



Rolling Hills Public Charter School

- Environmental Literacy & Living Classroom Initiative (ELLCI)



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Why should Rolling Hills develop an environmental education program?

- Specified in our charter as one of our innovative features
- Outdoor activities allow students another opportunity to experience science as a relevant, hands-on aspect of their daily lives
- Relevant, meaningful national and local topic
- Extensive community resources for support
- Helps to build a unique identity for our school and sets us apart from other Harbor schools
- Research shows this is an effective vehicle for teaching



What the research* says ...

- Environmental education (EE) holds great promise for improving the quality of learning in America's classrooms
- A nationwide study found that EE raises standardized test scores (across all subjects) and reduces discipline and classroom management problems
- Teachers report increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and greater pride and ownership in accomplishments
- EE can help produce motivated students, high performing lifelong learners, effective future workers and problem-solvers, thoughtful community leaders and individuals who care about the people, creatures and places that surround them
- EE enhances critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective decision-making skills and teaches individuals to weigh various sides of environmental issues to make informed and responsible decisions

* Closing the Achievement Gap: Using the Environment as an Integrating Context for Learning (Lieberman & Hoody)



Rolling Hills charter text:

“Environmental Education. Rolling Hills Public Charter School emphasizes responsibility for the health of our cities and our planet. Learners will participate in hands-on projects intended to form an awareness of the critical relationships between the built and natural environments. Learners will study and debate real-life issues such as coping with diminishing resources. Consistent participation in community projects will show learners how they can affect the future quality of our cities and health of our green spaces.”

ELLCI is designed to connect students with the natural world and our surrounding communities. The plan is a framework to guide our school in integrating place-based and service learning that is supported by community partners and will ensure that all students graduate as environmentally-literate citizens.



What ELLCI means ...

- Using the incredible resources of the Boise Foothills, the Boise River Valley and our “living” classroom as a medium for learning
- Weaving environmental education opportunities into the core curriculum where appropriate
- Partnering with local businesses and organizations to provide additional learning experiences
- Providing an opportunity for parents, students and faculty to work together to build this unique program and learning environment.

This is not about advocating a particular viewpoint or course of action, it's about using the environment as a medium for learning!



Vision

To create a generation of environmentally literate young men and women that possess the awareness, attitudes, knowledge, skills and motivation needed to address complex, multifaceted problems

Mission

To provide our students with multiple experiences that impart the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in problem solving, to take action to sustain and improve the environment and to analyze real-life issues that affect Idaho and our surrounding communities



The three pillars of ELLCI:

(Environmental Literacy & Living Classroom Initiative)

- Rolling Hills “Living” Classroom
- Community Connections
- Outdoor Learning Expeditions



Rolling Hills “Living” Classroom

- Raised planting areas
- Shaded outdoor meeting area for classes and labs
- Permanent greenhouse(s)
- Compost area
- Pond area
- Weather station



Community Connections

- Bringing in local resources/speakers for learning enrichment
- Partnering with local businesses who share our passion for education and can assist with in-kind goods/services
- Identifying service learning projects with an emphasis on environmental stewardship to fulfill community needs



Outdoor Learning Expeditions

- Attending local programs that correlate with our mission (all grades)
- Attending extended science programs such as MOSS, Teton Outdoor School, and OMSI (middle school)
- Participating in relevant “field” work in the local community



Progress so far ...

1. Strong support for ELLCI from school board, principal and staff
2. ELLCI team has developed preliminary education framework and will serve as a resource and central management hub
3. Construction has begun on living classroom area, raised beds are in (thanks to local Eagle Scouts!) and grants have been written for parts of phase II.
4. Additional funding being sought through grant writing and community partners



Next steps ...

1. Seek out training and professional development opportunities for parents and teachers
2. Recruit parents to serve as 'Environmental Ambassadors' in their child's class
3. Establish local community connections
4. Pursue funding through grant writing and local donations
5. Develop website to communicate ELLCI volunteer opportunities, current needs and program progress
6. Complete Phase II of our "Living Classroom" area



How you can help ...

- Volunteer to become an “Environmental Ambassador” for your child’s class
- Become certified as a Junior Master Gardener Teacher/Leader (registration required – contact us ASAP if you are interested)
2 day program: 10/8 from 4:30 – 9:15 and 10/9 from 8:30 – 4:00
- Watch for the launch of the ELLCI website and monitor for current ELLCI needs and volunteer and training opportunities
- Check with your employer to see if they have a Volunteer Incentive Program or Matching Gift Program that might benefit our school
- Join the ELLCI team! The only qualification needed is a passion for the program and a strong desire to make a difference



Thank you...

for working together to make

**Rolling Hills Public
Charter School**

the best school in the
Treasure Valley!