

# Compass Chronicle

Options Program | Winter 2018

## Welcome to 2018!

We hope that 2017 ended well for you and that you have had a great start to 2018 so far. Your EFs would love to hear about what their scholars were up to over Winter Break, so please do share!



This edition of the Options Newsletter is chock-full of examples of the dedication and hard work that our learning coaches and scholars have put into the school year so far. So many have exemplified our CCS Core Values of achievement, respect, teamwork, integrity, and communication. We have seen families work as a team to serve food to the needy, learning coaches who support other homeschooling parents regularly through communication on social media, and scholars who persevere to achieve knowledge and skills in spite of learning disabilities or illness.

Finally, as the end of the fall semester approaches, we encourage you and your scholar(s) to reflect on the semester and the learning that has taken place. *What was their favorite learning activity? What "aha" moments did they have? What topics might they still be struggling with? What did they get particularly excited about?* This may also be the time to change things up a bit if you are finding yourselves in a bit of a homeschooling funk, as we all tend to do every once in a while. *Do your scholars need a new daily routine? Will you change up the types of things you used your fall funds on for the spring semester -- different classes / new reading books / interesting supplements to your curriculum? Is it time to map out a schedule for the week for your scholars, or perhaps change the one you currently use?* Your EFs are ready and willing to help in any of these areas!

Wishing you a fantastic 2018!

Kristy Smith, Options Learning Manager

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## WHAT'S NEW IN OPTIONS?

Since our last newsletter, we have added a couple of great opportunities for both parents and scholars to get involved. Our remarkable EF Melissa Collier now hosts monthly Options Hangouts, giving the Options scholars a social forum to connect and share about various topics. It has been fun to see them share about their favorite field trips and pets so far. If you have a suggestion for a future Options Hangout session, I encourage you to email the suggestion to [Melissa](#).



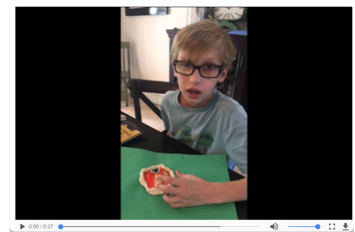
In early December, several learning coaches and EFs came together virtually for an Options Roundtable to chat about curriculum. The Roundtable proved to be a great exchange among learning coaches and EFs alike, as we all gleaned something from those who shared their experiences with and likes/dislikes of several curriculum options. One parent shared, "It was very helpful to learn the different options we have available for our kids from parents who have tried these programs." Another expressed, "I feel like I may need to change things up a bit mid-year, so this was perfect timing." If you missed this Roundtable, I encourage you to catch the next one. If you have a topic for a future Roundtable discussion that uniquely applies to our Options scholars, please [send it](#) our way!

## CELEBRATING OUR SCHOLARS

Our first-grade scholar, Michael N. is discovering different types of fruits and vegetables and how they grow. Here he is exploring how these brussel sprouts grow on a stalk. Both the stalk and brussel sprouts are edible, but the stalk requires longer cooking. He had never seen a vegetable grow like this and found it quite fascinating!



In this [interactive worksample](#), Jax M. demonstrated his knowledge of a cell. According to his mom, Lara, "We did diagrams of the cell in our science notebooks and then got out play dough and replicated the parts we learned about into a 3D model. Then Jax and his brother tested themselves by making a video and seeing if they could name all the parts! It was a great hands-on way to remember the shapes and names of the parts of the human cell." This was a great work sample showing hands-on, engaging, and creative learning!



Second-grade scholar, Carlos M. has been working on different types of experiments in science. He recently completed a celery stick experiment where he put celery in water and then added food coloring. He was super excited to add the red food coloring and waited patiently to see

what happened. The leaves turned red, and Carlos learned about how plants absorb water into their roots to help them grow.



Davin is a first-grade scholar at our Orange County Learning Center, and he is also part of our Wednesday Voyagers' program through Biola University. Davin created this artistic representation of the book *The Family Under the Bridge* after they read and discussed it together in the Voyagers' Language Arts class. His mom said, "The project was to explain the book by illustrating a poster with a favorite part, sad or disappointing part, place you might want to visit, favorite character, etc. Davin illustrated the part at the end of the book when the main character, Armond, a homeless man, found a home and job for both himself and the family he grew to care for. It was a very proud moment for him."

Scholar: Davin H.  
Illustration inspired by the novel  
"The Family Under the Bridge"



Kaelyn is taking an art class at KidsArt Rancho Cucamonga. She has a passion for art, which is demonstrated in this drawing of a Japanese cartoon character.



Elias built this diorama to represent the 2nd Battle of Bull Run. He learned that the battle was also called the Battle of Manassas and that three generals fought there.



The MacLeish siblings spent time serving together at a local soup kitchen.



We had thirty-three scholars participate in our Scripps Spelling Bee on January 17. Congrats to our top three overall winners: Ian C. (1st place), Jacob C. (2nd place), and Taylor B. (3rd place).



## CURRICULUM UPDATES

It's the start of a new year, and new happenings in the Vendor Department! We have recently added three new vendors to our always-growing list of curriculum options for our homeschool families. Our new vendors include:

[Henry Doktorski](#) - Chess teacher located in the Temecula area



[Toija Fitzgerald](#) - Photography classes in the Irvine area

[Gryphon Fitness](#) - Instruction in fencing and archery in the Placentia area

In addition, Little Passports is offering new subscriptions with the start of the new year. Take a look at their [flyer](#) to see if any of these subscriptions might suit the needs of your scholar.

Lastly, a couple of vendors have let us know that they adjusted their pricing. Math-U-See will offer their materials according to this [new price list](#), and Kidnastics Gymnastics & Cheer in Los Alamitos has [new prices](#) for some of their classes as well.

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## FAMILY SPOTLIGHTS

### The Moresi Family

**This month we would be pleased to introduce you to the Moresi family!** Peter, Jen, James and Natalie live in Thousand Oaks, and this is their first year at CCS, although definitely not their first year homeschooling! Jen took some time to tell us all about James and some of his exciting recent academic accomplishments.

**CCS: Tell us about your family:**

**Learning Coach:** Well, our family consists of my husband and myself, James, who is in second grade, and my step-daughter, Natale, who is in 4th grade. I am currently homeschooling James, and this is our first year with CCS. So far we are really happy with our choice!

**CCS: Why did you decide to enroll with Compass Charter Schools?**

**Learning Coach:** For the past few years I filed a PSA, but we decided that a charter school would better fit our needs as James is getting older and more involved in extracurricular activities and enrichment classes. I researched several of the charter schools, and I really liked the online aspect of Compass. I also felt that the parents were given a lot of freedom to make the appropriate choices for their scholars. I was already friends with my EF, Lindsey Chalco-Paz, and so joining Compass was an easy fit for us!





**CCS: Can you tell us a little bit about what your homeschool life is like?**

**Learning Coach:** James currently is really enjoying taking enrichment classes. He takes classes several days a week at Huckleberry Center for Creative Learning in Simi Valley, and he also takes classes at the homeschool program through Conejo Valley Parks and Recreation. He really enjoys science and art classes and is enrolled to start a film class with Conejo this month. We also are active participants in our local homeschool park day.

**CCS: What are some of James' hobbies? What do you enjoy doing as a family?**

**Learning Coach:** James is very into video games, so he enjoys spending time doing that. He also loves drawing -- he is a great artist. Our family loves to do the drawing tutorials on Art for Kids Hub together. Since we are a blended family, we really cherish the time that we get to spend with Natalie, James' sister. She is with us every other weekend, and James really looks forward to that. They love to play outside, ride scooters, and be together!

**CCS: Can you tell me about a time that James achieved something great?**

**Learning Coach:** Well, academically, when he started to read chapter books independently, we were all pretty thrilled! It seemed to happen overnight, sometime last year, and it was a big breakthrough for him. He is an avid reader now and loves to read the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Captain Underpants* series.



## The Imlach Family

**We would also like to introduce you to the Imlach family.** Denae and Chloe Imlach are in the second and third grades, respectively. The Imlach family lives in Anaheim, and this is their first year at CCS. Stacey shared with us a little about their family and homeschooling adventure.

**CCS: We know that often with our scholars that each day is different, but what would a typical day look like for you and your scholar?**

**Learning Coach:** We start our morning routine with coffee/tea and some literature to read. I (Mom) read aloud while breakfast is being eaten, and we discuss what is being read. We clean up, do small light chores, get ready for the day, and come back to the table for some journal writing/devotion time and math work. After our math lesson, we do some active stretching or walking around our apartment complex. Sometimes the girls start laundry and prep snacks while I am getting our next subject in order. At this point of our day, we review things that we are learning in class at the Orange County Learning Center. We do a creative writing lesson, sometimes prompted by a topic discussed in our readings earlier or just using our imaginations. We utilize our local library and bring home books that encourage the things that the girls are most interested in. The afternoons are usually filled with park play dates or letting the apartment kids come over to play. The girls help with dinner and dishes, and I encourage more reading and board game playing in the evenings. Some of our favorites are Sequence, Clue, Blokus and Connect 4. We end our day with an occasional tv episode, art/crafts and more books!

**CCS: What has been your greatest joy in schooling your scholar at home?**

**Learning Coach:** We all agree that we love the flexibility that we have and getting to do school in the parks.



**CCS: Share a challenge that you have experienced as a learning coach and how you have worked to overcome the challenge.**

**Learning Coach:** Learning to communicate why we homeschool to others has been our biggest challenge. We moved our family from Oregon to Anaheim almost 5 years ago. It took our family two years to find other homeschool families in this area that we could come alongside. Finding other like-minded parents and kids really helped to bring a balance to that question from others. I had written our family homeschool mission statement as we started this journey, but it was hard to see the girls not have a confident response to others in regards to not going to the same school as all the other apartment kids. Being part of the Compass family has helped us form in them an identity of how to be great life learners and giving an assurance of how they belong to something important.

**CCS: Why did you decide to school from home with Compass Charter Schools?**

**Learning Coach:** With my husband working in retail and other time investments within the community we have always believed that homeschool would give us the flexibility that we needed. Compass is our third Charter School program and we found it by following our EF! I am so grateful for their friendship and guidance. When my girls make good connections with others, it is only natural to want to keep them in those same circles.

**CCS: Can you share a piece of advice you'd give to a parent thinking about taking their child out of school to school at home?**

**Learning Coach:** Our family motto is to always be humble, aggressive learners. Recognize that every day is new, you will make mistakes and you won't have all the answers but be gracious to yourself. Enjoy learning alongside your kids.

**CCS: What do you, your scholar and the family enjoy doing together during your free time?**

**Learning Coach:** The girls are part of GRDC Tap Dance Company. It is a service to the community. We volunteer our time and practice several hours each week to perform in Assisted Living Homes for those elderly who are unable to attend functions outside of the facility. We love nature hikes and fishing together and recently built a "Tinker Bench," a specific space to allow the girls to be creative by building small wood projects and using recyclables to invent amazing creations! The girls love building forts out of everything, and we bought them pocket microscopes for Christmas, which we are really having fun with. We have several families living in our apartment complex and in the surrounding vicinity that are on refugee status, and we are always helping as English conversation partners, driving them to places and joining in the many cultural opportunities that are all around us.

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## **VENDOR RELATIONS**

### **Vendor Spotlight: California 4-H Program**

When you think of a 4-H program, you might only think of animal husbandry, farming, and agriculture. While a 4-H program is most well-known for its agricultural aspects, they offer so much more! One of our new vendors, the California 4-H Program is a part of the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). The program promotes hands-on, experiential learning.

4-H programs enable scholars to build positive communication and leadership skills. Meeting once a month, the groups are run and managed by the youth, including creating agendas, taking minutes, giving financial reports, and budgeting for community projects. When a scholar joins 4-H, they choose a project to enroll in. Examples of projects are robotics, animal science, public speaking, and home arts. A 4-H project is planned work in an area of interest to the 4-H youth. The projects are guided by a 4-H adult volunteer, aimed at planned objectives that can be attained and measured, summarized by record keeping, and include a minimum of six hours of project instruction. Project participation is tracked by enrollment in the program's online system and by completing annual project reports.



For a list of 4-H groups approved by Compass: [Riverside County](#); [San Bernardino County](#).

## Vendor Spotlight: Education.com

If you're interested in a variety of engaging educational games, worksheets, science projects, downloadable workbooks, and guided lessons for less than \$10 a month, take a look at what Education.com has to offer. When asked what inspired them to start



the business, their response was, "As the company has evolved, we saw that we could really boost kids' motivation to learn, increase their confidence in learning, and unlock their potential by developing a wide variety of our own resources that could speak to each child's unique needs." It is evident that Education.com has a passion for learning and they want to share their variety of resources with families. The materials offered through Education.com can be used to supplement learning throughout the year, to differentiate learning, and/or to focus on a certain skill.

Although there are so many offerings on Education.com, their "games and worksheets are [the] most popular learning resources. In fact, [the] Sight Words Bingo game, Bubble Buster Addition and [the] brand new Typing games (including the Home Row Flying Squirrel game) that help promote digital literacy, are among the kids' favorites. Also, Guided Lessons that tie together multiple games, songs, and stories to teach overarching skills are among the most used features on Education.com."

Right now, Education.com would like to offer families of Compass Charter Schools 25% off any Education.com Premium account. Just use [this link](#) and you'll automatically receive 25% off at checkout.

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## HELPFUL RESOURCES

### Winter Olympics 2018 Educational Resources

As we approach the exciting start of the 2018 Winter Olympics, we wanted to share some fun resources with you.

- Families will enjoy learning about the Winter Olympics in this exciting [webquest](#) as they explore the connections between math and the Winter Olympics.



- [Quick facts](#) about the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Olympics
- A fun [word search](#) about the winter olympic sports
- [Books](#) about the Winter Olympics
- [Teachers Pay Teachers](#) is a great resource for Winter Olympic activities that can be purchased or some that can be downloaded for free.

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## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

### Michelle Vreenman, Educational Facilitator

**CCS: What is your name, and can you share a bit about yourself/family?**

**Michelle:** My name is Michelle Vreeman. My husband, Eric, and I just celebrated our 20th anniversary last month. We met as sophomores in high school, went to colleges together, and got married after we got our teaching jobs.

We are proud parents of two amazingly, wonderful kids, Kate (11) and Joseph (3). They are kind and loving kids and our greatest joy! We are also a homeschooling family. Of course, they would give me a hard time if we left out our three furry family members which include Hank the Vizsla, Daisy the Terrier, and River the Pub/Pomeranian/Chihuahua mix.

**CCS: What is one of your favorite parts about working at CCS?**

**Michelle:** I love working with each of the families! I love to see their approach to educating their scholars and how excited they are about their work. I am also so thankful to be working with such an amazing team of supportive and knowledgeable educators. Everyone is always so ready and willing to help out and work together.



**CCS: What is your favorite thing to do when you are not working?**

**Michelle:** We enjoy Jeeping in Utah, traveling, reading, cooking, kayaking, and hiking as much as we can.

**CCS: What is (or was) your favorite subject to study?**

**Michelle:** My favorite subjects to study, and teach, are science and social studies.

**CCS: Do you have any advice for scholars?**

**Michelle:** My advice for scholars would be to follow their passion. If they love a subject or activity, dive in and see where that passion can take them!

**CCS: What is your background in education?**

**Michelle:** I have been in education for about 20 years. Overall, I've had so many varied and wonderful experiences in education and feel so fortunate to have worked with so many different families and scholars over the years.

I started off teaching High School US History, Government, Economics, and Sports/PE. I was also the Head Volleyball Coach and the school's Yearbook Advisor during these years. Then I worked as an elementary classroom teacher. I primarily taught fourth grade but also had a 2/3 combination class.

I then took a break and stayed home with my new daughter for the next three years. At this point, I began working from home facilitating courses with an online University as an Online Faculty Instructor and also started teaching high school US History online with a charter school. During this time, I also began homeschooling.

I am now happily working for Compass as an Educational Facilitator and look forward to working with Compass families for many years to come!

**CCS: How can Options families contact you if needed?**

**Michelle:** Through phone or text at (805) 358-8666 or by email at [mvreeman@compasscharters.org](mailto:mvreeman@compasscharters.org)

## Susan De La Pena, Educational Facilitator

**CCS: What is your name and can you share a bit about yourself?**

**Susan:** My name is Susan De La Peña. I live in Clovis, California but grew up in Norco with the horses. I have been married for 26 years and have six children, two girls, and four boys. The girls are the oldest and youngest and the boys are sandwiched in between. My two oldest children go to college in Southern California. One is at the University of Redlands and will graduate in April - then off to grad school. The other is at Biola University and should graduate next year. I have 2 boys in high school (11th and 9th), one in middle school (7th), and a daughter in 2nd grade. We also have a scholar visiting from China. My family and I are very involved at our church. I work in the nursery and toddler room there. You just can't get me away from kids! My dream is to one day have a small farm.

**CCS: What is one of your favorite parts about working at CCS?**

**Susan:** I love the sense of family and team we have here at CCS. It makes working here enjoyable, and it helps you to feel like you belong and are a part of something bigger. It is also great to be able to interact with the scholars and their families. I enjoy getting to learn about them and what they like.

**CCS: What is your favorite thing to do when you are not working?**

**Susan:** Well, since I don't have a lot of spare time, I mostly spend time with my family when I am not working.



**CCS: How can Options families contact you if needed?**

**Susan:** I am available through email at [sdelapena@compasscharters.org](mailto:sdelapena@compasscharters.org), or by phone at 805-807-5718. My 'door' is open!

**CCS: What is (or was) your favorite subject to study?**

**Susan:** I LOVE science, still do. I try and keep up on what is going on in the world of science through reading.

**CCS: Do you have any advice for scholars?**

**Susan:** It is important for you to do your work and study, but even more important is to develop a love for learning and learn HOW to learn. Then you will always be a 'scholar' of the world around you.

**CCS: What is your background in education?**

**Susan:** I received my degree from CSU Fresno. I taught in Fresno Unified as a long-term substitute before I moved to Texas. In Texas, I taught second grade for a bit. After we moved back to California, I would sub occasionally, but mostly was a mom. Six years ago, I started working with high school scholars in an online setting, helping out in the counseling department. I moved back into teaching this school year.

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## COUNSELING



### Happy New Year to all from the Counseling Team!

This time of year signals the end of Semester 1, and our team has been working tirelessly behind the scenes preparing for Semester 2 with final details and pre-loading courses for scholars. Additionally, while the bulk of college application season is through, we are still deep into financial aid application season as the March 2nd deadline draws near. Our team continues to support scholars with various records and document requests, as well as financial aid application assistance. We are looking forward to hearing from scholars regarding college acceptance letters as they arrive in the spring!

October and November saw a great deal of college, career, and academic activities and presentations that many learning coaches and scholars were able to enjoy by attending the live sessions or receiving the recordings. We will continue to provide these valuable resources via our department presentations and our College and Career Success Cafes. We invite all of our scholars to contact their counselor for more information.

Lastly, in December our department delivered an internal presentation to our school staff about the topic of Suicide Prevention. Considering the prevalence of adolescent suicide in our culture, our goal is to ensure that our staff knows what to do if such a situation presented itself. Our team values the privilege to continue to support our Compass scholars, families, and staff.



As civil rights pioneer Harriet Tubman once said, "Every dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world." As your school counseling team, we are here to help you explore your dreams and discover how to achieve them. Reach out via phone, text, email, or video conference and talk to us soon. Remember to make every day great!

~ Counseling Services Team



## Counseling News

Congratulations to our scholars Alexia, Helena, and Amber, who were nominated for consideration of the Carson Scholars Fund scholarship. Our entire counseling team worked collaboratively to nominate three scholars, one from each of our schools - Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Nominations were based on scholar service to their community in addition to their academic excellence (minimum 3.75-grade point average). If awarded, each scholar stands to receive a \$1,000 college scholarship for their future studies.

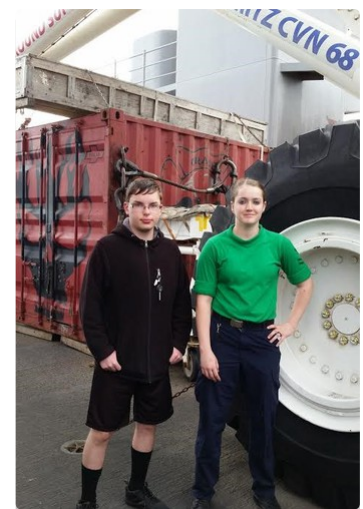
This February, the Counseling Department also looks forward to celebrating the 2018 National School Counseling Week, sponsored by the American School Counselor Association. This special week highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping scholars achieve school success and plan for a career. Please join us in celebrating the week starting next Monday, February 5 through Friday, February 9.

We highly encourage our families to [visit our website](#) and view a variety of helpful college and career preparation resources for scholars.

## Family Spotlight

Our journey to California from Texas really began in 2016 after my husband's passing. I suppose you can say we are a military family, with my late husband serving in the U.S. Army many years ago, and my daughter serving as a 1st Class Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy. My daughter's involvement in the military is actually what brought us to California.

Having the flexibility of online schooling has been a great benefit for my son, John McHale, as he explores his post-high school options. John had the opportunity to travel this past November/December to Hawaii to meet the USS Nimitz, a naval supercarrier returning from operations in the middle east. John is considering joining the military as one of his post-high school options, and being able to travel onboard the ship for a week as it returned to the San Diego naval base was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that has aided him in narrowing down a decision as to what he wants to do after he graduates high school in June 2018. He spent the



better part of his time observing and assisting with missile launcher maintenance and repair duties in the shop, which was an invaluable experience for him.

While onboard the ship, there was no access to Internet or phone for national security reasons which meant 8 days on the ship without the ability to do school work. Staying on top of his school work definitely required some creativity and sacrifices on John's part while on this trip. He completed as much work as he possibly could in the hotel room at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, while waiting for the ship to arrive, as well as working hard to catch up with work upon his return.

I'm so glad we chose Compass Charter Schools! The flexibility in completing assignments and the range of subjects offered, as well as the ability to pursue topics of interest are all reasons that brought us here. One of the highlights that made me choose Compass over other online schools is the opportunity for social interaction with other scholars and parents through the diverse and interesting field trips offered. My family's experience with Compass has been great so far as I feel closer to the teachers, staff, and administration - more than those of my previous 4 children who attended both public and private brick-and-mortar schools. We are happy to be here.



## Staff Spotlight

This month we are featuring Mr. Jacob Samples, School Counselor at CCS.

**CCS: What are your primary job responsibilities?**

**Mr. Samples:** My responsibilities as a school counselor involve providing support in academic planning and decision making, college and career exploration, and social-emotional wellness for our scholars, families, and faculty.



**CCS: Can you share a little bit about your background in education and counseling?**

**Mr. Samples:** I started out years ago as a program leader for an afterschool program called Think Together while I was completing my Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies at California State at Fullerton. I then earned my Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology from Antioch University at Los Angeles and moved to Palm Springs, CA to work at a community mental health clinic. I went back to school at the University of Redlands to receive my Pupil Personnel Services Credential for School Counseling while working at the Edison Academy for Differentiated Learning in Ontario, CA as a counselor for grades K-8.

**CCS: What is your favorite thing about working at CCS?**

**Mr. Samples:** I truly enjoy the challenge of connecting with scholars and families in a virtual setting, and watching them progress through the program. It is gratifying to see scholars gain confidence as they become more comfortable in their independent learning roles at CCS.

**CCS: What is your favorite thing to do when you're not working?**

**Mr. Samples:** My passion is theater arts. I love acting when I have time outside of my role as a school counselor. Additionally, I love to spend time with family and friends, and I love to travel and explore new places when I have the time!



## SHARE YOUR STORY







Are you enjoying the educational experience at Compass? Tell us! We want to hear from you. Why did you decide to join the Compass family? Or, what do you love most about being part of our community? Share your comments and all of your wonderful experiences at Compass with us! [Click here](#) to share.



### Compass Charter Schools

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Visit our [website](#) for more information about our academic programs. Or contact Kristy Smith, Options Learning Manager, at [ksmith@compasscharters.org](mailto:ksmith@compasscharters.org).

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d\\_3jyxoCWVU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_3jyxoCWVU)



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