

PARENT HANDBOOK

**CHIME Charter Elementary School**

2007-2008

CHIME INSTITUTE

in collaboration with

California State University, Northridge  
And  
The Los Angeles Unified School District

# CHIME Charter Elementary School Parent Handbook

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## CHIME Charter Elementary School Directory 2007-2008

School Office Number.....(818) 346-5100

Fax .....(818) 346-5120

Address: 19722 Collier St. Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Principal of CHIME Charter.....Julie Fabrocini

Office Manager.....Cathy Doyle

IEP Coordinator.....Candi Sullivan

Financial Manager.....Peggy Berrenson

Instructional Support Staff:

Deanne Torvinen, School Psychologist/Counselor

Jaye Weiner, Art and Library Teacher

Kelly O'Brien, Music Teacher

Dylan Grattidge, Technology Lab

Parent Association, Cindy Petrak & Mary Herbert, Co-Chairs

Room Parent Coordinator: Claudia Ortopan

Volunteer Coordinator: Angie Forshaw

Chairman, Board of Directors: Patrick Smith

### Note:

The CHIME Institute does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, religion, color, or national origin.

The CHIME Institute is a private nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax deductible.

If you have questions, which are not answered here, please call the Charter Elementary School Office at 818-346-5100 or see our web site at [www.chimeinsitute.org](http://www.chimeinsitute.org).

# **CHIME Charter Elementary School**

## **Holidays for 2007-2008 School Year**

### **First 2007 Trimester:**

First Day of Fall Trimester - August 27  
Labor Day - September 3  
Yom Kippur - October 2  
Veteran's Day - November 10  
Thanksgiving Day - November 22 - 24  
Last Day of First Trimester-December 20

### **Second 2007 Trimester:**

First Day of Winter Trimester - January 8  
Pupil Free Day - January 12  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - January 15  
Pupil Free Day-February 16  
Presidents' Day - February 19  
Last Day of Second Trimester - March 30

### **Third 2007 Trimester:**

First Day of Third Trimester - April 16  
Pupil Free Day - May 25  
Memorial Day - May 28  
Last Day of Third Trimester - June 21

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information about the Chime Charter Elementary School for parents whose children attend the School. It contains important information about the School, as well as policies and procedures that are designed to ensure that the School functions as an effective *learning community*. Thus, it is important that all members of the learning community - students, teachers, parents, staff, and administrators - understand the expectations of each.

Please read this handbook carefully and refer to it throughout the school year. If you have questions about anything in the Handbook, or if something is not covered in the Handbook, please ask your child's teacher or to the School Principal.

Please remember that as a new school, we are in the process of developing this Handbook as well as the policies and procedures described in it. We will be asking you for feedback about the Handbook so that we can improve it next year.

### **Charter Schools**

Charter schools are public schools that have a specific mission or purpose. Individuals or groups of parents, professionals, or community members can create charter schools. These schools can be independent from normal school district and state regulations, although they must follow all laws such as those prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, creed or disability. In exchange for increased flexibility and autonomy, charter schools must show that their students meet high academic standards. All charter schools in California must participate in statewide testing for academic achievement.

As public schools, charter schools may not charge tuition. They receive the same funding as other public schools, from the state and federal governments.

Each charter school has a charter petition, which describes the school's goals, curriculum, governance structure, employee qualifications and benefits, and other characteristics of the school. The charter petition functions as a contract between the school and the school district, which approves it. Charters are granted for a period of 5 years, after which they must be reviewed for renewal.

### **Mission of the CHIME Charter School**

The mission of the CHIME Charter Elementary School is to create an inclusive learning community where all students, parents, and professionals appreciate and value diversity in all its forms. It will educate students to become conscientious, responsible citizens, whereby they assume the role of life-long learners as they reflect upon and contribute to the cultural and civic life of the community. All students, kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, will be supported to achieve high standards in both their academic and personal development through an educational program based in constructivist approaches, and designed to engage students in problem solving activities at levels appropriate to their individual needs. In collaboration with California State University, Northridge (CSUN) and

the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), CHIME Charter Elementary School will serve as a laboratory in which faculty and students investigate how children learn, and as a resource on inclusive education for educators, parents, policy makers and others. It will serve as a demonstration site for student teachers, supervisors, practicing educators, policy makers and parents.

## **History**

The CHIME Institute for Children with Special Needs has operated a preschool inclusion program since 1990, in collaboration with the College of Education and the Child and Family Studies Laboratory at California State University Northridge. Parents of children who attended the CHIME preschool program provided the initiative for the CHIME Charter School. When their children left the CHIME preschool program, they could not find comparable inclusive programs in the community at the elementary level. They urged the CHIME Institute and the College of Education at CSUN to start a school that would be a model of inclusive education for elementary age students.

Professionals, including CSUN faculty and public school teachers and administrators, felt that such a school could demonstrate best practices in inclusive education for University students (including future teachers) and for educators in the local schools. From May 2000 through August 2001, a group of more than 50 parents, educators and community members worked together to create the CHIME Charter Elementary School. The Charter Petition was approved by the Los Angeles Unified School District on July 24, 2001.

## **Themes at the CHIME Charter Elementary School**

### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education means that *all* children are welcomed as members of the learning community and learn together in the same classrooms. Inclusive schools and classrooms welcome children of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds, income levels, and abilities. Inclusive education recognizes that *every* child is special, and that all have talents as well as unique learning styles. Many children are gifted in some areas, yet have difficulty with others. For example, a child may be a gifted artist, but have difficulty learning to read. The CHIME Charter Elementary School will provide the services and support that every child needs to achieve his or her potential, and to reach high academic standards.

Inclusive education benefits *all* children in the classroom. Research shows that students with disabilities are happier, feel more accepted as part of the group and better self-esteem. Students without disabilities develop greater sensitivity and are more accepting of people who are different from them. Research has also found that students with and without disabilities fare at least as well *academically* in inclusive settings as they do in segregated settings.

### **Diversity**

Children are diverse in learning styles, language and cultural backgrounds, developmental levels, social and emotional understandings, and learning abilities. Our goal is to respond in ways that honor the richness of this diversity. This means understanding instruction from the point of view of our students and using approaches that will help them be part of the academic and social life of the classroom and school community. Additionally,

it means that students, teachers, and parents respect and appreciate diversity, realizing that everyone contributes in unique ways.

### **Multilingual Perspectives**

An understanding and appreciation of students' home languages and cultures is an essential part of the CHIME approach. Creating a learning environment where all language learners are accepted and valued is crucial to successful instruction, and builds students' positive self-concepts. Parents are encouraged to continue to use their home language with their children, both in conversations and in daily reading.

The CHIME Charter Elementary School wishes to offer the opportunity for all students to become bilingual, and has as a goal that each child attains the degree of bilingualism of which he or she is capable. There are several ways that this theme may be implemented depending upon the students who enroll in the School and their parents' preferences. ASL is the adopted second language of CHIME Charter Elementary School. All Children receive in class instruction to develop ASL proficiency on a weekly basis.

### **Two-Way Immersion and English-As-A-Second Language Programs**

The CHIME Charter Elementary School will adopt one or both of the following approaches to teaching students whose primary language is not English.

**ESL:** Children who are English language learners (those whose first language is not English and who are not yet proficient in English) will receive daily instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL). This ESL program will provide a rich learning environment that fosters development of oral and written English. At the same time, it will promote a belief in accepting, affirming, and accommodating the home language and culture of all students.

**Two-Way Immersion:** In a two-way immersion program, children who speak two different primary languages (English and another language) are placed together in a bilingual classroom to learn each other's languages and work academically in both languages. The two-way immersion program will be offered when enough children speaking the same language (other than English) enroll.

### **Integrated Coursework**

CHIME Charter Elementary will integrate content from different curriculum areas. Integrated coursework helps students see how knowledge is connected, so that they can move away from viewing learning as the accumulation of isolated facts. Integration also helps develop life-long learning habits, in that it encourages students to look for meaning in everyday events, and to see that new information from other areas can be useful. Integration also offers the opportunity for students to apply their strengths in different areas of the curriculum.

An example of integration of curricular goals might be between language arts and mathematics, where students examine kinds of questions by collecting data on question usage in their own classroom. For example, how often do teachers ask Yes-No questions? Who asks more questions—students or teachers? Do all questions reverse the subject and verb? In this example, students would study

language arts by learning about questions. At the same time, they would learn math while they collect and analyze data, using math to gain a deeper understanding of questions.

### **Technology**

The CHIME Charter Elementary School will produce students who are capable information technology users. We will create students who are information seekers, analyzers, evaluators, problem solvers, and decision makers. Creative and effective uses of technology will be interwoven throughout the content areas so that not only will students become effective communicators, collaborators, publishers, and producers, they will also have the tools to be informed, responsible, and contributing citizens as they grow into adulthood.

### **Deep Learning**

The CHIME Charter Elementary School resolves to take the time that it requires for students to "go deep" with their learning. Our goal is not to teach a list of skills "a mile wide and an inch deep." Rather, the curriculum will be organized around central questions and themes which will encourage students to "uncover" the curriculum, taking the time required to construct meaning. At the same time, teachers adapt instruction for individual needs.

As with an integrated curriculum, the idea of going deep will provide a model for life-long learning habits. Studying in depth reinforces our goal of helping the students know what it means to be a reflective learner, of what it takes to truly understand something. Taking the time that one needs to understand in depth is to be expected and honored. Slowing down enough to be thoughtful workers and careful thinkers is a curricular goal, as well as a hallmark of an educated perspective.

### **Social Learning and Positive Behavioral Support**

A strong social community among students, parents, and professionals is integral to the CHIME Charter Elementary School. When students feel safe, welcome and important to the community, they can operate at their maximum potential. This sense of well being also allows students to actively participate in the life of the school community, by seeing themselves as part of something larger.

Because children are learning to understand their roles as social beings, the program will present positive behavioral support for them as they grow. Social skills instruction will be embedded in all areas of the curriculum. The goal is to help students to understand themselves as members of a community, to develop respect for others, to appreciate, to express their ideas, and to solve problems with others through positive, honest and direct interaction.

To establish a sense of community students will share their work with each other and with the community at large. For example, the Charter School will frequently hold exhibitions of student artwork, and will develop a library of materials written by students.

Positive behavior support programs emphasize respecting and valuing the learner; building new behaviors and skills to replace 'problem behavior'. The staff will use a "Gentle Teaching Sequence": Ignore/interrupt; Redirect and Reward. Teaching, encouraging,

reminding and consistently reinforcing expected behavior will create a positive climate and less need for dealing with rule violations.

## Chapter 2

### DAILY OPERATIONS

#### Calendar and Schedule

##### Calendar

The CHIME Charter Elementary School follows a single-track calendar. This calendar provides an opportunity for teachers to participate in staff development, and for children to participate in extended enrichment activities.

**The calendar for 2007-2008 is as follows:**

Opening day	8/28/06
On-Track:	8/28/06-12/20/06
Off-Track:	12/21/06-1/5/07
On-Track:	1/08/07-3/30/07
Off-Track:	4/02/07-4/13/07
On-Track:	4/16/07-6/21/07

##### Daily Schedule

7:30 - 8:30	Teacher/staff planning, collaboration, and professional development. Playground supervision will be provided for students arriving during this time
9:00 - 2:00	Instructional day for kindergarten only
8:30 - 2:40	Instructional day for grades 1-5
9:50 - 10:10	Recess
12:05 - 12:50	Lunch
2:50 - 5:30	After-school program

##### Minimum Day Schedules:

Dismissal on minimum days is at 12:30 or reverse minimum day is at 9:40. Minimum days allow for early dismissal to let teachers participate in professional development activities. Minimum day schedules will be provided at the beginning of each trimester.

#### Starting School

##### First Day Admittance

The first day of school can be stressful for both parent and students. We want to recognize and support the emotional needs of each child, but at the same time support their

independence and successful adjustment to school. We encourage you to do everything possible to help your child feel comfortable in his/her new environment, but also to recognize that sometimes it's best to leave and allow the teacher and others students to begin the inclusion process. If you have concerns about your child's adjustment on the first day, please discuss them with your child's teacher so that a plan may be implemented to facilitate the transition.

The School must receive the following information by the first day of school:

**Emergency Cards:**

Every family **MUST** fill out a new emergency card every school year before classes begin. These must be turned in to the office. **Please fill out a new emergency card immediately if any of the following information changes:**

- Home address
- Home, work and cell/mobile telephone numbers
- Doctor's phone number
- Names and phone numbers of people who are authorized to be emergency in case of emergency or to pick up your child after school

**Immunization Form**

The school **MUST** have immunization records on all students including kindergartners. New students must turn this form into the office before being admitted to class.

**Meal Application:**

Every family **MUST** fill out a meal application before beginning classes and turn this into the office. CHIME does not have a federally funded lunch program. **HOWEVER, this form is required by each family for grant demographics regardless of qualification.** This information is handled confidentially.

**Parent Service Commitment Form**

**Daily Arrival and Departure**

**Arrival**

**There is no supervision before 7:30 a.m.** Students can arrive after 7:30 a.m. Morning care is currently free.

**Collier St parking lot: park and walk** your child into school after 8:30 (**NO dropping off at this location**). For safety reasons, only two gates are open for arrival. These gates are located at **Jumilla from 7:30 - 8:30** and **Corbin** (for kindergarten only - no parking at this location) **from 8:45 - 9:05**. Do not walk your child in at the Jumilla gate, this is only for drive thru/drop off. After 8:30 if you are going to accompany your child, park and walk thru the main entrance on Collier.

If you must park in the morning, please do so with caution; parking is permitted only in the front parking lot on Collier Street during school hours. Enter the lot on Collier Street and exit the lot on to Jumilla Avenue. **Please do not park on the west side of Jumilla Avenue.**

**Do not use Collier Street (off of Oakdale Avenue),** as this is a narrow street and can be dangerous during school hours. Our neighbors have asked for so little from us and have been very supportive. We appreciate your willingness to honor their requests.

### **Kindergarten Arrival**

The Corbin gate will be open from 8:45 to 9:05 for Kindergartners to enter the school grounds. An adult will monitor the gate during that time period. The gate will be locked at 9:05, after that time you must enter the school from the main office.

### **Late Arrival**

If your child arrives late (after 8:30 AM), please accompany him/her to the office to sign in. This is necessary to assure that we have accurate attendance records, as well as to assure the children's safety.

### **Dismissal**

The instructional day ends at 2:00 for children in Kindergarten and 2:40 for all others. Parents of Kindergartners can pick up their child at the Corbin gate, which will be opened at 2:00. Please wait for your children in the lunch area, not outside the classroom doors, as this may be distracting for students. The After School Program begins at 3:00 and continues until 5:30. The After School Program has its own sign-in and sign-out policy. Each family is required to fill out an After School Agreement in order for their children to participate.

**In cases of emergency, during the school day your child will only be released into the custody of those people whom you have previously identified on the emergency card. Persons not identified on the emergency card can pick up a child only if the parent has sent a hand written note to the school notifying the school of this person's identity.**

### **Leaving the School During the Day**

If you must pick up your child early for an appointment during the day, please send a note to the classroom teacher or notify the office. The note should state the reason for leaving early. **Please keep doctor and dental appointments during school hours to a minimum.**

Parents must sign a logbook in the office, releasing the school from responsibility. **Parents may not enter the classroom to pick up a student without an early leave notice from the office.**

### **Visiting the School**

**All parents and other visitors must sign in at the office and wear a badge that is issued by the office.** This is necessary to assure a safe environment. Observations will be scheduled with the teacher, in advance, for twenty minute observation time period.

## **Health and Absenteeism**

### **Illness**

Please call the office before **9:00 a.m.** when your child is ill. For your child's protection and the protection of others please do not send your child to school sick. If your child complains of feeling sick at school, depending on the severity, you may be contacted to pick him/her up. If possible, please try to get a copy of the homework your child missed during his/her absence.

### **Absenteeism**

Please read the school calendar carefully and plan your vacations around it. Regular attendance at school is necessary for children to progress academically, as well as to be part of the social community of the school.

In addition, the school receives funds based on the number of days that children attend school. Regular attendance of all children will help to assure that the School receives the funds needed to provide a high quality instructional program. Of course, children who are ill should be kept at home. However, we encourage you to do everything possible to assure good attendance.

When returning from an absence, children must bring a note indicating the reason for the absence. The state of California requires a written excuse signed by the parent/legal guardian for readmission to class. Please include date and reason of absence in your note.

### **Medication**

A doctor's medical authorization **will be required** for all medical protocols, including medications to be administered at school. Medications will be stored and administered in the school office.

### **Lunch and Snacks**

Please send a healthy snack each day. There will be an opportunity for children to eat snacks in the morning, and after school if they stay for the after school program. The following are suggested healthy snacks: fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, crackers, cheese, bread, fruit juice, milk, water, beans, pretzels, corn nuts, granola bars, nuts, and seeds without shells. **Please do not bring soda or candy, these items will be taken away from your child and returned at the end of the day.**

There is a voluntary for-a-fee lunch program available on a monthly basis.

### **After School Program**

A for fee after school program will be available from 2:45 - 5:30 on a scheduled daily or drop in basis. Due to liability issues, your child **must be enrolled prior to attending.** Completion of membership forms and the **credit/debit authorization agreement must be on file before admittance** to the program. Charge is \$3.00 per hour.

## **Off-Track Enrichment Programs**

Enrichment programs will be offered during the summer. These will be at a cost to be determined. Parents with special interests or talents, who are interested in offering enrichment classes during the off-track periods, are encouraged to contact Parent Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Birthdays**

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday during school, please contact your child's teacher in advance and plan a convenient time. Please keep the Nutrition Policy in mind when planning your celebration in school. **Unless all children in the class are invited to your child's party, invitations should not be given out in school.**

## **Homework Policy**

Homework will be assigned 4 days a week, Monday through Thursday.

Each child should attempt to complete homework independently, but may need assistance. If your child needs assistance, please do not do it for him/her. Please guide your child, allowing him/her the opportunity to do their own work.

If your child's homework is consistently too difficult, please let the teacher know. Homework should be challenging, but not impossible!

Please have the following materials available at home for homework assignments:

sharp pencils	lined paper
crayons and/or markers	ruler
glue	dictionary
scissors	tape

## **Ways to Support and Monitor Homework**

By looking over your child's schoolwork, you can learn about what is happening at school and spend quality time with your child. Here are some ways to make the most of this experience:

- Establish a regular quiet place and time for homework. This helps children to develop good study habits that can last a lifetime.
- Sit down with your child and give him/her your full attention. Turn off the television and do not allow interruptions during this special time.
- Ask your child to tell you about the work as s/he shows it to you. Ask your child to point out his/her favorite and least liked kinds of schoolwork. Ask what was most and least difficult.
- Do not expect your child's work to be perfect. Making errors is part of learning. If you emphasize your child's errors, he/she may discard papers that are less than perfect, and be reluctant to share work with you.

- Let your child choose a few samples of his/her schoolwork to display on a bulletin board or the refrigerator, or to paste in a scrapbook. An inexpensive photo album works well for this.
- If you have faraway friends and relatives, have your child select a sample of his/her schoolwork to mail to them. Sending samples of schoolwork is a quick and easy way to stay in touch with relatives. And it helps your child take pride in his/her work.

## **Dress Code**

All students attending the CHIME Charter Elementary School will be expected to follow the School dress code. A common dress code promotes a team spirit and the idea that the mind and body are more important than clothing. Additionally, the dress code supports a safe school environment by helping staff to identify children who are - and are not -- not part of the school community, both on-campus and on field trips.

### **Boys:**

- Solid colors only
- Blue (any shade including denim is acceptable) or beige pants (long or short)
- White, red, beige or blue shirt or the School logo shirt, which will be available at cost (short or long sleeves, sleeveless and tank tops are acceptable)
- Closed-toe shoes

### **Girls:**

- Solid colors only
- Blue (any shade including denim is acceptable) or beige pants (long or short), skirt or jumper
- White, red, beige or blue shirt or the School logo shirt, which will be available at cost (short or long sleeves, sleeveless and tank tops are acceptable; no spaghetti straps)
- Closed-toe shoes

Students who do not adhere to the Dress Code will receive a "Notice to Support the Dress Code Policy."

Accommodations will be made as appropriate for students with special needs. See the School Principal if you believe your child needs an accommodation.

## Chapter 3

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement and collaboration are central to the mission of the CHIME Charter Elementary School. This chapter describes types of parent involvement, as well as processes for home-school communication and collaboration.

#### **Types of Parent Involvement**

Parents may participate in several different ways, depending upon their preferences, strengths and resources. The following sections are adapted from the CHIME Charter Elementary School Petition.

#### **Understanding and Supporting the School Mission**

*All parents are expected to support the School mission.*

The development of an inclusive learning community requires the support of parents. Therefore, it is essential that all parents fully understand and are committed to supporting the mission, vision, and goals of the school. These are some ways that parents can learn about an support the School mission:

- Read and honor the Home-School Agreement which describes family and school responsibilities including the obligation to embrace the school's vision of an inclusive and fully accessible learning community;
- Read this Parent Handbook, which provides information about the school's mission, vision, goals and educational program, as well as parent responsibilities;
- Participate in American Sign Language classes; and
- Attend workshops and seminars to learn more about inclusive and accessible education, individual differences represented by students in the school, educational approaches used in the classrooms, and strategies for supporting children's learning at home and in the community.

#### **Involvement in Their Children's Educational Programs**

*All parents are expected to be involved in their children's educational programs.*

The CHIME Charter Elementary School supports a family centered approach, which honors parents' priorities, concerns, and goals for their children. Parents are valued members of the educational team, contributing knowledge about their individual children's characteristics, learning styles, needs, and preferences. Ongoing communication between home and school, as well as a respectful and collaborative approach, helps to assure meaningful participation by families. Such participation will be supported through such strategies as:

- Parent involvement in identifying goals and priorities for their children's Individual Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Instructional Plan (IIP). These plans are based on an assessment of each child's level of functioning and learning styles, and developed through collaboration between teachers, staff, and when appropriate, the student;
- Regular summary notes on children's performance, written by staff and sent home with each child in the Home-School Communication Book, with the opportunity for parents to respond and ask questions.
- Regular parent-teacher-student conferences to assess each child's progress and develop or modify goals;
- Parent observation and/or volunteering in their children's classrooms;
- Collaboration with staff when problems or concerns arise.

### **Involvement in School Decision Making**

Parents are partners in the governance of the school. Parents will be involved in decision-making in regard to the overall school program, and are encouraged to participate in the following ways:

- Parent representation on the Board of Directors and on each governance Committee.

### **Serving as Resources to the School**

Parents will be expected to share their time and expertise to support the Charter School. Each parent will be asked to commit a minimum of 8 hours per year, either by volunteering in the classroom or by contributing in some other way. Examples of parent volunteer opportunities include the following:

- Participation on the Board of Directors or one of the governance Committees;
- Providing assistance in the classroom, in after school programs, or for morning or afternoon supervision;
- Providing enrichment experiences in various subject areas including music, drama, computers, story telling, or gardening;
- Sharing information about their cultural background and experience with children and staff;
- Working on fund raising projects; and
- Facilitating community service or service learning projects.

### **Home/School Communication**

The CHIME Charter School has a strong commitment to parent/teacher collaboration. Parents are encouraged to stay in contact with their child(ren)'s teacher(s) throughout the year.

### **Communication with Teachers**

The school will provide each child with a "Home-School Communication Adgenda" which is to be sent back and forth between home and school each day to document homework. Parents are encouraged to write questions and comments in this book. These books will be reviewed by classroom staff each day, and teachers will respond to any questions or concerns immediately.

Teachers and classroom staff will also use these books to write notes to parents about children's progress, successes and challenges, on a regular basis.

Parents may also contact teachers by calling the school office and leaving a message or making an appointment for a conference.

### **Communication from the Office**

Essential school-wide information will be sent to parents via students through a **weekly Monday flyer distribution**. Please ask your child for this packet if they do not voluntarily hand it to you.

### **Communication with the Office**

Please call the School office if you need to speak with the Principal or Office Manager. If someone is not available to speak with you immediately, please leave a message and someone will return your call. If your conversation will require a long time, please schedule an appointment.

### **Communication with Children During the Day**

If you need to communicate with your child during school, call the office and leave a message for your child. That message will be given to your child. A child will be called to the phone only in an emergency. Please make all car-pool and after school pick up arrangements with your child in advance.

### **Team Meetings**

Team meetings will be held to discuss your child's progress and are available throughout the school year. These meetings can be scheduled in advance with the teacher.

The following are suggestions for preparing for team meeting. These suggestions will help you to get the most out of these experiences:

- Think about your questions in advance, and write them down.
- Think about your goals and priorities for your child, and write them down.
- Think about issues or concerns that you want to share with the teacher. It is helpful for a teacher to know what is influencing a child's attitude, behavior or performance.
- Take notes during the meeting.

## Parents in the Classroom

All parents are encouraged to participate in their children's classrooms as volunteers.

### Volunteering

The teacher will coordinate and schedule all parent volunteers in the classrooms. To become a classroom volunteer, you must follow these procedures:

- Contact the teacher by calling the School Office, and indicate you're preferred days and times to volunteer.
- Complete required orientation sessions with Ms. Fabrocini prior to service.
- To assure student health and safety, **all classroom volunteers will be required to have TB tests and fingerprint/background checks.**
- Before entering the classroom, you must sign in at the office and obtain an identification tag. Display this tag at all times.
- In the classroom, please follow directions of the teacher and instructional assistant. Please ask questions if anything is unclear to you.

Education is one of the most important missions of CHIME Charter. The school's success depends upon the quality and commitment of all adults, school personnel to our volunteers. We are all models to the student body. We thank all volunteer parents who give their time to our students. They are very important contributors to our student's education. We would appreciate the volunteer parents to follow these guidelines:

- **Use Positive Behavior Support.**
- **Respect confidential information.**
- **Do not discuss students with anyone.**
- **Know and support the school rules and procedures.**
- **Model peaceful solutions and encourage cooperation at all levels.**

### Parent Education Nights

Parent meetings will be held each month to provide information on specific topics lead by CSUN faculty and other experts. If you have ideas or suggestions for these meetings, please contact your child's teacher or the school principal.

### CHIME Charter Elementary as a Laboratory School

The CHIME Charter Elementary School is a national model of best practices in inclusive and accessible education. It is being operated by the CHIME Institute in collaboration with California State University, Northridge and the Los Angeles Unified School District, and will serve as a laboratory and demonstration site for preparing teachers and other educators.

The partnership with the University and School District will have many benefits for students at the CHIME Charter Elementary School:

- University faculty will be involved in school governance and design of the curriculum, and they will be available to consult with classroom teachers and other staff.

- As a laboratory school, CHIME Charter Elementary has attracted highly qualified, fully credentialed teachers and other staff, who wish to have an affiliation with the University.
- As a partner with LAUSD, CHIME Charter Elementary will have the support of related services staff including speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists.
- University students from many fields, including education, child development, music, physical education, and the arts, will participate in the classrooms. In addition to providing extra help for classroom staff, these students will enrich the program by bringing in new ideas and expertise.
- Both University and School District personnel will assist with grant writing and development efforts, to obtain resources that will support the School's mission.

Some aspects of a laboratory school require special understanding by parents. A laboratory school serves as a place where University students can learn and practice their skills as educators, with modeling and guidance of experienced teachers and staff. It is important to remember that these students are *learning*. While they should be (and usually are) well prepared for their assignments, they will not perform perfectly or demonstrate best practice in every instance. Parents should be assured however, that teachers and staff have the welfare of the children as their top priority and will always assure that children are safe and well served. Moreover, most parents and teachers find that University students are a great help in the classroom, and that they often contribute by bringing in current practices that are informative for the teachers and staff, and beneficial to the children.

**Parents are urged to communicate directly with their child(ren)'s teacher(s) if they have questions about University students.** The University students themselves may be unsure of how to answer questions or may lack the background knowledge needed to respond to parent concerns.

## Chapter 4

### SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

At the CHIME Charter Elementary School, "Governance" is viewed as an opportunity to achieve the vision of an inclusive and accessible learning community by using collaborative decision-making processes that involve the entire school community. The CHIME Charter Elementary School will be governed in a manner that ensures all staff and parents share decision-making responsibility and that will assure local school control and accountability.

#### **The Governing Board**

The governing board of the CHIME Charter Elementary School is the Board of Directors of the CHIME Institute for Children with Special Needs. The CHIME Institute for Children with Special Needs (hereafter referred to as "The CHIME Institute") is organized as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit corporation whose purpose is to establish and maintain programs for children with special needs and their families in community settings.

The CHIME Institute Board of Directors governs the CHIME Charter Elementary School according to its bylaws. The Board of Directors' major roles and responsibilities include establishing and approving all major educational and operational policies, approving all major contracts, approving the school's annual budget, overseeing the school's fiscal affairs, and selecting and evaluating the administrative staff.

The CHIME Institute operates in a partnership with California State University, Northridge (CSUN). The CHIME Charter Elementary School operates as a laboratory for preparing teachers and other school personnel and for research on relevant educational issues. For this reason, CSUN faculty is represented on the Board of Directors and on governance committees, along with parents, Charter Elementary school staff, and community members.

#### **Committees**

Three committees assist the Board of Directors in governing the school: The Administration Committee, Curriculum and Instruction Committee, and Partnerships Committee.

All committees will have parent, teacher/staff and CSUN faculty representatives. The chairperson of each committee is responsible for convening meetings at times when most, if not all, the members of the committee can meet for conducting the committee meetings, and for reporting to the Principal of CHIME Charter Elementary. Decisions and outcomes resulting from school committee meetings will be shared with parents and staff via newsletters and school community meetings.

Members of the committees will be chosen by the Board of Directors through a recruitment process to determine applicants' interests and areas of expertise. Representatives will be chosen to reflect the student and family population. Two members of each Committee, including the committee chair, are chosen from the members of the CHIME Institute Board of Directors. Committee members have staggered terms to assure continuity from year to year.

Each committee has 7 voting members. Members of each committee include:

- Three parents, of whom at least one is a parent of a child who is deaf or has a disability;
- Three teachers or professional staff members in the CHIME Charter Elementary School;
- One CSUN faculty member.

All committee meetings are open to the public, and parents are encouraged to attend, even if they are not voting members.

Roles and responsibilities of the committees are described in the following section.

#### **Administration Committee:**

The Administration Committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding budget, personnel and facilities. This Committee will identify priorities involving the use of discretionary funds. It will oversee the financial administration of the school, contracts and grants, internal controls, material management and monies for curriculum development and instruction. Specific responsibilities of this Committee will include the following:

- Determines personnel needs;
- Designs staff evaluation process;
- Recruits and assists with selecting new staff members;
- Develops and monitors a substitute list;
- Develops yearly budget plan based on school-wide survey results and current needs;
- Allocates discretionary funds;
- Monitors student attendance;
- Adjusts expenditures depending on availability of funds;
- Assists principal in writing grant proposals, monitoring grant funds, and distribution of grant funds;
- Recommends school calendar to governing board.

#### **Curriculum and Instruction Committee:**

The Curriculum and Instruction Committee will make recommendations to the Board, and provide leadership within the School regarding the curriculum, instructional program, assessment of educational outcomes, and program evaluation. Specific responsibilities will include the following:

- Researches curriculum and instructional methodologies and emerging best practices;
- Reviews and adopts instructional materials and textbooks;
- Develops measures and procedures for outcomes assessment, in relation to school goals;
- Aligns assessment measures with curriculum;
- Develops report cards;
- Provides guidance to the school principal in such areas as: Organization of classes for each school year; establishment of procedures and timelines; the reorganization of classes as needed;
- Develops school-wide themes and projects, and schedules school-wide events in collaboration with the Partnerships Committee;
- Identifies needs for staff development; and
- Develops and monitors the school-wide positive behavioral support plan.

#### **Partnerships Committee:**

The Partnerships Committee will oversee internal and external partnerships including staff development; parent involvement, collaboration and education; community involvement; and University involvement and collaboration. Specific tasks may include but not be limited to the following:

- Develops and monitors the implementation of the Home-School Contract;
- Coordinates community activities and parent forums;
- Coordinates participation of business partners and student mentors;
- Prepares parents to assume Committee responsibilities;
- Organizes and monitors parents' volunteer hours;
- Organizes and promotes fund raising efforts and distribution of profits;
- Coordinates extra-curricular activities;
- Schedules and coordinates picture day, year book, and holiday programs;
- Schedules and coordinates school-wide service learning and community service activities; and
- Schedules and coordinates staff development and parent education activities.

## Appendix B

# Overview of the CHIME Institute

### History

The CHIME Charter Elementary School was founded in 2001 as an outgrowth of programs developed by the CHIME Institute for Children with Special Needs (hereafter referred to as "CHIME Institute").

What is now the CHIME Institute started as a demonstration project funded by the U.S. Department of Education at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). The demonstration project, which was known as the Children's Center Handicapped Integration Model Educational (CHIME) Project, developed a model for providing special educational services to young children with special needs at an existing child care/child development program. The CHIME Project was housed at the Associated Students/CSUN Children's Center and funded for a three-year period, from 1987 through 1990. To continue providing services using local sources of funds, the CHIME Institute for Children with Special Needs was established as a private, nonprofit organization (501c3) in August 1990. The acronym was changed to Community Honoring Inclusive Model Education (CHIME). The CHIME Institute, while operating as an independent nonprofit organization, had close ties to CSUN faculty and has served as a laboratory for preparing CSUN students in special education, child development, and other fields.

Also in 1990, the Preschool Inclusion program was expanded, and then relocated to what is now the CSUN Child and Family Studies Center (CFSC) (also known as the Preschool Lab). A few years later, an Infant/Toddler Program was established to extend the same philosophy and quality programs to families of very young children who had disabilities or were at risk of developing disabilities.

Over the years, parents of children in CHIME Institute programs, as well as parents of typically developing children who attended the CFSC, have asked us to expand the program through fifth grade and beyond. Parents have felt that the CHIME and CFSC programs provided high quality education that supported their children's development, as well as a nurturing environment that fosters self esteem and good social skills. The inclusion program was seen as a benefit to both children with disabilities and children who were typically developing. Parents of children with special needs felt that their children were fully accepted as members of the learning community, and that they learned by interacting with the typically developing children who had more advanced development. Parents of typically developing children reported that their children were more empathetic and accepting of others with special needs - and that they saw these characteristics generalizing to the home and community settings, and lasting well into their children's later years. Both groups said that they could not find comparable programs anywhere in the San Fernando Valley.

In the spring of 2000, the CHIME Institute Board of Directors responded to a plea by a group of parents to extend CHIME programs through the elementary level. A Steering Committee was formed to investigate the possibility of starting a fully inclusive charter school. Based upon the Steering Committee's work, the Board of Directors approved the concept in the spring of 2000. The Steering Committee assisted Dr. Claire Cavallaro, President of the CHIME Institute, in writing a proposal for a Charter School Planning Grant,

which was approved and granted in October 2000. The Planning Grant was used to support the work of several planning committees, which developed the Charter Petition. More than 50 individuals, including parents, CSUN faculty and administrators, and public school teachers and administrators, participated in these planning groups. The planning and preparation of the Charter Petition was a collaborative effort of many individuals who shared a vision of inclusive and accessible education.

### **CHIME Institute Programs**

The CHIME Institute offers three programs, designed to meet the needs of children and their families at different stages of development:

The CHIME Infant/Toddler Program (CHIP) offers classroom-based and home-based programs in which specialists in early intervention, physical therapy, and speech and language therapy work in a coordinated fashion with parents and children. A special childcare option provides services to children whose parents work full time. CHIP currently serves approximately 40 families of children who have disabilities or are at high risk of developing disabilities later in life. The CHIP operates at two sites; at the CHIME Charter School site and at the Vaughn Charter School in Sylmar. For information regarding the CHIME Infant/Toddler Program, please call the CHIME Institute at (818) 677-4979 or see our website at [www.chimeinstitute.org](http://www.chimeinstitute.org).

The CHIME Preschool/Pre-K Inclusion Program enables children ages 3 through 6 years, who have significant disabilities, to attend regular preschool and child care programs along with typically developing children. This program provides special education, speech and language therapy, modified physical education consultation, and physical therapy consultation in the context of the regular classroom. This program operates as a nonpublic agency at the CSUN Child and Family Studies Laboratory, and is separate from the Charter School. For information regarding the CHIME Preschool program, please call the CHIME Institute at (818) 677-4979 or see our website at [www.chimeinstitute.org](http://www.chimeinstitute.org).

The CHIME Charter Elementary School provides a model of inclusive education for children with and without disabilities.

The CHIME Charter Middle School provides a model of inclusive education serving students 6 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade will open September 2003.

### **CHIME as a National Model**

CHIME Institute programs serve as national models, implementing the highest standards in early childhood education. The CHIME Institute programs are unique in their provision of transdisciplinary, developmentally appropriate programs and support for inclusion in general early childhood education and child care settings. Highly qualified staff demonstrates best practices and serve as mentors to professionals-in-training in early intervention, early childhood special education and related fields. A large number of

university students observe and participate in CHIME programs as part of their training. Tours are conducted regularly for school district personnel, staff from other early intervention programs, parents, and other interested individuals. Practices developed at CHIME have been disseminated through presentations at professional conferences and institutes, and journal publications.

## **CHIME Institute Board of Directors**

To contact the Board of Directors, please call the Chime Institute Office at  
(818) 677-4979

Mr. Patrick Smith, Parent and Chairman of the Board

Dr. Claire Cavallaro, President

Ms. Catherine Agnew, Community Member

Ms. Elaine Berke, Community Member

Mr. Mike Williams, Parent

Dr. David Kretchmer, Professor, Elementary Education, CSUN

Dr. Michele Haney, Director, Infant/Toddler Program and Vice President

Ms. Barbara Hill, Director, Child and Family Studies Lab

Ms. Cathy Koch, Parent and Secretary

Mr. Sam Berkarian Parent

Dr. Deborah Heisley Professor, Marketing, CSUN

Appendix C

**CHIME Charter's School Rules**

**We are here and ready.**

**We are a community.**

**We learn as much as we can.**

**We are safe.**

**We are respectful.**

**2007-2008**

