

FAQs

QUESTION: What is a Charter School?

ANSWER: A Charter School is a public school of choice that is state-funded but privately operated. Charter Schools have the freedom to set their own policies related to such things as discipline policies, philosophy, teaching methods, curriculum, human resources management and staff development.

QUESTION: Who is eligible to attend Somerset?

ANSWER: K through 5th grade children of school age residing in Broward County selected by random lottery enrollment.

QUESTION: Can you give me some general background information on your school?

ANSWER: Somerset Academy has campuses in both Dade and Broward counties serving students in grades PreK3 – 12th grade. Opened in 1997, Somerset Miramar campus was the first of the Somerset Academies and was one of the first Florida Charter Schools. Somerset Davie opened in August for the 2002 – 2003 school year. We believe that every child can and will learn at his or her own pace, and we believe in using exploratory, hands-on learning and individualized instruction to ensure that each child experiences academic success!

QUESTION: How do I confirm my child's acceptance?

ANSWER: You may confirm your child's registration using any of the following methods:

Email us at dmiller@somersetdavie.com. Be sure to tell us you are accepting and list your child's name and grade.

Fax us at 954-584-5598. Be sure to tell us you are accepting and list your child's name and grade.

Call us at 954-584-5528. Be sure to tell us you are accepting and list your child's name and grade.

IMPORTANT: If we do not hear you within three (3) business days, we will assume you are NOT accepting your child's seat, and we will remove your registration application from our files.

QUESTION: What do I need in order to register?

ANSWER: In order to register, you will need to have completed and submitted the following documents to the school:

A completed registration packet

A copy of your child's birth certificate

Two forms proving that you are a Broward County residence (such as a driver's license and utility bill)

Up to date health and immunization forms (the originals – one is blue and the other is yellow)

Previous reports cards and academic transcripts including standardized test reports

A copy of your child's current health insurance coverage (for the required student accident insurance documentation).

A copy of your child's final report card no later than June 30th, 2008.

If your child is coming from a Broward County public school, we will request these records for you, and you will need only to fill out the completed registration form. Please remember that we must have *ALL* required documents in order for your registration application to be considered complete.

QUESTION: Are there any contracts or other special requirements to be a part of your school?

ANSWER: Yes, we do require all parents and students to sign the following:

The Somerset Code of Conduct

The Broward County Code of Conduct (distributed on the first day of school)

A Parent Volunteer Application and Contract (A minimum of 30. Please see contract for more details.)

An agreement to follow the guidelines listed in our school Handbook. (To read a copy of our current Handbook, please go to our website and click on the link for the our Parent/Student Handbook.)

Most of these documents are included in our Registration Packet.

QUESTION: What is the difference between a charter school and a public school?

ANSWER: Charter schools are public schools. However, we are both publicly and privately managed and funded. We follow the same calendar as the public school system. We abide by most of Broward County's policies, but we also have our own individual policies and procedures in place.

QUESTION: What is the difference between different charter schools?

ANSWER: All charter schools are public schools; however, some are municipally run and funded while others are privately run and funded. Each also has its own philosophy and vision. For example, some charter schools focus on technology or performing arts while others do longitudinal studies on different ethnic groups of students and how they respond to certain educational programs. Others are run almost exactly like a public school.

QUESTION: How is *your* charter school different?

ANSWER: Our school has a small family environment paired with a strong academic focus. We believe that each child can learn and we try to individualize our program to meet each child's level and learning needs. Our educational philosophy is based on some of the principles listed below:

Somerset Academy believes that a school should be a place where students love to learn, teachers love to teach, and parents are a key part of the educational process.

We believe that students work “up” to standards that are set for them and so we set high expectations for all of our students.

We believe in a “teaching by doing” approach to instruction and incorporate “hands on” activities in all of our instruction.

We believe that all students can and will learn.

We believe that each learner is unique; therefore we structure our academic program to meet the needs of each individual learner. We also allow learners to work at their own pace and engage in activities that meet different learning styles and levels simultaneously.

We also involve our students in a number of community projects that teach them to connect learning to the “real world” both locally and globally.

QUESTION: Do you provide transportation?

ANSWER: No, we do not. Students may walk, ride their bikes, or parents can drop them off in our carpool lane.

QUESTION: Are you affiliated with other Somerset Academy schools and will my child get preference if transferring from there?

ANSWER: Yes, we are all a part of Somerset Academy, Inc. Students do get preference if your child or a sibling attends any of our campuses. Somerset makes every attempt to allow students to transfer between campuses providing (1) space is available and (2) the transfer is initiated during the re-registration period. However, we cannot guarantee that this transfer will be granted. Be sure to note that you are transferring from one of our other campuses on page one of the re-registration form.

QUESTION: How old does my child have to be to register?

ANSWER: For Kindergarten, your child has to be 5-years-old by September 1st of the current school year. For 1st grade your child has to be 6 years of age by September 1st. If your child is coming from another country or a private school and is in a grade above their age-level grade for grades 2-5, you will have to show proof of promotion to the next grade level on a final Report Card signed by the principal or headmaster of the school. Final authorization of this grade placement is determined by Somerset’s Principal.

QUESTION: My child has an IEP and requires special services. Can he/she attend your school?

ANSWER: Yes, as a public charter school, we provide ESE services as stated on a child’s IEP. We ask that you bring a copy of your child’s current IEP prior to registration and meet with our ESE specialist and/or administrative team to discuss our ESE program, and your child’s IEP in order to be sure that our school is the best possible placement for your child.

QUESTION: Do you have a gifted program?

ANSWER: Yes. While we do not have self-contained gifted classes, we follow goals and objectives specified on their EP. Students labeled “Gifted” receive

instruction with a gifted-focused curriculum. We also provide for multi-age/multi-level classes to challenge our high achieving students. For more information about this, please contact a school administrator.

QUESTION: Does your school get graded? What is your grade?

ANSWER: Yes, all charter schools get graded the same as all public schools get graded. We are an A school and have met our AYP (Annual Yearly Progress) goals. We have only received one school grade since we have never had the minimum number of students in a grade level or the correct grade configuration to issue a grade.

QUESTION: Do you offer special area classes?

ANSWER: Yes, we will offer a variety of special areas classes such as Spanish, Physical Education/Health, Art, Music, Library/Research, Computers, Science and Character Education.

QUESTION: What extracurricular programs will you offer?

ANSWER: We offer extracurricular fee-based programs. Generally, programs such as martial arts, art, cheerleading, and dance are offered after school and run through private companies on our campus. These are determined on a year to year basis.

QUESTION: What are your school hours, drop off and pick up times?

ANSWER:

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Drop off: Between 7:45 and 8:00 a.m.

Pick up: Between 2:00 and 2:15 p.m.

QUESTION: Do you provide before and after school care? If so, what are the hours?

ANSWER: Yes, we offer a fee-based program for before and after school care. This program enrolls students on a first-come, first-serve basis. Our morning care program, L.E.A.P. (Learning Enrichment after school program) begins at 7:00 a.m. and extends through 7:45 a.m. Our after care begins at 2:00 and ends at 6:00 p.m. This program provides homework assistance, recreation, and enrichment activities for students.

QUESTION: How much does it cost to register to attend your school?

ANSWER: As a Broward County Public Charter School, we are tuition free for anyone residing in Broward County. Our before and after care program is fee-based. In order to get your child off to a good start, please note that you will be required to purchase school uniforms, a student planner and classroom school supplies for your child listed on the “School Supply Lists.”

QUESTION: What are the costs of your Morning Care and After Care program?

ANSWER: A non-refundable registration fee for morning and aftercare of \$30.00 is required. L.E.A.P., our morning care program, cost \$95.00 per month. LEAP our after care program, costs \$160 per month. Discounts are given to families that have more than one child registered in the program. These fees are subject to change on an annual basis

QUESTION: Can you explain the school's curriculum?

ANSWER: The primary goal of any school is to educate the children. In order to do that, the school must have a strong, structured, and spiraling curriculum that meets the needs of students at different academic levels and with different learning styles. Somerset Academy's Davie Campus has this very type of program and includes both traditional and alternative approaches for instructing our students. Our current traditional curriculum program follows the Florida Sunshine State Standards. Kindergarten classes incorporate the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program. The elementary grades incorporate the Harcourt Trophies Reading Program and Zaner Bloser language arts. Harcourt textbooks and hands on experiences are used for science, social studies and mathematics. All of these curricular programs are aligned to meet the goals of No Child Left Behind, to meet the requirements of Broward County Pupil Progression Plan (Policy 6000.1), and to meet the grade level proficiency expectations of Florida's Sunshine State Standards. By incorporating multiple learning systems at Somerset, we believe that we can create the best possible program for each individual learner while also making learning an exciting and enjoyable experience!

QUESTION: Is your school accredited by SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Universities)?

ANSWER: Our School is SACS Accredited and Somerset Inc., is the first accredited charter school district.

QUESTION: Where can I get more information on your school?

ANSWER: Continue to check our website, www.somersetdavie.com . You can always email us any questions that you might have. Our office personnel can be reached between the hours of 8:15 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. We are always happy to do our best to answering any questions you may have.

QUESTION: Am I able to take a tour of the school?

ANSWER: Yes! Please call the office to be placed on our tour schedule list.