

Enrollment Patterns

The school's growth plan projects that an upward trend in enrollment demand is likely to continue into the foreseeable future due to at least four factors:

(1) Improved Student Achievement: Student performance indicators show a positive trend over the past years. Journey School's State Academic Performance Index (API) Score has improved by more than 200 points since 2004. Moreover, every state and federal goal has been achieved, as all student sub-groups surpassed growth targets for Math, Reading, and Writing in 2009. Our current API Score is 816, which brings the school into closer alignment with various high-performing schools in Orange County. Additionally, Journey School recently received a 'Bronze Ranking' among *all* Orange County elementary schools.⁴ Moving forward, Journey School will pursue even higher levels of student performance while holding firm to core values and key beliefs.

(2) Growing Charter School Movement: The Orange County Grand Jury recently studied all public charter schools within Orange County. The published results noted that public charter school enrollment in the area has soared primarily because the schools provide diverse educational choices for children, parents, and school districts. The study posits that the local charter school movement is growing due to the unique and varied curricular offerings of charter schools like Journey School. Additionally, the Grand Jury findings lauded charter schools for providing unique learning opportunities to all learners, including at-risk and academically low-achieving students. They noted that charter schools offered support to the educators who serve these students. In the last two years, academic scores of charter school students have improved overall. The study also corroborates high levels of parent satisfaction.⁵ These local patterns mirror statewide and national developments.

(3) Waldorf Inspired Public Education on the Rise: At this time there are approximately a thousand Waldorf schools in ninety-one countries, including approximately 150 in the United States, where Waldorf's growth has been particularly vigorous. While many of these schools are private, The George Lucas Educational Foundation reported in 2009 that the number of public schools inspired by Waldorf educational methods is growing fast, fueled in part by the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act and the charter school movement. In the United States, there are now nearly 50 Waldorf-inspired public schools, most of them K-8 charter schools located in the West.⁶

As the only Waldorf-inspired public charter school in Orange County, we are uniquely positioned to meet the mounting demand for a child-centered, rigorous and joyful school. Outreach efforts and site-based data indicate that more families from

⁴ Fermin and Martindale, "OC's Best Elementary Schools", *Orange County Register*, February 8, 2010

⁵ Orange County Grand Jury, *Are Charter Schools Getting Passing Grades*, 2007

⁶ Costello-Dougherty. "Waldorf Public Education Are On the Rise", *Edutopia*, 2009

throughout the area from both traditional public as well as private schools will enroll their children at Journey School in the coming years.

(4) Research Based Education: In his landmark book, *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*, Dr. Robert Marzano asserts that we could be on the brink of unprecedented effectiveness for the public practice of education if we are willing to implement what is known about effective schooling.⁷ His basic position is simple: Schools can have a tremendous impact on student achievement if they follow the direction provided by research.

Marzano's research has important implications for Journey School and the broader Waldorf public charter school movement. The latest research in educational neuroscience establishes strong linkages between high student achievement and Waldorf-inspired methods. In fact, Marzano's own research confirms that the use of certain practices used in Waldorf schools, like teacher looping, summarization, and interdisciplinary teaching allow children to excel on a variety of assessments, including standardized tests.⁸ As educators and their allies implement what they are learning from brain research, Waldorf charter schools will both benefit from and contribute to educational reform. Specifically, we anticipate a steady stream of interest in our unique program, and we will embrace opportunities to disseminate best practices.

"I believe that Waldorf education possesses unique educational features that have considerable potential for improving public education in America... Waldorf schools provide a program that...not only fosters conventional forms of academic achievement, but also puts a premium on the development of imagination and the refinement of the sensibilities."—Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education at Stanford University and former President, American Association for Educational Research

Describe what it means to be an "educated person" in the 21st century:

Enduring Nature of Waldorf Education

Waldorf education was born in post World War I Europe, when socio-economic, political and technological circumstances were shifting rapidly. Rudolph Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, began working with social leaders to develop an education that would cultivate in young people the basis on which to develop into free, moral, and integrated individuals who could meet the challenges of the 20th century.

Steiner put forth the premise that human beings have a threefold nature: *physical*, *social-emotional*, and *intellectual*. Hence, in his educational model, *the heart must be reached as*

⁷ Marzano, Robert. *What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action*, 2003

⁸ Oberman, Ida. "The Relevance of Waldorf Education for Urban Public School Reform", *Encounter*, 2008