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The New Dimensions School

Changing the World one Student at a Time!

Welcome to our school!

Dear Families and Students,

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year at The New Dimensions School!

I am very excited to be a part of this school family, as we begin the eighth year at New Dimensions School. We have an exciting curriculum called **Core Knowledge**. In each grade, students are exposed to a broad range of historical, scientific and cultural topics. This wide array of subject matter will help build a strong vocabulary while developing cultural literacy.

We anticipate this to be an outstanding school year for all of our students. As always, we will focus on excellence in learning and on perfecting an educational approach that builds on the strengths and interests of each of our students.

I invite all NDS family members to become active supporters of our school during the year ahead, whether through financial donations or volunteering. There are many opportunities to volunteer including: helping with field trips, help organize fund-raising events, assisting with lawn/building/playground maintenance, one-to-one tutoring, sharing your special talents, and helping out in the classroom or our school office. Please let your child's teacher or our office know if you are willing to help out as a volunteer. I would like to see every parent or guardian make a pledged commitment to serve some volunteer hours in some capacity at our school this year.

I envision New Dimensions School as a vibrant, growing school that places emphasis on student's accepting responsibility for their learning. I see a school with active parent participation and support that encourages their children to become life-long learners.

We want to continue creating a strong, vibrant learning community, and that requires the commitment of each one of us! Let's work together to make this a landmark year in the lives of our children!

Larry Wilkerson
Director

What is a Charter School

Charter Schools provide parents choices in their children's education. Charter schools are free public schools, therefore, no tuition is charged. Enrollment is open to anyone who would like to attend. Children who live in one school district may attend a charter school in another school district. In the event classrooms are full, students will be placed on a waiting list and added to our enrollment in order of application. A lottery is in place when applications exceed our allotted numbers. Per pupil allocations of local, state and federal tax dollars are the primary funding source for charter schools and each charter school is operated by a private, nonprofit board of directors.

Mission

The mission of The New Dimensions School is to create learning environments and opportunities that support students' self-directed learning and love of learning. Our mission is accomplished by using students' interests, talents, and abilities as the building blocks for academic learning and achievement.

Foundations

Our school is built on four basic beliefs about students' learning:

- All students have interests and talents that form the foundation for meaningful academic achievement.
- Students are most successful in school when teachers and parents work together to help students learn how to learn.
- Students' learning is most successful when caring communities contribute to strong school/home/community relationships.
- Research findings on students' learning are the basis for school practices.

Board of Directors

Steve Moody, President

Bobbie McCombs, Vice President

Kim Kling, Treasurer

James Auton, Secretary

Susan McCann

Mary Louise McCombs

Laurie Robinson

The School Day

The school day begins at **8:00 a.m.** for all students. School dismisses at **2:30 p.m.** Students should arrive for class between **7:40 and 8:00 a.m.** and class officially begins at **8:00 a.m.** Because we want to allow teachers time to prepare for the day, please do not bring your child before **7:40 a.m.**

School Calendar is located on the last page of this handbook.

After School Program

The New Dimensions School operates an after school program. Hours of operation are **2:30 to 6:00 p.m.** For more information and an application, please call 437-5753.

Please Note: Any child not registered for After School Care, who is not picked up by 2:45p.m., will be required to pay an After School Care fee of \$10.00 per day.

Inclement Weather

The New Dimensions School will follow the Burke County Schools' Inclement Weather Policy. In general, we will close when the Burke County Schools close due to poor weather conditions. Consult the Burke County Public School's inclement weather hotline at 433-8047 for updates in case of severe weather.

Staying in Touch

One of the best ways that parents can help their children succeed in school is to be involved with their education. This starts with communicating *well* with your child's teacher. Good communication involves meeting with the teacher, being a positive partner in your child's learning, and keeping the lines of communication open throughout the year.

- 1. Meet school staff.** Go to the school's open house. Even though the time may be short, you can show your interest and support by introducing yourself and your child,

collecting information the school/teacher provides, and by signing up to volunteer for the school.

- 2. Go to parent-teacher meetings.** Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the course of the school year, but you can schedule a parent-teacher meeting through the school office if you need to share information about your child, or if you have questions or concerns.
- 3. Find the right time to talk to the teacher/school director.** If you are dropping your child off or picking your child up from school, you may run into your child's teacher or the school director and be tempted to discuss your child's progress. This is a good time to arrange an appointment with the teacher or school director. This is not the time for a meeting/discussion.
- 4. Write short notes.** If you want a quick response to a question, send a brief written note or an e-mail message to the teacher/director with your question clearly stated. Include your phone number and/or e-mail address. The director and teachers check their e-mail every day. Phone calls will be returned as promptly as possible. If you don't hear back in a few days, follow up with a phone message to the school.
- 5. Use email.** Email your child's teacher or the director. All staff emails begin with the initial of the first name, followed by their last name, and then newdimensionschool.org. eg. lwilkerson.newdimensionschool.org

NDS Administrative Office

Telephone: 828-437-5753 Fax: 828-437-2980

501 East Concord Street

Morganton, North Carolina 28655

www.newdimensionschool.org

Director

Larry Wilkerson, Ed.S. (lwilkerson@newdimensionschool.org)

Administrative Assistant

Donna Renn (drenn@newdimensionschool.org)

Exceptional Children's Coordinator

Stacie McPhail (smcphail@newdimensionschool.org)

Kindergarten

Jessica Mathis (jmathis@newdimensionschool.org)

1st Grade

Lauren Frisbee (lfrisbee@newdimensionschool.org)

2nd Grade

Mia Messina (mmessina@newdimensionschool.org)

3rd Grade

Kelley Stanton (kstanton@newdimensionschool.org)

4th Grade

Paula Cogdell (pcogdell@newdimensionschool.org)

5th Grade

Betsy Garst (bgarst@newdimensionschool.org)

Teacher Assistant

Jennifer Auton (jauton@newdimensionschool.org)

After School

Anne Stielow (astielow@newdimensionschool.org)

Our Approach to Learning

The New Dimensions School Curriculum Principles and Core Values

The New Dimensions School views competence and intelligence as multifaceted. The New Dimensions School staff considers all curriculum areas and learning opportunities as different ways for children to express competence. Nontraditional academic areas such as art are viewed as equally important as, for example, reading, as a context for academic achievement.

Children's self-directed engagement is viewed as the foundation for learning. The activities that make up the fabric of children's life are seen as the contexts for using interests in one area as the foundation for learning in other areas.

The New Dimensions School offers multiple entry points into the curriculum. Activity-rich learning opportunities are viewed as different pathways for children to enter into learning that is self-directed.

The New Dimensions School emphasizes curricular context. The New Dimensions School staff stimulates interests in making discoveries, constructing meaning, creating and testing new ideas, and reflecting on one's own abilities and accomplishments.

The New Dimensions School staff builds on children's assets and strengths. Identifying, acknowledging, building on, and celebrating students' assets and strengths are the heart and soul of The New Dimensions School curriculum. The belief that *all* children have assets and strengths as well as the capacity to become more competent is the cornerstone of this approach to learning.

The New Dimensions School gives teachers and students the license to learn. Learning by doing and learning to learn, are not only encouraged but are the measure of success *par excellence*. Teachers are encouraged to try new things, and students are encouraged to experiment, discover, explore, and learn to love learning.

The New Dimensions School redefines the meaning of gifted and talented. The New Dimensions School considers every child gifted and talented in some aspect or aspects of their lives. Discovering, celebrating, and building on these special abilities are what The New Dimensions School is all about.

NOTE: These principles and core values are adapted from and based on the successful work done by Project Spectrum at Harvard University.

- Chen, J. Q., Isberg, E., & Krechvsky, M. (Vol. Eds.). (1998) Project Zero frameworks for early childhood education: Vol. 2. Project Spectrum: Early learning activities. (H.Gardner, D. H. Feldman, & M. Krechevsky, Series Eds.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Chen, J. Q., Krechevsky, M., Viens, J., & Isberg, E. (Vol. Eds.). (1998). Project Zero frame-works for early childhood education: Vol. 1. building on children's strengths: The experience of Project Spectrum. (H. Gardner, D. H. Feldman, & M. Krechevsky, Series Eds.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Curriculum

The New Dimensions School adopted the **Core Knowledge** curriculum and put it into practice last year. This curriculum is based on some of the ideas presented by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. in his well-known books, **Cultural Literacy** and **What Every American Needs to Know**. **Core Knowledge** tries to develop cultural literacy by exposing students to a broad range of historical, scientific, and cultural topics. **Core Knowledge** develops familiarity with the traditions and knowledge commonly shared by educated citizens in a society. This curriculum eliminates many of the gaps and repetitions that frequently occur in a curriculum where textbooks and programs are selected at random. Our reading program consists of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program. Mathematic programs include the Saxon Math program along with the Week-by-Week Strategies. Together these are believed to build a strong literacy and mathematical foundation for each student. In conjunction with these programs, all classroom teachers follow the North Carolina standard course of study for all subject areas to insure the key concepts are taught at each grade level.

Enrichment Classes

At this time, we are in the process of finalizing our enrichment classes. We are looking at Spanish, music and art as possibilities to add to our curriculum.

Classroom Support

At the beginning of each year, parent(s) can sign up to be a classroom representative. Throughout the year, the parent rep may call to ask for assistance with testing, classroom/school activities, and field trips. Please sign-up to assist in your child's school year.

Documenting Student Success

The New Dimensions School follows a multifaceted approach to documenting student success. An extensive *Asset-Based Performance Portfolio* is compiled throughout the year to assess a student's growth. The portfolio includes several assessments, summaries, evaluations, and work samples from each student project. Parent-Teacher Conferences are held 4 times a year to review the students' portfolio.

Testing

Students at New Dimensions School follow the state of North Carolina testing requirements, which include but is not limited to, 3rd grade pre-test, 4th grade writing test, and End of Grade (EOG) tests in grades 3-5.

In addition to the state testing, New Dimensions conducts assessments on each child utilizing a nationally standardized test call the Metropolitan Achievement Test, in conjunction with that K-3rd grader students are screened using what is call the PALS (Phonemic Assessment of Literacy Skills).

School Policies

The New Dimensions School and Our Community

We expect children to be contributing members of both our school community and our community at large. Students will be expected to participate in the upkeep of their school by assuming responsibilities such as cleaning their classroom and supporting the school's recycling efforts. Children will be given the opportunity to take part in community service projects such as visiting nursing homes, preparing meals for local food programs/shelters, and more.

We believe that learning begins with the family. Parent involvement in the educational process is crucial in helping children learn. Parents will be asked to read to and with their children every day and to supervise homework when it is assigned. Parents are encouraged to maintain contact with their child's teacher. We invite parents to schedule appointments to talk with their child's teacher when needed. Regular Parent/Teacher conference dates will also be scheduled throughout the school year.

Drop-Off, Pickup Schedule

Parents are responsible for making certain that their children arrive and depart from school in a timely and orderly manner. Unless it is an emergency, parents must notify their child's teacher in writing if there will be a delay in picking up their child after class. Classes begin promptly at 8:00 a.m. and students should be picked up at 2:30 p.m... If the child is tardy or is being picked up early, the parent must sign the child in/out at the office.

Parents must complete pickup/drop-off forms for each student. These forms give teachers specific information about who has been given permission by the parent(s) to transport their

children. These driver-identification cards will include the driver's name and the signature of the child's parent. *To ensure the safety of our students, anyone other than a parent who is responsible for transporting a child must show appropriate identification to school staff before the child will be allowed to leave school grounds.*

Attendance/Tardiness

The New Dimensions School Board and the Director believe that regular and punctual attendance significantly affects the educational achievement and success of all students, at all grade levels. The primary responsibility for school attendance rests with students and their parents. Excessive absences create a disadvantage for the student and present a burden for the teachers. **We expect all of our students to be at school everyday and on time.**

Excessive unexcused absences will be addressed as followed:

1. After the third unexcused absence - a notice will be sent home and a parent conference will be requested.
2. Six unexcused Absences – the parents/guardian will be notified that they are in violation of the Compensatory Attendance Law and the matter will be directed to the school board.
3. After the tenth unexcused absence – the Director will have a conference with the parent and school board member(s) to determine the necessary action.

Excessive Unexcused tardiness will be addressed as followed:

1. After the third unexcused tardy – written notification from the Director
2. After the Sixth unexcused tardy - written notification to parent/guardian and forwarded to the school board and parent/guardian conference with Director to discuss the problem.
3. After the Tenth unexcused tardy – written notification and parent/guardian meeting with Director and School Board Member(s).

Positive Behavioral Support (PBS)/Discipline

The New Dimensions School staff is committed to providing school environments where every student can learn and grow successfully. Each person—**child and adult**—must be treated in ways that support his or her efforts to learn. The New Dimensions School supports children and their safety through redirection and collaboration. We believe children should be an integral part of understanding the choices available to them and that they should be empowered to make positive choices about respecting each other and our environment. We also believe that all ADULTS in the lives of children must be good role models. It is the expectation of the New Dimensions School Board and the Director that all ADULTS (i.e. school personnel, volunteers,

and our parents/guardians, family members) uphold the same standards that we are asking of our students, which is to be **Respectful, Responsible, Safe, Kind, and Good Learners**.

Our discipline guidelines will be that:

- Students are responsible for their actions. We encourage self-control in both speech and action.
- Students must observe the safety rules of the school for their own security, as well as the security of others.
- Students are expected to follow rules developed within each classroom.
- In the case of misbehavior, staff will redirect students to appropriate behavior and activities.
- Staff recognizes parents as the best resources to help form strategies toward achieving positive social interaction in their child's classroom.

Bullying

Bullying can profoundly affect the lives and school achievements of children. It is important for parents to understand the problem, to recognize signs of bullying and to let staff know if a child is either the victim of bullying or being a bully. Students may be unwilling to go to school, be missing possessions, become withdrawn, or have unexplained bruises or scratches.

What parents should do:

- Break the code of silence – If I child is being bullied, our staff needs to know about it.
- Bullying is against the rules and will not be tolerated.
- Encouraging Problem Solving - Parents and staff need to work together to model for students how to effectively and appropriately deal with conflict that show how to behave appropriately when we are upset.
- Active Listening - In order to understand what is happening, teacher and parents must engage in active listening and really listen to what is happening at school and discuss with students how to handle it.

Special Services

Support of Diversity

Each student in The New Dimensions School is expected to be a positive, contributing member of his or her class, demonstrating respect for individual differences, the environment,

and the community; creating a supportive and nurturing classroom where children can involve themselves fully in the learning process; and embracing individual and cultural diversity.

Support for Students with Special Needs

The New Dimensions School follows an open-admissions policy and does not discriminate against any prospective student on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or disability. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are written cooperatively by a team including parents and staff to assure that the educational needs of students with disabilities are well met. The school contracts for the provision of any needed supports such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Health and Wellness

Nutrition and Lunch

The New Dimensions School is committed to promoting good health and has approved a Wellness Policy. We feel that nutritious food benefits children's health and positively influences children's energy while at school. We request that parents reinforce an appreciation of good nutrition for their child by providing a nutritious breakfast and by selecting a healthy choice for lunch and snack. ***Copies of the wellness policy are available upon request.

We may ask that parents volunteer to provide a nutritious snack for their child's class on some occasions. Parents and teachers will decide on a process at the beginning of the school year whereby snacks will be provided.

Physical Education

Along with our regular curriculum, we will be offering Physical Education once again this year. Our plan is to have organized physical education classes two days per week. Recess periods with physical activity are also mandated for each class.

In Case of Illness

Parents are encouraged to keep sick children at home until all signs and symptoms of illness cease (including a fever of 101°F or above, nausea, diarrhea, etc.). Parents are asked to

call if your child will be absent. When your child returns to school please send in a written note explaining the reason for his/her absence.

Administering Medications

I. Prescription Medications

For the school to administer any medication a form must be completed in the office along with the following procedures:

If school personnel must administer a physician-prescribed medication during the school day, the following conditions must be met:

- A signed note from the physician or parent, including specific directions for administration of the medication, must be submitted to the office.
- A bottle with the pharmacist's label designating the patient's name, name of drug, instructions for administration, and name of ordering physician must be submitted to the office.
- A record will be kept of all children receiving medication. This record will be kept in a locked file at the school.
- A note regarding the medication will be attached to the child's health card.

II. Non-Prescription Medications

School personnel may administer nonprescription medicine to students only if:

- The teacher/office receives a note from the parent /guardian or doctor identifying the medication and the reason for taking it.
- A record will be kept of all children receiving nonprescription medication, and a note regarding the medication will be attached to the child's health card.

Smoke Free And Drug Free Environment

100% Tobacco Free School Policy. The New Dimensions School wishes to promote a healthy learning and working environment for students and staff. The school believes that the use of tobacco products on school property is detrimental to the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors. The school also recognizes that employees and visitors serve as role models for students. Therefore, and pursuant to G.S. 115C-407 Policy Prohibiting Tobacco Use in School

Buildings and the federal Pro-Children's Act, Title X of Public Law 103-227 and the No Child Left Behind Act, all tobacco use is prohibited on school grounds, in school buildings and facilities, on school property, or at school-related field trips, or school-sponsored events.

No student, staff member or school visitor is permitted to use any tobacco products, illegal drugs, or alcohol of any type at any time, including non-school hours, in any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by The New Dimensions School; on any grounds or property, including playgrounds and parking lots, used by the school, or at any school-sponsored or school-related event on or off-campus.

All employees, volunteers, contractors or other persons performing services on behalf of the school are prohibited from using tobacco products, illegal drugs, or alcohol of any type at any time while on duty or in the presence of students, either on or off school grounds. Further, no student is permitted to possess a tobacco product, illegal drug, or alcohol of any type while in any school building, on school grounds or property, or at any school-sponsored or school-related event or at any other time students are under the authority of school personnel.

More Important Information

Volunteers

The New Dimensions School is looking for individuals who would like to dedicate their time to assist in various needed areas in the school. Volunteers are asked to contact their child's teacher to schedule volunteer times. We have a need for, lunch room help, drivers and chaperones for field trips and classroom assistance.

Starting this year, all parent(s)/guardians are asked to commit to a partnership agreement with the school, where each parent/guardian will volunteer a minimum of two hours a month. Refer to the Parent Network section of the handbook for specific details. Please contact the office if you or someone you know is interested in long term substituting.

PTO

The New Dimensions PTO's mission is to enhance the educational and cultural opportunities for New Dimensions students by supporting and providing supplemental educational experiences in areas including but not exclusive to physical education, arts and music. All parents, guardians, teachers and school staff are encouraged to be an active part of their Parent Teacher Organization. The current officers and their contact information are as follows:

Cindi Bradshaw, President	433-5187
Carmen Tyler, Vice-President	448-2110
Deena Hunt, Treasurer	584-4478
Lynn Clark, Secretary	433-5383
Olga Propst, Secretary	584-4596