Anser Charter School

K-5th Grade Expeditions

EL Education at Anser Charter School

Our Vision

ANSER's vision is to educate the whole child in a collaborative learning community where individuals are inspired to achieve their academic potential, be self-motivated and feel a sense of connection and responsibility to the world.

Our Mission

ANSER's mission is to foster learning that imagines a better world and works toward realizing it; set high academic standards; promote creativity, discovery, reflection and balance; embrace diversity; and use developmentally appropriate practices and real-world experiences to educate within a climate of collaboration, community, character, and compassion.

Anser Charter School is a proud EL Education–credentialed school, where learning is designed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it through high academic standards, real-world experiences, and strong character. Grounded in a nationally recognized model, our approach promotes creativity, discovery, reflection, balance, and compassion while educating the whole child in a collaborative learning community.

As an EL Education school, Anser demonstrates high levels of implementation across three domains of student achievement:

Student Mastery of Knowledge and Skills

- Students build deep understanding and academic excellence, demonstrated through strong performance on state assessments and meaningful classroom learning.

High-Quality Student Work

- Students create authentic, rigorous work that reflects complexity, craftsmanship, and purpose—often designed for real audiences and real impact.

Character Development

- Students grow essential habits such as collaboration, responsibility, perseverance, and respect within a school culture rooted in community, character, and compassion.

Through hands-on, inquiry-driven expeditions and developmentally appropriate learning experiences, students connect their studies to the real world, becoming self-motivated learners who feel a sense of responsibility to others and to the world.

At Anser, EL Education comes to life through our shared belief: We are Crew, not passengers. Every student is known, challenged, and supported to achieve their academic potential while developing the confidence, empathy, and purpose to make a difference.

EL Education

Additional Curriculum at Anser Charter School

At Anser, students experience a coherent, research-based academic program that builds strong foundational skills, deep understanding, and a love of learning. Our curriculum combines Bridges in Mathematics, UFLI Foundations, and EL Education modules to ensure students grow as thinkers, readers, problem-solvers, and compassionate citizens.

Mathematics: Bridges in Mathematics (K–5)
Anser uses Bridges in Mathematics, a nationally respected curriculum that blends conceptual understanding, procedural skill, and real-world application. Students learn mathematics by solving problems, explaining their thinking, and working collaboratively.

As students progress through the grades, Bridges supports deeper problem-solving, flexible thinking, and mathematical confidence. Learn more at mathlearningcenter.org

Early Literacy: UFLI Foundations (K–2)
To ensure all students become strong, confident readers, Anser uses UFLI Foundations, a structured, science-based literacy program that builds the phonics, decoding, and spelling skills essential for reading success.
Through a carefully designed scope and sequence, students develop:

- Phoneme blending and segmentation
- Accurate and automatic sound-symbol knowledge
- Strong decoding and word recognition skills
- Spelling and writing connected to reading
- Fluency with both regular and irregular words
- Reading and writing of connected text

UFLI provides the systematic instruction and daily practice young learners need to become fluent, joyful readers. Learn more at ufli.education.ufl.edu

Deep Learning Through EL Education Modules and Expeditions
Across all grade levels, Anser students engage in EL Education modules and High Quality Expeditions—rich, interdisciplinary units built around powerful questions, real-world issues, and high-quality literature and texts. These modules and Expeditions connect reading, writing, science, and social studies while helping students think critically, collaborate, and produce meaningful work.
Through EL modules and Expeditions, students:

- Read complex, engaging texts
- Write for real purposes and audiences
- Conduct research and share learning
- Develop strong academic habits and character
- See how their learning connects to the world

Together, Bridges, UFLI, and EL Education ensure that Anser students receive a balanced, rigorous, and inspiring education that prepares them academically while nurturing curiosity, confidence, and compassion.

Kindergarten Expedition

BIRD EXPLORATION

Guiding Questions

- What makes a bird a bird?
- Why protect birds?

Each year, kindergartners engage in a year-long study of birds, an ideal focus for this age group because birds are highly visible and easily observed in students' everyday lives. This sustained investigation invites young learners to slow down, notice the natural world around them, and develop curiosity through firsthand experiences.

Guided by age-appropriate inquiry questions, kindergartners learn to observe, identify, and describe different kinds of birds. They explore birds' physical features, behaviors, habitats, and needs, discovering how birds live not only in their own backyards but also in diverse environments around the world. Through stories, research, outdoor observation, and creative expression, students build foundational science and literacy skills while deepening their understanding of living things.

The study also emphasizes responsibility and care for the natural world. Through habitat improvement projects, simple research, and service learning, kindergartners learn about the fragile nature of wildlife and the importance of stewardship. By the end of the year, students see themselves as caretakers of living things and recognize their role in protecting and respecting the world around them.

1st Grade Expeditions

BOX CITY

Guiding Questions

- What is a community, and why is it important?
- What do people, places, and helpers need to help a community thrive?
- How can I be a helpful member of my community?

In Box City, students work as a Crew to explore what makes a community function and thrive. Through hands-on investigation and collaborative learning, students study community helpers, essential places and spaces, mapping and zoning, accessibility, and the systems that support healthy, inclusive communities.

Students apply their learning by designing, planning, and constructing a shared Box City, making intentional decisions about layout, purpose, and community needs. Throughout the process, students practice teamwork, problem-solving, and civic responsibility. The expedition culminates with students showcasing their work at the Future City Competition at Boise State University, where they share their designs, ideas, and solutions with a broader audience.

WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Guiding Questions

- How do authors plan and tell stories?
- How do stories have a beginning, middle, and end?
- How can I share my ideas clearly with readers?

In Writers' Workshop, students deepen their storytelling skills by studying authors' craft, story structure, planning, and sequencing. Building on learning from the Box City Expedition, students analyze mentor texts to understand how writers develop characters, settings, and plot.

Through guided lessons, collaborative discussions, and independent practice, students apply these techniques as they plan, draft, revise, and publish their own original books. Emphasis is placed on creativity, clarity, and perseverance, helping students grow as confident writers who can share meaningful stories with an audience.

LIFE CYCLE

Guiding Questions

- What does it mean to be alive?
- How do living things grow and change over time?
- How can scientists observe and learn from living things?

In the Lifecycle Expedition, students explore what it means to be alive by investigating the life cycles of worms and other living organisms. Through hands-on observation and inquiry, students learn about growth, change, and the basic needs of living things.

Students engage in simple scientific investigations as they plan, conduct, observe, and document plant experiments. Working alongside buddies, they practice asking questions, making predictions, recording observations, and drawing conclusions–just like real scientists. This expedition emphasizes curiosity, collaboration, and care for living systems, helping students build foundational science skills while developing respect for the natural world.

2nd Grade Expeditions

SECRET LIFE OF POLLINATION

What happens when city and wilderness meet?

Guiding Question

- What is the importance of pollination?

Second grade begins the year by exploring what it means to be part of a community, both human and natural. Students investigate the interconnected roles that individuals play within communities before diving into the fascinating world of pollination. Through hands-on research and inquiry, students study a variety of Idaho pollinators and native plants, learning how these species depend on one another to survive and thrive. As part of this work, students build essential geography skills–such as map reading, spatial awareness, and location-based research–which they use to document habitats, track species, and deepen their understanding of Idaho's ecosystems. This integrated approach helps students see how communities, environments, and geography are deeply connected.

BOISE FOOTHILLS

Guiding Question

- What happens when city and wilderness meet?
- How does human impact affect the Boise foothills?

The second case study shifts students' focus to the geography, ecosystems, and habitats of the Boise Foothills. Students investigate how the foothills have changed over time, examining natural processes that shape landforms as well as seasonal and long-term environmental changes. Through observation, research, and analysis, students explore the plants and animals that call the foothills home and how these organisms are adapted to their environment. The case study also emphasizes the impact of human activity on the foothills, prompting students to consider land use, conservation, and stewardship. By connecting physical geography with environmental responsibility, students develop a deeper understanding of how people and place influence one another.

3rd Grade Expeditions

THE POWER OF READING

Guiding Questions

- Why do people read?
- How can people get access to the books they want?
- What barriers to book access might people experience?

The Power of Reading explores why reading matters, how people access books, and the barriers some individuals face. Through literary texts, discussion, and narrative writing, students build comprehension and analytical skills while examining how stories build empathy and express identity. The course culminates in a class-created library and Book Tour that celebrates learning and the importance of reading in students' lives and communities.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF FROGS

Guiding Questions

- What is the power of asking and answering "why" questions?
- How do people build knowledge and share ideas about a topic, such as frogs?
- Why is it important for people to learn about frogs?

The Wonderful World of Frogs invites students to explore frogs through poetry, stories, and informational texts driven by curiosity and "why" questions. Students learn about frog traits, habitats, and behaviors while building research, writing, and collaboration skills. By blending imagination with inquiry, they practice gathering, organizing, and sharing information to better understand the natural world.

THE WATER CHALLENGE: ENOUGH CLEAN WATER FOR EVERYONE

Guiding Questions

- Why are the world's sources of freshwater important?
- What threatens the world's supply of freshwater?
- How can people work together to protect our global well?

The Water Challenge: Enough Clean Water for Everyone explores global water systems and access to clean water through research and informational texts. Students build critical thinking and communication skills as they analyze water issues, form opinions, and propose solutions. The course culminates in public service announcements and visuals that promote responsible water use and positive change.

THE DECISIONS WE MAKE ABOUT MONEY

Guiding Questions

- What is money and how is it used?
- What influences people's decisions about money?
- How can people make positive change with their money decisions?

The Decisions We Make About Money builds financial literacy and critical thinking as students explore how people earn, save, spend, and share money. Through texts and real-world examples, students analyze money choices and the values behind them while strengthening reading, writing, and communication skills. The course emphasizes empathy, responsibility, and using money as a tool for positive change.

4th Grade Expeditions

POETIC FORMS & INSPIRING MINDS

Guiding Questions

- *What inspires people to create poetry and other forms of artistic expression?*
- *What inspires me to write poetry?*

The Art of Poetry engages students in reading, analyzing, and writing poetry through novels in verse, classic and contemporary poems, and poet biographies. Students study how poets use language, imagery, and structure to express meaning and emotion while building close reading, writing, and presentation skills. The course culminates in students creating and performing original poems, developing creativity, confidence, and a strong author's voice.

DEVELOPING BRAINS AND CHANGING MINDS

Guiding Questions

- *How does the brain help us think, feel, and move?*
- *What helps our brains stay strong and healthy?*
- *How does knowing about the brain help us learn and get along with others?*

The Brain and How We Learn introduces students to how the brain and nervous system support thinking, feeling, and learning through engaging texts and discussion. Students build scientific knowledge and academic skills by using domain-specific vocabulary, writing informative pieces, and exploring multiple perspectives. The course encourages curiosity, perseverance, and a deeper understanding of how the brain supports growth and creativity.

IDAHO HISTORY

Guiding Questions

- *Why do people move, and how does moving change people and communities?*
- *How has Idaho's land and geography shaped its people and resources?*
- *How did westward expansion change the United States and the people who lived here?*

In this expedition, students explore how movement has shaped the American West, with a special focus on Idaho's landscape, peoples, and history. Students study how geology and geography influenced Indigenous cultures, natural resources, and settlement, as well as key moments of westward expansion such as the Louisiana Purchase, the Corps of Discovery, and the Oregon Trail. Through maps, primary sources, and case studies, students examine how migration changed both the land and the people, connecting Idaho's story to the larger history of the American West.

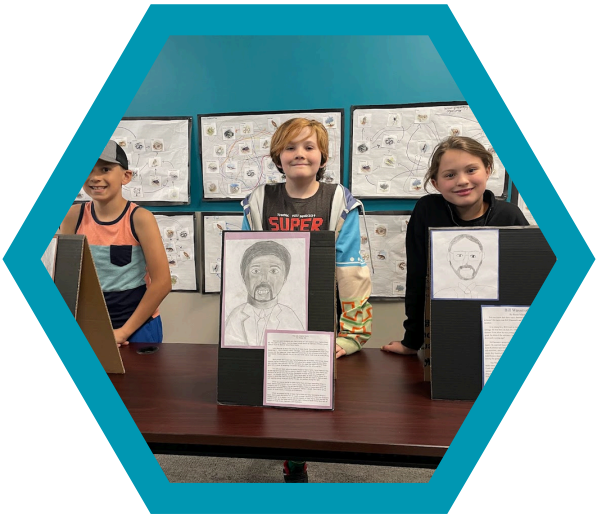
EQUAL RIGHTS AND THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Guiding Questions

- *What does equal rights mean, and why did people fight for the 19th Amendment?*
- *How can the struggles of the suffrage movement inspire action and change today?*

Equal Rights and the 19th Amendment explores past and present injustices through the study of the women's suffrage and civil rights movements. Using historical fiction and informational texts, students analyze key figures and events while building reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. The course culminates in students creating public service announcements that promote civic engagement, empathy, and positive change.

5th Grade Expeditions



STORIES OF HOPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Guiding Questions

- *What can stories teach us about hope and human rights?*

Throughout the module, students explore hope and human rights as they read narratives and nonfiction; engage in pair, small group, and whole-class discussions; and write narratives. The anchor text of the module is Esperanza Rising, a novel by Pam Muñoz Ryan that is about her grandmother, a privileged Mexican girl whose life is changed by the death of her father and a sudden move to California with her mother. By focusing on key themes about the importance of family, hope, and determination, the unit helps students make sense of a story about severe challenges without reducing the story to one of struggle. Students are guided to make connections between Esperanza Rising and other stories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in order to understand the rights to which everyone should be entitled.

VOICES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Guiding Questions

- *How did the American Revolution affect the different people living in America at the time?*
- *How do multiple perspectives better help us understand the American Revolution?*

Students learn about the experiences and perspectives of different people in the American Revolution through informational texts, a novel, a play, and poems. They analyze characters in texts and write informational literary essays about concerns characters have. Students also analyze the structure of literary and informational texts.
Connecting to this module, students will learn about our government structure using We the People textbooks, and will take a trip to Idaho's capitol building while the legislature is in session.

COMMUNITY ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Guiding Questions

- *What is energy and where does it come from?*
- *How do different energy sources impact people and the environment?*

Students will learn what energy is, why we need it, how we use it, where it comes from, and how it impacts communities. Students will read an anchor text to build background knowledge about energy. They will then read supplemental articles about a variety of local energy solutions to examine and compare different points of view on energy systems, how they meet the needs of different communities, and how they affect humans and the environment. During this module, students will participate in activities involving transfer of energy through wind and solar power, and circuitry. Finally, students will create a clean energy model and write a description of how it works for their Celebration of Learning.

Curiosity & Creativity Lab (K-1)

Curiosity and Creativity Lab is a dedicated space and time for students to express and explore wonder–wonder about the world around them and wonder about themselves. Through a diverse offering of STEAM experiences, with a strong emphasis on the arts, students are invited to inquire, investigate, invent, design, and create.

Learners engage in hands-on opportunities to grapple with ideas, construct solutions, practice skills, perform, and reflect–stretching their thinking and breathing life into new understandings. By interacting with the world as both scientists and artists, students build essential skills in asking meaningful questions, observing carefully, collaborating creatively, and joyfully connecting with others and their environment.

PE (K-1)

PE activities focus on developing large motor muscle coordination, balance, flexibility, strength, and endurance. Students participate in a variety of games and cooperative activities designed to promote positive social and emotional growth, teamwork, and collaboration skills. Emphasis is placed on the importance of movement as a lifelong contributor to overall health and well-being, helping students build healthy habits and a positive relationship with physical activity.

Urban PE Lab (2nd-5th)

Urban PE Lab is an experiential physical education course that builds motor skills, confidence, and character through purposeful movement in both indoor and outdoor urban environments. Students develop foundational motor skills, teamwork, sportsmanship, and perseverance while embracing the mindset that we do hard things on purpose.

Through partnerships such as Safe Routes, students participate in bike safety instruction and Greenbelt riding experiences that promote active transportation, environmental stewardship, and responsible use of shared community spaces. Fourth-grade students also have opportunities to visit Boise State University for motor learning assessments, deepening their understanding of how practice supports growth and improvement.

In the gym, students engage in age-appropriate skill development, cooperative games, team challenges, and sports experiences. Lessons balance high-energy movement with reflection and mindfulness, reinforcing respect, resilience, and care for one another and the environment. Urban PE Lab encourages students to move with purpose, embrace challenge, support their peers, and develop lifelong habits of health, responsibility, and joy in physical activity.

Curiosity & Creativity Lab (2nd-5th)

Curiosity & Creativity Lab is a dedicated space and time for students to create, express, and explore wonder–wonder about the world around them and wonder about themselves. With a strong emphasis on the arts, this course also integrates targeted STEAM experiences developed in collaboration with the K-1 Curiosity & Creativity Lab, ensuring a cohesive and spiraling learning experience across grade levels.

Through hands-on, inquiry-based learning, students are invited to create, investigate, invent, design, construct, and practice. They will grapple with ideas, stretch their thinking, collaborate with peers, and reflect deeply on their learning. Interacting with the world through the dual lenses of artist and scientist, students build both individual and collective capacity to ask meaningful questions, observe carefully, think creatively, and work collaboratively.

Curiosity & Creativity Lab is a place where students explore “What is?” while imagining “What if?”–fostering joyful connection, creative confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Library Lab (K-5th)

Library Lab is a once-a-week learning block that provides K-5 students with dedicated time to build strong reading foundations while developing curiosity, creativity, and confidence as learners. Through a balance of focused mini-lessons, hands-on Creation Station activities, and independent book selection, students practice essential literacy skills while exploring their interests and discovering the joy of reading. Library Lab supports a wide range of learners by offering both targeted instruction and meaningful choice, ensuring every student has opportunities to grow, engage, and feel successful.