Parents’ Guide to Education

THE FRANKLIN SCHOOL OF INNOVATION
An EL Education School
EL Education began in 1991 in a joint collaboration between The Harvard School of Education and Outward Bound. The first schools operating under the EL model were launched in 1993, and now EL has over 150+ schools in 33 states and the District of Columbia that implement the EL curriculum. All Denver City Schools use the EL model in grades 4-8 and New York City has officially chosen EL as its ELA curriculum of choice for grades 3-8. The ELA curriculum, used by Franklin in grades 5 - 8, has been recognized as one of the strongest English Language Arts curriculum programs available.

At The Franklin School of Innovation, EL is the cornerstone of our educational beliefs and day-to-day educational strategy. EL is what sets The Franklin School of Innovation apart from city, county, and other charter schools. EL is what makes Franklin’s culture and approach to education so special and unique in Western North Carolina.
“Expeditionary Learning is how kids want to learn.”

-former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

At its core, EL believes that greater engagement leads to greater achievement. In other words: if a student enjoys learning, then that student is more likely to learn. Increasing student engagement happens through a multifaceted approach that includes:

- **Real world curriculum**
  Academics at Franklin are rigorous and real. The heart of EL education is project-based learning. Students learn through fieldwork at exciting places and by meeting with knowledgeable experts, through interesting case studies, and by service to their community. Students begin to think like professionals and create high quality work that prepares them for college and for life.

- **Invigorating Instruction**
  Classrooms are active at Franklin. Students, not the teacher, are the focus of every lesson. Students talk and think more, discover more, critically analyze more, problem-solve more, and collaborate with peers more. Expectations are high, which creates a culture of high achievement. Students are held to high expectations by routinely showcasing their work to their parents and the public through exhibitions and events called Celebrations of Learning. Teachers provide support to help all students attain high standards.

- **Assessing Student Learning**
  Reflection on student work is routine at Franklin. Students do not simply learn and test their knowledge. Instead, Franklin students regularly reflect on the learning process and work to identify what holds them back, and then develop strategies to find success in the future. Teachers work hard to use classroom data to find strategies that will benefit student achievement. Students lead conferences with their parents, called Student-Led Conferences (SLCs), to reflect on their successes, struggles, and learning strategies in collaboration with their teachers and families.

- **Respectful Culture**
  Students at Franklin are held to high expectations of respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness. Students meet every day with their “Crew” - a small group of students that work with a faculty Crew leader to develop characteristics at the core of EL beliefs on citizenship and scholarship. School leaders work diligently to make sure that every student has a person to go to who knows them deeply. Student leaders are supported, challenged, and celebrated.
In the **EL model**, achievement is not simply about test scores, but instead about a **well-rounded** quality of **work** and quality of **character**. EL realizes that when students graduate from schools like Franklin, the world will not judge graduates by grades but by what they can do and by who they are at their core.
EL Education is Meaningful

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”
- Benjamin Franklin

EL approaches student achievement by diving deep into three important and equal categories:

1. **Mastery of Knowledge of Skills**

Teachers and students work together to analyze if a student has mastered the knowledge and skills required in each course. All students at Franklin are supported to

- demonstrate their proficiency and deeper understanding of knowledge and skills.
- apply their knowledge through meaningful, challenging, and real-world tasks.
- think critically and analyze and synthesize information about all subject matters. Students also consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints in order to better understand their own.
- communicate clearly by being able to speak, write, and present ideas across all subject matters.
2. Character

At Franklin, we believe character traits can be taught and learned. Students work every day to

- **become effective learners** by developing character traits, mindsets, and skills that lead to success at Franklin, at college, in their careers, and in their lives. Franklin teaches the value of action, inquiry, collaboration, persistence, ethics, and leadership in every classroom every day.
- **become ethical people.** Students are encouraged to voice their opinions and to stand up for what is right.
- **contribute to a better world.** Students lead and contribute to service at Franklin and in the greater Asheville community. Students work on projects and products that benefit others.

Students at Franklin build character through service. The 11th grade Learning Expedition explores the issue of housing costs and poverty in Asheville, culminating with the Habitat for Humanity Student Home Build.
3. **High Quality Student Work**

Students are held to expectations of creating high quality work.

➢ Work is complex and showcases high-order thinking skills and multiple perspectives.

➢ Students work diligently to create accurate and beautiful representations of learning.

➢ Products of student learning are authentic, original and directly connected to real-world issues. Teachers design lessons that set up students to create meaningful work that contributes to our school, community, and world.
EL Education is Inspiring

EL Education’s vision and the welcoming spirit of Asheville combine at The Franklin School of Innovation to create an atmosphere of high expectations and a supportive environment that help every student meet and exceed those expectations. Students, Teachers, and Parents work hand in hand to celebrate success, find joy in learning, and build a community-wide culture of trust and collaboration.

What Parents say:

“We love the curriculum, the teachers and administration are amazing. My kids are thriving at Franklin.”
- Bevin McGahey

“My kids are engaged, empowered, and challenged at Franklin! The staff is committed to every child.”
- Lauren Player

“[T]he teachers really care about every student. For people wondering what “Expeditionary Learning” is, I offer this example: last year the science and math classes teamed up to study water pollution in Hominy Creek (behind the school). They sampled water over 6 weeks, and built regression analysis charts for the data in math. Then they did a canoe trip down the creek picking up trash.”
- Brett Crossley

“My son actually missed being in school this summer!”
- Erica Jourdan

“Our 6th grader loves FSI and we are so thankful to have him at a school that challenges and engages him. The teachers all seem enthusiastic about teaching and he looks forward to going to school. Love the hands on approach to learning!”
- Amy Brinkley Bennett
What Teachers Say:

“I am inspired to come to work everyday because of the general culture of achievement and acceptance that is palpable on campus. Franklin is set apart because of how much every teacher cares about every student. I've worked at other schools, Franklin is just....special.”
-Drew Fowler, 9th Grade World Literature & AP Government

“One of the great things about EL and our school, in particular, is that we not only give students the opportunity to succeed, but we also give them the means. Our focus on growth and revision, as opposed to test scores and recall, allows students to move forward from wherever they are academically, gaining confidence with each step. With that confidence comes a new level of ownership and investment in not only school work, but in the school itself. This is a vital component in FSI's becoming home for so many students.”
-Tony Freeman, 6th Grade ELA

“The "Innovation" part of our name isn’t just a word, as many titles are; this school community, more than any other I've been a part of, constantly reworks itself in policy and practice to ensure it is meeting the needs of its staff and students. Teachers and kids cycle through reflection and revision in their daily practices, and a desire to be better every day is instilled deep in the culture here. I find it so inspiring to work in a place surrounded by people who are always trying new things or having conversations about how to better their practice, and it is so special to have relationships be at the forefront of that work. At Franklin, people work and play together, pushing on one another to grow better every day.”
-Katie Washburn, 11th Grade AP Language and American Literature

“One of the best parts of FSI is our Crew program. Each crew is a small group of students and a staff person that serves as a crew leader. Crew time is my favorite time of the day because we get to help students with their social and emotional development, collaboration skills, and academic skills such as goal setting and organization. We get to work on essential life lessons that don’t necessarily fit into a course curriculum. Crew is your family at school. It’s a place where we become better people together, learning from each other. We start and end crew-time with a circle. The shape of the circle helps explain who is learner and who is teacher during crew: we are all there to learn from each other and to teach each other. It's a space and time that gives kids ownership over their own learning and helps them practice kindness, resilience, and empathy.”
-Peggy McKay, 5th Grade Science and Math Teacher
What Students Say:

Franklin has always been a place that’s different from anywhere else. I thoroughly believe that it’s not only a school but a community. I have learned not only academics here but also how to be a good community member, how to advocate for myself, and find my own path. The strong connections I’ve built with teachers through my 5 years and the skills I have learned doing projects outside of the classroom have helped me grow into someone I can be proud of. I couldn’t see myself growing like this in a public [district] school setting and am happy Franklin gave me this opportunity to grow and learn as myself."
-Miranda Keith, Franklin Student

“Franklin has opened doors for me that no other school could have. With the unique way of teaching, it has impacted my entire education along with my future."
-Macy Gatts, Franklin Student

“Franklin has allowed me to expand my learning ability unlike any other school system I have been a part of. It creates this feeling of family and makes me want to explore more things than ever before."
-Preston King, Franklin Student

“Franklin is different from the way other schools teach, and is a fun place for me to learn. Also, it sends me into the environment more and shows me what the world is like instead of listening to constant lectures. Franklin also teaches me to collaborate with people and to ask for help more when I need it. Not only does Franklin do all of that, but it helps me to show my parents where I am in my studies more, so they can understand well too."
-Jack Dickson, Franklin Student

“For the better part of five years now FSI has served as a home for me. I understand the phrase is casually stated about a lot of things, but Franklin is different. Franklin is a place where we can freely express ourselves. Where we can form personal relationships with our teachers that propel us to strive for greater learning. Where we can grow bonds with each other and learning that set us on a steady track for our future."
-Janaka Volpe, Franklin Student
Franklin students thrive on EL Education’s model for curriculum, character, and high quality work. Franklin believes that every student can find success here. Franklin believes every student can better understand themselves and the world here. Franklin believes every student belongs here.

Want to find out how EL Education and The Franklin School of Innovation could benefit your child?

There are many ways for you to get more information about how the EL Education model at The Franklin School of Innovation could help your child find success:

➢ Sign up for our mailing list.
➢ Talk to one of our Franklin parent volunteers.
➢ Contact one of our Franklin teachers.
➢ Sign up for a tour.
➢ Sign your child up for a full day observation and visit.
➢ Visit The Franklin School of Innovation’s website.
➢ Visit the EL Education website.