

What It Means to Be an Educated Person in the 21st Century

Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental... The freedom to learn... We must insist upon this to give our children the fairness of a start that will equip them with such an array of facts and such an attitude toward truth that they can have a real chance to judge what the world is and what greater minds have thought it might be.

Linda Darling-Hammond, "The Right to Learn" (1997, p. 1) from W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Freedom to Learn" ([1949] 1970b, pp.230 – 231)

Thomas Edison Charter Academy provides a first-rate education for all students attending the school. The curriculum is an expression of our mission and is deliberately designed to produce learned, college ready, creative, and educationally confident graduates. TECA educators are uniquely aware of their roles as scholarly facilitators of student learning and employ collaboratively developed research-based strategies to ensure students reach educational goals. TECA teaches the whole child. TECA's academic offering is nested in values of community, collaboration, cooperation, respect, compassion, and creativity.

The California Common Core Standards are the outcome goals for student learning. We have selected our curriculum materials, teaching strategies, and professional development based on research that proves their value in advancing standards teaching and standards learning. TECA's emphasis on the arts and creativity serve to support a dynamic learning environment that engages all students and provides opportunities for all students to attain and demonstrate their mastery and talents.

At TECA, college begins in kindergarten—actually, in TK. TECA students become confident and successful high school students ready for college and career. TECA students are active members of the school community. They self-reflect, self-lead, lead others, and engage in discourse for understanding. We expect our students to be vocal and practicing champions of caring for their fellow human beings— and they are!

TECA students are apprentice learners. They learn side by side from and with their teachers. In their roles as facilitators of learning, teachers inform, model, coach, and provide feedback. Students thrive under this practice. They produce innovative learning products. They become producers of new knowledge. Learning at TECA is intellectual, physical, emotional, and creative. Learning attends to the many ways students learn best by providing multiple entries into our rigorous curriculum.

TECA is a community of collaborators. Administrators collaborate with teachers, staff, and students to move the school forward.

Enabling Pupils to Become Self-motivated, Competent Life-Long Learners

TECA faculty and staff understand that a learner in the 21st century must experience a rich, personalized program that is challenging and rigorous, while providing necessary support services. 21st century students must demonstrate that they are critical thinkers, innovative and self-motivated learners, competent problem-solvers, and life-long learners.

We implement a blend of state-adopted curriculum and staff-created projects firmly rooted in the California Common Core State Standards and Frameworks. TECA's curriculum embraces 21st century learning and includes a technology plan that provides laptops for all students in grades 2– 8 and other devices such as iPads for additional students. Project-based learning, ongoing teacher collaboration, and cross-curricular lessons provide a dynamic learning experience for all students in which students engage daily in Common Core learning activities that include identifying, determining, analyzing, recognizing, explaining, describing, integrating, evaluating, comprehending, reflecting, and more. Students at TECA are not waiting to become '21st Century Educated Adults;' they are already 21st Century Learners. The TECA curriculum emphasizes 'depth of knowledge' promoting profound learning, while teaching students to manage complex texts and to create new knowledge.

21st Century Learners also must demonstrate qualities of compassion, caring, cooperation, and collaboration. To that end, TECA's overarching 'umbrella' of community outlined in our Mission and Vision insures that the qualities described in the previous sentence are an integral part of all academic learning and school activities. TECA provides students with a comprehensive and well-rounded education in a culture of revision and redemption that supports all students in reaching their academic and life goals.