



A WHOLE SCHOLAR APPROACH TO TK-12 EDUCATION

The award-winning WISH TK-5 Community School, WISH 6-8 Community School and WISH Academy High School are free, public, independent charter schools authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District. Currently, more than 1000 students, from the Westchester area and nearby, are part of the WISH family, receiving a whole scholar approach to education guided by a commitment to social justice through inclusivity, led by approximately 100 amazing educators. Find out more at www.wishcharter.org.

Mission and Philosophy

The WISH mission is to maximize every scholar's learning potential within an atmosphere of caring and belonging. Our instructional philosophy is grounded in constructivism and embeds the concepts of inquiry, project based learning, hands-on learning, meaningful instructional activities, systematic instruction, and a collaborative group of professionals focused on making the learning environment exciting for students. Evidence-based teaching strategies are used to tailor efforts to meet the developmental needs of every individual.

In April 2013, WISH was named a SWIFT Knowledge Development Site by the University of Kansas due to exemplary work implementing our core tenets – one of only 6 schools in the US selected for this auspicious designation. As a TK-12th grade demonstration site, WISH has hosted ministers of education, superintendents, state education leaders, visiting professors, administrators and teachers from 26 US States and 12 countries.

Core tenets of the WISH model

- Optimal Class Size: All Kindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms have approximately 23 students. Grades 4 through 12 have approximately 26 students. These class sizes are proven to offer more individual attention, increased participation, and better communication between the instructors and students. In addition, most classes have student teachers, fieldwork students, or paraprofessionals who provide additional learning extensions and supports by providing even more opportunities for individual support.

- **Collaboration and Co-teaching:** Highly qualified, credentialed educators are partners in planning, teaching, and assessing each child. In addition to classroom teachers, teaching specialists support each grade level and move between classrooms to enrich learning opportunities. Music, Art, PE, technology, education specialists, and designated instructional support providers utilize a co-teaching model to increase adult to student ratios, provide tailored instruction, and demonstrate best practices for all scholars. Each staff member participates in a 30-minute debriefing session daily. At this time, staff members reflect on the day and share a success, challenge, and action plan for serving children better.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** WISH empowers and inspires learners to reach their highest potential. With an emphasis on academic achievement using a variety of modalities, developing character, building technology skills, and a deep understanding of the world, WISH prepares students to be leaders.
- **Family Partnerships:** The WISH Community Association (WCA) is comprised of parents, students, teachers, staff members, and community members, working together to create a public school responsive to every student. Volunteers and family partnerships are central to the success of WISH, leading to a rich and nurturing environment for children.
- **All Students Growing and Thriving:** Each class builds a strong, inclusive community together! Important academic, social, and ethical skills and attitudes are developed when students with various strengths, needs, and backgrounds learn together. During the summer, teachers attend and present at professional development programs on gifted and talented education, technology, differentiated instruction, co-teaching and collaboration, and inclusivity.
- **Affiliation with Loyola Marymount University's School of Education:** Our partnership with the LMU School of Education provides the ability to collaborate, continually study, and improve the instructional model at WISH while maintaining "best practices." LMU's nationally recognized School of Education is located in close proximity to the WISH campus and WISH serves as a demonstration site for LMU and we are currently working together to develop educator training modules.

Whole Scholar Approach

As part of our commitment to a whole scholar approach to education, the WISH faculty and parent association work together to raise additional funds to ensure that all students receive high quality art, music instruction in voice and theory, physical education, and technology instruction.

***"Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember. Involve me, I understand."
-Chinese proverb***

WISH adheres to the idea that people learn best by utilizing the principles of the constructivist theory. Constructivism emphasizes an internal-oriented approach in which by asserting one's knowledge, as well as participating in the learning process itself, learning is constructed by the learner's interpretation of their own experiences. Scholars benefit from working collaboratively in groups so that they can hear different perspectives and accomplish the learning tasks with the help of their peers and experts. Learning is an active process that is facilitated when students are given chances to express and evaluate their own thinking.