What are Citizens of the World schools?

CWC schools are academically challenging, free public schools where students of diverse backgrounds learn at high levels and grow into caring and responsible citizens of the world. We are proud to be the first national school network in the country that is mixed-income and mixed-race. Our talented principals and teachers create safe learning environments where students master critical thinking skills and learn how to engage respectfully and productively with fellow students, forming meaningful relationships that transcend cultural divides. This learning environment allows our students to achieve better academic results and provides a powerful advantage in life.

We are proud that Citizens of the World Hollywood had a state academic performance index score of 912 in 2012-13 putting it in the top 6% of all LAUSD schools. Families submitted over 500 applications for 66 kindergarten seats for the 2012-13 school year.

What are Citizens of the World schools? Citizens of the World Charter Schools are free, high-performing public schools that serve students of all backgrounds in communities across the country. We believe that in today’s society, children grow into strong critical and creative thinkers when they have the opportunity to learn alongside others with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. We are proud to be the first national school network in the country that focuses on educating mixed-income and mixed-race students.

Where are Citizens of the World schools located? CWC schools are located in communities where parents are demanding academically challenging schools that also reflect the full diversity of their neighborhoods. As of the 2013-14 school year, CWC has five schools – three in Los Angeles and two in New York – serving nearly 1,000 students.

What is the benefit of a diverse, integrated student learning model? Studies show that students in diverse, integrated learning environments have been found to have better critical thinking skills, academic achievement, and life opportunities. Schools must prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in our increasingly diverse society. This requires not just preparing students academically, but also promoting cross-racial understanding and tolerance among groups and improving life opportunities for all students.

How does the Citizens of the World teaching and learning model work? Our small classrooms – typically 22-24 students – are led by two adults, one teacher and one teaching assistant.

These talented instructors work to help students learn at high levels and learn how to work productively together, through creative hands-on projects that bring learning to life in a fun, personalized way.

How do you balance testing with creativity? We teach to the student, not to the test. We strive to create joyful learning experiences that allow students to become critical and creative thinkers. We also regularly track student progress to identify when children need extra help or more challenging work. Children learn and develop along unique paths.
Are students with special needs welcome at Citizens of the World schools? Yes. We support children of all needs, including English language learners and those with special needs. Our teaching and learning model is particularly attractive to families of students with special needs because it includes hands-on instruction that is highly differentiated.

How do you engage and partner with parents? We greatly value parent and community engagement. All CWC schools encourage parents to be engaged, but participation in the schools is not required. We work to create numerous opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the schools, including volunteer opportunities, parent surveys and community-building events. Each region decides how to best work with their parents.

How are Citizens of the World schools funded? Like other public schools, Citizens of the World schools are primarily funded by taxpayer dollars. We are a nonprofit.

Who started the Citizens of the World schools? Inspired by the potential of high-achieving diverse charter schools to dramatically enhance young people’s lives, a community coalition of parents, educators and philanthropists, including successful film and television producer Mark Gordon and long-time educator Kriste Dragon – an early parent leader and board member of Larchmont Charter School, an integrated school that consistently ranks among the best schools academically in L.A. – came together to create CWC in Hollywood. From there, others, including CWC board members Chris Forman and Cam Starrett – longtime philanthropists and passionate advocates for strong public schools – joined to support the first school and help the model expand.

What is the Citizens of the World network? CWC Schools network is a nonprofit organization that enables individual CWC schools to access national resources and knowledge to supplement their good work. In addition, the network ensures schools have control of decisions affecting students and adhere to fundamental CWC values: all students performing at high levels, children of all backgrounds learning together, and community building.

How does Citizens of the World decide where to expand? Our parents want excellent public school options where children of all backgrounds learn together at high levels. Since the first CWC school opened in 2010, many families outside the CWC community have also asked for the same option for their children. Our website will reflect any specific expansion plans if and when we have news to announce.

What are charter schools? Charter schools are independent, tuition-free public schools that are able to be more autonomous in exchange for agreeing to be held accountable for student achievement. Like traditional schools, charter schools were created by states to serve the public. Charter schools are supervised and directed by as well as accountable to the public through charter authorizing agencies, according to federal regulations under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

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