

Voyager Public Charter School

How are we different?

- ✚ **Non-traditional Curriculum:** At Voyager teachers create learning experiences around the State content standards weaving together activities that address multiple kinds of learning. The school emphasizes “hands on” learning and recognizes that children often learn better by moving and doing, rather than traditional paper-pencil tasks. Use of textbooks and pre-printed material is limited.
- ✚ **Students are responsible for their own learning:** From their very early school experience in kindergarten, students at Voyager are guided to set goals for themselves, reflect on their work, and give feedback to each other and to the teacher. From the beginning they are involved in problem solving and data collection. Children are often limited in their growth by teachers or adults who want to rescue or do things for them. At Voyager, our role as supporting adults is to nurture, support, and convey to them that, as unique human beings they are capable and competent.
- ✚ **Multi-age curriculum:** Children are placed in multi-age learning teams based on formal and informal assessment of skills, developmental needs, and class groupings. Different ages and ability levels are together in the same classroom providing increased opportunity for cooperative learning and cross-age tutoring. Students may stay with the same teacher for 2 years providing a seamless continuum of learning. In a multi-age learning environment age and achievement differences are accepted as normal thereby creating a non-judgemental, supportive community.
- ✚ **Alternative method of evaluating and sharing learning:** At the end of every trimester, narrative reports are sent home in preparation for the main part of the evaluation process: *the student-led conference*. These are **mandatory** sessions where parent participation is critical. The conference is an opportunity for children to share his/her learning, reflect on the progress of the trimester and discuss and plan for the upcoming learning period. This process puts the child at the center of his/her learning and again sends the clear message that they are competent and capable!
- ✚ **Community learning experiences:** Based on Voyager’s belief that children “learn best by doing” many out-of-classroom experiences are planned to augment the curriculum. These excursions (which are traditionally referred to as “field trips”) are not optional and provide experiences in a more natural setting, expanding the learning beyond the classroom. Different skills are developed through these experiences and are a key component to the curriculum.



✚ **Unity in Diversity:** At Voyager, we pride ourselves on the diversity of our families and believe that learning to accept different ways of thinking and different viewpoints is a life skill that is critical to the full development of a child. By learning to go beyond tolerance to acceptance our students begin to see how, although we are each different, we are interrelated and interdependent on one another.

✚ **Parent participation and commitment to the Voyager vision:** The vision of Voyager is to “become a role model that leads the transformation of education in Hawaii and the nation”. We expect parents to partner with us for the benefit of their child’s growth and learning by:

- Preparing students for optimal learning by seeing that they get a good night's rest (young ones require 10-12 hours of sleep per night) and have a healthy breakfast.
- Making the Voyager experience part of their family life by listening to what their child says about school, discussing school related events, reviewing assignments, and responding to school and teacher communication on a nightly.
- Supporting the school’s homework philosophy by providing support to their child in completing nightly homework assignments and assignments during intersessions or breaks.
- Maintaining close contact with their child’s teacher
- Participating in conferences, meetings, school events, and classroom activities
- Donating resources and time to fundraising activities
- Following school rules
- Providing regular feedback about our program and their child’s learning through surveys, information sessions, and informal conversations.

Voyager Public Charter School is a school of choice. The philosophy and learning methodologies were set forth in the original plan to the Board of Education in 2000.

When a family chooses to become a part of our learning community they are joining, not just because “it is better than my neighborhood school”, but because they understand the various aspects of the Voyager program and desire that kind of learning experience for their child.