

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a charter school?

Charter schools are nonsectarian public schools of choice that operate with freedom from many of the regulations that apply to traditional public schools. Charter schools, like other public schools, are secular in nature and do not teach religion. The "charter" establishing each such school is a performance contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success.

A charter school is independently operated in the sense that it can design its own educational program, hire its own teachers and staff and manage its own budget. The basic concept of charter schools is that the school exercise increased autonomy in return for an accountability to its founders, parents, public, and grantors.

Who operates Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools?

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools are operated by the Sky Foundation Inc., a non-profit organization which was established in Stillwater, OK, for the sole purpose of supporting Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools. The Sky Foundation, the charter holder, conducts business as Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools operates four charter schools in Oklahoma, including two schools in Oklahoma City and two schools in Tulsa.

How are members of the Dove Board of Directors selected?

The Sky Foundation is a nonprofit organization and members of its Board of Directors, who serve as unpaid volunteers, can be nominated by anyone – existing Board members, Dove school employees, parents of Dove students, Dove alumni and even the general public. The existing Board of Directors reviews the qualifications of nominees, seeking individuals who have expertise, experience or leadership abilities that will contribute to maintaining a continued standard of excellence for Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools and students. Once each year the existing Board of Directors votes on nominations to replace members whose terms have expired or who have left the Board for other reasons.

How do Dove students compare academically, in relation to other students?

At Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, excellence is our standard, and our record of achievement shows that we have been successful.

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools proudly serve more than **1,500 students in four college preparatory schools**. With a **college acceptance rate of 100 percent**, Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools have earned the reputation of providing a distinct, high-quality education.

- ◆ Dove Science Academy has been named by Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as **Oklahoma's Promise State Champion for 2009 and 2010** for leading the state in the number of graduates who qualified to receive Oklahoma's Promise, a state scholarship that allows students from families whose annual income is \$50,000 or less to earn free college tuition.
- ◆ Businessweek magazine named Dove Science Academy **Top High School in the State of Oklahoma** in "Best Overall Academic Performance" and "Best Low Income School" categories in 2009.
- ◆ Dove Science Academy ranked first among Oklahoma schools according to the Academic Performance Index, determined by state test results in 2006 and 2007. **In those years, DSA scored 1466 and 1497, respectively, out of a possible 1500.**
- ◆ Dove Science Academy was recognized with the "**Title I Academic Achievement Award**" by the Oklahoma State Department of Education in 2007 and 2008.
- ◆ Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools have **won over 700 awards** in local, national and international science fairs and competitions.
- ◆ Dove Science Academy won **Team Champion of Oklahoma State Science and Engineering Fair** in 2004.

What distinguishes Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools from other charter and public schools?

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools have very high expectations for students in both academics and behavior. Our faculty and staff are dedicated and hard-working, and receive regular professional development and supervision. They function as a team and are committed to ensuring that students succeed. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools have a small school and small class size.

The following educational innovations will distinguish Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools from other schools:

- Integration of technology into curriculum: By using a multi-sensory approach to learning, students will be provided with opportunities to learn through auditory, visual, tactile, and kinesthetic activities. The students are guided through the process of determining which learning style is best suited to their needs at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.
- Online Access: Parents will be able access online student grades, attendance, conduct, discipline reports, and teacher comments at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.
- Strong Reading and Writing Emphasis: English and ESL teachers focus on pronunciation and spelling of vocabulary used in the school, classroom, and home.
- Grade Advancement Policy: Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools develop a grade advancement policy for exceptional learners who demonstrate outstanding skills in reading and mathematics.
- Performance Assessments: Performance assessments - also known as "alternative" or "authentic" assessments - augment norm-referenced multiple-choice tests in all grade levels at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.
- Parental and Community Involvement: Involving parents in the activities of the classrooms, cafeteria, playground and many other extra-curricular affairs helps both students and parents to become better acquainted with the process of education.
- Peer Tutoring, Mentoring and Counseling: Peer partnership is used as a positive tool at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools. High school students will tutor elementary and middle school students in core areas.
- Guidance for teaching and support personnel: In-services are the frequent and major part of our staff development Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.
- Teacher Specialization in/after 4th Grade: The elementary school has two parts. The students receive specialized subject teachers as early as in the 4th and 5th grades in mathematics, reading, computer science, foreign language, and science.

- **Teachers as Homeroom Advisors:** Middle school students are assigned a homeroom teacher who acts as an advisor, helper, and immediate guide for the student at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.
- **Character Education and Leadership development:** The aim of education is to support the growth of pupils' overall personalities.
- **Family Visits:** At Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, parent-teacher relationship is improved by family visits. Teachers will be urged to visit students at home to inform the parents about the school and student's progress, while the parents will have an opportunity to provide the teachers with feedback and input.
- **Career Education:** All students attend an annual Career Day at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools and meet professionals from different occupations.
- **Cross-disciplinary learning:** Students work on projects that require cooperative teaching efforts in language arts, fine arts, mathematics, social studies, and science at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.
- **Digital Art Program:** The Fine Arts program is integrated with technology at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools. With the growing availability of technologies of interactivity and Internet access, we see new interactive and online platforms.
- **Participation in Contests:** Students in the gifted and talented and the standard program are encouraged to participate in local, statewide, national and international competitions.
- **Out of State and Europe Trips:** Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools organize out-of-state trips as well as those to different countries in Europe every year.

Why does Dove recruit teachers from outside of the United States?

At Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, we are committed to providing the very best education for our students, and to recruiting the very best teachers. We recruit teachers from within the United States and internationally, when necessary. Today, Oklahoma, as well as our entire country, has a shortage of qualified math and science teachers. This unfortunate situation was highlighted in a January 2011 report from the U.S. Department of Education, which identified specific areas of deficiency (including math and science) and called for the hiring of teachers in those areas as rapidly as possible.

That report follows a 2009 study that found a severe lack of math and science educators in the United States, and suggested that the shortage would grow in coming years; while at the same time new high school graduation requirements were requiring increases in math and science curriculums (Dallas Morning News, Feb. 10, 2009). This critical shortage of math and science teachers has resulted in education experts urging the federal government to become more involved in recruiting underrepresented minority students to science, math, and engineering majors, noting such efforts are critical to increasing the number of Americans working in those fields (The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 2009).

Dove only hires international teachers when there are not enough highly qualified math and science teachers in the application pool. As a result of the national shortage of math and science teachers, it becomes a viable option for Dove & Discovery administrators to hire international teachers based primarily on academic professional credentials, regardless of their national origin.

How many H-1B teachers does Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools employ?

Less than 20 percent of Dove and Discovery Public Charter School teachers hold H-1B visas. This employment of H-1B teachers is due to the well-documented critical teacher shortages in the field of math and science. As a result, Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools must recruit both inside and outside of the United States to find teachers qualified to meet the rigorous math and science-centered curriculum that is the foundation of our schools. Initially, a teacher may be issued an H-1B visa for a three-year term, only after the federal government has determined that no U.S. citizen is qualified for the job being filled. Our goal is that one day, based on our intense focus on math and science, Dove graduates will help fill the nation's critical need for math and science teachers.

Do the Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools or the Sky Foundation have any ties with any religious movement?

No. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools and the Sky Foundation are nonprofit, academic entities founded in the United States for the sole purpose of providing quality public education for children in Oklahoma. The schools are nonsectarian and have no ties of any kind to any religious movement. Dove was established by a group of graduate students at Oklahoma State University, who, after working as after-school tutors, realized the need for advanced math and science education in Oklahoma.

Do Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools teach religion?

No. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools are not affiliated with any religious group, nor do our schools teach any sort of religious curriculum. As publicly funded charter, Dove is required to abide by the same state curriculum as any traditional public school. We have a 10-year track record of delivering a rigorous math and science-centered curriculum that produces excellent academic results. We adhere strictly to the guidelines of the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), and our focus is on delivering excellent educational opportunities for children in Oklahoma. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools have been accredited by OSDE annually with no deficiency since they were founded.

What ethical standards are in place at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools?

At Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, excellence is our standard, and this applies without exception to our students, teachers, faculty, Board of Directors, vendors, and anyone else affiliated with our schools. We have a meticulous recruitment and training process and our teachers, in particular, are required to:

- Recognize the basic dignities of all individuals with whom they interact in the performance of their duties
- Represent accurately their academic and professional qualifications
- Exercise due care to protect the mental and physical safety of students, colleagues, and subordinates
- Understand and apply the knowledge and skills appropriate to assigned responsibilities
- Keep in confidence legally confidential information they may obtain
- Ensure that their actions, or those of another on their behalf, are not made with the specific intent of advancing private economic interests
- Refrain from using their position or public property, or permitting another person to use an employee's position or public property, for partisan political or religious purposes, and,
- Avoid accepting anything of value offered by another for the purpose of influencing judgment.

Who can apply for Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools?

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools are open enrollment and free to all students living in their respective school districts and surrounding school districts. Students must also be age eligible to attend any Dove and Discovery Public Charter School.

Is there a school uniform policy?

Yes, there is a school uniform policy at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.

Do Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools offer after school and Saturday tutorials?

Yes, Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools offer after school and Saturday tutorials.

Do Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools offer programs for gifted and talented students?

Yes, Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools offer gifted and talented programs and advanced courses.

What courses are offered at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools?

Many of the courses offered in regular public schools will also be offered at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools. However, Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools will offer a broader and more rigorous curriculum in English, math, social studies, science, art, music, physical education and Spanish. Special emphasis is put on science, math, and computer technologies at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.

Why should the parents send their children to Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools?

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools offer a comprehensive college preparatory program emphasizing science, mathematics, and technology education. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools strive to play a role in satisfying this need. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools also offer programs to develop skills and education for its students to enroll in science and engineering departments of prestigious colleges in the country and compete in an increasingly demanding workplace of science and technology, and contribute to the long-term economic development for the region.

As Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, we believe every child can learn and grow into a successful and productive citizen. When this belief is combined with the expertise necessary to set up and run a school, the result, we think, is an excellent environment in which your children can learn. We believe that this environment will lay the foundation for a bright and productive future.

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools emphasize character education. We believe that parents want schools where their children are taught to be honest, courageous, persistent individuals, not just where they become educated. Our students wear uniforms daily and adhere to a clearly-articulated discipline policy.

Our teachers and leadership team are experienced and committed. Your children will be in the classroom with a high-performing teacher at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools.

At Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, our goal is to enable our graduating seniors to enroll in top four-year public and private universities.

Do you offer character education and what do you mean by character education at Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools?

Yes, as Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, we also offer character education classes to our students. By character we mean “common sense values” such as honesty and integrity. Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools strive to create a culture that honors “Doing the RIGHT Thing!” where RIGHT stands for Respectful, Intelligent, Genuine, Hard-Working and Team-Oriented.

As Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools we hope that parents who want their children to grow up to be adults who embrace common sense values will not only choose to send their children to Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools, but also work with us to model and teach their children what these words mean and what they look like when put into action.

Dove and Discovery Public Charter Schools hire faculty, administrators, and staff who embody principles of character and leadership and who wish to be an active part of a community that values these in word and deed.