



What is the San Carlos Charter?

Dubbed a “Learning Laboratory” in its founding years, San Carlos Charter (SCC) (formerly SCCLC, San Carlos Charter Learning Center) has historically been a place of new ideas in education. As the first charter school established in the state of California, SCC educators embodied the founding vision of the charter movement: to provide an alternative to traditional public education. School leadership was encouraged to support creativity, educators were empowered to test new approaches, and families were inspired to contribute to a community experiment. SCC has remained a high-quality alternative educational option for San Carlos families.

Current trends in K-12 education align with SCC’s founding educational philosophies and also serve as a springboard for growth and opportunity. These trends include:

- Emphasis on problem-based and project-based learning;
- Heightened awareness around social-emotional development; and
- Recognized need for social consciousness.

Our Vision and Mission Statements

Our Vision:

SCC learners go into the world as curious, socially-conscious, and creative independent thinkers, inspired to make positive and authentic contributions to society.

SCC educators bravely try new things, and succeed or fail, share reflections with education leaders locally and beyond.

Our Mission Statement defines our approach to realizing our long-term vision:

SCC fosters an inclusive, learner-centric environment that draws from the whole community to support all of our children as learners and people. The core components of our approach:

- *Expose and support learners to **solve real-world problems***
- *Encourage **collaboration***
- *Emphasize **social emotional learning***
- *Promote **reflection and continuous growth***
- *Inspire **advocacy for self and others***

Educational Philosophy

In order to thrive in the modern world, SCC educators and staff believe a learner must be prepared to understand and solve complex problems. As a staff and community, we foster a school environment in which our learners can develop the following characteristics in order to be better prepared for the future:

Social and Emotional Competency: Learners must be able to navigate social situations, both professionally and personally. At SCC, we strive to empower our learners to lead with influence, rather than control. They must be able to utilize social and emotional awareness to effectively collaborate with others.

Analytical and Critical Thinking: Learners must be curious about the changing world around them. They will encounter issues that they must be able to tackle with creativity and innovation. As they work to solve problems, they will encounter new information and changing variables that they must respond to with agility and ease.

Creative Problem-Solving: Learners must be forward-thinking to meet the ever-changing needs of society in the future. They must anticipate the needs of their communities and develop innovative solutions to solve the world's pressing problems. They must take initiative and pursue their interests with a passionate sense of urgency.

Curriculum

Interdisciplinary Instruction: SCC educators use an integrated curriculum design, empowering learners to engage individually and cooperatively with material and with ideas. With integrated learning, learners are able to make connections across multiple subject areas. Through this multidisciplinary approach, learners are able to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to understand the complex interrelationships in the real world.

Educator Created Curriculum: Given the interdisciplinary model of instruction, traditional textbook curricula do not adequately meet the needs of SCC learners. Curriculum is primarily created by educators, with most references coming from primary and secondary sources such as newspapers, periodicals, online websites, library books, expert speakers, and educator-created resources. Textbooks occasionally serve as supplementary resources to enhance learning. At all levels, instructors are creative and innovative in addressing the developmental needs of learners, and in matching children's individual learning interests to challenging daily activities.

Multi-Age Classrooms: To ensure an intimate school experience, the grade level structure is designed to offer two-year learning loops for most grade levels. This allows learners to develop and sustain deep relationships with both their peers and their educator. Within this structure, educators are able to maximize learning time in the classroom during the second year without spending time on typical activities associated with the start of a new year: administering assessments, getting to know learners, and establishing classroom rules and routines. Additionally, this structure provides opportunities for the older learners in the cohort to provide classroom leadership.

Current Classroom Configurations:

Four K/1 classes; 22 each
Two 2nd grade classes; 22 learners each
Four 3/4 classes; 22 learners each
Three 5/6 classes; 22-30 learners each, depending on content area
Three 7/8 classes; 22-30 learners each, depending on content area

Assessment

San Carlos Charter utilizes a comprehensive assessment system to measure and track student mastery of grade-level standards and requisite skills in each subject area. Assessment result analysis forms the basis for educator professional development and instructional planning.

The methods for measuring learner outcomes are consistent with the way the school reports information to the state for the purposes of accountability (<https://caschooldashboard.org/#/Home>). SCC conducts all required state assessments in compliance with the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (“CAASPP”) program. Staff helps translate results so their meaning is accessible to learners, parents, and educators.

In addition, SCC educators administer additional assessments (formative and summative) to gain a fuller picture of learner achievement. The assessment plan for SCC is designed to:

- to help teachers respond instructionally according to learner needs;
- to give parents and students meaningful, useful feedback on student progress;
- to compare the school’s progress to that of all schools, including those with similar student demographics; and
- to monitor the school’s progress in meeting its outcomes and to revise its activities accordingly.

Family Participation

Volunteerism is a basic component and necessary part of the SCC vision. The school itself was created by the dedicated volunteer efforts of parents and community members and an integral part SCC’s ethos. Family participation deepens the home-school connection and helps reinforce improved educational outcomes. Active family participation also builds and strengthens our community.. SCC strives to create an environment that not only fosters volunteer efforts on behalf of the school, but also helps to foster the spirit of volunteerism in our learners by promoting service learning projects.

SCC views family participation as an essential element to the success of the educational process. Families who contribute time to the school explicitly demonstrate to our children that they value education. They also have more input over the educational process and help the school bring innovative programs to the learners. This said, it is important to make the distinction that SCC is not a *parent run* school. Operational, personnel, discipline, and educational decisions are ultimately the responsibility of the staff and Governing Board.

Charter encourages 80 hours per year per family or 120 hours for 2 or more children enrolled. Our Volunteer Coordinator works with families to help them find opportunities that match their skill set and time constraints.

Families can be involved in a multitude of ways including:

- Assisting educators in the classrooms
- Teaching/tutoring small groups of learners in specific subject areas
- Leading small group activities in specific topics of expertise or interest ranging from art to music to engineering and beyond
- Coordinating or delivering hot lunch to learners
- Participating in the Governance Council
- Helping maintain a clean and safe campus through evening classroom cleanup and/or weekend work days
- Supervising/driving on field trips
- Shopping/gathering resources for the curriculum
- Joining one or more teams which support our mission and the educational experience of each child

Governance

SCC Board of Directors (also known as the BOD)

In March 2011, SCC began operating as an independent corporation and is governed by its articles of incorporation, the corporation [Bylaws](#) and the SCC Charter. The purpose of this corporation is to manage, operate, guide, direct, and promote SCC.

The SCC Board of Directors is made up of parents and community members. The Board of Directors is responsible for certain operations as listed in the SCC Charter document, including: implementation, staffing, budget development and approval, school calendar, school policies and procedures, and resolving parent concerns and complaints.

School Administration

Jennifer Pellegrine, Executive Director
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Korah Guilar, Director of Learner Services
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Miriam Peirano, Office Manager
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Educare

Educare is Charter's on-site before and after-school program. Educare provides programs and activities that allow our learners to continue growing and learning outside the classroom. An important goal of the Educare program is to use its revenue to support the overall operation of the school.

Details of the Program:

- Care is offered from 7:20 AM - 8:15 AM and 12:00 PM - 6:20 PM (varies based on grade level)
- Learners can be enrolled on a regular or drop-in basis for an hourly fee, or a combination of the two
- Kinder Time is offered M, Tu, Th, F (12:35 dismissal for all on Wednesdays)
- Homework and reading time is provided each day
- A modest, healthy snack is provided each day

Educare strives to provide activities that are child oriented and inspired. There are regular opportunities for enrolled children to stretch their imaginations and get their creative juices flowing! While an extension of the school day, Educare also provides ample time for free play, which allows the learners to relax and reflect on their day.

Some examples of Educare activities include:

- Cooking/Baking
- Art Projects
- Sports & Games
- Creative Play
- Outdoor Play
- Team Building Activities

Special Days:

Educare is also open during some non-school days, assuming minimum enrollment thresholds are met. These days often include a special activity, or occasionally an off-campus field trip.

After-School Enrichment Program:

In addition to regular Educare activities, we also offer a range of fee-based after school elective courses that further enrich the learning environment at SCC. Past offerings have included: drama/theater, art, robotics, chess, band, soccer, dance, cooking, and much more!

Fundraising at Charter:

Charter, like all the schools in the San Carlos School District, raises money to bridge the gap between state revenues and the cost of a quality education. We accomplish this with a combination of site-based fundraising and actively participating in the San Carlos Educational Foundation (SCEF) with the other schools in the district.

Our only site-based fundraiser is the Chili Cook Off (CCO). This happens in the Fall and is our major annual fundraising and community event. Graduating kids talk about the Cook Off as one of the things that makes our school memorable. The CCO is the only major event for-Charter, by-Charter, and families' time, talent and contributions during the Chili Cook Off go directly to the Fundraising Association for our school (SCCFA) and together we always reach the annual limit of \$100,000 of Charter-only giving. Money from the SCCFA is used for project-based learning programs and for things like class supplies, cooking, garden maintenance, and general support of the school's operating budget.

The San Carlos Education Foundation (SCEF) is a non-profit fundraising organization that helps the San Carlos School District and SCC provide a well-rounded public education for all students. SCEF works in partnership with parents and the community to support core and innovative programs that are vital to an exceptional education. By joining together in support of SCEF, SCC can leverage support, streamline fundraising efforts, ensure that key educator positions are filled and programs are made available in all San Carlos public schools including SCC. The money we receive from SCEF helps fund our Library, Spanish, and PE programs.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a charter school?

Charter schools are public schools that operate as their own school district. They have contracted (“received a charter”) with the State of California, primarily through local school districts, to deliver specific educational outcomes in exchange for freedom from certain portions of the California Education Code; this is often summarized as “greater accountability for greater flexibility.”

How do I get my child(ren) enrolled?

Each January, Enrollment Orientation Meetings are held. After attending the Enrollment Orientation, if you still believe that SCC would be a good match for your child and family, then you are required to take a tour of the CLC campus to learn more about the academic program. Enrollment applications are available online after each tour and are due as specified on the enrollment calendar. Placement priority is given first to any children of staff members, siblings of current learners, then to residents of the San Carlos School District by their lottery assignment, and finally to residents outside of the San Carlos School District by their lottery assignment. Please refer to the Enrollment Policy for details.

How does the SCC get funded?

As a public school, the SCC receives funding directly from the State of California. Each charter school in California receives a fixed amount based on the average daily attendance (ADA). ADA funding is a fixed number of dollars paid to the school for every child enrolled based on an “average daily attendance”. SCC and SCEF also solicit funding from the community and various organizations through grant writing and fund-raising efforts.

How do you teach skills without textbooks?

The SCC uses a constructivist curriculum which means that learners build their knowledge from hands-on experiences and a wide variety of original resources, including source material, chapter literature books, manipulatives (blocks, rods, dice, etc.), and experimentation. Additionally, small group direct instruction is provided in order to build the skills needed to accomplish the final product for the curricular unit. Therefore, in some instances, parts of a textbook may be used, but it would be only part of the approach to learning the material.

What are SCC’s Special Education Services?

As a public charter school, SCC is committed to educating all learners. Historically, our school has a special education population of 10% - 20%. This reflects the historical average of the San Carlos School District. As a charter school that is also an LEA currently with the San Mateo County Special Education Local Plan Area (“SELPA”), SCC is committed to offering a special education program that will meet the needs of its learning community.

SCC uses both Learner Success Teams and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (“MTSS”) to ensure that interventions are effective in addressing each learner’s individualized needs and goals.

Glossary of Terms

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for the leadership and direction of SCC. She manages SCC in accordance with law and the charter, which includes the mission and vision of the school. The Director has responsibilities related to learners and the instructional program, Educare, personnel, non-instructional operations, coordination with the local school district and the community.

Director of Learner Services

The Director of Learner Services provides oversight of the Special Education program. The Director of Learners services also serves as liaison with the San Carlos School District and the San Mateo County Office of Education in matters pertaining to Special Education.

Seminars

This is an enrichment program that provides exploratory experiences in science, practical arts, fine arts, music, theater, dance and movement. Parents, staff, and artists in the community classes staff the Seminar classes.

Learners

SCC strives to build life-long learners and therefore refers to its students as “learners” to indicate that they are active participants in the process. It is also an effort to reshape the traditional relationship between student and teacher, recognizing that every learner is a teacher and every teacher is a learner.

Educators

In relation to the above, we refer to teachers as “educators.” Many of our educators choose to use their first names with the learners.

Milestones

Each grade level or age grouping has a special, off campus trip that is unique to their level. These trips provide experiential learning opportunities tied to our core curriculum. Many are overnight experiences increasing in length as learners grow older through the grades. Examples include Pigeon Point Lighthouse, Yosemite, Mosaic Project, Coloma Outdoor Discovery Museum, and many others.

Personalized Learning Project, PLP

This is a project that is decided upon by each learner (2nd-8th grade, optional for K/1s) at SCC. Each year learners are asked to discuss with their parents and educators their learning strengths, their learning weaknesses and a learning goal. Throughout the year they will have an opportunity to use their strengths to improve their weaknesses while learning about a personal area of interest.