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**TwinRivers**  
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Discover Twin Rivers charter  
schools your child will love



# Discover an Innovative Education that Fits Your Child

Twin Rivers charter schools offer unique options to all by Evan Tuchinsky

Education in public schools isn't a one-size-fits-all proposition. Every child is unique, so a learning environment that perfectly fits one student might not fit another.

Parents want choices. In fact, they demand choices. Charter schools offer choices to meet the demand. Twin Rivers Unified School District has three charter schools: Creative Connections Arts Academy (CCAA), Smythe Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Westside Preparatory Charter (WPCS). These schools, with their seven campuses, collectively meet diverse needs across all grades, pre-K through 12.

The Twin Rivers charters offer distinct options for tuition-free education and are open to any student regardless of home school or district.

"Not all educational settings are equal for all students," says Bill McGuire, deputy superintendent of Twin Rivers. "Some students may have unique needs to be successful, and sometimes charter schools can fulfill that unique need."

McGuire stresses that high-quality educational offerings and high expectations are a characteristic of all Twin Rivers schools, not just the charters. Offering both charters and traditional schools allows the district to meet diverse needs.

"There's not any one thing that says this is why you would choose a charter," McGuire says. "It's really how the school may individually meet the needs of your child."

**"Some students may have unique needs to be successful, and sometimes charter schools can fulfill that unique need."**

Bill McGuire  
Deputy Superintendent of Twin Rivers

CCAA nurtures creative, interactive and visual learners through a curriculum infused with fine art, music, dance and drama. WPCS challenges high-performing students with rigorous academics. Smythe provides enrichment by emphasizing the arts, science and technology.

The charters do share some common ground. Parental involvement is a big component of all three charters. Parents who choose this form of education pledge to take an active role with their child and their school. This isn't a chore; rather, it's part of the charters' appeal. Parents, teachers, staff and students partner to form a close and engaged learning community.

"There's a community of shared values within each charter," says Dr. Anne Zeman, executive director of elementary education for Twin Rivers. "Charters tend to have that sense of identity."

Each Twin Rivers charter school is accepting applications for the 2015-16 academic year. The charters are open to any child, not just those who reside within the Twin Rivers district boundaries. Parents interested in enrolling a student can contact schools for information about enrollment and waitlists.

Both McGuire and Zeman advise prospective parents to visit the campus, preferably with the potential incoming student, to ensure the school fits just right.

"All of our schools strive to offer a quality product," Zeman says. "But charter schools have an area of focus. They fill a niche."



Photo and cover photos courtesy of TRUSD

## A WORLD OF CHOICES UNIQUE PROGRAMS FOR UNIQUE KIDS

### CREATIVE CONNECTIONS ARTS ACADEMY, K-12

- Focused on visual and performing arts
- Dedicated art, dance and music teachers
- Fine-art training for teachers in all subject areas
- Field study days: job shadowing, field trips
- Community service

**625**  
STUDENTS ENROLLED

**2** CAMPUSES IN  
NORTH HIGHLANDS

### SMYTHE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, PK-8

- Focused on arts, science and technology
- Features preschool and transitional kindergarten
- Emphasis on cultural awareness and acceptance
- After-school enrichment program

**1,075**  
STUDENTS ENROLLED

**2** CAMPUSES IN  
SACRAMENTO:  
PK-6 & 7-8

### WESTSIDE PREPARATORY CHARTER, 7-8

- Focused on high academic performance
- Leadership-building
- College-preparatory curriculum
- Academic electives
- Athletic teams
- Field study days

**375**  
STUDENTS ENROLLED

**3** CAMPUSES IN  
NORTH HIGHLANDS, RIO  
LINDA AND SACRAMENTO



Annette Contreras is an eighth-grade student at Smythe who says her experience at the school has been unforgettable.  
Photo by Laura Marie Anthony

## Making Learning Fun

Even before setting foot on campus, Annette Contreras got a special feeling from Smythe Academy.

A recruitment presentation at her elementary school — with a performance by the Smythe Drumline — made a strong impression. School staff seemed to really care about students and wanted her to enroll. When her sixth-grade class visited the school, Annette noticed the cleanliness of the campus and how it “felt nice to be there.” She recognized former schoolmates. She felt like she belonged.

Now an eighth-grader, Annette is thriving at Smythe. She’s made the Principal’s Honor Roll every semester while playing on Smythe’s volleyball and soccer teams. She appreciates the Renaissance Rally for high-achieving students and Smythe Bucks for positive actions. She says these incentives make her feel that “students are appreciated.” She, in turn, appreciates her school.

“A highlight of Smythe is that it’s just fun and rewarding to come to school,” Annette says. “The field trips are really great!”

She is excited for a series of upcoming field trips including the San Francisco Exploratorium, the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Civil War Days at Gibson Ranch.

“Smythe is more than just my middle school,” Annette says. “It’s a place where learning is fun and a place that prepares me for my future. It’s really been an unforgettable experience.”



## Finding the Right Fit

Michelle Deleon is glad she chose Westside Preparatory Charter for her daughter, Arianna.  
Photo by Laura Marie Anthony

Michelle Deleon and her husband, Carlos, may have chosen names starting with “A” for all their children, but they appreciate the qualities that differentiate Arianna, Alexander, Anastasia and Alyssa.

Take Arianna, their eldest. She’s 13 ½, but has always been advanced for her age. She’s an academic high achiever, detail-oriented, altruistic and outgoing. She enjoys music and the arts. “Well-rounded” is how her mother describes her.

So, when it was time for Arianna

to enter middle school, the Deleons sought the right environment for her unique needs and traits. The choice: Westside Preparatory Charter, which they heard from other parents would offer the demanding classwork Arianna requires to thrive.

“I knew that she needed something more academically challenging,” Michelle says. “She would definitely be challenged there; she wouldn’t just be putting half an effort into her homework and being done. After her being there and seeing what they put her through,

I’m glad I made that decision.”

Arianna not only participates in GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) and succeeds scholastically, but also enjoys extracurricular activities such as art and competitive athletics. Both she and her mother also appreciate the opportunities for field trips, community service, job shadowing and enrichment days off-campus.

“It’s a really good, well-rounded program,” Michelle says. “They’re not just sitting in a classroom learning from a book.”

Amanda Borman teaches kindergarten at CCAA, and says the charter school provides the freedom to be creative and effective in the classroom.  
Photo by Laura Marie Anthony

## A Passion for Teaching

Amanda Borman began working with kids as a teenager and is now a teacher with 12 years under her belt. For the past four, she’s taught kindergarten at Creative Connections Arts Academy (CCAA), where she feels she can reach her full potential as an educator and enjoys freedom and flexibility. Borman was attracted to CCAA because of the school’s focus on integrating the arts into every class at every grade level.

“I already felt myself doing that in my classroom,” she says. “I found the opportunity to go over

to Creative Connections, which is where I truly wanted to be.”

Creative expression takes many forms at CCAA, including visual art, body movement, dramatic play, chants and songs.

Borman’s approach with kindergartners is “to always keep them moving” with “hands-on, manipulative” lessons.

“I do not like worksheets!” she says. “I believe they learn through experience.”

She also uses “positive reinforcement” for classroom



management. Borman believes strongly in the high-quality education offered at CCAA — so strongly that she’s not just a teacher at the school, she’s also a CCAA parent. Her youngest two children, Lucas, 9, and Alexis, 7, attend the school. Her eldest, Jacob, 13, is an alumnus.

Borman says she values the unique partnership between parents and teachers at CCAA. Each day, at least one parent volunteer helps out in her classroom.



## CCAA KEY FACTS

- Creative Connections Arts Academy (CCAA) is an arts-integration charter school.
- Serves approximately 625 students.
- All students participate in an arts experience annually.
- CCAA features a resident artist.
- Students have three field study days, in which students explore careers, community service and possible field trips as part of the regular curriculum.
- CCAA offers sequential instruction in dance and music, both vocal and instrumental.
- Offers several after-school programs.
- High school offers several visual and performing arts electives.
- Students in kindergarten through sixth grade discover the arts through exploratory classes offered twice a week.
- CCAA received the Civic Learning Award of Merit in 2014-2015.
- CCAA is one of two schools in California selected to be affiliates to the Kennedy Center's Partners in Education Program.
- CCAA offers a media program beginning in fourth grade with opportunities for media production and live broadcast.



Photo courtesy of TRUSD

# Creative Connections Arts Academy

Creative Connections Arts Academy (CCAA) is a learning community where the next generation of thinkers and innovators is cultivated. Students are encouraged to explore and think differently in the family atmosphere on the small, intimate campus setting. The mission of CCAA is to create students who use their creativity to become active parts of the global citizenry. Students are taught to be self-motivated and lifelong learners through arts integrated and project-based learning. CCAA has a curriculum that emphasizes positive character traits and supports development of the “whole child” academically, socially and emotionally.

## HOW IS LEARNING AT CCAA DIFFERENT?

Students at CCAA have a wide variety of opportunities to learn in an integrated learning environment where all art forms and modalities of learning are part of daily instruction. In addition, the school offers sequential, standards-based art instruction to allow students to develop strong

skills and pathways leading to college and career. Students have the opportunity to participate in several field trips and assemblies, including Mondavi Center performances, Sacramento Theatre Company performances, Shakespeare Festival presentations and visits to the Chabot Science Center.

## WHY CHOOSE CCAA?

CCAA is an environment where students do more than learn textbook math and English. Students at CCAA learn to think and solve problems. The school offers more choices in educational opportunities and opportunities for parent involvement as part of CCAA's core belief in civic engagement. In the workforce of the future, the most important skills will be collaboration and creativity. At CCAA, students are challenged to be thinkers and scholars and work in a collaborative environment on a daily basis.

## WHY DO YOU LOVE YOUR SCHOOL?

“I love CCAA because here my children are not just a number, a name, or even just a student. Here my children are known and recognized by staff as the individuals that they are and here they are treated as individuals.”

**Kim Cwiok**, parent

### CREATIVE CONNECTIONS ARTS ACADEMY, GRADES K-6

7201 Arutas Drive  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
Phone: 916-566-1870  
Fax: 916-566-1871  
Website: <http://ccaa.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Jacqueline White  
Secretary: Shelly Shaw

### CREATIVE CONNECTIONS ARTS ACADEMY, GRADES 7-12

6444 Walerga Road  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
Phone: 916-566-3470  
Fax: 916-566-3505  
Website: <http://ccaa.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Jacqueline White  
Secretary: Wendy Hatt





Photo courtesy of TRUSD



## SMYTHE KEY FACTS

- Serves approximately 680 students in transitional kindergarten through sixth grade.
- Serves approximately 450 students in grades seven through eight.
- Offers a diverse, multicultural environment.
- Students wear school uniforms.
- Weekly art and music classes.
- Free transportation available for all middle school students.
- Exploratory classes offered in the arts and sciences.
- The school has two soccer teams.
- Teachers build lasting relationships with students.
- Science and reading nights for families.
- Parents can access student report cards online.
- Fourth-graders learn how to play the recorder.
- School offers community involvement programs that support students.
- Sixth grade attends Sly Park outdoor education school.
- Smythe has a student choir.
- Team sports are offered at both campuses.
- Girl Scouts offers extracurricular opportunities.
- School is currently laying the groundwork for a band program.

# Smythe Academy of Arts and Sciences

Smythe Academy of Arts and Sciences serves preschool through eighth grade students on two campuses, providing a unique learning environment for students through an enriched program emphasizing the arts and sciences. The magic that happens inside the classroom is what makes Smythe special. On any given day you visit, you might see students learning about grammar through song and performance, engaged in a science lab experiment while working toward mastery of Next Generation Science Standards, or using the latest technology to develop the information literacy skills they need to become successful in the future.

## HOW IS LEARNING AT SMYTHE DIFFERENT?

Students at Smythe stay engaged through project-based learning. Students work on a variety of projects throughout the year both independently and collaboratively in groups. Teachers are guided by the Common Core State Standards, but

curriculum is shaped by each teacher's unique skills and interests. Teachers work together as a team to address each student's needs with the goal of improving individual outcomes. One of the most important qualities of teachers at Smythe is the belief that all students have the potential to succeed.

## WHY CHOOSE SMYTHE?

Parents should choose Smythe if they want their children to learn in a unique environment that highlights the arts and sciences and supports the whole family learning together. Curriculum for students includes weekly art and music instruction, hands-on science lab experiments and numerous after-school community involvement programs. But Smythe also offers family education in the form of community-based English classes for adults, parent volunteer opportunities, citizenship classes, infant/toddler parenting classes and more. Enrolling your child in Smythe means joining a community where everyone in the family can learn together.

### SMYTHE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, GRADES PK-6

2781 Northgate Blvd.  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
Phone: 916-566-2740  
Fax: 916-566-3584  
Email: [kenneth.dandurand@twinriversusd.org](mailto:kenneth.dandurand@twinriversusd.org)  
Website: <http://smythe6.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Ken Dandurand  
Vice Principal: Stephanie Tarrell  
Secretary: Jenny Koons

### SMYTHE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, GRADES 7-8

700 Dos Rios St.  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
Phone: 916-566-3430  
Fax: 916-566-3531  
Email: [melissa.jewell@twinriversusd.org](mailto:melissa.jewell@twinriversusd.org)  
Website: <http://smythe7.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Melissa Jewell  
Secretary: Tonia German

## WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL?

"The thing I love most about Smythe is how the adults support your learning and care about how you are doing. The teachers are always supportive of their students."

*Katrina Evans, fifth-grade student*



## WPCS KEY FACTS

- WPCS is a National Blue Ribbon School.
- WPCS is also a California Distinguished School.
- WPCS is a Title 1 Achieving School.
- Parents can access report cards online.
- Active parent participation is a key feature.
- Offers a challenging curriculum based on Common Core State Standards.
- Students are offered extra math support.
- Features schoolwide physical education.
- Fully certified teachers and support staff.
- Teachers emphasize college- and career-readiness.
- Many educational field study days and community service opportunities.
- Project-based learning.
- Offers after school tutoring.
- After-school enrichment through guitar, art, yearbook, club and sports.

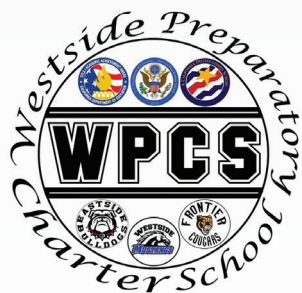


Photo courtesy of TRUSD

# Westside Preparatory Charter School

**W**estside Preparatory Charter School (WPCS) provides a safe, supportive environment where students can achieve their highest academic potential. WPCS is comprised of three small campuses — each located on an elementary school campus — and is an award-winning school with years of success educating middle school students.

## HOW IS WPCS DIFFERENT?

Teachers at WPCS know every student and ensure none falls through the cracks. This relationship is enhanced by the structure of the students' day with core block scheduling. Instead of spending 50-minute periods with several teachers each day, students spend a core block with their language arts/history teacher and another core block with their math/science teacher. This gives flexibility needed for project-based learning. Common Core State Standards focus students to think deeply and critically, collaborate with others and cultivate communication skills. Daily physical education also helps students strengthen both the body and mind.

## WHY CHOOSE WPCS?

Staff at WPCS believe people — not expensive buildings or programs — are at the heart of establishing a successful learning environment. In addition to a relationship with their teachers, each student is encouraged to make connections with other students and staff. Cultural diversity is honored and celebrated. Students are recognized for their achievements and have many opportunities to not only succeed, but become leaders. When students feel safe, receive support and are challenged with high expectations, they become more confident and can be equipped with the tools for a great future.

## WHY DO YOU LOVE YOUR SCHOOL?

"I love how Eastside is a smaller campus, and it allows me to connect more with my teachers and classmates. The teachers at Eastside are amazing, and they challenge me academically so I can reach my highest potential."

**Maximus Gomez,**  
eighth-grade student

### WESTSIDE PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL, GRADES 7-8

Frontier Campus  
6691 Silverthorne Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95842  
Phone: 916-566-1840  
Fax: 916-566-1841  
Email: [ellen.giffin@twinriversusd.org](mailto:ellen.giffin@twinriversusd.org)  
Website: <http://csfc.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Ellen Giffin  
Secretary: Cindy Mangan

Eastside Campus  
6469 Guthrie Way  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
Phone: 916-566-1860  
Fax: 916-566-1861  
Email: [renee.scott-femenella@twinriversusd.org](mailto:renee.scott-femenella@twinriversusd.org)  
Website: <http://wpcsec.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Renee Scott-Femenella  
Secretary: Julie Rhea

Westside Campus  
6537 W. Second St.  
Rio Linda, CA 95673  
Phone: 916-566-1990  
Fax: 916-566-1991  
Email: [laura.lofgren@twinriversusd.org](mailto:laura.lofgren@twinriversusd.org)  
Website: <http://cswc.twinriversusd.org>  
Principal: Laura Lofgren  
Secretary: Sara Rowlett



# FAQs:

# Twin Rivers Charter Schools

by Evan Tuchinsky

Parents have a lot of questions about charter schools. Here are some of the queries frequently asked of educators and administrators in Twin Rivers Unified School District.

## What is a charter school?

A charter school is a public school, held to the same standards and expectations as any public school in California. Charters are different in that they are more independent and self-governing than traditional public schools. Twin Rivers charters are tuition-free and open to all.

## Why do charter schools exist?

Charter schools form to meet the interests of parents and provide additional choices for their children's education. Charter schools offer flexibility and the ability to meet the diverse needs of individual students. Many charters feature a special academic focus, innovative educational approach or fill a unique need.

## Are charter schools part of the school district?

Some charter schools operate independently of any school district, as stand-alone schools. Other charter schools are part of school districts.

Twin Rivers' charters — Creative Connections Arts Academy (CCAA), Smythe and Westside Prep (WPCS) — benefit from the same support from the district as any Twin Rivers school, while operating more independently than other schools. Each school must follow its "charter," the governing document that serves as the educational blueprint for the school.

## Who can enroll?

Any student eligible for a California public school can enroll in a Twin Rivers charter school, regardless of home school or district.

## Can I apply even if the campus is not in my neighborhood?

Yes! There are no geographic boundary or residency requirements. Many parents come from all over the greater Sacramento region to provide their child the opportunity to attend Twin Rivers charter schools.

## Why should I consider a charter school?

Parents choose charter schools for the individual needs of each child. Some children thrive in a small classroom or on a close-knit campus. An active student may learn best through hands-on experience: art, performance, project-based learning, lab work and field trips, which are critical elements of Twin Rivers' charters. A gifted student may need lessons above grade-level norms. Charter schools offer choices that cater to differences, while fostering a sense of community.

## What unique programs are offered?

Each school is as distinctive as its charter, just as each student is unique. CCAA infuses arts education into the entire K-12 curriculum. Smythe emphasizes arts as well as science and technology in its K-8 program. WPCS challenges middle-schoolers academically while offering electives that boost leadership skills and college-preparedness.

## How can I know if a charter school is a good fit for my child?

Schedule a visit, preferably as a family. Meet the principal, tour the campus and sit in a class. Ask questions that will help you understand if the school's approach is a good fit for your child's unique needs and interests. Then discuss whether the school feels right.

## How can I enroll?

Twin Rivers charter schools are accepting applications at each campus. While parents can call to request an application packet by mail, the application cannot be processed until a parent or guardian comes in with documentation (the child's birth certificate, proof of residence and immunization record).

## Is there a waiting list?

Check with each school. Due to popularity, schools often have a waitlist.

## Why should parents from outside the district consider a Twin Rivers charter school?

Small campus communities and the special focus and program offerings of each charter school, such as art, science or project-based learning, appeal to parents. Since any student can enroll, families beyond Twin Rivers borders have the same opportunity for a free, distinctive and high-quality education.



Photos courtesy of TRUSD



Photos courtesy of TRUSD

# Find Out For Yourself!

## Visit a charter school to learn more

Charter schools provide families with choices, and families choose charter schools for various reasons.

Some parents are attracted to academic focuses or learning approaches that match the needs and interests of their children. Other parents value community service and off-site learning. Some want small classes or small campuses.

The common thread is a desire for educational experiences best-suited to every child's individuality.

Twin Rivers Unified School District embraces options. The three Twin Rivers charter schools



offer distinct programs in settings you won't find anywhere else in the greater Sacramento area.

Whether you're a parent seeking a school where the arts infuse every class, science and arts enrich holistically, or rigorous academics that push students to meet high expectations, Twin Rivers has a charter

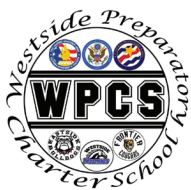
of choice — and your family needn't live within the district to enroll.

Seeing is believing. Visit any of our campuses and determine which is right for *your* child. After all, meeting the specific needs of each student is what charter school education is all about.



### TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE

- 1 5115 Dudley Blvd.  
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### WESTSIDE PREPARATORY CHARTER SCHOOL, GRADES 7-8

- 2 Frontier Campus  
6691 Silverthorne Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95842  
916-566-1840  
csfc.twinriversusd.org
- 3 Eastside Campus  
6469 Guthrie Way  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
916-566-1860  
wpcsec.twinriversusd.org
- 4 Westside Campus  
6537 W. Second St.  
Rio Linda, CA 95673  
916-566-1990  
cswc.twinriversusd.org



### SMYTHE ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES, GRADES PK-6

- 5 2781 Northgate Blvd.  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
916-566-2740  
smythe6.twinriversusd.org

### SMYTHE ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES, GRADES 7-8

- 6 700 Dos Rios Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
916-566-3430  
smythe7.twinriversusd.org



### CREATIVE CONNECTIONS ARTS ACADEMY, GRADES K-6

- 7 7201 Arutas Drive  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
916-566-1870  
ccaa.twinriversusd.org

### CREATIVE CONNECTIONS ARTS ACADEMY, GRADES 7-12

- 8 6444 Walerga Road  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
916-566-3470  
ccaa.twinriversusd.org



For more information on Twin Rivers Unified School District, visit [www.twinriversusd.org](http://www.twinriversusd.org).