

PCSI Core Values, May 2015

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CURRICULUM

PCSI intends to establish a learning environment based on mixed-age groups in small classroom settings. Families will be involved in the learning process, based on their desire to be part of their children's education. Academic and non-academic subjects will be presented through themed projects that integrate various subjects in a holistic manner. As much as possible, children will be allowed to pursue their own interests and learning styles within a diverse and wide-ranging curriculum. In a similar manner, teachers will be allowed maximum creativity in presenting projects.

Instruction will include manual skills and home economics (eg. knitting, gardening, woodworking.) Child-created resumes and regular teacher assessments will be used in place of letter grades. Children will be allowed large blocks of time to explore subject matter; the day will not be broken up by "bells" or other artificial time constraints. Math will be focused on practical skills — counting, sorting, measuring, money management, practical geometry — with less focus on theoretical studies. Development of creativity and problem solving skills will form a major part of the curriculum; nature and the outdoors will be part of the curriculum as well.

Physical movement will be encouraged and promoted by the school design and furniture choices. Collaborative work will be balanced with competitive skill building; children will learn how to work together, and how to compete gracefully. Everyone will feel safe and supported by the school environment.

SOCIAL LEARNING and EMOTIONAL HEALTH

PCSI envisions happy, thriving children that are eager to learn in a respectful and friendly environment where teachers and students feel strong fellowship and are comfortable communicating with each other. In a safe and supportive setting children will learn personal responsibility, social justice and conflict resolution as well as cooperation and competition skills while participating in teams and on group projects such as plays, murals, construction activities and working in the school garden.

Students will experience social justice; fairness, people's rights, politics and governance; and be heavily involved in the community. Emotional counselors will be present to help support self-confidence and develop independence, a strong sense of self and personal value, as well as positive relationships with their surroundings and fellow students.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS and NATURE

Our modern world lives in an ever-changing environment. PCSI feels it is vital that children have a deep understanding of nature and their surroundings. We live in a beautiful and rich area and our students will be immersed in the outdoors as much as possible. Environmental awareness courses, local area exploration, "green living" education and wholesome health will be part of every child's experience. Recycling, repurposing and composting will be integrated into daily activities.

A school garden for children to learn the delicate balance of an ecosystem and experience an intimate relationship with plants, as well as build the skills to cultivate food. Students will

learn to respect and care for their local environment, all the while be shown the bigger picture of our global community and the importance of sustaining our natural resources.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

It is vital for a child to have a strong sense of place; to be positively engaged with the people and community that they live in. Interaction with others not only builds social and life skills, but can also provide inspiration and spark curiosity. The family of each student will be welcome and encouraged to participate not only in their own child's education, but also to be a part of the learning environment of the whole school. Guest speakers, apprenticeships, field trips, assemblies and volunteering for local non-profits and community projects or events will provide avenues for children to explore different interests and discover their place and personal worth.

ART and CULTURE

PCSI believes the application of creative arts is pertinent for healthy mental development. Be it writing, music, arts and crafts, drama or dance performance and sports. Each person has a special way in which to create and students will be encouraged to explore every and any avenue of interest in a safe and non-judgmental setting.

With a strong focus on the process and production of craft items rather than "fine" art, children will learn many applicable life skills, and have encouragement and support to market and sell such items if so desired. Freedom of expression is the heart of every culture and students will explore different customs and traditions from around the world, past and present. Spanish immersion and learning expeditions to see other cultures will be highlights of each year.

HEALTH and NUTRITION

A healthy and happy life begins with holistic living. Yoga, meditation, exposure to nature, exercise and nutrition all play an important role. Students will experience a wholesome environment and be shown the proper ways to care for themselves, each other and nature. Students will be heavily active in the school garden where they will learn seed planting, crop management, how to harvest and processing.

Ultimately the children will learn the importance of proper nutrition and dietary habits. An innovative lunch program utilizing local resources will provide delicious and nutritional breakfast and lunch options which will be served in a "family" dining setting where parents and siblings are encouraged to join for meals.