

DISCOVER the
WOW & WONDER
in Learning at EMSA

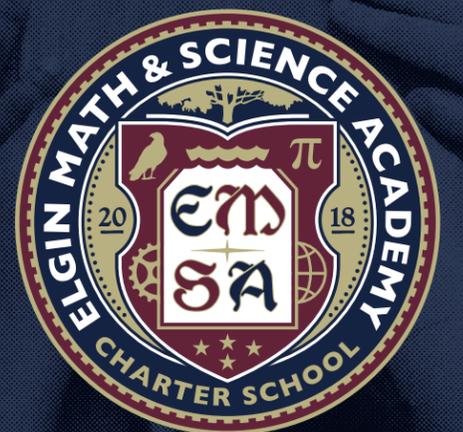


welcome

Welcome to EMSA!

Our school is *more* than a school. It's a place where students discover **abilities, values,** and **passions** in an environment that offers **adventure** and the ***unexpected***.

We are excited to share our story and we invite you to celebrate the ***Wow and Wonder in Learning*** with our crew.



who we are

ELGIN MATH & SCIENCE ACADEMY

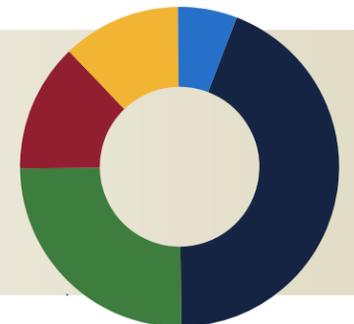
EMSA is a **nonprofit** 501(c)(3), independent, **public charter** school with a local Board of Directors composed of educators, business leaders, and parents. EMSA opened in 2018 with 208 students in grades K-3 and we will grow to full capacity in 2023 with 468 students in grades **K-8**.

EMSA is the only **tuition free** charter school that is available to students residing in District U-46 boundaries. We serve free/reduced hot lunch, provide busing throughout 90 square miles, offer a longer school day/year, and have on-site after school care with the Boys & Girls Club of Elgin.

EMSA is a diverse and dynamic EL Education community dedicated to fostering each child's unique potential through exemplary standards of character, academic achievement, and social responsibility.

Diversity at EMSA

17 Languages Represented	42 % Hispanic
26 % English Learners	26 % Caucasian
22 % Receive Special Ed. Services	14 % African American
2 % Students Without Housing	12 % Asian
55 % Receive Free & Reduced Lunch	6 % Two or more



mission

EMSA is an EL Education public charter school. **We strive to support the whole child and develop socially responsible leaders who aspire to create a better world.**

vision

EMSA will be an inspirational model for K-8 public education. **Together**, we will equip our students to be successful in a changing world and we will empower them to think critically with a global perspective while living out our **Habits of Scholarship: Respect, Responsibility, Courage and Creativity.**

values

Our **community** is a Crew where everyone is welcome, has a purpose and a voice. Our **campus** enriches the educational experience through the wonder of nature. Our **classrooms** are active, engaging, and student-led spaces. Our **curriculum** is STEM-focused and data driven. Our **teachers** are the backbone of our culture and academic rigor. Our **students** are creative thinkers, courageous leaders, responsible learners and respectful classmates.

What Learning Looks Like at EMSA.

- Learning is active.** Students are scientists, urban planners, historians, and activists, investigating real issues and collaborating with peers to develop creative solutions
- Learning is challenging.** Students at all levels are pushed and supported to do more than they think they can. Excellence is expected in the quality of their work and thinking.
- Learning is meaningful.** Students apply their skills and knowledge to real-world issues and problems and make positive change in their communities. They see the relevance of their learning and are motivated by understanding that learning has purpose.
- Learning is public.** Through formal structures of presentation, exhibition, critique, and data analysis, students and teachers build a shared vision of pathways to achievement.
- Learning is collaborative.** School leaders, teachers, students, and families share rigorous expectations for quality work, achievement, and behavior. *Trust, respect, responsibility, and joy in learning permeate the school culture.*



EMSA is an **EL EDUCATION SCHOOL**

EL Education's model is built upon two traditions: **Outward Bound's** focus on challenge, teamwork, service, and compassion, and the **Harvard Graduate School of Education's** focus on active inquiry-based learning and character development.

Top-Rated Curriculum

EMSA is the only student-led, experiential learning K-8 public school in the U-46 area. EL Education's ELA curriculum received the highest score for a K-5 curriculum from leading independent reviewer, EdReports.



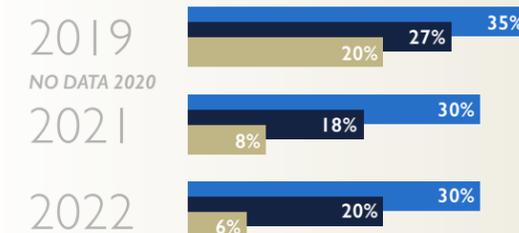
Closing Achievement Gaps

After three years of attending an EL Education school, students **GAIN** an average of seven months in reading achievement and ten months in math achievement.

EMSA Students Outperform District Peers in ELA & Math

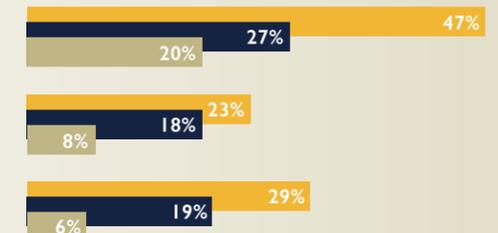
Illinois Report Card's IAR testing results show students meeting and exceeding grade level readiness at EMSA outperform local District U-46 schools in both English Language Arts and Math. Since 2019, EMSA students' **ELA** scores average **10** points above District U-46 and **20** points above its closest neighboring district school. EMSA students' **MATH** scores average **12** points above District U-46 and **23** points above its closest neighboring district school. *The scores below reflect percentage totals of met/exceeded performance levels according to the Illinois Achievement Readiness testing data.* <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com>

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



EMSA
District U-46
Neighboring School

MATH



EMSA
District U-46
Neighboring School

OUR SUCCESS



why we are here

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

EMSA is **building equity in education** through a commitment to a community engaged **real-world** approach to learning, a school culture that fosters **community**, and an academic focus on **math and science**. *We strive to know each child's specific needs and work to ensure every student can reach their highest potential.*

Why a "Charter" School.

Charters are allowed the **freedom to innovate** while being held accountable by the Illinois State Board of Education for **advancing student achievement** and institutional compliance.

Empowered by Community.

EMSA was created by Elgin citizens who **dreamed of a different way** to address the needs of today's children. The heart of EMSA's founding team is to provide an exceptional opportunity for children of all backgrounds within our local community to grow and learn in a safe, healthy, adventurous environment where students and teachers can achieve *their* dreams.

Continued Demand.

EMSA is the **ONLY** public charter school in Illinois' second largest school district of 36,000 students. We continue to show strong interest with a **200+ student wait list** since opening.

Adaptive Response and Resilient Nature.

In August of 2020, EMSA was the only local public school in our area that **opened on time** and implemented a **hybrid model with in-person and remote daily instruction**. We successfully adapted to meet the **safety, academic** and **SEL needs** of our students for the duration of the 2020 fall semester.



A Proven Record.

In 2022, after a thorough review of our students' evidence of learning in alignment to EL Education's three dimensions of student achievement, EMSA became a credentialed EL Education school. EMSA also received its five year renewal from the Illinois State Board of Education by proving to be **strong in both its academic and financial standing**.



The **need** for an innovative approach to education is real. The **opportunity** to raise public school standards is here. **EMSA is READY.**

GETTING SMART TO DO GOOD

Three Dimensions of Student Achievement.

When students enter adult life, they will be celebrated not for their performance on tests, but for the quality of their work and their character. EL Education builds students' capacity for three dimensions of high achievement:



Mastery of Knowledge and Skills.

Students develop a deep understanding of all subject areas, practice critical thinking, communicate clearly, and apply of their learning to meaningful tasks. Teachers ensure curriculum, instruction, and assessments are rigorous, meaningful, and aligned with standards.

Character.

Students work to become effective learners, ethical people, and put their learning to use to improve their communities. Teachers elevate student voices and leadership, reinforce habits of scholarship, model a school-wide culture of respect and compassion, and prioritize social and emotional learning.

High-Quality Student Work.

Students create complex work, demonstrate craftsmanship, and create authentic work. Teachers use models of excellence, critique, and multiple drafts to support all students to produce work of exceptional quality.



Students experience *joy and achievement* by applying their knowledge, skills and **passion** to **making the world a better place** for their peers, families and community.

COURAGE

I can grapple with and **overcome challenges** by believing in myself. I can help others to *dive in, get stuck, and push through*.

CREATIVITY

I can **challenge myself** to *explore and express new ideas*. I can appreciate the unique thoughts and work of others.

RESPECT

I can *value myself, others, and the environment through actions of listening, caring and sharing*. I can build **mutual trust** where all voices are heard and honored

RESPONSIBILITY

I can be *mindful, prepared and ready for learning*. I can engage in all activities and take **ownership** of my actions.

TEN PRINCIPLES of Learning & School Culture

The Primacy of Self-Discovery

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.

The Having of Wonderful Ideas

Teaching 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.

The Responsibility for Learning

Learning is both a personal process of **discovery** and a social activity. Our school encourages both children and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

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, with a caring adult looking after the progress and acting as an advocate for each child.

Success and Failure

All students need to have success 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.*

Collaboration and Competition

Individual 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.

Diversity and Inclusion

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. Students investigate and **value** their different histories and talents as well as those of other communities and cultures.

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.

Solitude and Reflection

Students and teachers experience time alone to explore their own **thoughts**, make their own **connections**, and create their own **ideas**.

Service and Compassion

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others. One of our primary functions is to prepare students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service.

our culture



OUR CREW

CREW means **pulling together, thinking together** and **supporting each other** to do things bigger and better than we all thought possible.

WE ARE CREW, NOT PASSENGERS

Social Emotional Learning at EMSA.

Our school culture is planned for, developed, and sustained through practices that bring the community together, promote shared understandings, and encourage all community members to become crew, not passengers.

Our students are known well and supported by staff and participate in daily, 30-minute crew meetings where students and staff forge meaningful relationships, provide social, emotional and academic support, and reinforce EMSA's habits of scholarship in small group settings.

CREW is a structure.

It is a group of students who meet together to support and push each other in school and life.

CREW is a spirit, a way of being.

To be "Crew" means to pitch in to help each other, to step up and take responsibility for everyone's well-being around you.

- Classroom Crew** is a daily, 30-minute gathering where students share their academic and social opportunities and challenges with one another in order to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of their peers.
- Staff Crew** provides teachers and administration a weekly opportunity to maintain relationships, transparent communication, and a team mindset.
- Community Crew** is a school wide gathering every Friday to reflect on world events, celebrate accomplishments, and experience connectedness with other grade levels.
- J.E.D.I. Crew** teaches students the importance of working together as a crew to achieve Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- Care Giver Crew** provides a forum for parents and guardians to learn and share ideas to support student health and achievement.

OUR impact



PARENT TESTIMONIALS.

When our children started attending EMSA, **a light was sparked in their hearts** that we weren't sure was ever coming back...the school has always went out of their way to get our kids the support they need. **We can't imagine our kids anywhere else.** ~The Russell Family

You have made a big difference in our daughter's life from **absolute dedication**, adaptation to her special needs, and our phenomenal staff of great people that we consider extended family. ~The Bemont Family

My daughter is one of the younger kindergartners, and the growth that she has made is unbelievable. **Her social skills as well as her academic skills have surpassed my expectations.** She is more engaged and has taken on more responsibility at home. ~The Manor Family

OUR ROOTS

CAMPUS HISTORY

Chicago Junior School.

Fulfilling the desire to help orphaned boys who were roaming the stockyards of Chicago, Morris Schwabacher and V.P. Randall founded The Chicago Junior School in 1913 with only a tent and the wilderness of northern Michigan. Growing to 50 students, CJS moved to an active farm near St. Joseph, MI. Then, in 1923, CJS relocated the boarding school one last time to a **100 acre farm in Elgin, Illinois.** *The silo that stands tall in the center of campus reminds us of the original farm that once occupied this property.*

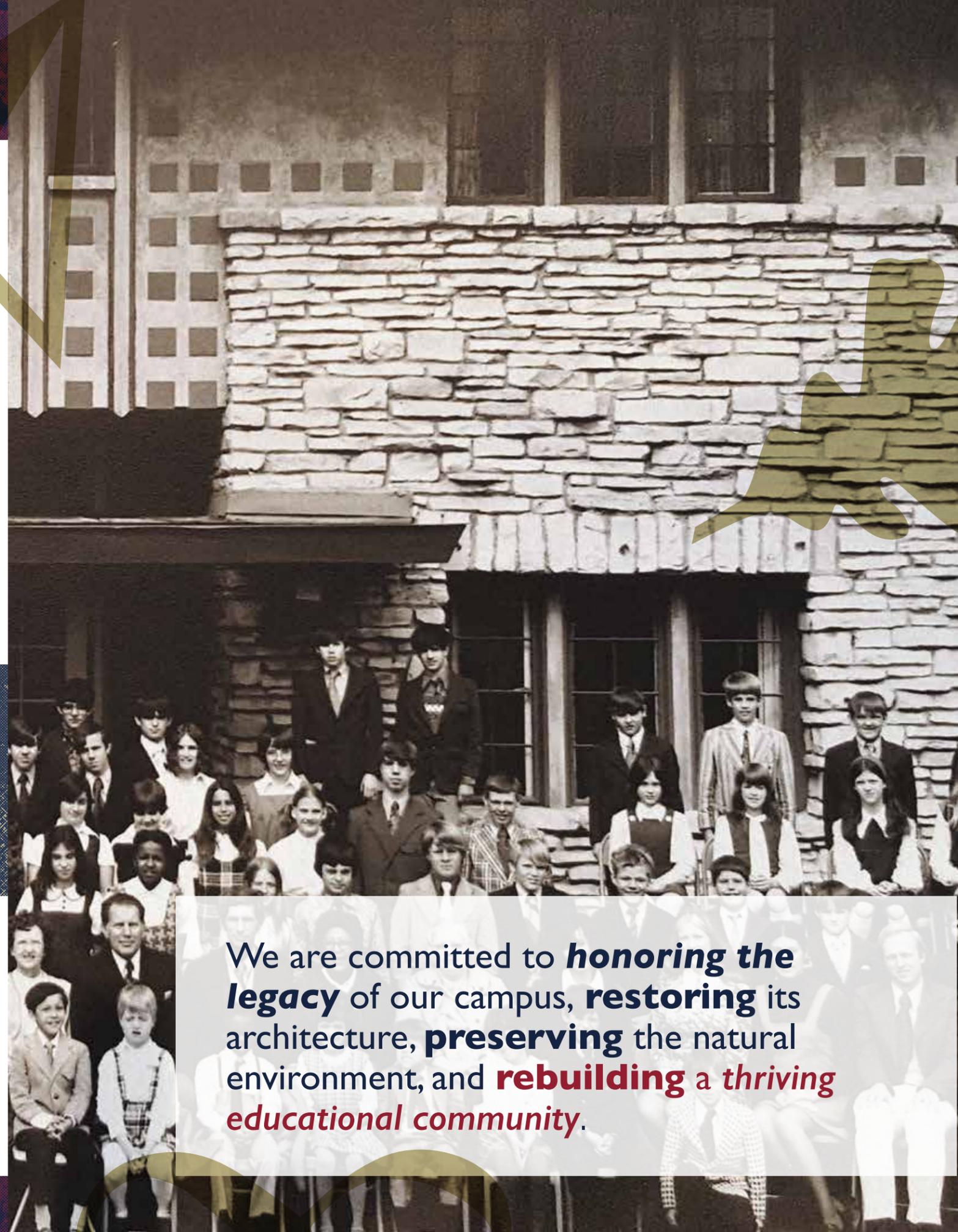
Here, **John Van Bergen** designed and built the administration building as the new heart of the school in 1929. In 1955, girls were allowed enrollment into CJS and occupied their own dorm. The campus continued to expand throughout the 1960s with the Katzenberger Pool and Gymnasium and continued modifications to dorm and classroom spaces.

Fox River Country Day School.

In 2003, the CJS board adopted a new name to better reflect the values and location of the school: The Fox River Country Day School. In 2005, FRCDS built the current K–4 classroom building, the “Neil” Building. In 2011, FRCDS closed its doors due to financial difficulty — ending a nearly 100 year history. The campus remained abandoned until 2018 when the City of Elgin agreed to have the Elgin Math and Science Academy carry on the campus’s **educational legacy.**

Elgin Math & Science Academy Charter School.

On **October 3, 2017**, the Illinois State Charter School Commission voted to grant the appeal of EMSA’s Charter School Proposal. Once only a dream, we now have the great privilege of being the only public charter school within the 90 square mile boundary of School District U-46.



We are committed to **honoring the legacy** of our campus, **restoring** its architecture, **preserving** the natural environment, and **rebuilding a thriving educational community.**



OUR CAMPUS

EXPLORING the NATURAL WORLD

With an outdoor learning lab at their fingertips, EMSA students engage in hands-on learning and **scientific observation** while benefiting from daily interaction the sights and sounds of nature.

EMSA's campus is adjacent to the Forested Fen Illinois Nature Preserve and Kane County Forest Preserve. These **protected ecosystems** include: native white cedars and rare plant species; springs and seeps, heritage oaks, and ephemerals.

Zones

 CHILL ZONE

 PLAY ZONE

 FOREST PRESERVE

 NATIVE PLANTS

 PRIVATE

 CLOSED

key

 Forest Preserve Boundary
 Landmark
 Sidewalk
 Trail (more coming soon!)



Mirroring a college **campus experience**, students at EMSA experience **building to building movement**, a variety of learning spaces, and hikes *in their very own backyard*.



OUR PASSION

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

We are proud to provide a free, public education where children of all backgrounds experience nature and benefit from its sights and sounds everyday.

Our campus is nestled in an incredibly precious and rare ecosystem. With this unique outdoor learning lab at their fingertips, our students engage in hands-on learning and scientific observation while benefiting from daily interaction with the sights and sounds of nature.

Sustainability and Equity.

At EMSA, we teach and practice Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in everything we do. **We believe that environmental education is for everyone and being good stewards of our planet includes caring for everyone and everything on it.**

Stewardship.

EMSA students draw connections between community building and caring for their environment. We can learn how to foster a healthy, sustainable community through appreciating biodiversity's role in maintaining a stable and sustainable ecosystem. EMSA students actively participate in preserving our campus's oldest species by learning about our heritage oak trees and getting their hands dirty to protect them by sowing native seeds and plantings.

Daily Interaction with Nature.

Whether its recess hikes, tending to a classroom pollinator garden or simply reading under a favorite tree, daily interaction with the outdoors **increases students' ability to focus** on tasks indoors, provides opportunities to be **physically active**, and contributes to an overall **sense of well-being** for students and staff.

Field Studies Club.

Friday Field Studies is EMSA's unique outdoor program that brings naturalists, artists, and historians to our students to facilitate their explorations of nature. Students spend time with our field experts and parent volunteers to focus on environmental **awareness, understanding, appreciation, and action.**

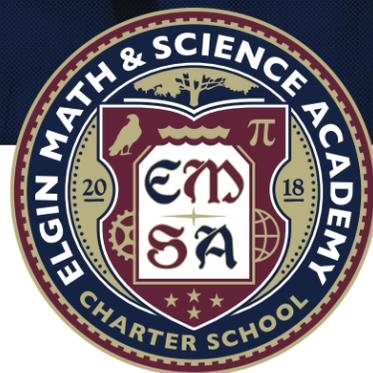
Classroom Expeditions.

Each grade level at EMSA focuses their studies during the year on one particular component of earth science. Our third graders when studying frogs don't simply look at pictures of frogs, but they journey down a short hike to the pond where they listen to them, observe their habitat, collect data and gain an **experiential understanding** that typical classroom resources cannot provide.



Learning from field experts, our **young scientists** practice **stewardship** of our campus's **natural resources** and **unique ecosystem.**

SUPPORT



CALLING ALL CREW

ALL HANDS ON DECK!

Help us continue to provide a meaningful education in a student-centered learning environment that feeds children's curiosity, strengthens their courage and develops a respect and responsibility towards one another and the world!

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

Campus Buildings

- Gymnasium Building
- Administration Building
- Elementary Classroom Building
- Westview Building
- Historic Dining Hall Building

Campus Learning Centers

- Children's Art Studio
- Multipurpose Center
- Elementary Great Room
- Library & Study
- Outdoor Amphitheater

Learning Spaces

- Outdoor Expedition Pavilions
- Science & Ecology Lab
- Math & Technology Lab
- Student Art Gallery
- Performance Stage

Active Spaces

- Gymnasium
- Outdoor Field & Recreation
- Hiking & Running Trails
- Elementary Playground

Giving Levels

CREW	\$10,000 and above
HAWK	\$5,000 – \$9,999
OAK	\$2,500 – \$4,999
MONARCH	\$1,000 – \$2,499
CEDAR	\$500 – \$999
FOX	\$250 – \$499
Fellows of EMSA	\$100 – \$249
Friends of EMSA	up to \$100

To GIVE, contact our team:

Katie Taylor, Director of Development
ktaylor@emsacharter.org
(847) 533-2829

THANK YOU

- Andrew & Alice Fischer Charitable Trust
- Gardener Foundation
- Illinois Landmarks
- Palmer Foundation
- Mary Gardner Educational Foundation
- Walton Family Foundation
- Anonymous Individual Donor
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Education First
- Nova Foundation
- SEL In Action Award
- Alfred Bersted Foundation
- Green Guerilla
- Amazon Smile

GuideStar



Our **top priority** is to deliver an **excellent, equitable and free** education in an **unmatched learning environment** to our K–8 students.



Let's make a Better World
TOGETHER.