

Total Alternative Education for ages 5-18

- FAMILY REINTEGRATION PROGRAM
- BUILDING COMMUNITY
- INDIVIDUAL CARE
- ADVISING GROUPS

*Self-Determination + Collective Effort
Freedom + Responsibility + Self-Discipline
Academic Preparation + Survival Skills*



2559 and 2561 'B' STREET
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92102
HOURS: 9AM - 3PM TEL. (714) 231-8651

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Exploring Family School (E.F.S.) is a private, non-profit, non-graded, alternative community school for students between five and eighteen years of age. We are registered as such by the State of California. E.F.S. offers a valid high school diploma and for those who do not wish to fulfill the requirements for such a diploma it offers a "Certificate of Completion" in one of a number of non-academic areas in which a student may wish to concentrate.

Hopefully, this brochure will answer some other questions you may have. For further information, please call the School during office hours:

(714) - 231-8651

9 A.M. - 3 P.M.



Q. How did E.F.S. get started?

A. E.F.S. was founded in 1969 by a group of students, parents, and teachers who felt a need for an alternative to impersonal, competitive, mass education.

Q. In what ways is E.F.S. an alternative?

A. In just about every way. Here are some examples.

1. Our teaching/learning process is continually refined to meet individual needs, and we find this is best accomplished through cooperative efforts -- as opposed to the competitive style characteristic of mass education.
2. The School is run, at all levels, through the joint effort of students, parents, and staff.
3. Family involvement is one of the cornerstones of our educational philosophy.
4. In addition to academic subjects, we view as basic the skills of self-awareness, interpersonal communication, and group interaction.
5. Equally basic to our educational process is a sensitive understanding of, and response to, the social and political realities of the world we live in.

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Q. What about these social and political realities?

A. E.F.S. was founded during the social upheaval of the Sixties by people who took active part in this upheaval -- when outcries against war and imperialism, and the rebellion of oppressed minorities, women, and youth pointed to a general need for social change. Thus, from the very beginning, E.F.S. has been committed to a vision of a world in which no person, community, or nation shall exploit another -- economically, socially, or in any other way -- a commitment which involves daily head-on encounter with all manifestations of racism, sexism, and the other forms of oppression which operate in our society, in us, within and outside E.F.S.

Q. Is this consistent with personal freedom and freedom of choice?

A. At E.F.S. personal freedom and freedom of choice are concrete goals to be pursued. As abstract ideals, they can easily become the freedoms of the strong to oppress the weak, of the greedy to exploit the generous, and so on. Therefore, at E.F.S. we see any person's freedom as limited at the point at which it encroaches upon the freedom of others, at which it tends to subvert the safety and goals of E.F.S. and, of course, whenever our resources are too limited to meet the choices the person would like to make.

F R E E D O M A N D R E S P O N S I B I L I T Y

Q. Is freedom at E.F.S., then, defined only by what it is not?

A. No! But it is learned concretely through interaction with others, whose need for freedom, dignity, and growth must be equally respected.

Q. Are you saying that a student can do anything he or she wants, as long as it doesn't hurt others?

A. Yes and no. Students are strongly encouraged and helped to make their own decisions about study programs, interaction with others, behavior in groups, and so on. The more responsibility a student shows in making these decisions, the less responsibility the staff and other students need to take for him or her.

This responsibility involves a recognition of the available choices, of one's own needs as well as the needs of others, of the graduation requirements, of the goals of E.F.S., etc. An increase in a student's ability and willingness to take such responsibility for herself or himself is an important index of growth.

Beyond this, students begin to feel responsible for E.F.S. as a whole, and become involved in decision-making at the level of the Board of Directors, the various working committees of the Board, and a variety of special projects and activities. (It is noteworthy that the above also applies, with only minor modifications, to our staff and to the other members of the E.F.S. community.)

RESPONSIBILITY / PERSONAL GROWTH

Q. How does this constant interplay between personal freedom and its limits affect students?

A. It affects everybody at E.F.S. This is how people learn to be self-directed within the common purpose of a group; self-determined, but in a cooperative setting; self-knowing, self-reliant, self-respecting, self-governing, self-disciplined -- to the extent to which E.F.S. has succeeded in imparting its values. This kind of learning is a long-term endeavor, and we have not always succeeded. But each person's progress is a yardstick of our collective growth, and by this yardstick, E.F.S. has grown a lot in the last few years.





Q. What happens if a student just won't "buy" your approach?

A. Like a person, a school that tries to be everything to everybody ends up being of little value to anybody. E.F.S. has its own character, philosophy, goals and methods. They are all subject to improvement through the many avenues of involvement and input available to all members of the E.F.S. community; but not through being ignored or violated.

We do not expect a student to change overnight. We are ready for a long, patient effort, and a lot of hard work with the student and his or her family. But sometimes, after trying very hard, we are forced to recognize that our resources (human, material, or both) are simply not adequate to the needs of a particular student or family. When a student leaves E.F.S. for this reason, the decision is usually mutual and, we all hope, in the best interest of the student. Even then, most people recognize that E.F.S. has done all it could to offer the student the best education possible.

THE CONTRACT SYSTEM

Q. How do people at E.F.S. know what is expected of them?

A. E.F.S. operates under a Contract System. There are contracts between students and teachers, teachers and E.F.S., E.F.S. and the family, group contracts, individual contracts, and so on. A contract at E.F.S. is a written statement of aspirations and goals regarding an activity undertaken jointly by two or more individuals or groups, and a commitment to try to live up to these aspirations and goals.

For example, a student may design a contract specifying his or her expected achievement in a given class (related to the class outline prepared by the instructor), but may also be a party to a collective class contract in which the goals and objectives of the class as a whole are specified.

A contract may be renegotiated at reasonable intervals to correspond more closely to the changing capacities, and even goals, of those involved. Persistent difficulties of any kind are usually dealt with by means of probationary contracts, which specify activities for a probationary period of specific length and the possible results of the various degrees to which the probationary contract has been fulfilled. Here Advising Groups play a significant role.

Q. What are the Advising Groups?

A. Every E.F.S. student is in an advising group, which is essentially a peer group supervised by a member of the core staff. In these groups, which meet for an hour every school day, students discuss common concerns, share experiences, resolve conflicts, seek help, help one another, and learn the art of constructive criticism and self-criticism.

An advising group is also where the student gets help from the advisor in constructing a best possible class schedule for the term, and where other school-related problems get worked out. Generally, it is a training ground for effective interpersonal communication, and a daily stimulus to the student's personal growth.



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CURRICULUM

Q. Can you describe your curriculum?

A. The E.F.S. Universe of Learning Curriculum comprises five general areas, and is augmented by Special Studies. The five areas are: Basic Skills, The Present, Our Heritage, The Physical Universe, and Vocations/Professions/Apprenticeships. Basic Skills fall into three categories: Cultural (The Three R's, The Three N's, Language, Art, etc.); Social (Communications, Interpersonal Relations, etc.); and Physical (Health, Physical Education, etc.). The Present includes areas such as government, economics, geography, and so on. Our Heritage concerns the history of peoples and nations, our spiritual heritage, and our biological heritage. The Physical Universe includes physics, chemistry, astronomy, ecology, and so on. Finally, Vocations/Professions/Apprenticeships is an area of study for older students who are ready to consider realistically the various work and learning possibilities the future may offer.

A variety of programs fall under Special Studies, and include such popular projects as the Multi-Media Production, Oral History, Poetry Workshops, and so on. As a result of hard work, and in recognition of our accomplishments, last year E.F.S. was awarded a poet-in-residence award by the California Arts Council, and another poet working with our language program from the "Poets-in-the-Schools" project of the National Endowment for the Arts. E.F.S. also serves as the non-profit aegis for The Feminist Poetry & Graphics Center and its publication, The Greater Golden Hill Poetry Express.

OUR STAFF



Q. What kind of staff do you have?

A. Our Core Staff practice what they preach. In their effort to work cooperatively while maintaining the highest standards of quality in their work, they have developed themselves into a team with a great capacity for sustained effort and creative innovation. They teach, and also share administrative responsibilities; they are the students' advisors, and are also vitally involved in family contacts and recruitment. Each has a primary area of responsibility, but is ready and able to take over from another staff member if need be. At periodic staff training sessions and other "professional growth" activities, the Core Staff share their concerns, plans, and skills; deepen the understanding and knowledge they need in their work; and further advance the growth of the team as a whole, and of one another as persons.

In their efforts the Core Staff are aided by paid part-time auxiliary staff, volunteers from colleges and the community, and many of our parents, guardians, and students who have committed themselves to more than just the minimum involvement with E.F.S.

THE
E.F.S.
GOVERNMENT

Q. How is E.F.S. governed?

- A. The daily activities of the School are conducted within the framework of policies set by the E.F.S. Board of Directors, whose membership consists of representatives of the students, parents and guardians, staff, and members of the larger community. Students hold a plurality. As specified in our by-laws, potential members of the Board are nominated at a general meeting of their peers, and then elected by the existing Board. The Board's Executive Committee makes policy as needed between meetings of the Board.

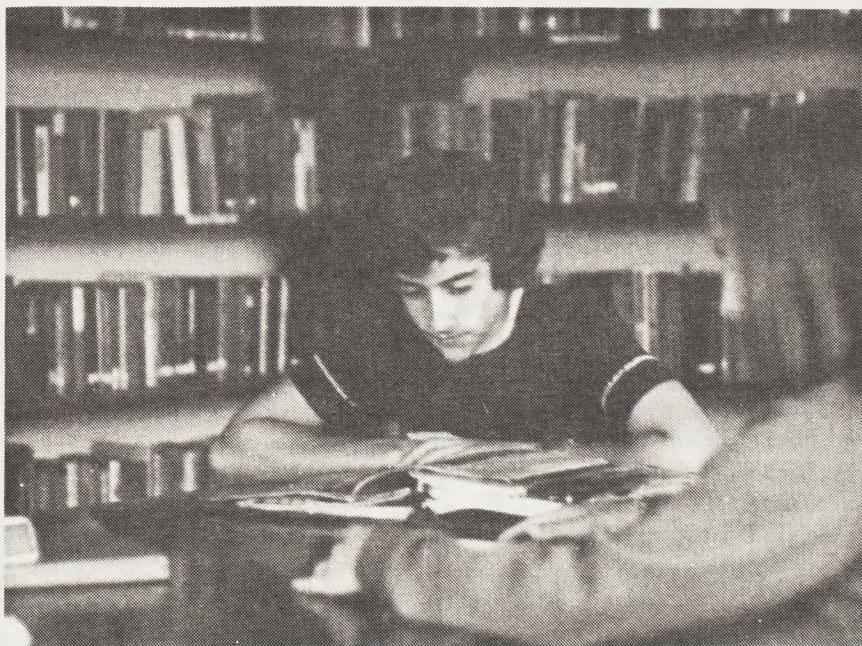
Participation on any of the several very active Standing Committees of the Board (e.g., Curriculum, Finance, Maintenance) does not require Board membership and, in fact, constitutes for some parents and students part of the contribution they exchange for a scholarship. Most important decisions affecting E.F.S. policy are generated by these committees, each of which consists of at least one student, one parent or guardian, and one member of the staff.

T U I T I O N A N D S C H O L A R S H I P S

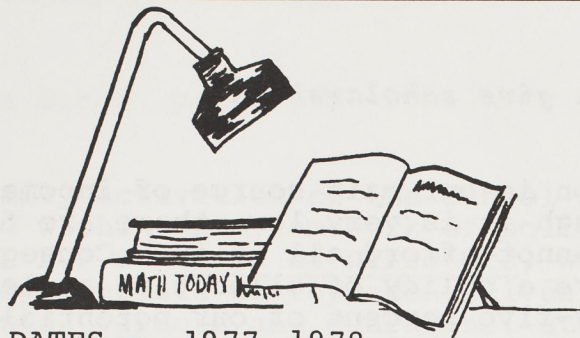
Q. Do you give scholarships?

A. Tuition is our main source of income. Although it is very low, there are families who cannot afford all of it. Consequently, we have a policy of allocating at least twenty-five percent of our potential full tuition to scholarships. Staff salaries, rent, utilities, supplies, and many of the other expenses essential to running a quality school, exceed our tuition income and make us rely heavily on donations and fundraisers. But above all, we must count on our families to come across with their financial commitments as spelled out in the family contract.

By the way, since we are a tax-exempt corporation, all donations to E.F.S. are tax-deductible.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



KEY DATES - 1977-1978

1977

SEPTEMBER 1 - SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS
 SEPTEMBER 15 - STUDENTS BEGIN
 SEPTEMBER 19 - FIRST DAY OF CLASSES FOR
 TERM I
 OCTOBER 4 - BOARD MEETING
 OCTOBER 17 - COMMUNITY MEETING
 NOVEMBER 24 & 25 - THANKSGIVING VACATION
 DECEMBER 13 - BOARD MEETING
 DECEMBER 17 to JANUARY 8 - WINTER RECESS

1978

JANUARY 9 - FIRST DAY OF TERM II
 JANUARY 23 - COMMUNITY MEETING
 FEBRUARY 6 - BOARD MEETING
 FEBRUARY 20 - COMMUNITY MEETING
 FEBRUARY 24 - WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY
 MARCH 17 - LAST DAY OF TERM II
 MARCH 18 to MARCH 26 - SPRING RECESS
 MARCH 27 - FIRST DAY OF TERM III
 APRIL 4 - BOARD MEETING
 APRIL 17 - COMMUNITY MEETING
 MAY 15 - COMMUNITY MEETING
 MAY 29 - MEMORIAL DAY
 MAY 30 - BOARD MEETING
 JUNE 16 - LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS
 JUNE 30 - END OF '77 - '78 SCHOOL YEAR

I WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE
EXPLORING FAMILY SCHOOL. PLEASE CONTACT ME.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____ BEST TIMES TO CALL _____

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX (ES)

- ☐ I am the parent or guardian of a potential E.F.S. student. (Student's name & age _____)
- ☐ I am a potential E.F.S. Student. (Age _____)
- ☐ I am a potential E.F.S. volunteer. (Please list on reverse side your areas of interest.)
- ☐ I wish to make a tax-deductible donation to E.F.S. but would like to discuss it first.
- ☐ I am enclosing \$ _____ as a tax-deductible donation to E.F.S. (Please note: You may designate your donation for a specific purpose; e.g. supplies, scholarship, recreation, etc. We need help in all these areas.)

Exploring Family School
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United Way
of San Diego County

A United Way Member Agency