



Guiding Principles and Core Practices

COMMUNITY The school community is intentionally inclusive: we put relationships first and develop social-emotional competencies to build a strong, safe, and supportive space for all students, staff, and families.

Guiding Principles (What we believe)

- We put relationships first, before everything
- School is a safe and supportive family where every student is known, seen, and cared for
- Equity means everyone gets what they need to succeed
- We value autonomy, shared responsibility, and leadership: Teachers have the freedom to teach. Students are agents in their own education. Parents are partners. Everyone has a voice
- Social-emotional learning and development is integral throughout the culture and curriculum

Core Practices (What we do)

- ✓ We prioritize student needs and relationships through systematic student and staff activities, gatherings, and structured meetings
- ✓ We build safe and connected community through frequent and intentionally designed small-group and all-school community-building on- and off-campus activities
- ✓ Our teachers teach content AND attend to social and emotional needs and development
- ✓ We build community and a sense of connectedness among parents through frequent communication, volunteer opportunities, interactive parenting workshops, and student-led presentations of learning
- ✓ We build an empathetic, safe, and inclusive community by favoring alternatives to discipline (e.g. restorative justice, circle, in-house suspension, etc.)

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EXCELLENCE Instruction reflects high expectations, inspires *curiosity*, builds *critical skills* and promotes *deeper thinking* to close opportunity gaps

Design Principles (What we believe)

- Learning is a “productive struggle”: it is collaborative, experiential, reflective, and built on prior knowledge and student curiosity
- Effective instructional practice aligns to clearly defined outcomes, values process and product, is continuously modified in response to the results of varied assessments, and explicitly addresses and develops social and emotional skills
- We create safe classrooms environments that embrace different ways of learning to inspire creativity and promote deeper thinking in all types of learners
- Relationships and relevance precede and provide access to rigor
- Students come to us curious and ready to learn. They are successful when we encourage them to take risks, and engage them with meaningful contexts for skill-building and critical thinking

Core Practices (What we do)

- ✓ Teachers have the autonomy and time to develop relevant standards-based curriculum in collaborative teams
- ✓ We engage student curiosity and build critical skills through experiential and project-based exploration and connections to real world applications
- ✓ We prioritize reflection to maximize student growth.
- ✓ Our assessment systems distinguish student mastery of academic content from effort.
- ✓ We systematically assess what students need and provide supports to ensure continuous improvement.



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DIVERSITY We build intentionally diverse, welcoming, and equitable learning communities where students and staff develop self-awareness and cultural competence to build a better world.

Design Principles (What we believe)

- Demographic diversity of students and staff is an asset and a priority for our community: ideally no single subgroup is dominant and school demographics are reasonably representative of the surrounding community
- We can interrupt and dismantle inequity by establishing and continuously working toward explicit equity goals
- We value and deliberately develop multilingual and cultural competence among all members of community
- Experiential curriculum should explicitly address anti-bias and social justice concepts in developmentally appropriate way from K-8th grade.
- The school program should be inclusive and engaging for culturally and linguistically diverse students, staff, and families

Core Practices (What we do)

- ✓ We prioritize teacher diversity, equity and inclusion in our recruitment, hiring, compensation, and other policies.
- ✓ We develop staff cultural competence through facilitated professional development, self-exploration, team building, and reflection
- ✓ Our curriculum is culturally relevant and responsive: We engage students in developmentally appropriate anti-bias learning experiences building their capacity to competently engage with issues of identity, power, privilege, and social-justice.
- ✓ We consistently monitor and respond to inequities in achievement, behavior, participation, satisfaction, and other outcome measures to close the opportunity gap
- ✓ Our curriculum is culturally relevant and responsive - we explicitly address social justice issues and multicultural identities in the curriculum