



Gateway Lower School

Program Overview

Gateway School provides an environment in which students develop strong academic skills, learn to take appropriate intellectual and emotional risks, elevate their critical and abstract thinking to a high level of complexity, and create enduring relationships with their teachers and peers. Our students build confidence and gain skills of communication, creativity, critical thinking and collaboration that prepare them for life in the modern world.

Dynamic Learning Environments

Inspiring curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking through innovative education for a fast-changing world.



OUR WHOLE CHILD PHILOSOPHY

MINDFULNESS Practicing awareness of thoughts and emotions helps children improve attention, self-control, and resilience. We give students daily and weekly opportunities to slow down and pay attention to their breath, bodies and sensations.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE The RULER approach developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, gives our community a shared set of tools and language for emotional literacy.

CHARACTER EDUCATION Our mission calls for our students to develop compassion and citizenship, so we make the time for direct conversations about values and character.

SERVICE LEARNING Children want to help others, and doing so builds their self-esteem and confidence. Authentic service learning begins with empathy, as we guide children to connect with the local community, and discover who lives here and the challenges they face.

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM Our program recognizes the intersection of emotional safety, social connection, and academic success. We emphasize a highly social, collaborative approach to learning in which the social context is as important as the individual development of knowledge.

BUDDY PROGRAM One of the great benefits of having a K-8 program is that we create a strong sense of community by fostering cross-grade relationships.

PLAYGROUND Our playground is guided by the three core principles of fun, safety, and inclusivity. We keep strong staff-to-student ratios on the playground, make sure all staff are trained in conflict resolution, and provide rich and varied activity options.

Co-curricular Specialists

Our exceptional co-curricular program enhances children's self-awareness, and builds their skills and experiences through our values.

THE DISCOVERY CENTER integrates multiple disciplines with a focus on science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) to promote creativity, exploration, collaborative learning and innovation using traditional and 21st century tools.

THE LIFE LAB is home to our unique K-5 Environmental Science curriculum. Our Life Lab provides children with a real-life, hands-on opportunity to study the natural sciences in our $\frac{1}{4}$ acre garden classroom. Our outdoor learning environment is an ideal setting for scientific investigation; fostering children's natural curiosity about the world around them. Within the context of a garden, a thematic teaching approach is used to integrate life, earth, and physical sciences at all elementary grade levels.

THE MUSIC PROGRAM is built upon Orff-Schulwerk, an innovative approach to teaching and learning music based on the ways children naturally communicate. It weaves together speech and poetry, movement and dance, drama and song, and improvisation with playing musical instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION nurtures students' love and appreciation for movement, promotes a lifelong passion for physical activity, and reinforces the many life lessons learned on the field and black top. Our emphasis is placed on doing one's personal best, inclusivity and fair play.

ELEMENTARY SPANISH is taught through songs, stories, art, drama, conversation, and vocabulary building. Integrating elements of Spanish with our core program helps students to see connections and relationships among ideas and people, and deepens their learning.

VISUAL AND STUDIO ARTS encourages students to perceive the world through an artistic lens by studying works of art, objects in nature, events, and environment. They begin to appreciate art, identify the elements and principles of design, and build their studio habits and skills.

Academic Curriculum

Our teachers create a developmentally appropriate space that nurtures personal character and fosters confidence, creativity, flexibility and curiosity in each child.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS Our language arts curriculum helps students become independent readers, competent writers, discriminating viewers, articulate speakers, active listeners and critical thinkers. Our program uses a range of instructional approaches that respond to the strengths and needs of our students, from Writer's Workshop and Lit Circles to word study and read alouds. In all grades, writing skills are taught across disciplines, helping the students become stronger writers as well as stronger historians, scientists, and mathematicians. Oral language development is integrated in all subjects beginning in the earliest grades, with strong emphasis on public speaking. In all grades, teachers foster and facilitate communities of readers and writers who practice for authentic audiences, and present their work through author parties, reader's theater, and publication.

MATHEMATICS Our program emphasizes mathematical thinking, not simply computation. Rather than trudging through rote memorization without understanding of what numbers mean and what operations do, Gateway students develop strong conceptual skills by learning to solve problems in multiple ways. The Bridges Mathematics curriculum draws content from several strands of math, including algebra and the use of variables, data and probability, geometry and spatial sense, measures and measurement, numeration and operation, and patterns and functions. We love how the program is embedded with playful and joyous interaction with mathematical concepts, and that it teaches students to see themselves as mathematical thinkers who can collaborate with their peers and articulate creative solutions to big problems.

CULTURAL STUDIES Gateway embraces the study of cultures and influences that affect children's lives. Students gain a sense of their place in the world by understanding that the nation is composed of people whose origins span the globe. The program encourages respect for different cultures and ways of life, empathy for one's neighbors, and an understanding of each individual's relationship to the global community. Discussion, debate, dialogue, and self-discovery are cultivated, and combined with field trips and projects to enhance the classroom experience.

SCIENCE Gateway's science program fosters children's natural curiosity about the world around them, using the rich natural environments surrounding the school – the ocean, the garden, and Lighthouse Field – as the laboratory to learn principles of earth, life, and physical sciences. The K-5 program weaves together the MARE (Marine Activities, Resources & Education) program with our award-winning Life Lab program. Through an integrated, inquiry-based approach, students learn to use the scientific method, and analytical thinking to understand the language and principles of science.



Mission

To inspire children to lead lives of purpose and compassion through scholarship and citizenship.

Vision

A dynamic and intellectually challenging educational experience rooted in Progressive philosophy and reflective of evolving research.

Goal

For students to discover their individual and collective potential to make positive change in the world.

AT Gateway...

We know that young children develop life-long attitudes about learning based on their earliest experiences in school; that's why our elementary grades are filled with exploration and discovery, with experiences designed to nurture every child's innate curiosity and wonder. From their first day on campus, Gateway students begin learning how to reason, to research, to solve problems and to communicate their ideas effectively. Our students love being active agents in their education!

RELATIONSHIPS PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Our small class sizes and low student-to-teacher ratios allow teachers to get to know each child and to encourage each student to work at their own "learning edge." Teaching children how to relate compassionately is fundamental to their growth.

CHARACTER IS AS IMPORTANT AS ACADEMICS

ACADEMICS Integrity, responsibility and discipline come first in the school's list of core values. Almost all children will make mistakes and poor decisions; they need explicit teaching and practice to learn how to do the right thing, even when no one is watching. From emotional intelligence to self-discipline, we teach the personal elements that help kids become good citizens.

STUDENTS ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

By connecting children with the world beyond the school's walls, we give them unparalleled opportunities to learn, reflect, and contribute. Our program integrates field trips and authentic service learning into our teaching. Our school serves the community by hosting trainings, talks and events such as Girls Leadership, our Speaker Series, and the Santa Cruz Mini Maker Faire.

INSTRUCTION IS BASED ON

RESEARCH We root our teaching practices in our understanding of the best available research in fields including neuroscience, psychology, sociology, and biology.

CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

Differentiation allows faculty to vary instructional techniques and address distinct learning needs. When children are ready for challenge, we may take them to areas outside the curriculum, or ask them to go deeper into it. When children need more help, we create scaffolds and structures that support their success.

GATEWAY'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM TRANSFORMS STUDENTS INTO

SCHOLARS Our elementary program is a study in balance: support and challenge, autonomy and collaboration, knowledge acquisition and skill development, academic mastery and critical thinking. Sometimes our teachers use inquiry-driven methods to help students generate and research questions that will guide their learning, and at other times they make sure students are getting the necessary practice to master concepts. Students frequently participate in hands-on, project-based learning that facilitates in-depth understanding.



GATEWAY SCHOOL
WHERE EXPERIENCE AND INNOVATION MEET