

**Wauka Mountain Charter School**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is a charter school?**

A charter school is a public school that does not charge tuition, serves all students as with any public school, but has flexibility to be more innovative and make choices based on what is best for the students at that school. Things that will not change if our charter is approved: school buses will continue to transport our students; our school will continue to serve breakfast and lunch; we are not anticipating staff changes. Wauka Mountain would be a *conversion* charter school, which means that we are converting to charter status with the support of our Hall County Board of Education.

**Will current Wauka Mountain students still attend Wauka Mountain Multiple Intelligences Academy?**

Yes. According to our charter, which you can read in its entirety from a charter school information link on the Wauka Mountain website ([www.hallco.org/wmes](http://www.hallco.org/wmes)) our student body will be made up of our current students. Additional students may be admitted by lottery if space allows.

**What is *Multiple Intelligences*?**

It is a theory developed by a Harvard University professor Howard Gardner in 1983 which says children are smart in many other ways than the traditional verbal (reading) and math we assess as successful learning in school. Schools have implemented his theory in practice and research has shown that children benefit from learning in multiple ways. Gardner says that everyone has intelligence (or is partial to) learning in several of eight identified “smart” areas:

<b>SMART/Intelligence Area</b>	<b>Your child may enjoy:</b>
Word Smart	Reading, writing, telling stories
Math Smart	Math, reasoning, logic, problem-solving
Picture Smart	Drawing, art, puzzles, mazes, design
Body Smart	Sports, dance, acting, moving
Music Smart	Singing, listening or playing music
People Smart	Organizing, leading, resolving conflict, good with people
Self Smart	Setting goals, may enjoy working alone, understanding personal strengths and weaknesses
Nature Smart	Being outside, identifying and understanding nature, exploring

**What will be the same when the charter school opens in fall 2010?**

Our students, our staff, and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), our curriculum will look the same. We are still accountable for teaching the GPS and for showing increased student achievement through CRCT testing, as mandated by the Georgia Department of Education, and *No Child Left Behind* (federal accountability legislation). We are committed to the standards for rigorous education as identified by Hall County Schools. We will continue to use the curriculum tools that our teachers have implemented over the past years such as Readers and Writers Workshop, Singapore Math, and Calendar Math.

**What will be different with a charter school?**

- Each student will complete two projects yearly that are centered on a school-wide theme, which incorporate the “smart” areas that appeal to your child. These projects will be presented to the child’s class and family, recorded and stored digitally (on DVDs) that will be updated yearly and given to families at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Wauka Mountain.
- Our teachers will be working towards teaching from thematic units in some subject areas, which could give students opportunities to demonstrate mastery of the GPS using Gardner’s multiple intelligences.
- Also, we hope to move away from having traditional CAMP (Computer, Art, Music and PE) and expand to offering “specialty classes” for the children, that give them opportunities to explore other areas and subjects in the “smart” areas they show interest, or their parents request that they try. For example, instead of every child going to general music class each week, music ‘smart’ students could elect to take flute or guitar class, or sing in chorus as part of the school day. Also we are working on how we could offer specialty classes in foreign language, culinary arts, golf, technology, and partnering with the J.A. Walters YMCA facility, just to name a few.

### **Who will teach the specialty classes?**

Specialty classes will be taught by our current computer, art, music, and physical education teachers, in addition to the classroom teachers. If we utilize community members or parents as teachers in any specialty class, they would be required to pass a background check. Through our proposed partnership with the J.A. Walter YMCA facility, their teaching staff would be working with our students, and they have also undergone certification and background check requirements. If we are able to partner with the J.A. Walters YMCA facility, our students will be transported to and from the YMCA on Hall County school buses.

### **What will change regarding the daily school schedule?**

We are still in the planning stages; we have not made any final decisions about what our daily schedule will look like. We want to consider all options for providing the best learning environment for our students. We want parents to have a voice in the decision about changes, if any occur, to our schedule. Scheduling is very challenging, especially when we are trying to offer a lot of choices for our students. We do not have a pre-determined idea about which schedule is best, we are exploring many options. Some of the schedules that we have discussed include:

- Keeping the exact same daily schedule as we have now, starting at 7:48 and ending at 2:20, Monday through Friday
- Starting instruction at 7:30, which would be 18 minutes earlier, because our buses are here by 7:10 and most students are ready to go to class by 7:30.
- Being innovative with our schedule – we have discussed a 4 ½ day weekly schedule, partnering with the YMCA to offer expanded care that includes opportunities for more specialty classes on the ½ day that students are released. This innovative schedule would allow our daily specialty class sizes to remain small. The 4 ½ day schedule allows time for blocks of collaborative planning, professional learning, and would also give parents time to schedule dentist/doctor appointments on Fridays after lunch, in addition to providing increased opportunities for our students to experience new learning through the YMCA program at our school.

### **Will services for students with special needs be affected by the charter school conversion?**

Students with special needs will continue to be served in the same capacity that they are currently being served. There will be no decrease in the quality or time that these students receive services.

### **Will Wauka Mountain Multiple Intelligence Academy students be required to wear uniforms?**

Some parents have expressed interest in school uniforms, but that is not a component of our charter. A parent vote would be held if uniforms are implemented in conjunction with the opening of the charter school.

### **Can parents become involved in the charter school planning process?**

We welcome parent involvement. Our charter leadership team meets monthly after school and we invite parents to attend those meetings. We have scheduled some evening charter planning sessions for parents as well.

### **Charter Leadership Team Monthly Meetings**, start at 2:30 p.m., usually meet in the media center:

September 24; October 15; November 12; January 21; February 18; March 18; April 22 ; May 13

### **Evening parent meetings**, 7 p.m. in the media center:

Monday, November 9, 2009

Tuesday, March 30, 2010

### **Where could I find an answer if I have other questions about the Wauka Mountain Multiple Intelligences Charter Academy?**

You can contact your child's classroom teacher, any administrator, or the co-chairs of our Charter Leadership Team (listed below). Parent representatives of our School Council are excellent resources for asking questions, they have been continuously informed over the past year about our charter progress and dreams. We welcome your input and questions and want our parents to be informed participants in our charter conversion.

#### CLT co-chairs

Leah Hulsey (2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher) [leah.hulsey@hallco.org](mailto:leah.hulsey@hallco.org)  
Michelle Truelove (music teacher) [michelle.truelove@hallco.org](mailto:michelle.truelove@hallco.org)