State need, but seem to ignore the values of our learning community.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST AND WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE TO ADDRESS AREAS OF GROWTH PRESENTED BY THESE CHALLENGES?

The Pedagogical Advisory Committee is discussing ways to offer coverage to teachers so that they can observe each other. Currently our hearth teachers and specialty class teachers offer support. The younger grades each have an in class assistant and each of the older grade hearths has a part time assistant who can hold a class, if planned in advance.

We have discussed using only outside mentors or at least avoiding using class teachers as mentors. Using outside mentors has seemed to work well in the past and we are able to call mentors in from a supportive Waldorf community outside of our school, which does come with a cost. The insight given from a supportive observation has, overall, proven to be very helpful to the teachers. Newer teachers seem to benefit more from in-school mentors or team lead relationships.

Our school has a document of norms and expectations for each grade. That document works to combine state standards, as much as possible, with the expectations of the State. As teachers and as a school community, we also often discuss how to implement testing and core standards in the most healthy way possible for the children. We continue, through leadership of our director and work of our board, to voice our concerns regarding certain state practices and will continue to work to shift the conversation from performance emphasis via testing scores to healthy human growth and well-being outcomes, for children, their families, teachers and the communities they are a part of.

Self-Study Process

Overview

The process for our school's self-study included many layers of involvement from both staff and community. Conversations and broad overviews were presented during an all-staff faculty meeting in September of 2022. A timeline was laid out from September through February detailing the steps needed for this study to be accomplished. Working groups were formed led by members of the Pedagogical Advisory Committee (PAC) and composed of Board Members, Parent Council Leadership Members, and other members of the school's faculty.

In early October the first meetings were held to discuss the purview of each group. The focus of each group was to really dive into what we were already doing as a school, and not to change directions or create new plans in relation to each working groups' concepts. Groups were formed naturally by the different sections that needed to be detailed in the study: Mission & History led by Emily Merchant, Image of the Human Being led by Roel Op'tEnde, Child Development led by Marla Macdonald, Social Change through Education led by Corrine Gentry, Human Relationships led by Annemarie Goslow, Access and Diversity led by Heather Campbell, Collaborative Leadership led by Emily Cox, Schools as Learning Communities led by Nicole Denison, Summary of Self-Study Process led by David Keenan, Summary of Strengths and Challenges led by Kara Salisbury, and Preliminary Action Plan led by the PAC.

Each group held multiple meetings throughout the winter to discuss and review their sections. The aim was to really find the spirit of collaboration and to hear all members of the group and their view on the subject. It helped to have different avenues and understandings from the members involved therefore deepening the understanding of each of the sections defined in this study. Separate documents were formulated from these meetings detailing, defining, and assessing our own understanding of what is happening at Wasatch Charter School. We answered many questions regarding the how's and the why's, the what's and the when's of the foundations and functions of our school.

We found that in each section, there were consistently similar strengths and areas of challenge. This speaks to the vast weave of the interspersed robust education that we provide here at Wasatch Charter School. Every aspect of what we do at this school pops up in other areas. The staff are united together on this journey to educate the whole child and to build a community of people that want a brighter future for our students.

The working groups then compiled all the information into documents to share with the PAC. The PAC then worked on reviewing, compiling and editing the documents to have a robust single document to present to separate groups for further comments and suggestions. Those groups included the faculty as a whole, the board and the parent community. With those suggestions and comments, the PAC made slight changes to the document prior to a full final editing process.

The past 7 years have been an amazing journey in the establishment and growth of Wasatch Charter School. Through many ups and downs our community has bonded and created something truly special for students in the Salt Lake Valley. It has been through this study process that, on paper, we now have a robust document describing all the nuances of the school. We now have a thorough description of what the school has become, and where some areas of growth can flourish in the future.

Summary of Strengths & Challenges

Overview

In reviewing the strengths and challenges from each of the sections of the study, it was found that they largely fall into some broad categories. The broad categories seen in the area of strengths are: things that are supportive to teachers/staff, things that are supportive to students, things that build the sense of community among the broader scope (staff and students but also parents, Governing Board, etc.). In the area of challenges, there are a few ways that the items could be categorized, but they also largely fall into the same broad categories as the strengths, so they have been organized that way below, with the addition of one additional category: compliance with State requirements.

STRENGTHS

Things that are supportive to teachers/staff:

Continued support for teachers to attend trainings and workshops to improve their understanding of child development and renew their interest and engagement as they stay with their class each year

Regular meeting times to support collaboration

Math and Reading specialists who come and support the class teachers to help the students be able to stay in their classrooms for instruction

Many different forms of support for staff, including our hearths and hearth keepers

Mentorship program for the teachers to have veteran teachers to support them

CHALLENGES

Compliance with State requirements:

The state requirements for the start age of kindergarten

State requirements for meeting proficiency in specific academic areas by specific ages that don't align with the Waldorf Pedagogy.

Implementing Curative Education, based on Steiner's 12 lectures, to students with special needs while still complying with special education laws and regulations

Things that present challenges with/for students:

"School-hoppers" not really looking for Waldorf education

Being such a large school it is very difficult to instill values/all be on the same page/penetrate fully

Many opportunities to foster relationships and learning between staff

Commitment to finding the right role for each staff member

Things that are supportive to students:

Teachers staying with their class for many years helps to support the full developmental journey of the children

Long-term relationship with teachers

Adults in different roles working with children

As a public Waldorf school that accepts a variety of children, we are able to broaden our understanding and practices to meet a variety of needs of child development

School-wide implementation of social/emotional programs

Lotus Class - Curative Education

Compassionate Campus Crew

Teaching through relationship

Seeing and meeting individual needs

Different aged children working with each other

Well-crafted lesson plans rich in cultures and civilizations from around the world

No-blame meetings

Minimized computer work

Knowing your students are launching into a different system and working to bridge that gap

Trying to find a balance between the world we insulate them from while also bringing it to them before high school comes...

Conflict in figuring out how to still protect them/ and also know what's coming and try it out in a low-stakes context before being held to those expectations

Things that present challenges to building a sense of community:

Parent support

Parent Education:

- how to educate and connect with new families

- how to reach the families that don't show up to offerings

Collaboration with other, more mature Waldorf schools

Turnover in Board members, the need to re-build connections each year

Large community size

Things that present challenges with/for teachers/staff:

Balancing individual freedom for teachers with consistent expectations throughout the school

More conversations about curriculum in team meetings

Three Streams Student Support

Things that build the sense of community:

Successful community events such as Harvest Festival and Spring Gala

Curricular Parent Evenings and social gatherings for families

Strong investment in community by faculty and parents and volunteers

More form in Governing Board Meetings and processes

Increasingly shared vision

Frequent communication with parents

Collaboration with other schools through our sports program

Time and space for specialists to work with students who have special needs, and second language learners.

Finding time for faculty to meet during school days

Wasatch Charter School

Site Visit Report

May 15-17, 2023

Submitted by:

Liz Beaven, EdD - Executive Director, Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

Hellene S. Brodsky - Kindergarten Teacher, Journey School (JS)

Caleb Buckley, EdD - Executive Director, Golden Valley Charter School (GVCS)

Kelly Larson - Grades Teacher, Journey School (JS)

Submitted to

Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

June 6, 2023

Primary Contact:

Chamomile Nusz, Membership Director, Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

membership@allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org

cc. Emily Merchant, Executive Director, Wasatch Charter School

Table of Contents

Disclaimer: Limitations on the Distribution, Use and Scope of this Document	3
Mission	4
Introduction	5
Core Principle #1 Image of the Human Being	6
Core Principle #2 Child Development	8
Core Principle #3 Social Change Through Education	10
Core Principle #4 Human Relationships	13
Core Principle #5 Access and Diversity	14
Core Principle #6 Collaborative Leadership	16
Core Principle #7 Schools as Learning Communities	17
Summary of Strengths and Challenges	19
Conclusion	20
Attachments	21

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This report is intended for use by the school. Appropriate use includes release to the larger school community, if done so in an accurate and balanced manner. The report is not written for the purpose of providing a public relations document. If a school uses the report in a manner that misrepresents or distorts its contents or purpose, the school will be subject to corrective action by the Alliance.

The charge of the Alliance visiting team was to determine the actual situation as it existed in the school, its program and its procedures, and not to pass judgment on the professional personnel involved. Hence, this report is an objective description of circumstances as they appeared to trained and experienced educators. Any use of this report as an official assessment of a staff person's professional competency would be in violation of the professional ethics under which a school peer review is conducted.

Any matters relating to safety issues should be addressed as soon as is feasible: While the Alliance team may comment on conditions related to safety, the report is not to be construed as substituting for periodic inspections of the facilities as required by law and by principles of good practice in risk management gleaned from professional counsel to the school.

The members of the visiting team voluntarily reflected their professional judgment in arriving at the conclusions reported in this document. They are willing to support the thoughtful evaluations that they have made, provided the report is used appropriately. They are not to be held accountable for an injudicious or unauthorized use of this document.

Mission

Wasatch Charter School (WCS) is a K-8 tuition-free charter school in the Salt Lake Valley guided by the principles of public Waldorf education that provides a comprehensive education program integrating academics, arts, movement, nature, and social responsibility into everyday learning. Through a culture of holistic learning and dedication to the optimal development of each individual child, WCS nurtures intellectual, social and emotional, and physical capacities through an artistic, hands-on, interdisciplinary approach to core academic subjects which enables each student to blossom into an imaginative, engaged, competent, life-long learner. Our students, teachers, faculty, and families emerge as confident, creative, strong critical thinkers and environmental stewards, empowered to act positively in their own lives and communities.

Introduction

Wasatch Charter School (WCS) extended a warm welcome and gracious hosting to the Visiting Team. All parts of the school were accessible to the Team, and questions or requests for information were readily addressed. WCS is a young school, opening its doors in August 2016. It has a commitment to innovation and has achieved a great deal in under seven years; it should be noted that three of these years were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The school has built enrollment and staffing, developed purpose-designed buildings, acquired a lease and developed usage for a working school garden, added a facility for the early childhood program, and nurtured community and school culture. It has demonstrated a commitment to its identity as a Public Waldorf school, with significant resources allocated for professional development and teacher education.

In accordance with Utah law, the school was required to have a minimum of 500 students enrolled in order to open. It had 540 students at opening, from kindergarten through eighth grade, many of whom had no prior experience of Public Waldorf education. Today, WCS has over 640 students plus additional students in a separate preschool program (operated by the Wasatch Family Foundation, a separate non-profit organization). The school operates as its own Local Education Authority (LEA, the required structure for charters in Utah).

WCS was founded out of an intention to offer Waldorf education to children and families in the Salt Lake area. It is committed to the Core Principles of the Alliance for Public Waldorf education and is explicit about its connection to anthroposophy. The school noted that a spiritual view of the child and of life is commonly held in its community and has been readily accepted. The Visiting Team saw the commitment to Waldorf education demonstrated in a wide variety of ways.

The school shares the common challenge of Alliance schools of balancing Waldorf pedagogy with state mandated requirements; staff are committed to the school's mission, and to aligning these requirements in innovative ways. These include: emphasis on social inclusion and school community; special education and student support; emphasis on development of the will and the importance of movement for all students; and a commitment to Waldorf teacher education and professional development.

This report addresses WCS's approach and alignment to the seven Core Principles of the Alliance as described in its self-study report and as observed by the team. It includes a summary of overall strengths and challenges. The self-study process was inclusive of many perspectives and the site visit team met with representatives from major stakeholder groups including students and parents.

The Visiting Team thanks the Wasatch school community, employees, and leadership for their warm welcome.

Core Principle #1 Image of the Human Being

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

From the School's Self Study:

Waldorf education at Wasatch Charter School is a holistic approach emphasizing Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy of the 3-fold human being of body, soul and spirit. The body is strengthened and developed through physical education, practical and artistic activities and movement. The curriculum is infused with activities to strengthen the will. Examples include movement work, creating main lesson books and doing handwork.

The soul or "feeling life" of the human being is nurtured through the arts such as music, drama and painting. Storytelling is emphasized as an essential tool to awaken and support imagination and creativity.

The spirit is viewed as foundational to a person's development. Students develop a strong sense of self, a connection to the community as well as an appreciation to the surroundings and the wider world. The curriculum encourages the students to look within themselves to further develop empathy, reverence, interconnectedness and respect for all living things.

Wasatch Charter School strives to foster the individual's well being by encompassing the child's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.

Summary of Strengths

- Integration of academics and arts
- Eurythmy blocks
- Support of critical thinking and global consciousness of the students
- Arts, movement, nature into curriculum
- School's commitment to social responsibility, civic engagement and environmental stewards
- Experiential learning
- Community service
- Farm and growing cycles in the garden

Summary of Challenges

- Balance of Waldorf education and state regulations and standards
- Adjustments to curriculum, assessments and teacher training to meet state requirements: ie - Introducing typing skills in third grade, phonemic awareness program in kindergarten

Innovation

- Wasatch Lotus Class
- Curative Education
- Three Care Streams of Student Support / Kim John Payne
- Attendance of multiple faculty members to the World Conference

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #1 Image of the Human Being

- Opening of the day as a faculty to set tone for children
- Calendar of the Soul read for reflection and support for all
- EC teacher observed saying an additional morning verse with team partner assistants
- Engagement of students as they enter the school, e.g. - daily letter
- Warm atmosphere of school and classroom environments - simplicity and beauty of classrooms without clutter
- Developmentally age-appropriate education in each classroom - surroundings, materials, artwork - circle in EC was engaging with a focus of the physical body development, rhythm and breathing.
- Waldorf pedagogy throughout the school and classroom environments as seen through lessons, manner which the teacher interacted with the students, lessons presented and classroom preparation
- Relationship-based education observed throughout the school - teachers interacting warmly with students in the classrooms and hallways, with lunch coordinators, office staff and administrators
- Adults worthy of imitation - seen throughout the nursery and kindergartens
- Adults in loving authority positions - from the car drop off, door holders, teachers, meal cart folks, single subject teachers, office personnel admin and back to pick up staff
- Healthy rhythms, routines, rituals and transitions - throughout grades and in EC
- Healthy food available for students and faculty
- Warmth permeated the classrooms, especially present in EC as seen by the gentle flow between inside and outside time, play to snack time and meaningful work to cleanup
- Strong ego presence in grade teachers as seen in the grade teacher's lessons, patience and calmness of Hearth leaders, Lotus teachers creativity, acceptance and tolerance of a variety of needs from differing children
- Hearth model as strong support of the human being and healthy development
- Will activities are infused throughout the curriculum and a daily practice in all grades - observed Gaga game play of 6th grade at the EC site, games and movement throughout the grades, Lotus students helping in the nursery, K students creating birthday book pages, galloping to a stop in movement journeys, dyeing cloth in collaborative peer groups and listening attentively to a birthday story.

Core Principle #2 Child Development

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

From the School's Self Study:

Child development as viewed by Rudolf Steiner is a focus of WCS. The staff engage in on-going study, bring mentors to the school to support staff, and have hired experienced leaders in Waldorf education to supplement on-going learning. The faculty are required to have continuing education focusing on child development and are required to be certified Waldorf teachers or have commenced training within three years of full-time employment. Although it may be challenging due to time constraints and role responsibilities, the school supports and facilitates peer mentoring. The faculty study and focus on child development and 7-year cycles.

Summary of Strengths

- Support teachers and staff to attend training and workshops
- Math and reading specialist
- Mentorship program
- Robust looping to support the full development of the children
- Broaden understanding and practices to meet the variety of children at the school
- Wasatch Family Foundation
- Three Streams Support
- Speech Arts

Summary of Challenges

- State requirement for the start age of kindergarten
- State requirement for meeting proficiency in specific academic areas by specific ages that don't align with Waldorf Pedagogy
- Implementing Curative Education to students with special needs while concomitantly complying with special education laws and regulations

Innovation

- Hearth Program - each having their own developmental task to serve student group
- Lotus Class
- The Farm and Garden Programs
- Robust Specialty Team
- Full supportive Special Education Department

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #2 Child Development

- Hearth as an opportunity for older students to care, nurture and/or feed younger students
- Age appropriate Waldorf curriculum that speaks appropriately to the age to the child
- Addressing the children throughout the school in a developmentally age appropriate manner - tasks asked of the children meet them where they are
- Electives for the students as a means of age appropriate self expression
- On-going professional opportunities and study of child development for the staff
- Three Streams support groups
- Compassionate campus crew and opportunities
- Code of Conduct as brought by 7-8th graders
- Social circles
- Parent enrichment and education opportunities to learn about child development and the 7-year cycles as well as changes at each age and stage of development
- Morning Movement groups and other opportunities for movement
- Curative education training for faculty
- Speech specialist to support teachers and children
- Age appropriate room spaces to support development of students
- Age appropriate communication between faculty, staff and students

Core Principle #3 Social Change Through Education

Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society

From the School's Self Study:

The school is an entity with great capacity to effect social change, both with the children and the larger educational community. The school commits resources of finances and personnel to develop math and literacy resources, staff the Hearth outside each classroom cluster, develop the Lotus Program, and train staff and students in Compassionate Campus and Three Streams work. The primary focus at WSC is on each child as an individual and allows children the freedom to develop at their own pace. The staff acknowledge the potential impact they can create upon the greater community through the demonstration of social and emotional accountability, health, academic and organizational success by the use of methods unlike other schools within the community. These approaches counter the current culture in the surrounding community. The school offers a distinct and meaningful choice for the community.

Summary of Strengths

- School-wide implementation of social/emotional programs
- Lotus Class
- Compassionate Campus Crew
- Well-crafted lesson plans rich in cultures and civilizations from around the world
- No-blame meetings
- Minimized computer work
- Robust Three Streams Team
- Successful community events such as Harvest Festival and Spring Gala

Summary of Challenges

- State requirements and mandates
- “School -hoppers” not really looking for Waldorf education
- Being such a large school, it can become difficult to instill values and all be on the same page to penetrate these values fully
- Parent support
- Middle school
 - aware that students are launching into a different system and working to bridge that gap
 - trying to find a balance between the world the school encourages they be insulated from while also bringing it to them in healthy ways before high school
 - conflict in figuring out how to still protect students/and allowing them to try it out in a low-stakes context before being held to higher expectations in high school.

Innovation

- Dedicated Assessment team striving to bring testing, progress-monitoring, and computer programs in least intrusive and healthy ways.
- Strive to be thoughtful with mandates regarding implementation and work with the state to develop plans on the school's own timeline.
- Social circles in grades 4-8
- Peer tutor support by older grades in lower grades
- Work spaces in upper grades classrooms for struggling younger children.
- Lotus Class - mixed age, curative smaller classroom designed for students with high emotional academic and curative needs.
- Opportunities for integration between classes and individuals of varied ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #3 Social Change Through Education

Snapshots:

- A group of 3-4 middle school students washing windows in the office, 3-4 with shovels in hand working on the new outdoor theater, older students sitting in the hall or Hearth working with younger students.
- The organization of the school and focus upon social/emotional development demonstrates many harmonious relationships between thinking, feeling and willing throughout the school.
 - Students from the Lotus Program work with kindergarten classes
 - Middle grade students tutor younger students
 - Small groups of sixth to eighth graders work in the office and on building maintenance
 - Eighth grade students present long-term projects with classmates.
- Grades 4-8 have weekly social circles and check-ins with their class; a time to share and work through social challenges in a safe space.
- A panel of three sixth and three eighth grade students expressed their appreciation for their classes that feel like a "family" community. They explained with gratitude how they learned to solve problems "within themselves".
- The school is challenged by state testing and required state curricular mandates. The staff collaboratively work to figure out the best way to include these mandates while maintaining integrity with the principles of Waldorf Education and the social / emotional well-being of the children.
- Parent connections were not easily observed by the Visiting Team.
- Family Council members expressed a range of commitment amongst parents from deeply engaged to understanding Waldorf education to not engaged, just liking what the school does.
- Staff include many parents and relatives.

- The staff expressed continued dialogue needed on transitioning students into high school.
- The Visiting Team observed conscientious thought put towards expanding and moving out into the community, from the garden, visits to the senior housing nearby and connection with the Wasatch Family Foundation preschool.

Core Principle #4 Human Relationships

Public Waldorf Schools foster a culture of healthy Human relationships

From the School's Self Study:

Summary of Strengths

- Peer relationships fostered through compassionate campus
- Professional learning communities and leadership groups
- School provides regional support to other charters with professional development and school events such as pentathlon

Summary of Challenges

- Balancing freedom in teaching with direct guidance and mentorship
- Educating new families on school's mission

Innovation

- Many adults are on hand throughout the day to support children, including in the hearth spaces
- The "Three Streams" approach to discipline/emotional support is fully implemented

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #4 Healthy Human Relationships

- Middle school students indicated that relationship with their classmates and teacher are the best part of the school
- Morning meeting of staff at 8am brings unity
- Conversations observed with students were respectful and showed evidence of training on social/emotional intervention strategies
- Cell phone policy is carefully followed and promotes greater human interaction
- The Visiting Team observed relationships to be among the strongest principles in the school

Core Principle #5 Access and Diversity

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

From the School's Self Study:

WCS intentionally positioned itself within the public sphere because of a commitment to access and diversity and a desire to extend access to the school to a broad cross-section of Utah families. Wasatch Family Foundation offers extended day kindergarten and aftercare for students to make the school more supportive of working parents' needs. Programs such as the Lotus class, interventions, SPED, morning movement support, and school structures such as the hearths were developed through learning from and being responsive to student needs. The school is located directly on a bus line, allowing easy access to the campus for students and families using public transit.

The main school building is accessible to all bodies and is ADA-compliant. Adjustments are made as needed to meet individual needs.

The school notes that the student base has a more diverse representation of demographics than the surrounding population base. The curriculum reflects cultural diversity through the grades. Teachers choose stories from diverse cultures; students are exposed to a broad swath of cultural ideas and beliefs.

Summary of Strengths

- Three Streams Student Support
- Lotus Class - Curative Education for moderate to severe disabilities within special education services.
- Sheltered instruction for second language learners
- Fee waivers are available for any cost-based activities
- The school is predominantly caucasian, but is conscious of bringing a world-based curriculum to its students

Summary of Challenges

- Time and space for specialists to work with students who have special needs, and second language learners
- Increased diversity, equity, and inclusion training for staff is currently being discussed and explored.

Innovation

- The Lotus class is based on curative education within the special education continuum of services. The class provides individualized programs within a multi-age, mixed ability setting. The primary emphasis is on movement activities from Steiner's curative indications.
- Students in the Lotus class provide peer support and leadership to kindergarten students.
- An emphasis on movement through morning movement and pull-out activities.

- Holistic intervention programs throughout the school.
- The Three Streams program, a comprehensive, Multi-Tiered System of Supports was developed from the school's beginning in consultation with Kim John Payne. It provides a developmental approach to social/emotional, discipline, and remedial learning. A committee and regular meeting time of school experts provides school-wide support, ensuring that public school requirements are met with a constant influence of Waldorf educational goals.
- Community involvement is encouraged through parenting classes, parent enrichment, and parent mentoring when needed.
- Middle school athletics are accessible for any student, including providing modifications and adaptations as needed.
- Fee waivers are available for low SES families for activities including outdoor education for all students.

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #5 Access and Diversity

- The school population reflects its location in a predominantly caucasian community. Demographic information in the Annual Report for 2021-22 shows 22% of students are non-white; under 5% are English language learners, 15% are special education students, and 16% qualify for free or reduced lunch (the school notes this was affected by covid attendance patterns and is likely higher).
- A 7th grade statistics project surveyed 53 teachers and students and found that 19 languages were represented in this sample group with Spanish the most common second language.
- The school expressed a desire to increase its outreach to underserved populations, extending the school community.
- The Visiting Team observed an emphasis on curriculum selections to provide a breadth of world views - examples included a nuanced discussion of Christopher Columbus, and an emphasis on Native American history and knowledge. Student responses indicated that an invitation to explore alternative perspectives was familiar to them.
- The current faculty has racial, age, and gender diversity.
- A gender-neutral bathroom in the center of the building is available to students.
- The school is interested in ongoing development of its approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion and is looking at bringing in consultants to help with building student diversity and staff training.
- Overall, the Visiting Team observed that access is a priority for WCS and that issues of diversity are less evident, although there is awareness of their importance and impact.

Core Principle #6 Collaborative Leadership:

School leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal structures

From the School's Self Study:

Summary of Strengths

- A common vision based upon Waldorf education in the Public Sector
- High degree of Waldorf training and commitment to school's mission
- Many structural points for parent participation - board, foundation, family council, class parents, etc.

Summary of Challenges

- Post-pandemic and with a growth mindset, special attention is needed to hearing everyone's voice
- Increasing participation in school wide events and offerings

Innovation

- Arises out of interest from faculty
- The Foundation allows for growth in more areas such as preschool

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #6 Collaborative Leadership

- Pedagogical Advisory Committee functions as representative of the school and works collaboratively in scheduling meetings, hiring, and other matters.
- The Visiting Team observed strong direction and leadership from the Executive Director and also observed several management positions which hold authority and influence in the school.
- The board is aware of their "emerging maturity" phase of development and has confidence in their group and school leadership.
- While many opportunities for parents to engage were presented, it was not clear to the Visiting Team that participation in these events was high, or whether there was an imperative to have it increased.

Core Principle #7 Schools as Learning Communities:

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

From the School's Self Study:

The school is well on its way to cultivating effective lifelong learning communities for both children and adults. Grounded in Rudolf Steiner's philosophies, the staff collaborate and develop curriculum, lessons and activities for the children before them. The school engages in a relationship approach to learning. Students engage in meaningful work, art, projects and explorations which take them beyond the walls of the classroom.

Teachers too are engaged in ongoing learning from "PLC's" (Professional Learning Committees) and team meetings throughout the year to summer grade level and Waldorf Immersion programs. Staff are granted a learning stipend for use in what they feel would be most beneficial for them.

Summary of Strengths

- Teachers have the freedom and responsibility to create lessons arising from the relationship and understanding of the children they carry.
- Emphasis on Waldorf pedagogical approaches is held as a priority
- Children learn in active social environments
- Movement, art, singing, group work, hands-on projects and explorations are part of each class.
- Children in older grades tutor or mentor younger students in the school
- Children help with school maintenance and repair
- All students work at different times on the farm
- The weekly schedule includes a Friday afternoon meeting for full time teaching staff and space during morning specialities for team meetings
- Child studies
- Class teachers hold 4 parent education evenings a year
- Three Streams staff and visiting mentors host parent gatherings
- Stipends are provided for grade level and ongoing training for teachers
- Waldorf Immersion program developed for the staff is a two week session each summer and open to the public

Summary of Challenges

- Maintaining consistency with meetings and mentoring
- Transparency and communication amongst all parts of the school community
- Administration and seasoned teachers took on a huge load of teacher support and family communication
- Time and availability of space in the building for learning communities to meet
- Time and availability for mentoring on a consistent basis

- Challenged by state standards and testing at odds with Waldorf model which may not be appropriate for developmental stage of the child

Innovation

- Hearth space staffed in each pod provides support for students and teachers
- Younger grades have a class assistant
- Older grade Hearths staff can hold a class as needed
- The school has developed a document for ELA and Math to combine state standards with Waldorf curriculum.

Site Visit Team Summary Core Principle #7 Learning Community

Snapshots: Each morning staff gather in the atrium at 8:00 for announcements, singing or movement and a reading of Calendar of the Soul. During announcements, needs are shared and volunteers are gathered to ensure all is covered for the day. The Pedagogical Advisory Committee meets around a large table collaboratively discussing staffing for next year, and planning the agendas for the last faculty meetings of the school year establishing who is holding what for teacher inservice week in August. The staff respectfully collaborate and engage in thoughtful discussions in every setting we observe.

- The Visiting Team observed the collaborative approach to learning communities carries over into classrooms and amongst the students, who share meaningful work in the building.
- Though challenged by incorporating state mandates into Waldorf pedagogical curriculum the staff has accessible ELA and math curriculum guides for each grade 1-8, layering Core Standards into Waldorf blocks.
- Waldorf training and continued deepening for staff is upheld as a school priority and sets a strong foundation throughout the school.
- The staff expressed that time and availability are challenges they struggle with to maintain the consistency of mentoring relationships, and meeting times for learning communities.
- Waldorf training and sources appear to have come primarily from Gradalis trainers. Some staff expressed a concern that not experiencing other schools and Waldorf approaches could create its own dogma within the school.
- The school has developed a summer program for introduction to Waldorf and for teacher education; this is open to all.
- Overall the Visiting Team observed collaborative learning communities throughout the school working together to meet the needs and challenges presented to them.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges: Visiting Team

Strengths

1. A demonstrated commitment to the principles of Waldorf education and to anthroposophy as its foundation, and conscious activity and allocation of resources to support this commitment. The school sent a group of 9 to the recent international teachers' conference in Switzerland.
2. Emphasis on student support: this includes the Lotus Class (a multi-age program for students with exceptional needs), individual support programs, and tiered approaches to intervention, and an in house speech instructor, currently for part of the year.
3. The "hearth" model that provides a hub for students and teachers; used for academic support, respite for students, interventions, and social space.
4. Commitment to developing the will - movement was evident in all classes, with significant time spent outdoors and movement equipment in classrooms.
5. Commitment to Waldorf teacher education and professional development, with adequate resources to support this. This includes the development of professional learning communities and summer programs.
6. A "Three Streams" program throughout the school, supported by school-wide training, which provides an overall mood of compassion and community plus crisis support if needed.
7. Purpose-built facilities that were designed to support the school's mission and work. There is a high level of care of the facilities, with cleanliness and orderliness throughout.
8. Emphasis on collaboration among students and adults. This was evident in the faculty morning circle, in the working of the Pedagogical Advisory Committee, and in classrooms.
9. A separate non-profit organization, the Wasatch Family Foundation, that provides the support of pre-school and extended care programs and general fundraising.
10. Leadership with a vision for the school and its future and energy and the capacity to advance that vision.

Challenges

1. Finding ways to increase participation and build an understanding of the school's mission in the parent body.
2. Continuing to expand the reach of the school to underrepresented communities.
3. Navigating an upcoming change in leadership that will require heightened collaboration, communication, and transparency. The founding executive director will be changing her role and scope of work, and will be working from overseas.
4. Maintaining transparent and effective communication in a large organization, with clarity and confidence for all constituents on where to address concerns or questions.
5. Building a greater culture of giving, primarily through the work of the Foundation, to meet the goals of the organization.
6. Increasing the available facilities to house the future fully triple tracked grades program: space was repeatedly addressed as an issue with every available spot creatively put to use.
7. Managing expectations. The school has achieved a great deal and has ambitious goals including the development of a high school, building its current offerings in teacher education, and acquiring more land and facilities. The Visiting Team recommends that the school keeps

an eye on sustainability and does not overextend, especially for the next year or two as the school fully emerges from the impact of the pandemic and navigates a significant change in governance and leadership.

8. In common with all Public Waldorf schools, continuing to find a balance of state regulations and a Waldorf approach. Examples include the state's requirement for the start age for kindergarten and implementing curative education and complying with special education laws and regulations.

Action Plan

The school included a preliminary action plan in its self-study. This is included as an appendix. The school anticipates continued growth, expanding the student population to three classes in every grade, with smaller classes of 25 rather than 31. This will support stability in staffing and scheduling but will also challenge communication and maintenance of a shared culture. There is strong interest in developing a high school and in growing onsite teacher education and professional development. The preliminary action plan addresses these interests.

Conclusion

Wasatch Charter School is clearly a regional leader and has the Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education at the core of everything it offers. The school is innovative and yet true to the origins of the Waldorf approach. From the strategic goals down to the individual conversations between students and teachers, an observer can see evidence of the school's mission at work. Wasatch has many areas that can serve as an example, even to schools that are much more established. This was evidenced in the site visit process, in which team members identified practices that they intended to take back to their "home" schools. Thai demonstrates Wasatch's role as an exemplar of good practice, innovation and contribution to Alliance schools.

Large, stable enrollments, a permanent site, and a depth of Waldorf curriculum all point to a firmly mature organization. The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education's Seven Core Principles are visibly present in the school; the Visiting Team noted that there are many places where all seven of the Principles can be seen at work together.

The school is young and the current 8th grade class started in 2nd grade. It has grown rapidly and achieved a considerable amount. It has completed its first five-year comprehensive review with the State with a determination of "good standing". As it completes its seventh year, it faces a change in leadership and structure with the Executive Director planning to transition to part-time and remote work, from overseas. Given her pioneering and pivotal role, the Visiting Team, as well as some members of the community, expressed concern about managing the transition of the founding Executive Director to part-time and remote. There are plans in place to address this, with distributed leadership and an increase in responsibility and duties for several individuals, yet these plans are currently untested. With the rapid growth of the school, the community of parents and new employees will need extra layers of transparency, communication, and process to understand how the school functions and to feel that many voices go into supporting the mission. WCS is approaching this

transition in a thoughtful, deliberative manner, aware that there is much that will be unknown until this unfolds. Overall, the school has embraced this upcoming change, seeing it as the completion of a phase of development and a step that will provide growth opportunities for individuals and for the school overall.

Attachments from the text:

Preliminary Action Plan

Wasatch Action Plan

Alliance Determination

The Alliance Membership Committee and Board have approved Wasatch Charter School to become full members of the Alliance.

A visit will be made at the end of the 2023/24 school year by a membership committee member to support the school as they are transitioning leadership this year.

Overview

The timing of this self-study during our seventh year and post-pandemic phase has provided ample opportunities for reflection. In identifying our successes and innovations, we have also seen areas where additional growth is possible. Many of these areas are found in a gesture of deepening and enriching the forms that have been created.

Specific Focus Areas

- Continue to emphasize and support Waldorf teacher training for faculty in order to expand the scope of child-development-centered pedagogy in school practices. In particular, encourage Special Education teachers, Student support staff, and specialty teachers to commence relevant certification or training programs that will deepen their feelings for the philosophical and anthroposophical foundations of the curriculum and pedagogy.
- Support measures to retain faculty and continue to build job satisfaction, including increasing pay, providing adequate training and job support, fostering positive and authentically friendly work relationships, and providing opportunities for faculty leadership and community building.
- Deepen pedagogical understanding through ongoing training, such as:
 - ◆ Summer Introductory Course for new teachers, part-time staff, Board and Family Council leadership
 - ◆ Internal and external mentors
 - ◆ Enriching and thoughtful professional development on-site

- ◆ Development of classes or support for trained teachers looking to deepen in particular areas, such as music, art, movement, storytelling, etc.
 - ◆ Refinement of APPEL licensure program and introductory process for new teachers
- Continue building a Faculty Leadership culture through Pedagogical Advisory Committee, Professional Learning Communities, and Committee Structure.
 - Continue to deepen parental understanding and engagement through meaningful, intentional parent evenings, parenting courses, engaging volunteer opportunities, monthly community events, and emerging farm co-op programs.
 - Continue to refine curricular practices and grades expectations to ensure that state standards and Waldorf pedagogy can be woven together and teachers have adequate support in planning and delivering effective lessons, particularly connected to literacy and mathematics.
 - Continue to improve operational functions to ensure governance, compliance, and financial accountability is maintained.

Long Term Desires

Our community intends to continue to grow, expanding our student population to three classes in every grade (with smaller classes of 25 rather than 31). This growth plan will facilitate a stable staffing structure and consistent schedule from year to year, rather than the annual adjustments that have been necessitated. It is hoped that this growth will create a strong and stable PreK-8 program with a well-established faculty, robust special education, student support, and specialty programs.

To support this growth over the coming two to three years, the school plans to:

- Refinance our existing bond in the next 1-2 years as our financial metrics and history make us eligible for a State-backed bond program with lower interest rates
- Acquire additional building space, including additional classrooms, offices, and larger specialty spaces (eurythmy, gym and music rooms) to support the triple tracked model
- Hire and train additional class and specialty teachers to support the additional student population
- Amend our charter document with State approval to increase our maximum student population to 690 from 640.

In addition, there is significant interest within our school community for two other initiatives. These include expanding to include other schools within our chartered Local Education

Agency and growing onsite training and professional development programs, including licensure for new teachers. The growth of these related endeavors could strengthen and expand the efficacy of our current operations and vision for the existing school if undertaken with care. Timing will be critical to these efforts in order to ensure that they are supportive and to not diminish or drain resources from the existing operations.