

SIERRA EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING SCHOOL

A Public Charter School of the Tahoe-Truckee Unified School District

Family Information Nights

Information about enrolling students entering K-6th grades for the 2011/2012 school year.
Attendance to at least *one* information night is required for enrollment.

You will learn about:

School Philosophy and Expeditionary Learning
Curriculum Program
Schedule and General School Information

Date	Time	Address
Tuesday, Feb 15th	6 PM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road (Sierra Mountain Community Education Center) Portable buildings M4
Thursday, March 3rd	6 PM	Family Resource Center 11695 Donner Pass Road Truckee
Wednesday March 9 th	6:30 PM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road (Sierra Mountain Community Education Center) Portable buildings M4
Saturday, March 12th	10 AM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road (Sierra Mountain Community Education Center) Portable buildings M4
Monday, March 14th	6 PM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road (Sierra Mountain Community Education Center) Portable buildings M4

NOTE: Meetings will be presented in both English and Spanish.

About Sierra Expeditionary Learning School:

- Multi-grade classes
- Tuition-free public school
- Hands-on Expeditionary Learning curriculum
- K-6th grade, expanding to 8th grade over next 2 years
- 40% enrollment reserved for socio-economically disadvantaged
- Follows state and district standards and participates in state-wide assessments

For more information, visit www.TruckeeCharterSchool.org or email dmanahan@TruckeeCharterSchool.org

Sierra Expeditionary Learning School Family Night Orientation Plan

Dates, Times, Locations of Presentations

Tuesday, Feb 15th	6 PM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road <i>(Sierra Mountain Community Education Center)</i> Portable buildings M4
Thursday, March 3rd	6 PM	Family Resource Center 11695 Donner Pass Road Truckee
Wednesday March 9 th	6:30 PM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road <i>(Sierra Mountain Community Education Center)</i> Portable buildings M4
Saturday, March 12th	10 AM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road <i>(Sierra Mountain Community Education Center)</i> Portable buildings M4
Monday, March 14th	6 PM	Sierra Expeditionary Learning School 11603 Donner Pass Road <i>(Sierra Mountain Community Education Center)</i> Portable buildings M4

Important Dates

- **March 22nd, 2011** - Lottery Application must be submitted/postmarked by this date. Faxes will not be accepted. It is ok to drop off at the school in M3 during the hours of 8:30am – 3:30pm Monday through Friday.
- **March 29th, 2011 at 6pm** - Public Lottery will take place at Sierra Expeditionary Learning School in M4

Marketing Plan to Notify Attendees of Meetings

The strategy to get in front of the community in the most cost effective way; posting on our website, having E newsletter updates to our both of our lists; the current school community and those who have signed up for more information through our website and previous information nights. Also communicating with the public through public relations and articles in the local publications (Sierra Sun and Moonshine Ink). Announcements on 101.5 if free. Elizabeth will communicate to ELAC.

Hang up flyers at the following locations –

Kid Zone Museum
FRC - <i>do they have a newsletter?</i>
SELS
Sierra Nevada Children's Services
Stepp/Next Stepp program
Donner Trail
Latino Advisory Council
State Preschool
Head Start
For Goodness Sake
New Moon
Tahoe Donner Club House

Starbucks
Truckee Bagels
Wild Cherry
Other schools?

Event Timeline

- Hour Prior** Set-up of A/V, chairs, refreshments, handouts
- Event Time** Guests arrive and sign in, hand out paper work
- 15 minutes after guests arrive** Welcome and Presentation begins.
- 30 minute presentation** Q & A
- Hour after event time** Close

Audio/ Visual Needs

- Screen, Projector, Microphone, Laptop and PA system for all locations
- Screen** 1 (english) and 2 (spanish)-
- Projector** 1 –
- 2nd Projector for Spanish -**
- Laptop** w/ loaded presentation–
- Cables** - Extension cords and projector cables will be kept in event box.
- Spanish Translation Equipment –**

Event Staffing and Staff Arrival time

Tuesday, Feb 15th	SELS - M4	4:30 PM (if possible)	Presenter – Greeter – Sign In – Audio Visual – Spanish Translation -
Thursday, March 3rd	FRC	5 PM	Presenter – Greeter – Sign In – Audio Visual – Spanish Translation -
Wednesday March 9 th	SELS – M4	5 PM	
Saturday, March 12th	SELS – M4	5 PM	Presenter – Greeter – Sign In – Audio Visual – Spanish Translation -
Monday, March 14th	SELS – M4	10 am	Presenter – Greeter – Sign In – Audio Visual – Spanish Translation -
Tuesday, March 29 th	SELS – M4	5 PM	Greeter Lottery Person Type on Screen

Collateral material (all materials on white to save \$)

Sign in forms – all applicants must sign at the event
Application English - 1 pager
Application Spanish – 1 pager
Free lunch qualification paperwork (for interested parties) – 40 copies
FAQ – direct people to SELS Handbook on website for review
Lottery Application policies
Expeditionary Learning materials - if available

Sign in Process

Greeters should give the "Handout/FAQ" sheet to people as they come in.
When people sign in give them one copy of the Lottery Application Policies and the Lottery Application (not stapled). **Be sure to write the number from the sign in sheet in the "Office Use Only" box on the application.** If they need more than one Lottery App, then fill out 2 spaces on the sign in sheet and put the corresponding number on each Lottery App. (This ensures that the name on the Application matches the name on the sign in sheet when remitted).
Free and Reduced Lunch Apps are handed out as needed only.

Signage

4 small logo signs for doors, and podium.

Refreshments

Coffee - Mandarin oranges

Questions for board –

What do we do with late applications?

What do we do if we do not have enough applications?

If people apply after lottery, do they have to meet with David?

Visit lottery policies.

What do we say regarding additional K1?

6th Grade sports and buses?

SIERRA EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING SCHOOL

P.O. Box 2179 • Truckee, CA 96160
www.truckeecharterschool.org

Lottery Application Policies/Enrollment Information

Lottery Process:

Prior to applying to Sierra Expeditionary Learning School, attendance by at least one parent at a Family Information Night is required. Students are eligible for Kindergarten if they are age 5 on or before December 2, 2010. The following steps must be completed for the application to be processed:

- Attending and signing in at a Family Information Night during which the academic program, SELS philosophy, mission and lottery procedures will be explained in further detail.
- Formally applying for a place in the lottery by submitting a completed application by **March 18th, 2011**.
- If necessary, a completed application for Free and Reduced Lunch must be submitted with the lottery application.

Important Dates:

- March 18th, 2011 - Lottery Application must be submitted/postmarked by this date.
- March 29th, 2011 - Public Lottery will take place at Sierra Expeditionary Learning School.

Lottery and Admissions Procedure:

Sierra Expeditionary Learning School desires that its student population be reflective of the entire Tahoe/Truckee community. To that end, the school will actively outreach to recruit a student population from the entire area served by TTUSD, including both North Lake Tahoe and Truckee; and attempts to strike a socioeconomic balance among the student population consistent with the overall population of students in the district, as reflected in the yearly California Basic Educational Data System ("CBEDS") report for TTUSD.

For each school year, each grade level will be assigned a certain percentage of spaces for students who are economically disadvantaged (as defined by those students' demonstrated qualification for the Free and Reduced Price Meal program). The percentage of spaces designated for students who are economically disadvantaged for each year will be based upon the TTUSD student population as a whole, as reflected in the most recent available CBEDS report, and may be rounded up or down by one space to achieve a whole number of student spaces for each grade.

If the number of applications for admission to a grade exceeds the number of available slots in that grade, the spaces in that grade will be filled by two random lotteries. Those not chosen for admission will be placed on a ranked waiting list for their category (low socioeconomic status or general) based upon the order in which they were drawn. The ranked waiting lists will be used to fill future vacancies in each category. If there are no students on the waiting list for a category with a vacancy, the first student on the waiting list for the other category will be given the space. The lotteries will be held in a public setting, and the following admissions preferences will be given:

Lottery 1: Economically Disadvantaged Student—Pool of applicants limited to students who are economically disadvantaged, defined as students demonstrating their qualification for the Free-Reduced Priced Meal program.

1. In the first two years, the children of founding members.
2. Siblings of students already attending the school.
3. Children of on-site Sierra Expeditionary Learning School personnel.
4. Students residing within the territorial jurisdiction of TTUSD (as set forth in Education Code section 47605(d)(2)(b).)
5. All others.

Lottery 2: General—All other applicants.

1. In the first two years, the children of founding members.
2. Siblings of students already attending the school.
3. Children of on-site Sierra Expeditionary Learning School personnel.
4. Students residing within the territorial jurisdiction of TTUSD (as set forth in Education Code section 47605(d)(2)(b).)
5. All others.

After the lottery, families will receive their official enrollment forms and will be informed of the enrollment process, they will be notified of their status on the list and advised that they must notify the Director within 2 weeks if they wish to enroll their student in that slot. At that time they should provide updated information (address, telephone number, etc.). If they do not respond within the 2-week window, they will be moved to the bottom of the waiting list and the next student will be notified. If the number of applications does not exceed the number of spaces in the school, there will be no lottery, and all students who submitted a complete application will be enrolled.

Currently enrolled students will not participate in the random drawing, as they are automatically reserved a space for the following year.

Throughout the school year, when an opening becomes available, the next student on the waiting list for the appropriate grade will be notified of his or her status and given one week to respond with the intent to fill the slot. After that time, a student who does not respond will be moved to the bottom of the list and the next student will be notified.

Prior to matriculation, parents and students must sign a form indicating that they have read and understand the philosophy, mission, handbooks, and policies of Sierra Expeditionary Learning School and that they accept the responsibility for proper maintenance of school equipment and materials.

SIERRA

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING SCHOOL

The **Design Principles** below express the philosophy of education and core values of Expeditionary Learning.

1. THE PRIMACY OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. THE HAVING OF WONDERFUL IDEAS

Teaching in Expeditionary Learning schools fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an Expeditionary Learning school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. EMPATHY AND CARING

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust. Learning groups are small in Expeditionary Learning schools, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child. Older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

5. SUCCESS AND FAILURE

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. COLLABORATION AND COMPETITION

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students investigate and value their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures. Schools and learning groups are heterogeneous.

8. THE NATURAL WORLD

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. SOLITUDE AND REFLECTION

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need time to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

10. SERVICE AND COMPASSION

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others, and one of an Expeditionary Learning school's primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **What is a charter school?**

Charter schools are tuition-free schools that are open to the public, participate in state tests, employ credentialed teachers, and do not discriminate. Charter schools are often not bound by the constraints of school districts rules or union regulations regarding tenure, assignments, and hours. This freedom enables a charter to control its resources more efficiently and direct its energies to the needs of its population.

2. **What are we proposing to do?**

Sierra Expeditionary Learning School (SELS) is independent charter under the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District. SELS currently serves 64 students in K-5th grades and will expand over 4 years to serve 200 K-8 students. SELS has been working in partnership with the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District to offer a quality alternative educational choice for families and to ensure positive outcomes for students.

3. **Will the Sierra Expeditionary Learning School further drain resources from TTUSD's already stretched budget?**

Charter schools are funded through the state and federal government and can also apply for grants and corporate underwriting. In fact, charter schools are eligible for a \$500,000 start-up grant through the U.S. Department of Education. TTUSD receives annual state revenue of approximately \$7,879 per pupil. Sierra Expeditionary Learning School receives \$4,806 per pupil from TTUSD. TTUSD retains the additional \$3,073 per pupil to help defer the district's overhead. Additionally, Sierra Expeditionary Learning School pays 1-3% of its revenue to TTUSD for oversight responsibilities. We also contract on a fee-for-service basis with TTUSD for English Language Learner Support, Special Education services and potentially transportation, which help to offset the budgetary impact on the district.

4. **How does the Sierra Expeditionary Learning School propose to effectively serve English Language Learners?**

We honor, respect, and value diversity and have designed our curriculum to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. During our first year of operation, the Sierra Expeditionary Learning School EL identified students participates in a Structured English Immersion Program. In this program, EL students are taught in English with support in the student's primary language. All students will participate in Spanish Language instruction. Since Spanish is our dominant second language in Truckee, it will be an excellent opportunity for native Spanish Speakers to model learning another language and culture to native English Speakers.

The Sierra Expeditionary Learning School meets all requirements of federal and state law to provide equal access to the curriculum for English Language Learners. The school is dedicated to providing EL students with an exceptional education and transitioning them into English proficiency as soon as possible. However, the school also recognizes the cultures, customs, and languages of all its students through the school's core curriculum as it focuses on building lifelong learners and community engagement.

5. **What is Expeditionary Learning and why is different than what is being offered at TTUSD currently?**

Expeditionary Learning Schools (ELS) is a national, nonprofit organization that provides an effective way for schools to educate children K-12. Launched in 1993, ELS has endeavored not only to create good schools, but schools that are more adventurous and

rigorous than the norm. The ELS approach holds that teaching and learning should be active and challenging; unique to ELS, teachers involve students in learning through rigorous academic content and service to the community, which are embedded in *learning expeditions*. Learning expeditions are long-term, interdisciplinary, "real world" investigations by teachers and students of compelling subjects, which culminate in public presentations. Teachers receive intensive instruction in formulating curriculum around learning expeditions, as well as active teaching practices that foster student success and build positive school cultures.

Expeditionary Learning is based on five core practices. These core practices work in concert and support of one another to promote high achievement through active learning, character growth, and teamwork.

The 5 core practices emphasized by Expeditionary Learning

1. **Learning Expeditions:** These challenging, interdisciplinary, real-world projects and in-depth studies act as the primary curriculum units in Expeditionary Learning schools. Learning Expeditions support critical literacy and address central academic standards of content, while promoting character development and fostering a service ethic.
2. **Active Pedagogy:** In Expeditionary Learning schools, teachers use active pedagogy to help students become active and collaborative learners: to make connections, to find patterns, to see events from different perspectives, to experiment, to go beyond the information given, and to develop empathy and compassion for events, people, and subjects.
3. **School Culture and Character:** Expeditionary Learning builds shared beliefs, traditions, and rituals in order to create a school culture which is characterized by a climate of physical and emotional safety, a sense of adventure, an ethic of service and responsibility, and a commitment to high quality work.
4. **Leadership and School Improvement:** Leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools create a professional community that focuses on curriculum and instruction as the primary vehicles for improving student achievement and school culture.
5. **School Structures:** Expeditionary Learning schools use longer and more flexible schedule blocks, common planning time, heterogeneous groupings, and/or looping to ensure student success.

Expeditionary Learning achieves success in these Core Practice areas by providing schools with an extensive professional development program. Over a multi-year period, school faculties and administrators are offered a coherent, demanding, and highly regarded program of professional development to implement the model and to realize significant improvement in student learning and character development. For more information, visit www.elschools.org.

6. **I have heard that charter school teachers do not need to be part of the union and as a result can be subject to unfair treatment. Is this true?** A charter school enjoys more staffing autonomy and curricular freedom than a district, allowing it to implement innovat-

ive concepts and applications which enable the school to educate, change, and grow in response to students' needs and best interests. This autonomy has been shown to lead to high job satisfaction among charter school teachers. Sierra Expeditionary Learning School teachers receive a competitive salary and benefits comparable to TTUSD employees. Sierra Expeditionary Learning School teachers are not governed by the existing contract between TTEA and TTUSD, but are able to join a collective bargaining unit if they choose.

7. I have heard that charter schools haven't worked very well in the past in our community. What is different for this proposed Charter?

The Sierra Expeditionary Learning School is intent on starting small and staying small so that we can remain focused on the goal of providing our community with an accountable educational alternative. In addition to collaborating with TTUSD throughout the entire planning phase, we have chosen a curriculum that has been nationally recognized as an innovative, research-based, school improvement model which has been credited with producing high performing public charter schools.

8. Does Sierra Expeditionary Learning School have transportation to and from the school?

SELS is located at the Sierra Mountain Education Center and is on the morning and afternoon TTUSD bus routes and is available to all Truckee families.

9. What is the approval process for the Sierra Expeditionary Learning School?

A charter petition must be authorized by a local, county, or state school board. The petitioners (the founding group of parents) have presented the SELS charter petition to the Tahoe Truckee Unified School District. The petitioners expect to receive a decision from the district in early March.

10. How do I enroll my student in Sierra Expeditionary Learning School?

Admission to Sierra Expeditionary Learning School for the 2011/12 school year will be open to any student who will be entering Kindergarten through 6th grade. Applications will be available in late February and early March at our Orientation Nights. Enrollment will be by lottery at the end of March 2011.

11. Do charter school teachers have to be credentialed?

Sierra Expeditionary Learning School core teaching educators are required to hold appropriate California teaching certificates, permits or documents issued by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, including CLAD certification. In keeping true to our mission, we seek to provide exceptional instruction for our students. We employ staff that have knowledge or expertise in the guiding philosophy of the school and who support the principles of Expeditionary Learning.

12. Is the Sierra Expeditionary Learning School responsible for providing special education services to its students?

Sierra Expeditionary Learning School complies with all applicable state and federal laws in serving students with disabilities, including but not limited to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act ("Section 504"), the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA").

Additional Information

For more Information and to stay informed, visit www.TruckeeCharterSchool.org.