



A LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE FAMILIES

This letter has been written cooperatively by The Bridge School Vision Team, which includes Parent Board Members, Families, Teaching & Administrative Staff

We are honored that you are exploring The Bridge School as a potential educational program for your child and family. The decision about how to best support your child's education is among the most important a parent can make. We hope learning more about us helps you decide whether our program is the right fit for you.

We highly value our **school community** and expect all Bridge School staff and families to take active, nurturing and positive roles to support this foundation of our children's education. We believe learning is best accomplished within a caring community and so we offer many collaborative learning experiences. We share responsibility for every child and believe we all play a role in safeguarding and supporting not just the development of our own child, but all children in the program. We are committed learners embracing the idea that everyone has something to learn and give and we strive to treat each other with compassion and respect. Being a **cooperative program** is inherent to our community as parents and staff work collaboratively to support school functions, classroom environments and facility maintenance.

The primary focus of The Bridge School is to support **whole child development** by inspiring, cultivating and protecting students' intellectual, social, emotional, creative and physical growth. We help every student develop his or her sense of self as a learner, community member, and participant in the natural world. In short, we want to help children become not just good learners but *good people*, as Alfie Kohn might say.

The Bridge School offers **multi-age** classrooms where students are taught and assessed based on developmental stage rather than strict grade levels. Strong student-teacher relationships have a chance to grow and there are opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and leadership. We use well-researched developmental continuums and descriptive benchmarks to assess students along a multi-year span to mark progress.

Rather than expecting students to respond to a fixed set of experiences and expectations, we spark the intrinsic motivation of life-long learners through a **progressive educational approach**. Within broad themes and objectives, our teachers select curriculum and interdisciplinary projects to support skills in asking questions, seeking answers, thinking through possibilities and evaluating their own work. We believe students actively construct their understanding of the world by relating it to what they already know and new facts and skills buttress authentic, relevant learning. We trust children and their unique learning processes and we trust, encourage and expect our deeply committed teachers to be creative and to treat students with seriousness and respect.

There is no single type of Bridge School family, but families here generally support the mission of our program by:

- Treating our young and growing school with respect
- Supporting fearless exploration
- Valuing the state of childhood and supporting the wonder, play and joy that comes naturally to children
- Helping others in our community demonstrating compassion and support for one another
- Having a really good time at school
- Having a sense of humor and perspective about ourselves and our children

We value our school both for what it offers current students and families and for the role it will play for those in the future. We work very hard – some of us every day – and take responsibility for providing a thriving learning environment for current students and for Bridge School families we do not yet know.

We hope you are interested in meeting some of our current families and learning more.

We look forward to meeting you!