



OUR PHILOSOPHY & BELIEF STATEMENT

As educators and school leaders, it is important that we develop, contemplate, and reflect upon our own beliefs and philosophies about children and schooling so that we may approach our careers with strong hearts and minds ready to accomplish one of the most important jobs on earth.

OUR BELIEF STATEMENT

Children are the world's most valuable asset – we, as educators and school leaders, are entrusted with the future of the world; to respect, nurture, encourage, guide, inspire, and empower.

OUR PHILOSOPHY ON TEACHING & LEARNING

It is our philosophy that the school years are critical to a child's development and well-being. Educators and school leaders must be ever mindful to create a nurturing, safe environment for all children. We must ensure that we educate the whole child: head, heart, and hand. We need to realize that all students have their own uniqueness that makes them special. These differences are to be valued and respected.

Every student has infinite potential if they can believe in themselves. Our role as educators and school leaders is to guide, encourage, and empower the students as they work to realize their true potential and develop a lifelong love of learning. This includes providing activities where students are required to think critically; take pride in their work; respect themselves and others; work independently and collaboratively; and make responsible choices.

Learning is not achieved by “force-feeding” facts to students. Learning is what occurs within the students when they are given an opportunity to experience life's wonders and integrate new knowledge within their pre-existing schema. Students learn best when they are actively involved, and the material is made meaningful. Educators should offer many creative, hands-on opportunities for learning. We must remember that all learning is interconnected. Material should be taught in interdisciplinary, thematic units. Projects can help integrate knowledge and create motivation.

A few things that are crucial to keep in mind regarding teaching and learning:

- Lesson material needs to be relevant to the students' lives for it to be meaningful and interesting.
- Children with their various learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses, must be approached through an interactive, multiple intelligence-based curriculum.
- We should remain flexible and spontaneous to take advantage of valuable teachable moments.
- Personal working relationships should be developed and nurtured with every student so we can understand their situations and individualize for them, but above all so we can smile with them, laugh with them, and care for them.
- We should always remain “children at heart” ourselves and be constantly inspired by the wonderful qualities that each child uniquely possesses.

Our Philosophy on Classroom Management

It is our philosophy that there are no “bad kids” – only children who need compassion and understanding. If we build a classroom community of trust and respect, classroom management will become much easier.

A number of things to always remember and practice in regard to classroom management:

- Children should play a major part in deciding the best rules for the classroom. They should also be given the opportunity to realize what they did wrong and decide what they should do to correct it, rather than be punished.
- We should always remind children that even though we may be unhappy with their actions, we will never stop caring about them.
- We cannot build people up by cutting them down. Educators should not embarrass, insult, or talk negatively about children.
- Respect must never be demanded; it must always be earned.

Our Philosophy on Parent & Community Involvement

Parental involvement is an important part of a quality education and instills the value of learning in children. Parents should be looked upon as essential partners in the children’s journey of learning, but we must also take into account the challenges families face in today’s society. Communication and respect are paramount to building and strengthening parent involvement in the schools.

Schools should actively reach out to the community in order to offer extra opportunities for students, but more so to allow students to become meaningful and contributing members of society and know how they are connected.

Our Philosophy on Assessment

Assessment should be a natural integration into a school’s curriculum, rather than an intimidating end of the year inconvenience. Assessing students should be a constant and reflective observation and evaluation of the learning process. Lessons should be planned with specific goals in mind and assessment should measure our achievement of those goals. Assessment should show the extent to which students can critically think and use the knowledge they have gained. Schools need to gauge how students are learning and integrating their skills. Both formal and informal means of assessment need to be used and analyzed to obtain an accurate and complete picture of the students’ and the school’s strengths and weaknesses so improvements can be made to the curriculum and learning environment. The results of all assessments, formal and informal, should be used to guide the school, the teachers, the parents, and the students in enhancing the educational process and learning quest.

Conclusion

In summary, it is our firm belief that a positive attitude and a sincere heart are the foundations upon which great educators and school leaders are built. A smile and a kind word are priceless and can change a child’s life forever. Partnerships with the community can offer students unique opportunities that can spark interests and provide mentors. School should be a magical place where educators, leaders, parents, students, and the community journey together on a challenging, yet exciting and meaningful, expedition toward a better world that they are fully capable of creating.