

**YOU  
WANT  
TO  
TEACH  
HERE**



# About Sycamore Valley Academy

## A K-8 Charter School featuring...

- Gifted education
- Multi-age classrooms
- Differentiation /personalization
- Project-based learning (“PBL”)
- Art & Art History
- Spanish language instruction
- Hands-on Science
- Service-Learning
- Thematic Learning Units
- Social-emotional learning (“SEL”)
- Authentic Assessment, including multiple measures and portfolios
- Uniform Dress Code
- Parent Partnering
- Tuition-Free
- Optional After-School Program

# Grow Your Teaching Career

## *at Sycamore Valley Academy*

SVA was founded in 2012 upon a simple idea: our children deserve a world class education. It was our intention to root an institution in the right principles so that our students and teachers would be able to reach their highest potential, grounded in the right assumptions about learning and with the freedom to innovate.

### **Our Mission**

The mission of Sycamore Valley Academy is to provide a rich, meaningful education in a nurturing environment, where students are continually challenged and their natural curiosity, creativity, and talents can thrive. SVA is a collaborative community of educators and families working together to help our students grow into virtuous, courageous, and intelligent citizens, equipped with a love of learning and a love of life, and eager to contribute to a better world.

### **Our Vision**

SVA models transformative change in education by elevating expectations of learning and growth. With grit, tenacity, and empathy, we improve the world around us by embracing challenges as problem-solvers. We create an inclusive community with access to rigorous and enriching educational experiences that challenge and support individuals to achieve their personal best and realize new opportunities.

**SVA seeks educators who are fiercely dedicated to our mission and vision.**

# How do you want to grow?

After teacher credentialing, the school site is the primary source of teachers' professional development opportunities.

Sycamore Valley Academy provides teachers with the kinds of learning and training teachers *actually* want: we provide our staff the tools and professional growth opportunities they need to become excellent teachers!



## You'll love teaching at SVA!

We offer our teachers...

- *Cutting edge professional development, including:*
  - training in best practices in Gifted Education/ differentiation,
  - Project-Based Learning (PBL),
  - Lucy Calkins Reading and Writing Units of Study,
  - Number Talks,
  - Common Core,
  - Lesson Variety (including inquiry-based methods),
  - BTSA (for qualifying teachers) with seasoned veterans
  - Attendance at conferences and County Office trainings
- *Encouraging culture of collaboration and support*
- *Small, family-like school community and smaller class sizes*
- *Competitive salary and benefits package*
- *A community committed to the success of the whole child*
- *Higher than average "prep time" (average 4.5 hours/week)*
- *Classroom supplies account credit of \$800/year*
- *Opportunity to do meaningful service learning with your students*
- *Higher than average field trip budget, funded by our PTO*
- *Ongoing observations and feedback from administration*
- *A teaching team that is top-notch: peers you can learn from*
- *Discounted participation in our after-school programs (\$20/student/mo)*
- *Children of staff enjoy lottery exemption (guaranteed admission) in our exceptional school!*

# Meet our Illustrious Staff

Read all about us! Staff Bios are available on our website under the "Our People" tab.

*"As a way to help teachers grow, stay passionate about education, and keep up to date with valued teaching strategies, Sycamore Valley Academy invests in its teachers. Yearly, teachers have the opportunity to attend conferences, seminars, book studies, and curriculum workshops. Needless to say, an up-to-date, educated teacher is beneficial for students of any age!"*

*Educators at SVA are trusted with the freedom to make decisions that are best for their students. Every child is unique . . . classrooms are the same in this regard. No class is ever alike, so teachers need to be given the ownership to make those executive decisions that will help students succeed. SVA discourages "cookie cutter" classrooms in which all students need to be doing the same thing, regardless of ability, interest, or appropriateness. What is encouraged is true authentic learning, challenging students of varying levels, and basically respecting each student and his/her needs.*



*I could fill pages and pages describing the many aspects of Sycamore Valley Academy that I have come to appreciate as both an educator and as a parent of an SVA student.*

*As an educator, it is nothing short of a dream job.*

*As a parent, I feel blessed watching my child*

*excited about school to the point of her crying when she is too sick to go! SVA is truly a wonderful community filled with rich academia, amazingly supportive families, and dedicated educators."* — **Sandra Padilla**



# SVA is a great place to work!

The collaborative culture of our school builds relationships. Anyone here will tell you, the SVA community feels like a family.

Our staff, including teachers, administrators, and support staff, work together in a cooperative spirit. Through this culture of collaboration, relationships are built upon mutual respect, with every individual valued for their talents and strengths. With such genuine community support and love, many of our staff are great friends.

## We Have Fun Together, Too!

Every January, SVA Principal/Superintendent Ruth Dutton hosts a New Year's party for all staff at her home. We toast the accomplishments of the academic year so far and talk about all of the many ways our school will be growing and improving in the new calendar year!

Check out our staff music videos here: <http://tinyurl.com/jx7h7jg>





# What Parents Say about SVA . . .

*"SVA students and staff are a community of learners. The SVA teachers put an enormous amount of effort in ensuring that each student's needs are addressed. They go above and beyond every day by sending home individualized challenge*



*homework or ensuring students with skill deficiencies get the help they need. The teachers create an atmosphere where the students encourage each other to push their learning limits.*

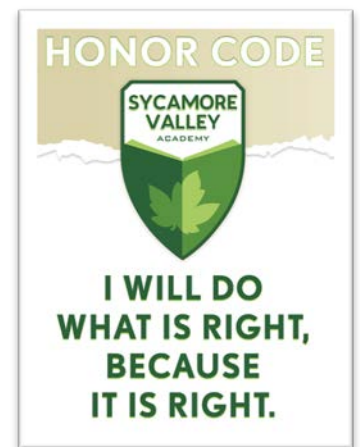
*Though the school is relatively small, they provide extensive services. SVA has a nurse, library, science room, hot lunch, after-school care, as well as before- and after-school transportation available to students. The staff is strong*

*and consistent in their direction and values . . . the students complete at least one substantial project each term; the themed projects excite the students and contribute to a deeper learning. I find the school to carry an incredible balance of strength and humility."*

— Sasha Anderson

*"We are utterly relieved and grateful for SVA. The past few months have been so rewarding, watching Tynan really start living up to her potential. Unimpeded by boredom from busywork or fear of peer attitude, all that is brilliant and beautiful about her is ever more apparent.*

*The collaborative, project-based environment has her enjoying every subject at school again. She is delighted that her ideas and questions are welcome in the classroom, and feels motivated to return her teachers' respect by improving everything from her handwriting to her interpersonal skills. The frequent group projects and constructive communication instruction have dramatically increased her confidence. She has taken SVA's Honor Code to "Do What is Right, Because is Right" to heart . . . this most basic and applicable code becoming as much a part of her identity as her love of science.*



*The hard work you and your amazing staff put into providing an education for the whole of each student is deeply appreciated. Thank you thank you thank you!*

— Eric and Mary Hetherington

# What Students Say about SVA . . .



Student Name Jonah Van Orman Grade 8

Dear SVA,

This is my first year at SVA and first year at a Charter School so it took time to get used to the small class sizes and only having a couple of teachers. I had to get used to a different teaching and learning style, but after about the second week I was having a great time. Now as we come to the end of our second trimester I have realized just how lucky students at SVA are. Students aren't forced to go page by page through a text book, they have a lot of freedom as to what they want to learn. Small classes create the perfect environment for more focused learning which leads to accelerated learning. I believe the students attending SVA will leave with an educational and social advantage over many classmates and peers.

Sincerely,

Jonah



Also learning is so fun because we have hands on activities. It seems just like a game but when I come home, I realized I learned a few more facts because of the game.



# Who We Are Looking For

## Thinkers

If we want thinking children, we need thinking teachers. We look for teachers who can reflect on the process of learning, on pedagogy, on the nature of children, and the role of the 21st Century educator. SVA prides itself on being a professional environment that does not micromanage its teachers; we look for teachers who are thoughtful and deliberative, worthy of that trust.

## Doers

Working at a charter school is fundamentally different than working at a district or private school. We are nimble and ever-changing as we continuously pursue our mission/vision. Ideas that bubble up from staff conversations are implementable right away. We want staff who not only have good ideas or the ability to constructively criticize, but also those who have the "can do!" attitude and offer their own hands to bring the ideas to fruition.

## Lovers

Love is at the forefront of this institution: love of children, love of learning, love of each other, love of ideas, love of life. We want optimists who embrace challenge with realistic vision and who work from a place, ultimately, of love. We want teammates who uplift, who bring their joy and passion to work with them, who assume the best in others at all times. The work we do is hard! But it is lightened by a community full of encouragement and love.

## Believers

Our school has lofty goals. We don't just want to be an option for families; we want to be an excellent option for families. We hire staff who believe in children's innate curiosity and propensity to learn, and because of that, have the patience and trust to design lessons that put students in the driver's seat. We hire staff who believe that our goals (as articulated in our mission/vision), while challenging, are worth pursuing and possible to achieve, and who want to give their talents toward that aim.

## The Hiring Process

Sycamore Valley hires only the best of the best. We take pride in hiring well and maintaining an excellent staff, and we recognize that the talent of our staff is essential to our success. Because of this, we have an extensive hiring process that enables us to get to know candidates well, so that as our school grows in size, it also grows in excellence.

We first screen applicants based on qualifications and complete applications. After that initial screening, we look for applicants whose responses on the Career Interest Form and *Target Success Sketch* (available through Edjoin) indicate a good philosophical fit with the school. As the pool of applicants narrows, we then schedule interviews, where candidates are asked to bring a portfolio or artifact to help us get to know them. If necessary, SVA may conduct a second interview or visit teachers in their current classrooms. Last, we make offers of employment to the most qualified candidates who have the greatest talent to offer our school.



## Sycamore Valley Academy Salary Schedule 2015-16

### Core Academic Teachers & Instructional Coach (Certificated)- Base Salary

Intern 1	Intern 2	A	B	C	D	E	F
\$44,558	\$48,395	\$50,283	\$56,896	\$65,180	\$74,500	\$82,457	\$87,260

In order for individuals to move horizontally, he/she must meet all of the following requirements:

Intern 1= Individual has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) short term permit, provisional intern permit, credential waiver or internship credential without subject matter competency.

Intern 2= Individual has a BA/BS degree, intern credential with subject matter competency (HQ under NCLB and state law) or designated subject credential without BA/BS degree.

Class A= Individual has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) any regular credential or designated subject credential (with or without 30 upper division or graduate semester units), and 3) is beginning his/her first, second, or third year of full-time teaching.

Class B= An individual may move to Class B after he/she has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) any regular credential or designated subject credential (with or without 30 upper division or graduate semester units), 3) is beginning his/her fourth, fifth, or sixth year of full-time teaching.

Class C= An individual may move to Class C after he/she has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) any regular credential or designated subject credential, 3) 30 upper division or graduate semester units, and 4) is beginning his/her seventh, eighth, ninth, or tenth year of full-time teaching.

Class D= An individual may move to Class D after he/she has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) any regular credential or designated subject credential, 3) 45 upper division or graduate semester units OR MA degree, and 4) is beginning his/her eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth year of full-time teaching.

Class E= An individual may move to Class E after he/she has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) any regular credential or designated subject credential, 3) 45 upper division or graduate semester units OR MA degree, and 4) is beginning his/her fourteenth, fifteenth, or sixteenth year of full-time teaching.

Class F= An individual may move to Class F after he/she has 1) a BA/BS degree, 2) any regular credential or designated subject credential, 3) 60 upper division or graduate semester units including MA degree, and 4) is beginning his/her seventeenth or greater years of full-time teaching.

**Newly Hired Teachers** are placed into the Class that fits their years of experience and their completed credentialing. SVA shall grant, upon initial employment, a **maximum of 11 years of credit** for placement on the salary schedule. Credit will only be awarded for previous, verifiable experience for full-time positions within the United States, so long as the employee possessed a valid teaching credential for each year of experience credit requested.

Core Academic Teachers in part-time positions ("job sharing") at Sycamore Valley Academy, with 50% or greater responsibility, accrue service years at a 1 to 1 rate (as if they are full-time). Only job sharing service time performed at *Sycamore Valley Academy* is credited this way.

SVA teachers are members of **STRS** (State Teachers Retirement System). Additionally, Employee may contribute to a 403b for retirement. There is no matching Employer contribution to the 403b at this time.

Full time teachers receive an Employer contribution of \$834/month for Health, Dental, Vision, and Basic Life insurance.

### Stipends & Extra Duty Opportunities at Sycamore Valley Academy

- \$1000 stipend is added to the base salary of Core Academic full-time teachers and the Vice Principal or Principal/Superintendent for possessing a Ph.D. or equivalent degree.
- For extra duties completed beyond the regular contract, teachers may earn the hourly pay rate above, "Core Academic Teachers-Hourly Rate" or a stipend for services provided. (*For example, managing afterschool tutors/intervention program, taking on an assigned special project, etc.*)

# What is a Charter School?

Charter schools are tuition-free, public schools open to any student who wishes to attend. Each charter school is governed by its own local school community. This freedom allows teachers to be more innovative, and communities to shape their local school.



SVA is a fully autonomous ("independent") charter school, authorized to operate by VUSD, but with its own governing board. All federal requirements, and some state requirements, apply to charter schools. The charter authorizing entity is responsible for ensuring the charter school operates in compliance with all applicable laws and the terms of its charter.

The basic idea behind the charter school concept is that local community members are able to join together to design a school to meet local needs, and that in so doing, positive ripple effects will result within our public school system. SVA is proud to be the first and only autonomous charter school authorized by VUSD, and is proud to be a part of the larger charter school movement as well.



## Sycamore Valley Academy K-8 Charter

6832 Avenue 280  
Visalia, CA 93277

P.O. Box 1189  
Visalia, CA 93279

Phone: 559.622.3236  
[www.sycamorevalleyacademy.org](http://www.sycamorevalleyacademy.org)

Fax: 559.622.3237  
[office@sycamorevalleyacademy.org](mailto:office@sycamorevalleyacademy.org)

*For more information, including how to apply, visit:*

<http://www.sycamorevalleyacademy.org/#!careers-at-sva/xltbo>