

Hello Board Members,

Since there are some new faces on the board, I would like to take a moment to formally introduce myself. My name is Katie, and I am the Instructional Assistant in room 211.

The story of my time at PCM is a bit more complicated than you might imagine. I started in year 1 as a Kindergarten Instructional Assistant, and was laid off two months into the school year. After two more months, I was asked to come back as a sub, and then was re-hired full time as a floating IA, which meant I spent time in every classroom. Last year, I worked in room 207, initially with Laura McCormick, and then with Demond Roberts. This year, I landed in 211, initially with Jill Stansbury, and now finally with Natalie Hall. Needless to say, the journey has been a lot. I have gone through such high highs, and such devastating lows with our school. I have experienced such joy at our heights, and such devastation at our lows. Through it all, I have stuck by our school. I'd like to give you numbers, and data, and specifics about why I've stayed, but I've always been more of a story teller than a numbers person anyway.

When I worked in Kindergarten I met a little girl who's parents had just been through a nasty divorce. She cried every day as soon as she was dropped off. Due to our model's philosophy of following the child, she was never forced to do work in this state. Instead, she was given the opportunity to feel her feelings. I'd often spend mornings holding her while she cried, and slowly, but surely, that child began to blossom. Today she is a second grader, and a leader in our classroom. Just yesterday she was able to contribute to designing the cover of the book we are writing as a class. In Kindergarten, even raising her hand to answer a question was nearly impossible.

Last year, in room 207, I met a child who shared with me that she had recently been homeless, before her mother had surrendered custody to her grandfather. Through a lot of hard work, dedication, and care, that child is now thriving in the Older Elementary class.

This year, one of my students had a sibling pass away in December. I was devastated by the news, and by the pain in their sweet little face as they continued coming to school. We did what we do at PCM. We made space for her. We got her the counseling that she needed. We showed her the love that we have for her. She is not the same as she was, but she is moving through the grief with such grace.

I have countless stories like these. Of children who have survived sexual and physical abuse, who have experienced homelessness, who have complex needs, and the thread that ties each of them together is the support that they were given by our staff and by our school. PCM may be small, but we have moxie coming out of our ears. No one will fight for these children the way we have. No one will love them as much as we do. No one will stand beside them as they grow and change the way that we have. The thought of sending them to traditional institutions that will force them to conform, rather than letting them be, keeps me up at night. Now I have to ask you to fight for us in the same way that we fight for our children. Don't give up on us. Appeal the Charter Comissions decision.

Thank you,
Katie