

# A Parents Guide

# Education



THE **FRANKLIN** SCHOOL  
**INNOVATION** OF  
An EL Education School

# Introduction

EL Education is an education model that focuses on engaging the teacher and student in work that is equally challenging, adventurous, and meaningful. The EL mission is to, *“create classrooms where teachers can fulfill their highest aspirations, and students achieve more than they think possible, becoming active contributors to building a better world.”*

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 Franklin, 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.

**Our Habits of Scholarship are:**

**Inquiry**

**Ethics**

**Collaboration**

**Leadership**

**Persistence**

**Action**



# EL Education is different

“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 their peers more. Expectations are high, which creates a culture of high achievement that teachers support students in attaining. Students are held to high expectations of achievement by routinely showcasing their work to their parents and the public through exhibitions and events called Celebrations of Learning.

## **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 from success and 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” and Crew leader- a small group of students that work with a faculty member on developing characteristics which are at the core of EL’s 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 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.





# EL Education is meaningful

## 2. Character

- 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.*

# EL Education is meaningful

## 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 connect 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 will 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:

*"The Franklin School of Innovation provides a smaller school setting. I love that my child has a "crew" that follows him through grades, a strong sense of community, and a learning process that is more than testing and grades.." - Jessica Byrd*

*"As a parent of two FSI graduates I am grateful for the community that embraced each of them from the day the school opened. Their teachers and the school staff know them as individuals and have shown up for them beyond graduation. Our children and their friends continually talk about how their expeditions and group work made them so much more prepared for working collaboratively in college than their peers from around the country. As a parent I have witnessed the ways that FSI challenged them to grow and do more than they thought they could and they carry that with them everywhere they go." - Ann-Marie Breen*

*"This fall I will be enrolling my third son at Franklin. I have been so happy at the level of engagement engendered by their teachers and their program. My children have developed meaningful relationships with the staff at Franklin and have been encouraged to speak their minds and pursue their interests. I appreciate how much an EL education fosters learning not just in traditional academic subjects but also in the social, emotional, and intrapersonal realms." - Kalyan Volpe*

*"We have been impressed with the caliber of education our kids have received at Franklin School of Innovation. The EL model has helped our kids become independent thinkers and question things as opposed to memorizing for a test. We were impressed with the student-led conferences that help kids to reflect on areas that they are succeeding and areas of opportunity to improve. We are very grateful for finding this school for the delicate middle school years!" - Steve and Brea Kichefski*

*"I've been so impressed with the intentional and collaborative communication at FSI. I've not experience another school environment that makes such an effort to integrate family and inspire autonomy and personal responsibility in students. Our son has grown leaps and bounds in terms of his independence and confidence since transitioning to FSI in 5th grade last year. Highly recommend!" - Laura Torres*

*"Our daughters are thriving at Franklin School of Innovation academically and socially. Their platform of education better emulates life, promotes life-long-learning, and prepares our children to be contributors and providers in our community." - Steve and Pavla Newman*



# EL Education is **inspiring**

## What Teachers Say:

*"I've never known such a heart-driven and student-centered school. What's beautiful, though, is that when the whole-child is supported, meaningful work naturally follows. We've had students published in the New York Times; others have submitted articles to professional peer-reviewed journals; and still others are actively engaged in community issues like homelessness or access to mental health care. In so many big and small ways, students are building the future they want to see."*

-Dr. Lora Hawkins, English 1, YPAR, & ELA Department Lead

*"I am both an FSI teacher and an FSI parent. When people ask me what makes FSI different and why I chose FSI for my kids, my answer is always the same. Crew is the what separates us from the rest of the pack. Crew bonds students and gives them "school family" and an adult advocate to help them navigate the challenges of transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Crew is dynamic and creates a safety net that catches students when they fall and helps them get back up again. This is the number one reason I chose FSI."*

-Matt Reynolds, 12th Grade Social Studies

*"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, Middle School Principal

*"FSI is about building Crew...creating a culture of community, respect, hard work, and ultimately becoming better people together."*

-Charlie Keller, 6th Grade Math

*"The faculty and staff at FSI are deeply committed to our students' well-being. FSI, along with its EL model, offers a framework and environment where every student can thrive. At FSI, students are encouraged to push their boundaries, challenge themselves, and produce high-quality work that is both authentic and culturally relevant." -Teshale Byan, 11th Grade Math*

*"We celebrate the growth mindset which encourages our students to learn from their mistakes, which provides multiple opportunities to achieve their personal and academic goals. We put emphasis on high quality work and allow students to learn from each other, taking ownership of their own education and leadership in the actions they take to meet their goals. The EL approach encourages students engagement in the process of learning." - Jenn Ryan, 5th Grade Science*

*"EL education is such a great experience for not just the students but for the educators as well. We are able to really get the students thinking out of the box, get them out of the classroom, and giving them a fully immersive educational experience. Using the EL model, I've been able to engage my students in a music education experience unlike anything I've ever seen in a traditional classroom and I feel so lucky to be a part of this incredible school. - Sandi Wilson, Music*

# EL Education is **inspiring**

## What Students Say:

*"After a non-EL (expeditionary learning) education, EL was a vast change for me, namely in the sense that it allowed students to collaborate with each other and the teacher. EL has taken me a long way because its teaching and learning styles interact with one another instead of being parallel to each other."*

- Michaela Mamone-Peebles, Franklin Student

*"I think EL Education is meant to grow students experiences and help shape them for the future. Since I've been at Franklin I've grown as a person and a scholar, and I've watched so many others do the same."*

- Henry Thome, Franklin Student

*"EL Education has allowed me to foster collaboration within all of my classes. The group-oriented projects and classroom setup work to encourage the idea that kindness is a given, not a value that others must earn. Because of EL, I am now confident that I will succeed in creating these same connections in college."*

- Sarah Pusser, Franklin Student

*"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 Alumni

*"The EL (Expeditionary learning) style is an idea that learning is hands-on and requires collaboration. It teaches you to apply what you have learned and use it in the real life situations. I've truly enjoy this style of learning because it embraces a kinesthetic approach to learning. Crew helps you embrace who you are as a person as well as grow as a community. It encourages students to think for themselves yet not be afraid to ask for assistance."*

- Sierra Kichefski, Franklin Student

*"Franklin is different from the way other schools teach, and is a fun 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

# EL Education is Franklin

Franklin students thrive on EL Education's model for curriculum, character, and high quality work. We believe that every student can find success here and that every student can learn to better understand themselves and the world here. Franklin believes every student *belongs* here.

## Want to find out how EL Education and Franklin 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:

- ▶ Talk to one of our parent volunteers via [parentcrew@thefsi.us](mailto:parentcrew@thefsi.us).
- ▶ Contact a grade level teacher via [our website](#)
- ▶ [Sign up for a tour.](#)
- ▶ [Visit The Franklin School of Innovation's website.](#)
- ▶ [Visit the EL Education website.](#)

