

History of the TECA Educational Program

Thomas Edison Charter Academy is a transitional kindergarten through eighth-grade elementary school serving approximately 700 students. TECA is currently one of 18 charter schools operating within the city of San Francisco and since 2010 has been authorized by the San Francisco Unified School District. TECA received its original authorization for a kindergarten through fifth-grade charter in 2001, and in 2004 expanded to include the sixth grade by a unanimous vote of the California State Board of Education, the previous authorizer of the TECA charter (SBE). In 2005 TECA expanded to seventh grade, and in 2006 to a kindergarten through eighth-grade school.

For the first six years, Edison Learning Incorporated (ELI) provided TECA's administrative structure and facilitated the educational design of the program, working with TECA's board of directors, executive director, and staff to implement its design at the local level. Over a three-year period from 2007 to 2010, TECA transitioned to a localized model, based on the capacity that had been built among TECA's board, school leadership, and staff. In 2011, TECA became its own, independent non-profit, governed by its local board.

TECA implements a rigorous standards-based educational program design that promotes a positive learning environment in which all students can succeed. Teachers work in grade-level collaborative teams to create an interconnected instructional model that builds on each previous grade's foundations. TECA's curriculum and instruction is aligned to the Common Core Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics. Teachers develop science and social studies curriculum aligned with Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards. Our curriculum model is designed to support students to become self-motivated, competent, life-long learners. Our curriculum provides students with opportunities for exploration, expression, and insightful understanding. TECA's teachers integrate technology within the curriculum, including student research, presentation, and technical skills such as coding. TECA also implements California Visual and Performing Arts Standards— including dance, drama, music, and visual arts, into its educational programming. All instruction at TECA is based on a comprehensive and ongoing multi-level diagnostic assessment strategy that determines student strengths and weaknesses and designs instruction to specifically target needs of individual students. Teachers use formative benchmark assessments to guide instructional strategies. They review assessment data and look forward to continued state guidance in interpreting results of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) System.

In 2010, with the overwhelming request of parents and community and the unconditional support of teachers, TECA launched a Dual Language Program (DLP). This program has proven to be extremely successful in terms of academic outcomes for students and requests for placement of their children into the program by parents. The DLP extends to sixth grade. We expect to continue the dual Spanish-English content area learning, progressively moving up the grades with an additional grade each year up to eighth grade. In TECA's DLP, students receive 50% of their instruction in Spanish and 50% in English for their kindergarten through fifth-grade years. As they move into the middle school grades, students have the opportunity to maintain their Spanish language learning with a minimum of two content courses taught in Spanish.

As a TK–8 school, we see our role as essential in preparing all students for success in high school and helping families to navigate the high school application process. Our students are predominantly from three city neighborhoods: Inner Mission/Bernal Heights (37%), the Excelsior/Ingleside District (18%), and the Bayview Hunter’s Point (12%), with most students from low-income families. Despite these odds, 80% of our students go on to attend the highest rated public high schools, including School of The Arts (SOTA) and Lowell and top private and parochial schools. Our preparation for success is reflected in our strong API scores, with a three-year average API of 794. Our 2013 Academic Performance Index (API) score is higher than the average score of all Title I SFUSD elementary and middle schools, higher than the majority of SFUSD Title I public schools, and higher than the two K–8 schools that serve a similar population and of 70% of the public schools in the neighborhoods in which most of our students reside.

TECA’s shared decision-making model ensures that a collaborative of leaders (which include the executive director, administrators, teachers, and parents) work together to make decisions, implement agreements, and provide for rigorous academic learning and teacher professional development. Further, TECA extends its informed collaborative leadership practice to include collaborations with the California Charter Schools Association as well as local charter and public-school leaders and teachers. Since 2007, TECA's board has maintained an inclusive approach to board governance. At present, TECA's board convenes monthly public board meetings and has included and increased the voice of stakeholders by allowing for administration, teacher, and student representation, thus promoting greater discourse and involvement of teachers, parents, and community members. TECA' s board includes members with backgrounds in business, finance, and the arts, and includes parents and non-parent board members. In 2010, TECA' s board members expanded outreach in the San Francisco community to include working with local non-profits and public agencies to deliver health and wellness, sports, and college readiness support. TECA' s board is committed to implementing consistent and transparent policies and procedures, to continued outreach to the local community, and to further developing TECA's sustainability. The primary commitment of TECA 's board is to continue to ensure the fair and equal delivery of its educational and enrichment programs to all students offered through the school.

We recently completed a video history of TECA and what makes it unique that includes students, parents, teachers, and administrators, all contributing to the shared vision and understanding of the way of work and benefit to children of Thomas Edison Charter Academy. We invite you to view this presentation, “TECA Students Shine” on our website.

School Location: Thomas Edison Charter Academy shall operate as a classroom-based instructional program within the geographic boundaries of the San Francisco Unified School District in the same location that has housed the school historically—located at 3531 22nd Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.