

# Waldorf and Public Waldorf Education

Together, the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education (Alliance), the organization for public district and charter schools in the U.S., and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), the organization for independent schools, share this statement on Waldorf® and Public Waldorf<sup>sm</sup> education:

The two organizations are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity and promote the highest quality of education arising out of the insights of Rudolf Steiner through sharing resources, cultivating collegial relationships, and supporting the ongoing development and professionalism of member schools. Member schools of AWSNA engage in a process of organizational development, culminating in a 7-10 year cycle of self-study and peer review. Member schools of the Alliance will begin to engage in a process of organizational development, through a process that includes self-study and peer review, scheduled to be implemented in early 2017. Specific information on these processes can be found on the AWSNA (<https://www.waldorfeducation.org/>) and the Alliance (<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/>) websites.

In support of the tens of thousands of families whose children attend a school that is a member of either AWSNA or the Alliance, we offer this shared statement to better understand both Waldorf and Public Waldorf Education. Waldorf educators, whether they work in independent schools (AWSNA) or in public/charter schools (Alliance), hold Rudolf Steiner's goal for education to be eloquently expressed in the following quotes:

*"The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility - these three forces are the very nerve of education."* Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man*, (2004, p. 190)

*"Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and meaning to their lives."* Rudolf Steiner

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Each association has established principles that serve as the foundation for the work in all aspects of member schools, from educational program to leadership and community engagement. These AWSNA and Alliance principles have the same source—the indications of Rudolf Steiner and are adapted from the core principles developed by the Pedagogical Section Council of North America. Full versions of the respective principles are available on the AWSNA (<https://www.waldorfeducation.org/waldorf-education/in-our-schools/awsna-principles-for-waldorf-schools>) or Alliance ([http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CORE-PRINCIPLES.final\\_11.08.16.pdf](http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CORE-PRINCIPLES.final_11.08.16.pdf)) websites.

The following summary is offered to help parents and others understand key similarities and differences. Member schools of both associations may vary widely in their manner of implementation of their respective principles. These variations are generally a reflection of the maturity of the school and its available resources, not of a school's commitment to the principles.

*Neither AWSNA nor the Alliance can give guidance on the best fit for any child.  
Parents are advised to visit all schools under consideration as part of their school choice process.*

|  | AWSNA   | ALLIANCE   |
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| <b>Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</b><br>The curriculum and pedagogy is informed by Steiner's indications and understanding of child development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools have autonomy in the design and implementation of their curriculum and pedagogical practices.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The degree of site-based autonomy afforded to schools in design and implementation of their curriculum and pedagogy varies from state to state and district to district.</li> <li>Schools strive to implement district and state guidelines from a developmental perspective.</li> </ul>        |
| <b>Finances</b><br>Most schools, public and independent, ask for parent contributions to help meet school costs.                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition payments by parents are the primary source of funding.</li> <li>Schools in the US may receive limited state or federal grants/funding for specific purposes. If they do, they must meet the identified accountability requirements.</li> <li>Canadian schools have different funding structures, depending on the provincial law.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public monies are the primary source of funding.</li> <li>Parents may be asked to supplement the public monies to cover the additional costs of the Public Waldorf program through fundraising and donations.</li> <li>Public funding comes with public accountability requirements.</li> </ul> |

|  | AWSNA   | ALLIANCE   |
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| <p><b>Student Assessment &amp; Reporting</b></p> <p>Both public and independent schools use a variety of assessment tools to monitor student learning, working with Steiner's picture of child development.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Often a 360° approach is utilized, including student observation and evaluation of student work.</li> <li>• Schools generally use narrative reports to provide the assessment data to parents, and may incorporate other reporting mechanisms, including letter grades, as appropriate.</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are required to meet district, state, and federal assessment guidelines, generally including standardized testing.</li> <li>• Schools use a range of assessment approaches in addition to standardized testing, including student observation and evaluation of student work.</li> <li>• Schools generally use some form of grades to provide assessment data to parents, with narrative reports usually provided in addition.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Teachers</b></p> <p>Both AWSNA and Alliance schools emphasize ongoing study and professional development. Teachers have chosen to work based on the impulse of Waldorf education. Teacher qualification requirements vary from state to state.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools seek Waldorf credentialed teachers whenever possible. In accredited schools Waldorf training is an expectation.</li> <li>• Schools hire teachers with varied professional and educational backgrounds. Most schools do not require state credentialing or traditional teacher training.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools seek Waldorf trained teachers whenever possible but often hire teachers who have not yet started this training.</li> <li>• Schools generally require that teachers possess a degree, meet state teaching credentialing requirements, and have a willingness to pursue Waldorf professional development and training.</li> </ul>   |

|   | AWSNA  | ALLIANCE  |
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| <p><b>Student Admissions</b></p> <p>Both public and independent schools follow state and federal non-discrimination laws.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are free to accept students according to their own guidelines and set their own class size limits.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools accept all students according to state authorized admission policies and procedures (e.g. neighborhood school, lottery) up to their allocated enrollment cap.</li> <li>Class size may be set by district or state policies.</li> <li>Many schools have wait lists for admissions.</li> <li>Schools cannot exclude students based on their learning needs.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Diverse Learners</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools vary in their provision of student support; available services may include extra lesson, therapeutic eurythmy, therapeutic movement, speech, or tutoring.</li> <li>Some schools access public support services for qualified student through an IEP.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on an IEP, students have access to district support services that can include speech and occupational therapists, psychologists, learning specialists, or individual classroom aides.</li> <li>Schools may also offer supplementary services such as extra lesson or therapeutic exercises.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Governance</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are 501 (c)3 non-profits, or the equivalent in Canada.</li> <li>Each school's governing board is independent of any external agency and has legal and fiduciary responsibility for its operations.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are established under a school district or authorizer.</li> <li>Requirements of governance structure vary from state to state and may differ depending on whether the school is a district school, dependent charter, or independent charter.</li> </ul>   |

|   | <b>AWSNA</b>   | <b>ALLIANCE</b>  |
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| <b>Starting and Growing a School</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are generally established as early childhood centers.</li> <li>• When a critical mass of parents and teachers identify sufficient resources and students, a school may start.</li> <li>• Generally, grades are added one at a time.</li> <li>• School culture and community tends to grow organically.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools apply to receive approval from the chartering agency.</li> <li>• Approval is contingent upon receptivity to Public Waldorf principles and facilities.</li> <li>• Schools generally have a minimum number of students that must be admitted upon opening, identified by the District or chartering agency.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Association Membership and Accreditation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools work collaboratively to reach decisions on behalf of the association and engage in self-study and peer review.</li> <li>• Full member schools are Waldorf accredited through AWSNA, a process which assesses congruence between the school's mission, the AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools, and the school's activities.</li> <li>• Many schools choose AWSNA accreditation in conjunction with another regional or national agency, such as WASC.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative activities are fostered by the Alliance, with more established schools providing leadership.</li> <li>• Schools are invited to participate in collaborative activities.</li> <li>• Stages of membership are based on the developmental stage of a school and its alignment with the Core Principles of the Alliance for Public Waldorf education.</li> <li>• The term 'Public Waldorf' is used by the Alliance based on agreement with AWSNA, the owner of the US service mark 'Waldorf'.</li> <li>• Schools may choose accreditation through a regional or national agency, such as WASC.</li> </ul> |