



Optimum Learning Environments Charter School
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a Charter School?

A: Charter schools are public schools, paid for with tax dollars and charge no tuition. They provide for greater local control and allow for more flexibility and innovation, increased educational choices and opportunities, and healthy competition within the educational sector.

Q: Do Charter Schools have to meet the same standards as traditional schools?

A: Charters schools are subject to “real” accountability and can be closed if they do not meet the terms of their charter. Additionally all students are tested annually and the State of Oregon issues a “report card” for charter schools as well as traditional schools. See <http://www.salemkeizer.org/content/optimum-learning-environment-charter-schoolfor> the latest report card.

Q: Why a Charter School?

A: The teachers working on this charter school want to provide unique opportunities and experiences for the children at OLE. Federal money is available to Charter Schools to finance creative teaching and innovative programs. At OLE these include additional resources for technology, a school site naturescape and community service/civics experiences.

Q: Don't some charters focus on special-need students or high achieving students?

A: Yes. However, this charter is designed for all levels of students. For example, we utilize a supplemental math program that can be individualized so each student can progress at his/her own rate to be successful.

Q: How does the experience of the Charter School children at Forest Ridge differ from that of the other Forest Ridge children?

A: The programs developed through the charter will be provided to all Forest Ridge students. However, without charter funding the unique programs would most likely be too expensive for a traditional school to afford.

Q: If there is no difference in the educational programs, why should I consider enrolling my child in the Charter School?

A: The Charter School program is innovative and targeted to develop students who are successful in meeting state standards and can apply their knowledge and skills to current and future issues that students in the 21st century will face. Additionally class sizes are held at 26 students per grade level.

Q: What qualifications does my child need to be a Charter School student?

A: Students must be entering grades one through five in the fall, and reside within the boundaries of the Salem-Keizer School District.

Q: Are the same programs provided at OLE as at other elementary schools?

A: Yes. District-provided programs such as music, P.E., and media are provided to OLE students.

Q: What kind of teachers work at the Charter School?

A: All teachers are certificated teachers licensed by the State of Oregon. They are employees of the Salem-Keizer School District.

Q: Are there any costs to me to have my child enrolled in the Charter School?

A: As required by Oregon law, the Charter School is a public school and there are no tuition costs.

Q: Are parents required to volunteer?

A: Parent volunteers are greatly appreciated, and there are many wonderful opportunities for you to help. However, there is no volunteerism requirement.

Q: Is transportation provided to my child?

A: Students living within the Forest Ridge attendance boundaries are bussed if residing within the bus zone. Students residing outside the Forest Ridge boundaries must provide their own transportation.

Q: Is there be a before and after school daycare program?

A: Yes. Salem Child Development Center hosts a meaningful program for students utilizing the school facilities. They have a brochure available describing their program and fees.

Q: The Charter School can have up to 26 students per class. What if more students apply?

A: A lottery drawing will occur to select students to fill open positions up to the maximum for each class and then a wait list will be developed for other applicants.

Q: Do Charter School students have to apply each year?

A: Once a child is enrolled in the Charter School, they and their siblings may remain enrolled through fifth grade without reapplying.

For more information contact the school at 503-399-5548