



## Frequently Asked Questions



### A little background

#### When did Bok Academy open?

Classes began August 2008.

#### What makes this school different?

Edward Bok Academy (Bok) is part of the Lake Wales Charter Schools (LWCS) system and has more freedom to create academic programs to meet the needs of our student population:

- We are small enough to know all our students and address their needs in a more personal manner.
- We have a global perspective.
- Our connection with the LWCS enable us to make quick course corrections, if needed.
- We provide more access to technology than most schools currently operating in Polk County.
- We use architecture and design as an integrating device throughout the curriculum.
- Our focus requires all students to be involved with community service work.
- Bok's organic garden projects and global curriculum provide hands-on opportunities.
- We work with the Lake Wales CARE Center to improve the lives of families in need.
- Bok has a direct connection to a national treasure: Bok Tower Gardens.
- Civility is a core component of the curriculum.
- Bok has a Center for Science & Nature on our waterfront campus.

### Campus basics

#### How big is Bok Academy?

We opened with 350-375 students, but now we have a population of about 540 students in grades 6-8.

#### Where is the school?

Bok Academy is located at 13901 S. Hwy. 27 across from the main campus of Warner University. (Bok is on property previously owned by Warner.) We are on beautiful Crooked Lake.

#### When does school start each day?

#### How long is the school day?

We start at 9 a.m. and end at 3:52 p.m.

#### Is there transportation?

Yes. LWCS provides bus transportation for Bok. Eligibility is the same as the Polk County Public Schools district, which follows state guidelines that students must live 2 miles or more from school to be eligible to ride the bus.

We have bus routes throughout the greater Lake Wales area, as well as one route into southeast Winter Haven (Thompson Nursery/Lake Ruby area).

#### Does Bok follow the same calendar as other Polk public schools?

All LWCS schools currently follow the Polk County calendar.

#### Is there a school lunch program?

Yes. We work with the Polk Food Service Department to provide school meals. Eventually, we expect to have our own full kitchen facility.

### Joining the student body

#### Who should apply?

We want students who have a proven academic record or students who are ready to become scholars. We need students who are curious about life and learning, students who seek a high level of achievement, and students who believe it is possible to change the world!

We want students who are willing to help improve the Lake Wales community. We want students who started asking, "Why?" before kindergarten and have not stopped. The students we seek are kids who want to have unique adventures. We want students who will have fun, but who know that good behavior is expected.

Our goal is for the student body to be much more diverse than most magnet schools. We are seeking students who represent all ethnic groups, neighborhoods, and students from across the socio-economic spectrum.

#### Who is eligible to attend?

All students in the greater Lake Wales community who are interested in a rigorous program in grades 6-8 are eligible to attend. (We also can accept students from other communities.)

It is important for parents to clearly understand Bok's mission and purpose before encouraging their child to apply. Becoming a part of the Bok community comes with responsibility and a full family commitment to support the staff's efforts to live up to the ideals outlined in the Bok Charter.



### **Can I still apply?**

Yes! Students will be admitted on a space-available basis or added to the waiting list, once all spaces are filled in that grade level.

Applications are available at any Lake Wales Charter Schools elementary school or Bok Academy. Completed applications must be returned by mail or hand-delivered to Bok Academy, 13901 Hwy. 27 South, Lake Wales FL 33859.

### **Do I have to accept or decline the offer if my child gets in?**

Yes, failure to accept or decline the offer will result in losing your student's space. You can accept or decline by returning the postcard you receive with your student's acceptance letter.

After the winter Open Enrollment period, we mail out notification letters. (Students who apply after the winter Open Enrollment are applying on a space-available basis, or being added to the waiting list.)

### **How will Bok enrollment procedures shape the Bok student community?**

Bok's Charter clearly states that this school will create a community where students from different socio-economic

groups will have an equal chance for academic success and full access to a rigorous educational opportunity. Bok's student body reflects the rich diversity found in the Lake Wales community and serves as a research base for Warner University's lab school.

## **Foundation for learning**

### **Will we have to study a lot?**

Yes! In order to take a plunge into substantive learning, students must be committed to building a foundation of knowledge that will become the basic framework for all other studies. Having an authentic desire to learn is the first step for Bok scholars.

### **Will students have ESE and gifted services?**

Our curriculum is perfectly suited for gifted students. While we have services for ESE, all students need to be on track for a standard diploma. Our technology component enables us to offer students independent/online study opportunities. The collaboration with Warner University and our other partners enables us to enrich our curriculum in many creative ways.

### **What is the curriculum?**

The baseline curriculum follows the Sunshine State Standards and all the related curriculum requirements dictated by the state. In addition,

we follow the Polk County Public Schools' K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan. We will raise the bar significantly.

For more details, read the Bok Charter:

[www.lwcharterschools.com/edwardbok/Home1.html](http://www.lwcharterschools.com/edwardbok/Home1.html)

### **Are there extended learning opportunities or workshops for students?**

Yes, there will be extended opportunities for students. We will hold an orientation for new students to become familiar with the "Bok Way of Life." Our alliance with Warner University enables us to offer unique workshops for students and teachers.

### **Are there single-gender classes?**

Yes. We are working with educational experts from Stetson University, who have successfully worked with other schools to implement single-gender classes.

### **Will some courses be eligible for high school credit?**

We want to ensure that advanced students can progress as rapidly as possible. We will look at each student's needs and abilities, and develop an appropriate plan, which may include virtual on-line coursework.

### **Do you have a traditional sports program?**

We have basketball, volleyball, track, soccer and golf. Bok also has martial arts, a mountain bike program, and kayaking.

### **Do math and science have a special emphasis?**

Yes, we have rich math and science programs that spiral through every aspect of our curriculum. Our math curriculum is based on the work of Mike Bell and the ACALETICS math programs that have been featured in the *Miami Herald* and *Education Week*.

We use the Organic Farming Project (Bok Farms) as a key part of our agri-science curriculum, with its gardens and small animals, including goats and rabbits.

Students also may participate in robotics and Rocket Club.

### **What other type of programs are offered?**

Bok has steel drums, band, chorus and strings music programs. The strings program is coordinated by Meg Smith. Band and chorus are closely associated with the LWHS Highlander Music Program. We also have a dance program.

### **Will character education be taught?**

Absolutely! Bok offers an education that strengthens the character and ethics of our students. The program is not a pre-packaged program, but one pulls from many sources to advance the notion that a life should be lived at full engagement and with a high degree of integrity and authenticity.

Resources that will be used to support this effort:

- Key philosophers with special emphasis on the works of Plato – his thought that everything in life falls into three categories: knowledge, conduct, and governance.
- *Moral Leadership* by Robert Coles.
- Biographies of lives of merit, current and historical.
- Dr. Benjamin Carson's Think Big program.
- *The Essential 55* – bestselling book by a National Teacher of the Year.



- Guiding principles that are common in all religions.

“Tectonics Behavioral Program” brings about authentic and deep structural changes in the behavior in students. We will expose students to the notion that individual patterns of behavior shape their lives and help them to control their future. In conjunction with these offerings, Bok’s Martial Arts program reinforces self-discipline and self-respect.

Bok will have a Visiting Scholars Program that will teach Ethics and Leadership.

### **What does architecture and design have to do with a middle school curriculum?**

Using architecture and design as an integrating device brings a global perspective to the curriculum. This approach engages the intellectual, emotional, and ethical life of middle school students by capturing their imagination and teaching them to be designers and architects of their own learning. This curriculum also includes historical preservation and environmental stewardship. A teacher can use the “built environment” to teach every discipline.

Bok will push kids to think with projects that encompass the principles of architecture and design. This approach places math and science at the core of the curriculum.

In addition to these two disciplines, attention to architecture and design helps students understand the patterns in life. Just as literature is the written record of the human spirit, architecture is a record of the human spirit in stone. We teach students to see patterns around them, and take a deeper look and attempt to understand. We ask students to see with new eyes.

Our alliance with Bok Tower Gardens and access to Pinewood Estate will be an excellent way to teach architecture and land stewardship. This is where Edward Bok’s life and legacy will be etched into the Bok curriculum. Architecture will be the motif running through this school; it will serve as the school’s metaphor for all learning.

### **How does Bok Academy address the challenging social needs of middle school students?**

The teachers who are involved with Bok have a deep understanding of this age group and are committed to the creation of an engaging curriculum.

The alliance with Warner University will broaden our capability to offer wonderful field experiences. The college campus has many acres for students to explore, cut biking trails, and find ways to help give back to Warner for this amazing opportunity. Our alliance with Bok Tower Gardens is a wonderful asset, and a great setting to spend a day just having fun and learning about the Ridge area. Our mountain biking program is great for riding or taking kids into the woods for a day to discover.

### **Will there be extra-curricular opportunities?**

Yes. Some of the Bok staff have great ideas waiting to be implemented with the students. We will connect with schools around the world and hope to have exchange programs with some of these schools.

### **Will experiential learning be part of the curriculum?**

Absolutely. In this area of Florida we have a gift of tremendous resources to use as teaching tools. All one has to do is drive

around the 50 miles surrounding Lake Wales and to see all the possibilities. The problem will be trying to decide which of these resources will be the most beneficial to our educational purpose.

Warner University has an area called HEART, which was designed to teach missionaries to go anywhere in the world and survive and make a life. We have access to this camp and will use it as a way to build self-sufficiency in our students. Already this year, our eighth graders have taken an expedition to the “outback” at HEART.

### **Technology bells & whistles** **How much technology does Bok have?**

As much as we could afford when we opened, including wireless connectivity, nearly 200 laptops, and smartboards in every classroom. We used a combination of state start-up funds, regular state and federal technology funding for schools, and private contributions\* to start with as much technology as possible.

Since then, we have added even more laptops. For instance, we have 45 new laptops for our Intensive Reading program (1:1 ratio so every reading student has a computer).

\*For information on contributing to Bok Academy or other needs supported by the LWCS Foundation, contact Frances McMichael at (863) 679-6560 x227 or email: [fmc michael@lwcharterschools.com](mailto:fmc michael@lwcharterschools.com)

### **Does Bok have Promethean Board Technology?**

Yes, this technology is found in every classroom at Bok. The Promethean Project enables students and teacher to have the web at ready access. The capability to have instant feedback and quick communication between students and teacher is a unique feature for this middle school.

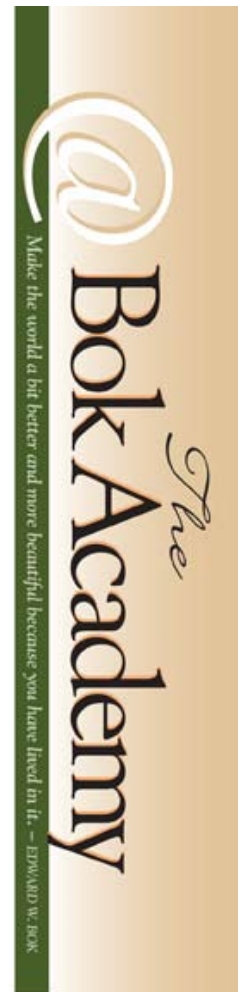
### **What is the Technology Plan?**

Our goal is to be a digital school. In this initial stage, we want to substantially increase access to technology for students. The Promethean Board Project already has been accomplished.

However, we must move with due diligence into this phase of school design with well-researched decision-making and a focus on the budgetary parameters that exist. We will seek partnerships with major companies and other foundations as we work to put the funding pieces together.

### **Must a Bok Academy student own a laptop or iPod?**

No.



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## What about support for the technology?

This is extremely important! We have to make sure that technology decisions are made with a realistic plan that our staff can reasonably support. A unique aspect of our technology plan will be to use students as a key part of our tech support team.

## How will you control student access to Web content?

This is a major issue for all students who are admitted to Bok. They must sign contracts that they will follow our technology code of ethics and technology use agreements.

If a student violates this trust, that student may be asked to leave Bok. It may mean that a student who is prone to this sort of violation is simply not ready for a school such as Bok.

This will be a serious discussion as we move forward. The issue of technology use and abuse has nothing to do with the actual computer; it has more to do with the maturity and integrity of the person using this tool. Bok needs students who are committed to doing the right thing in every aspect of their lives.

## Leading the way

### Were local teachers hired for the faculty?

Absolutely. We wanted to have a core group of teachers from Lake Wales who know this community and have ties to the history of Lake Wales. Some of the teachers who helped with planning Bok became 2008 charter faculty members.

In addition to this core staff, we hired teachers – from outside the Lake Wales community– who came to us with special skills or experiences that enrich the Bok team. We have a great staff!

Bok educators are experts in their discipline and have a deep understanding of curriculum integration. These teachers have outstanding technology skills and understand the implications of brain-based learning.

In addition, Bok teachers are idealistic and refuse to buy into any beliefs or excuses that hold kids back from reaching a higher level of achievement. We want our staff members to always maintain good senses of humor and passion for their work.

## Groundwork for success

### Will Bok follow the Polk Code of Conduct?

Yes. However, in the future Bok may choose to amend the Code of Conduct or design its own.

### Will there be any specific parental obligations?

Yes, Bok expects parents to come to pre-arranged parent/student conferences, support the philosophy and mission, understand and subscribe to the responsibility of the students' increase of technology access and sign a contract outlining the Bok parental expectations.

Further, parents are expected to volunteer and support Bok activities when possible and understand the need to support the LWCS Foundation efforts to raise funds for all charter schools.

### Is there a dress code/uniform?

Yes, we have a uniform dress code. We believe as a school and a community that our attitude about what we do and how we feel about ourselves is often influenced by what we wear.

We set out to have a diverse student body, and we achieved that goal. The school uniform is one method we use to level the playing field for all students who attend Bok Academy. Wearing a common uniform also serves to develop a strong sense of community. The Bok staff also wears shirts with Bok logos. *(Assistance is available for those families who may have trouble purchasing uniforms. Contact any Bok staff member.)*

## Community support

### What organizations are partnering with Bok?

- Bok Tower Gardens, Lake Wales
- Lake Wales Care Center
- Stetson University, DeLand
- Warner University, Lake Wales

### Will the alliance with Warner University violate the separation of church and state?

Not at all. We collaborate with Warner just as other Lake Wales schools do. The religious tenets of WU are woven into their curriculum; our curriculum is mandated by the State of Florida and the federal government. We welcome our partnership relationship with WU, just as we welcome our partnership with Bok Tower Gardens and the Care Center. All three are wonderful resources for the students of Lake Wales and great examples of stewardship and service.

### How can my community group or civic club get involved? How can I or my business make a contribution to Bok Academy?

There will be many ways for individuals and organizations to volunteer at Bok. Like every school, we need guest speakers and mentors. We also need people with special interests like architecture, technology, martial arts, and the wide range of programs described above.

For information on making a financial contribution to Bok Academy (or other needs supported by the LWCS Foundation), please contact Frances McMichael at 863-679-6560 x227 or send an email to: [fmcmichael@lwcharterschools.com](mailto:fmcmichael@lwcharterschools.com)



# Who was Edward Bok?

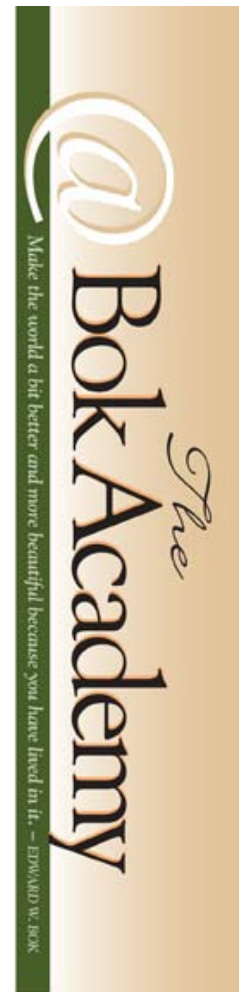
Born October 9, 1863

in Helder, The Netherlands

Died January 9, 1930

in Lake Wales, Florida

- Emigrated to New York City as a young child
- Longtime editor (1889-1919) of *The Ladies' Home Journal* magazine
- Promoted free enterprise, civic responsibility, ideals of American womanhood
- Championed reforms including demands for better labeling laws in food and drugs to assure purity; public school reform; civic beautification drives
- Won Pulitzer Prize for his autobiography *The Americanization of Edward Bok*
- Active in many kinds of philanthropy
- Sponsored American Peace Prize in 1923 to encourage USA's participation in international affairs and prevent another world war
- Spent much of his retirement in Florida, where he created a nature preserve in Lake Wales and built Bok Tower
- His oldest son, William Curtis Bok, served on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court; his grandson, Derek Bok, served as president of Harvard University



## Contact

**If you have questions,  
suggestions or want to  
volunteer:**

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