



A Community of Learners

STATE OF THE SCHOOL

2022

[THESCHOOLHOUSE.ORG](https://theschoolhouse.org)

DEAR FRIENDS:

Each year since the outset I've sent a State of the School address out to our community. Part update on TSH and part reflection on the state of education, it seemed at this vital moment in our history befitting that it be printed rather than emailed. I can put no finer point on the fact that education is the central critical issue of our time. It has no equal in the eyes of a society that is susceptible to smoke and mirrors, misinformation and maleducation. Even though Education has gone through many tribulations in our history, it's never quite been like this...

TSH is fundamentally different in a few ways. The first, is that we serve the child, not the adult. Adults are complicated. We often get very caught up in small things and we miss the big and supremely important. Children see it all. And our work is to give them the most important tools they need to build themselves into extraordinary human beings.

The only way to do this of course is to build a model of something better. This isn't always easy. Parents are used to schools who hide things... we don't. Communities have ideas about how real learning should happen... it happens in happy places contrary to their belief. Politicians will do anything to appease the status quo and so one bad curriculum after another gets peddled... we created our own.

Know as you read this that you are a part of something bigger. Not something perfect. But something better, more effective and decidedly more innovative than we could first imagine. Educators and parents alike are part of this. You are a leader in it because you send your kiddos here every day. I look at the Rose Family with their commitment to the Pajama Drive every year; Margaret Marchand and her tireless efforts as a Locust Valley BOE member to put children first; Ted and Steve and their incredible business serving as a model for entrepreneurs everywhere; Steve Boyd who brought us the La Sierra approach; Libby, Denise and Amanda who have crafted an outstanding Farm Stand; Kelly Little who keeps our community connected; Patti Searles who literally helped us open our doors; and parents Sara and Bill Haugland for their tremendous love and support. This is but a small fraction of what we can do collectively.

At The School House our mission is clear: an innovative, concise curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, a beautiful environment, an Educator culture that sets the standard, parents who are smart, big picture thinkers and leadership that does not waiver.

Here's our State of the School.

Warmly,
Mimosa





Isla proudly displays her tomatoes picked from our own backyard garden!

TRAINING AT THE SCHOOL HOUSE

Training is the single most powerful component of what we do. It's why I open the State of the School here.

So, what exactly happens in "training"?

First, nearly 90% of our Educators who elected to train already have Master's degrees. As our Primary Learner Poppy would say, "What?!?" Yep, these already brilliant minds – all 17 of them this year – including myself – committed to 3 hours each night of digital online training, Saturday practice training, 6 total weeks in Arizona, 4 weeks of practice teaching and 3 weeks of observation in addition to completing over 200 assignments. Take it from me, one assignment on decimals – the right way to teach it not the ditto way – took me over 2 hours.

This is Navy Seals of teacher training.

In training, we focus on the four essential components of pedagogically advanced Learning: Follow the Child, Prepared Environment, Let the Hand Inform the Mind and Telling Stories.

This, in addition to understanding how nearly 200 materials work... more on that later.

Follow the Child: This is ongoing work as it is very difficult to follow the child when you also must set essential boundaries. Freedom within limits... how do you possibly manage that with 25 children? Did you know Dr. Montessori managed with an average elementary class of 40 with one Educator and one

TRAINING AT THE SCHOOL HOUSE...

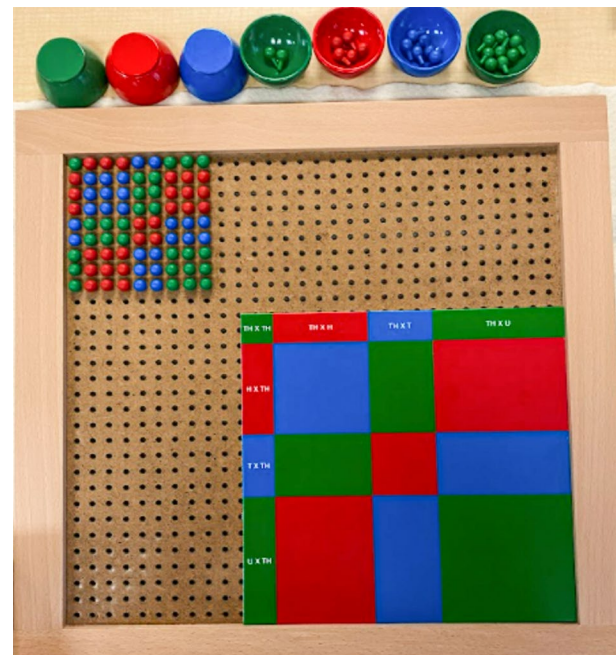
assistant? She did this because she wanted children to solve their own problems, not constantly look to the adult.

Organization, peer-to-peer teaching, setting expectations early, personal responsibility... and so much more is how we do it here albeit with a smaller ratio. We ask ourselves, if a child loves to read how do we get them to be passionate about math? We cannot simply let them not do math when there are beautiful lessons to impart. This technique is not new to teaching... the grabbing the attention of a child... but it is waning because schools make it impossible to let children flourish WHILE they are learning. It's either all or nothing. Rote 3 hours of homework or counting blueberries in the garden for years on end. Support, love, training and sharing allows Educators the time to find those moments that spark within children a love of something they might not know...

Prepared Environment. How do you train for this? Preparing the environment means that things in the classroom are ALL purposeful. This is hard. Because for instance there are a lot of ways to explore Russia. Russia with botany cards that relay information of plants in the tundra need to be prepared; then maps of Russia; then guest speakers about Russia; how about longitude and latitude of Russia. What is longitude and latitude anyway? All the materials in the classroom are hands-on and scaffolded, so they are made (mostly) for kiddos to explore on their own with a little guidance. But all of them are carefully made and created by Educators which takes an enormous amount of creativity and time.

In every TSH classroom, you'll find tens of thousands of dollars in materials. And they are phenomenally purposeful. They are little miracles if you know how to use them. Remember the formula for finding the square root? No!? Me neither. Because likely it was never presented in a way that was memorable.

Now let me show you how we find the square root of 1,750,329. What is the root of the square at the bottom of the placed pegs below (root meaning the bottom number just like trees have roots)? Our kiddos know that the single green peg is 1 thousand, three reds are 3 hundreds, 2 blues are 2 tens and 3 greens are 3 units. 1,323!



TRAINING AT THE SCHOOL HOUSE...

This was done on our squaring board. And then converted into paper-based formulas that children will remember and build upon.

Within that prepared environment, Educators are then trained to see what is not working... is there a material that hasn't been used? Is it really making the case for the child and connecting or do I need to think of a new material?

Things that children love are inherently included in the environment. Small slips of paper to identify parts when studying an object or animals; always writing in cursive to support brain development and thought processes; their work hung at eye level; work journals that they produce; art in their room that give their world a light, beautiful aesthetic.

This is all infinitely harder than slapping up posters. And the work our Educators put into their environment is one of these hidden but essential gems of what makes the AEC work.

Let the Hand Inform the Mind. Why do we need training in that?! Well, have you ever done something for your child? Sure. Have you done it over and over again even when you know they can do it for themselves? Me too! We can't help ourselves. And it takes copious hours in and out of the classroom to retrain our brains to let children fail, try and do without our interference. They need to move the objects. They need to forget the Family Engagement. They need to tie their shoes. This is hard because we often feel badly about things (adult obsession!) and feel we should help them. But the key is... help them do it by themselves.

And finally, we train to Tell Stories. And to memorize them, so that we tell them with heart and soul and love and passion. Nearly every one of our lessons in the AEC has a story to accompany it. The Story of Governments, the Story of Friendship, the Story of Asia, the Story of Sharing. How do you invite children to hear a story? What do you do when the story is over? How do you connect hard work... for instance the periodic table... with the Story of the Universe?

Hard work is key to happy, productive children, but hard work under duress with no movement, no stories and no beauty is never optimal for the human being. We simply don't work that way...

Our Educators who have gone through this program will graduate in May of this year. And you can expect a tremendous party in their honor. Incidentally, TSH has the highest number of enrolled Educators in these programs (Elementary in Arizona and Primary right here on our campus) of any school in the nation. Thank you, Haugland Family!



Elementary Learner Elizabeth learns Geography through the use of pin maps. This hands-on materials challenges Learners to recognize geographic and political boundaries, flags and world capitals.

NEW PROGRAMS & EXPANDED EXISTING ONES

8th Grade

Our 7th grade parents were so convincing (i.e. Ted) that we had no choice to expand our 7th grade program into a Middle School Program that includes 8th grade. It also helped that our 7th grade children are off-the-charts kind, brilliant and incredible leaders.

The 8th grade program is currently being developed for the 2022-23 school year blowing the standards out of the water. On deck is public service, entrepreneurship, community service, lots of Goings Out (hands-on field work the Learners plan from start to finish), Executive Functioning, representing the TSH Blue Jays in school-to-school friendly competitions like geography and math bees, intensively fun writing and math workshops and of course an expanded role in Project-Based Learning.

Puzzle Mastery and Executive Functioning

Puzzle Mastery is what we call tests. Tests are not inherently bad just like standards are not inherently bad. Children will have to take drivers tests and SATs and lots of other quirky exams as they get older. But how you do testing is what matters!

So, like our kiddos we are clever. Tests are puzzles. And these makers of puzzles are trying every which way to see if they can beat you. In the month of March, we present these kiddos with all sorts of scenarios. We put it to them like this: Let's show

the world that this kind of learning can produce happy kids who know a lot (and a lot more than just what's in the testing lane). Our Learners then take the ERB – a private school test that is slightly more difficult than the state ones.

This is preceded by Ms. Meg who starts in late February with Executive Functioning in our Elementary II/7th grade. Although EF is inherent in all grades at TSH, this is meaty stuff. How do you organize your time? Create calendars? Read to comprehend and problem solve. Maybe we could all use a little session with Ms. Meg!



Math whiz and Educator Mr. John works with Jackson and Dillon on their math "work books". These self-created books show progression, determination and connection of math operations.

NEW PROGRAMS & EXPANDED EXISTING ONES...

La Sierra

We have launched a new elementary version of the La Sierra Sports Program. Think if you started with a trainer and you could do just 3 sit ups. Then a week later, you could do 6? And then 12? This focus on personal best, conditioning and strengthening is paramount for young Learners.

La Sierra in the Elementary grades is all about fitness. Fitness for the body and fitness for the mind. Setting goals and reaching them. Making sure that whatever sport you play – or if you just like to run! – your body is healthy and happy.



Lily meditates in the Outdoor Classroom.

PBL

How do we transfer skills that we learn in the classroom to real-world scenarios? This is a major problem in education. We do not focus enough time on the right things. And therefore, we waste a lot of time on superfluous academics. Project-based Learning (PBL) makes these connections for our kiddos.

Many times, we'll get the question, why do I need to know how to divide? When we are developing a product, we'll get an overall cost. For instance, we know it's \$8.00 for a roll of duct tape. We know we are only going to use 5" per unit of product, but we have 60 feet of duct tape. How do we factor in our per unit costs of duct tape so we can get an accurate accounting? Division! Kiddos jumped right into dividing with decimals because they had to... we were dealing in dollars and cents.

Yet, the writing, reading, math, science... these skills are just the tip of the iceberg for PBL. It's leadership, collaboration, time management, critical thinking and being able to correctly evaluate your decisions and to improve upon them. Learners also consider the importance of giving – outright, partial proceeds or parts of profit.

All Learners participate in PBL at different levels.



Even as a 1st grade Learner, Lexi is in charge of her Learning. She uses a work plan to make certain she covers all subject areas each week.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS & EDUCATOR "HANG TIME"

Let's talk about Hang Time.

As I write this, TSH is developing how we can have some of our Learners spend extra time with Educators after school in areas of what we call rigor learning. Rigor Learning are those toughies. Spelling, Reading, Math. These are things that take a tremendous effort on the part of kiddos. They are hard. They need to be fully understood at the root. And I can't tell you the number of dads who have come up to me to say... Man, if I only had a little more help at that age.

We often impart parents to help their child in these areas. But let's face it... we're not all teachers. And teachers are the most special breed of human I know.

So, once we work out the logistics, certain Educators will stay after school and "hang" with 1-3 students at a time on the specific aforementioned areas beginning in 1st grade. This a voluntary program and has no cost.

More to come...

After School Clubs

In 2022-23, we'd like to offer some expanded opportunities to our kiddos to stay after school Monday through Thursday, in addition to Mr. Jonathan's fabulous Soccer Program. Drama Club, Math Club, Student Government and Scouts are just a few of the things we'd like to see.

If you have a special skill in these or other areas and would like to participate (or know a professional who would) please let us know!

INVENTION FAIR

This year marks our First Annual Invention Fair! Remember the month of May in school? Probably not, since most of the time you were champing at the bit for summer!

We can't miss an opportunity with our Learners to keep the learning going and so starting in Early May, Learners will pair up with a friend and have one month to create their very own scientific (or otherwise) invention.

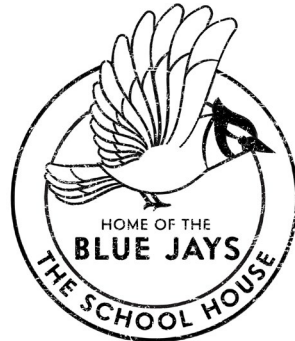
We want these kiddos to work at home with you on these, to do research in class and to let their minds wander and create.

Inventions will be presented in June in conjunction with our Summer Concert for all of you to see!

INTRAMURAL SPORTS PLAY

Mr. Jonathan has gotten down on one knee and promised we will be playing other schools soon, soon, soon. I know he has no control of COVID protocols and so we are hopeful that our young athletes will be able to face off at the Elementary level in the Fall of 2022.

Our school athletes already compete on various soccer and football leagues throughout the Island. And we know there are so many others who want to bring their spirit to the Blue Jays.



Hands on learning about the Water Cycle:
Declan discovers exactly how rain falls from clouds.



CAMP 2022

I'm a 70s girl and so the freedom of summer play, neck-breaking slip and slides and ice cream trucks is 100% in me. Yet, when I write the AEC (in collaboration with years of other smart folks) I can never contain myself. There is so much in this beautiful world to share with our children – and reading, math and writing should be year-long skills that are presented in totally engaging ways over the summer months (and all year actually).

This Summer TSH is proud to announce NATURALIST CAMP 2022. Lead by our very own in-house naturalist and Elementary II Educator Ms. Olivia – a crowd favorite to say the least.

We are going to follow in the steps of Charles Darwin over 6 weeks of camp including: his tremendous backyard experiments, journaling, using math and algebra in science, field trips to discover new flora and fauna, a focus on tennis and soccer (his two favorite games!), root word exploration, David Attenborough on the big screen at night, nature drawing and species preservation.

Sign-ups begin after our February break!



Understanding the earth from a Naturalist's point of view: soil, nitrogen and root parts.

WINTER & SPRING WITH YOUR KIDDOS

1. Workbooks at Home (but only in two areas).

Math and Spelling are generally difficult. They require memorization which is a skill they are developing (and we are losing!) The best way to add rigor is find the right books and to present them in the right way. BTW, as a rule girl Learners will be more attracted to them than boy Learners. This isn't something you have to do... but if you have a child that is finding certain things difficult, it is great to explain to them the merit of practicing and getting "through" challenges.

When you present a workbook, follow your child. The best place to do this is when you're cuddled up and physically close.

The second-best place is to set aside time twice a week NOT after school but before dinner. They must have time to unwind when they get home or you will be met with resistance. Think about when you get home from work!



Elementary I Learners check in each morning and control their own Learning destiny. They fulfill requirements because they want to... and because they are fulfilling their birthright to learn!



Adrianna works on a Reggio art project with loose parts. First she collected elements from nature that appealed to her, then she used them to create insects.



Prior to the introduction to pin maps, Learners like Bella use puzzle maps to trace and record countries and continents. This is why the 3-year cycle is vital.

WINTER & SPRING WITH YOUR KIDDOS...

2. Documentaries, Films and Screens

The job of the screen makers - after working for over a decade in the entertainment industry - is to sell your child screens, screen time and content.

We always recommend very limited screen time. Every time you give them an hour, two, three... that is time from 0-12 they are not having tactile experiences. This is not something to feel bad about... just to be cognizant. I much prefer curated content if they are going to be on a screen... meaning film, not YouTube. If you set up a habit of watching with them, they will want to be there. Here is a list of outstanding films that add to the message of character, courage and integrity:

14 Peaks – parental discretion

The Alpinist – parental discretion

Wild Russia

Wild Japan

Wild China

Anything David Attenborough

A Reindeer's Journey

The Speed Cubers

The Winds of Kitty Hawk

Paper Planes

Wide Open Sky

Jake Shimabukuro: Life on Four Strings

Migrations: Herds on the Move

Spellbound

Incredible Creatures that Define Design

Searching for Bobby Fischer

Togo

WINTER & SPRING WITH YOUR KIDDOS...

3. Moms & Dads

Anything featuring the stand-up comedy of Tom Papa will make COVID seem like a distant dream... at least for an hour.

Check out *Mother to Son* by Melissa Harrison. This book is something I pick up each morning and literally just flip through it. There is one for fathers as well. It just sets me on track and reminds me what they really need from me each day as a parent.

If you would like to go deeper into what drives the philosophy of TSH, read *The Montessori Method*. It will blow your mind... and it is one of the very big reasons we founded The School House.

4. Typing

Winter is a great time to hone typing skills and we recommend this program for children 3rd grade and older.

Check out www.typingclub.com

5. Nights at The School House

Got questions? Want to see how math materials translate into the middle school and high school curriculums? Do you wonder why we teach cursive? How technology is handled? What is the foundation of our science curriculum?

This is an awesome opportunity to meet other parents, hear more about the AEC and to also discuss topics that have been on your mind as you navigate parenting. Often the best source of information is other parents!

Our Book Club featuring the *Secret of Childhood* will give you so many insights into child behavior, discipline and development stages.



Working with the Decimal System: Harley understands the true value of "5 Thousand" by feeling how heavy it is on her tray.



John, Nikole and Angelia in Elementary II, use the Timeline of Life for biology and earth sciences. Using the control, they create their own Timeline of how species developed, research plants and animals from their origin and practice scientific naming.

TSH EXPANDED

We want to expand TSH to give every child a better education including those 150 kiddos currently on our waitlist.

To that end, a fantastic family, the Hauglands, want to bring TSH to another community. Another family, the Del Biancos, wanted to bring it to Vero Beach, FL. We built TSH so families could recreate it in their communities. And we've no doubt it will be re-created, but when the building and circumstance is right. As much as we want these kids to be at TSH, we haven't yet found the perfect building for the next endeavor on the South Shore as of this writing. Two more buildings are in the hopper and we continue to search for locations.

While we push for bricks and mortar, we are laser-focused on our Northport kiddos. Fine tuning this location is a true obsession each day for our Team.

We are opening The Little House! Slated for 2022-23 and already nearly fully committed.

And continuing our development of AEC Anywhere, an exciting endeavor to get our curriculum to Home Schoolers with live support.



2022-2023 ENROLLMENT, FINANCES & TUITION

Our invitations to re-enroll will be distributed on February 9th. We expect that we will again be at full capacity and this is vital to the Learners we serve. TSH operates on a three-year cycle, meaning we take each level – EI for example – as an entirety. This gives us the ability to provide a much richer curriculum to our children with great clarity and continuity. It is also our expectation that all our current Educators will return in 2022-23... a dream team indeed.

Here is the straight story about The School House. We have worked tirelessly to keep tuition the lowest of any independent school while still delivering TSH standards, quality and innovation to our community. We have even added components like The Little House and AEC Anywhere which will help augment the sustainable model once open. However, the fact remains **\$14,000 is the actual cost per student to attend.**

This year our parent community came out in droves and raised a whopping \$142,000 at Gifts Worth Giving and every cent after costs went to help our tuition gap for this year. Yet, this still leaves us with a significant deficit.



For 2022-23:

Primary Learner Tuition will be \$8,900.

Kindergarten, Elementary and Middle School Learners Tuition will be \$11,500.

If you can afford to pay the actual cost of sending a child to TSH, please pay an additional \$2,500 to close the tuition gap. This \$2,500 is tax-deductible.

Many of you remember that my goal is get tuition down. But I can't do that with rising costs and until we can sustain this location. The Little House will help fund the school. AEC Anywhere will help fund the school. And at that time, we'd like to make this kind of education as close to free as possible for everyone.

Ms. Meg and our extraordinary parents have committed to raise \$250,000 in our Capital Campaign. These funds are earmarked to secure health benefits and a 401k for our Educators, our dream of a little blue bus in addition to the costs of launching an 8th grade. We have a terrific way of acknowledging and celebrating our big givers when the campaign concludes its first year in August 2022.

Please note that our tuition increase does not cover what this campaign looks to implement. By giving to our Capital Campaign, you are solidifying our ability to provide competitive benefits, a middle school curriculum and our Goings Out program all of which are central to our growth.

A LOOK AT THE WORLD OF EDUCATION

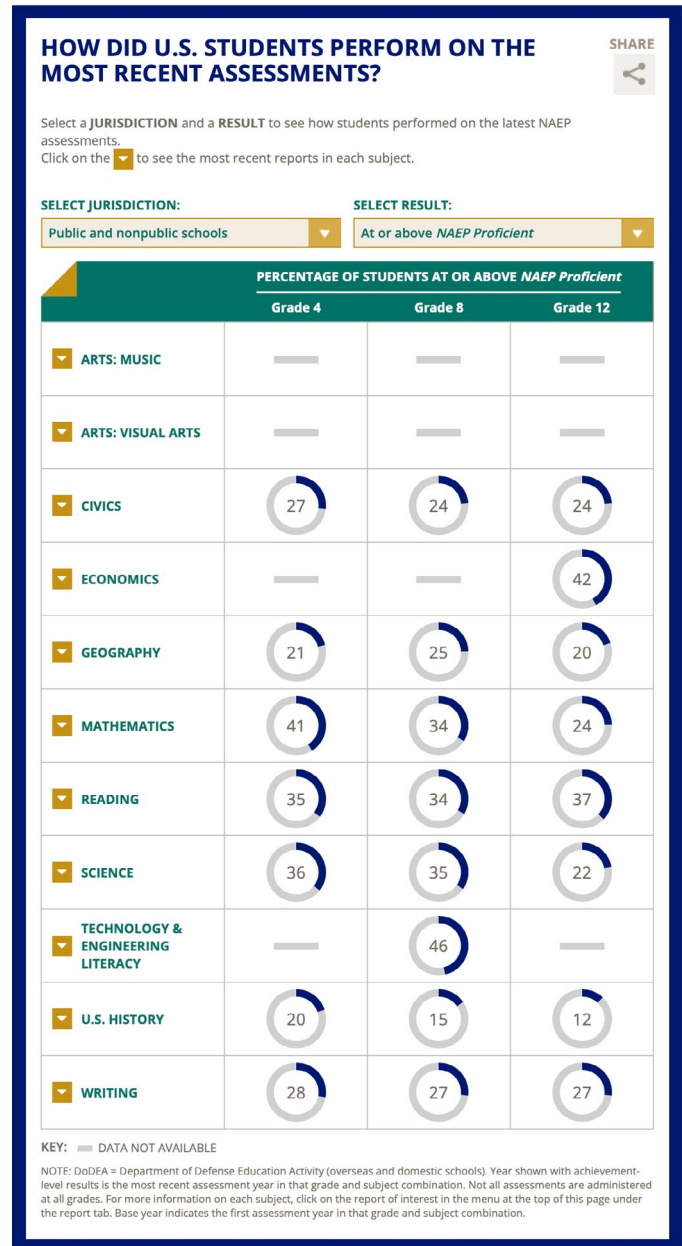
The news reflects our state of Education in America.
The statistics are even more compelling.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), first administered in 1969, is the largest continuing and nationally representative assessment of what our nation's students know and can do in subjects such as mathematics, reading, science, and writing. Standard administration practices are implemented to provide a common measure of student achievement.

Teachers, principals, parents, policymakers, and researchers all use NAEP results to assess progress and develop ways to improve education in the United States. The results of NAEP are released as The Nation's Report Card, and are available for the nation, states, and in some cases, urban districts.

NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

Here are the results **PRE-pandemic**. Only 24% percent of American children at grade level in CIVICS. 37% at grade level for MATH. 22% at grade level for SCIENCE. **12% at grade level for U.S. history.**





Adrian adds words to his book about Insects by using the Small Movable Alphabet. He writes his title phonetically:
Hav u evr non wut yur gardin lucs like?



Ava polishes a wooden zebra in the Environment. Through this work, she lengthens her ability to focus and concentrate, she strengthens her fine motor skills, and she enhances her ability to follow a multi-step process.

A CLOSING BY MARIANA ARONIADIS

7th Grader The School House

The School House is a truly amazing place. It is my home away from home, a place where you can be you and always be happy. From the eager learners to the dedicated educators, wonderful principal, and president, how could you not feel like your home?

The learning that happens in this school is immense! If you walk into any classroom, the walls are filled with knowledge, the type of knowledge that you can use later in school, work, and everyday life. We spend a lot of time outside in nature thinking about the world around us, which in my opinion, is the most efficient way to learn.

I don't know where to begin when talking about our learners and educators. Our educators have so many talents and have made so many contributions to the T.S.H. Family. They all put 110% in trying to make each day incredible for their learners and are so patient and kind with each one of us. The T.S.H. Learners always have big smiles on their faces when they walk into the classroom. They all have their own passion and light in their classroom. My classmates are so kind, funny, and smart. It is so amazing to see them every day.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to talk about the T.S.H. Community. Our special educators like Miss Dani,

Mr. Jonathan, Miss Anna, Miss Olga, Miss Miriam and Miss Stephanie. They are all phenomenal educators, always smiling and always happy to be here, making us feel happy and welcome. Our educators in the office, Miss Juliet, Miss Natalie, Miss Mimosa, and Miss Meg. We couldn't have this amazing place without each one in this community.

T.S.H. is a wonderful place filled with wonderful people, love, and laughter. This place makes me feel safe and taken care of. It is amazing to be a part of this community, and anyone and everyone will feel welcome when they walk through the big blue doors of T.S.H.





Working with the Trinomial Cube: Poppy is introduced to this Algebraic Equation through her senses. At this age it is like a puzzle to her, and when she reaches Elementary, she will use it for more advanced Mathematical Work.



Milo practices 4 digit subtraction with the Stamp Game. He is developing an understanding of Place Value and the Decimal System through this work.

be kind.

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