Education Plan

Revised and Board Approved March 2019

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Outline overview

Educational Philosophy (How does this align to pillars on website)

Our educational philosophy is grounded in two main beliefs:
- **Learning is a lifelong developmental process.**
  - By this we mean that we believe learning occurs best when:
    - The focus is on what the child can do, not on his/her shortcomings.
    - Learning is conceptualized as a life-long, developmental process.
    - Understandings are constructed by the learner over time.
    - There is a regular, thoughtful and authentic assessment process that involves teachers, students, and parents and supports moving the learner forward.
- **Knowledge is socially constructed in the context of culture, experience, and community.**
  - By this we mean that we believe learning occurs best when:
    - Students take risks in a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment.
    - Learning is authentic and for meaningful purpose.
    - There are explicit and high expectations of excellence, hard work, responsibility, and accountability.
    - Learning is thoughtfully reflective.

Our instructional design is based on our fundamental beliefs about how individuals learn.
We believe that each individual is a capable learner who brings a unique constellation of talent, interest, experience, and cultural heritage to every learning situation. We know learning takes place best in an environment where these differences are valued and respected. Individuals in our classrooms work together to investigate topics and questions that are personally meaningful and important. Teachers and learners (both children and adults) strive together to attain the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to participate powerfully in their families and their communities, both local and global. Such knowledge, skills and attitudes are broad and encompass literacy, aesthetic appreciation, social responsibility, and a deepening of the understanding of what it means to be human. The pedagogical hallmarks of a classroom with these goals at heart are shared power and choice, explicit modeling, collaboration, and direct teaching in response to observed needs and interests.

Strategies for Learning

Curriculum

With the development and adoption of the Ohio Learning Standards for English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, Ohio schools have a clear statement of what Ohio school children are expected to learn and be able to demonstrate at certain benchmark points in their education. We have adopted these standards as the basis for our developmental curriculum, and as Ohio continues to revise its standards and further develops model curriculum in each content area, we will continue to re-align our own curriculum to be consistent with Ohio expectations. Per the Ohio Learning Standards, English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, the Fine Arts (Art and Music), and Physical Education are required learning in each of our schools. Each of our students is expected to attain the benchmark standards within the broad grade-level bands. However, we use a framework for instruction based on developmental stages (to be described subsequently) rather than on age-based grade levels. In other words, we expect our students to get to the same endpoints, but to get there in a different way. This "unconventional way" is, of course, the rationale for Community Schools in the first place.

Our teachers do not give equal emphasis and equal classroom time to all curricular areas in each developmental stage. **At the earliest stages (Emerging and Beginning), our greatest focus is on English Language Arts (Reading and Writing) and Mathematics. In order to be a lifelong learner and spirited citizen, our students must be competent in these areas.** Through thematic studies, teachers integrate ideas from social studies and science into classroom instruction, but the focus is on the teaching and learning of literacy and mathematics. Similarly, instruction in the arts, health and wellness, and technology are secondary to literacy and mathematics in these early stages of learning. Although the Ohio Learning Standards provide the broad outline of the skills and competencies to be developed, the students and teachers collaborate and negotiate to determine the specific foci of their inquiry.

Our emphasis on literacy and mathematics first is reflected in our Assessment Framework (Appendix C) as well as in the revised Ohio standardized testing program.

In the later stages of development (Developing, Refining, and Applying), our students further hone literacy and mathematics skills and understandings and then use this knowledge to study science and social studies in much greater depth. Our curriculum encourages less breadth and more depth in how students approach their studies, believing this approach is more valuable to the development of lifelong learners. In their final year at our schools, students are expected to demonstrate their attainment of the school's mission by designing, completing, presenting, and evaluating a community service project.

Students who complete our curriculum will demonstrate the following broad exit competencies:
- Students will read fluently and understand challenging texts both for pleasure and as a means of learning and solving problems.

- Students will have an understanding of audience and purpose and of which strategies to use to communicate effectively across different media. They will feel confident speaking to small groups of people in a formal setting.
- Students will be able to use a variety of math strategies to test solutions and solve problems. They will be able to interpret and manipulate data to make better decisions in their daily lives.
- Students will be able to recognize their role as a member of the community and be able to advocate for justice for themselves and others. They will understand how communities and governments make decisions, and they will be able to work with others to effect change.
- Students will understand the value of being a lifelong learner. They will demonstrate curiosity, persistence, a willingness to experiment and make mistakes, and a drive to create and innovate.

Social Emotional Learning

One of our most important goals in the Intergenerational Schools is to develop, support, and nurture in all learners (young and old) the school's values: Celebration of Diversity; Choice & Accountability; Innovation; Interpersonal Skills; Joyful, Independent Learning; Integrity; Shared and Responsible Use of Resources; and Work Ethic. We believe the development of these values within a person enable him or her to live, to achieve, and to practice spirited citizenship and lifelong learning.

The word "discipline" derives from a word that means "practice" or "learning." We understand that our students are learning and practicing what it means to be a member of a community every day. We support learning behavior expectations through the use of relationships, rituals, and routines. We clearly and directly communicate and teach our school rules, and we work to notice and name what is going right. Consequences are logical, consistent, and free from emotion. We eliminate the use of negative leakage with students. This means we don't scold, shame, or use sarcasm with students or adults.

We also understand that for some students the journey toward fully functioning as a learner in our community will be a challenging one. Especially for some of our youngest students, the early stages of discovering what it means to learn in a classroom and around peers is hard. This can also be true for older students who join our community late in their schooling life, having come from other schools with a different philosophy of educating and supporting students. We work together as a school team (teachers, support staff, administrators, mentors) with students and families to better understand students' strengths and needs as we support their social emotional learning and development.

Our approach to discipline and social emotional learning at The Intergenerational School is intended to develop self-control and self-discipline. We know an effective school requires that each student be accountable for the choices he or she makes about behavior. We believe that it is possible and desirable for each student to learn to make positive choices that are in the best interest of both him- or herself *and* the learning community as a whole. Our approach to discipline is intended to help students learn to accept responsibility for their choices and actions; it is not intended to be punitive to a child, though undesirable natural consequences may follow from a child's poor choices.

Nurtured Heart Approach

We use the key elements of the Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) to build a positive school culture. The basic foundation of this approach is focused on relationships, which perfectly aligns with our mission. We use this strengths- based positive discipline approach that has three parts: positive recognition for following rules, minimizing attention to negative behavior, and consistent consequences for breaking a rule.

This is not a distinct curriculum or an add on program. It is a social emotional *strategy* that includes **acknowledging the inherent goodness within each and every student and transforming negative behaviors into positive behaviors while strengthening the relationship between the student and teacher**. The NHA was created and developed by Howard Glasser, who has written several popular books including *Transforming the Difficult Child* (with co-author Jennifer Easley). For additional resources about Nurtured Heart, see Appendix.

Responsive Classroom

In concert with Nurtured Heart, we use Responsive Classroom as our curriculum and approach to teaching to further support students' social emotional development by focusing on Engaging Academics, Positive Community, Effective Management, and Developmentally Responsive Teaching. Responsive Classroom is anchored in the core belief that to be successful in and out of school, students need to learn a set of **social and emotional competencies**—cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, and self-control—and a set of **academic competencies**—academic mindset, perseverance, learning strategies, and academic behaviors.

We believe and support the six principles that guide this approach:

1. Teaching social and emotional skills is as important as teaching academic content.
2. How we teach is as important as what we teach.
3. Great cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. How we work together as adults to create a safe, joyful, and inclusive school environment is as important as our individual contribution or competence.
5. What we know and believe about our students—individually, culturally, developmentally—informs our expectations, reactions, and attitudes about those students.

The Four Domains of Responsive Classroom

Engaging Academics	Effective Management	Positive Community	Developmental Awareness
▪ Designing instruction that is active and interactive	▪ Developing meaningful rules that connect to children's learning goals	▪ Building a sense of community and shared purpose during the first weeks of school	▪ Creating an organized physical environment that matches developmental needs
▪ Giving clear directions	▪ Explicitly teaching behavioral expectations	▪ Providing structures that allow students and teachers to get to know one another and appreciate differences	▪ Structuring appropriately challenging lessons
▪ Asking open-ended questions	▪ Establishing efficient routines that allow for a high degree of autonomy		▪ Connecting learning to children's strengths and interests
▪ Pacing lessons and activities to keep students engaged	▪ Intervening before behavior goes off track	▪ Devising routines that provide a sense of safety and predictability	
▪ Offering meaningful learning choices	▪ Providing clear, respectful, and immediate feedback when behavior does go off track		
▪ Giving high-quality feedback	▪ Keeping the class's learning momentum going while calmly handling disruptions	▪ Creating community traditions that nurture a sense of belonging, significance, and fun	

6. Partnering with families—knowing them and valuing their contributions—is as important as knowing the children we teach.

All teachers and staff in our schools adopt the following core classroom practices at the heart of the Responsive Classroom approach:
- Interactive Modeling—An explicit practice for teaching procedures and routines (such as those for entering and exiting the room) as well as academic and social skills (such as engaging with the text or giving and accepting feedback).
- Teacher Language—The intentional use of language to enable students to engage in their learning and develop the academic, social, and emotional skills they need to be successful in and out of school.
- Logical Consequences—A non-punitive response to misbehavior that allows teachers to set clear limits and students to fix and learn from their mistakes while maintaining their dignity.
- Interactive Learning Structures—Purposeful activities that give students opportunities to engage with content in active (hands-on) and interactive (social) ways.

As part of our social emotional developmental curriculum, we acknowledge students' need for frequent periods of time for both structured and unstructured movement. Our students have physical education or yoga multiple times each week, and each of our schools has time each day for outdoor recess and/or quiet choice time for students. These periods of movement and choice allow for our students to better focus and participate in the other parts of our academic day.

Alignment with our Mission

At the Intergenerational School our mission is to **_connect, create, and guide a multigenerational community of lifelong learners and spirited citizens as we strive for academic excellence_**. Everything we do in our educational program begins with the mission. We learn together as children and adults based on our shared values and an educational philosophy informed by research on human growth and development. Because the language of our mission was deliberately chosen to reflect who we are and what we value as a school, it is worth examining the key terms in greater detail.

Multigenerational Community:
- We create a community of individuals organized around the central activity of learning that transcends traditional age barriers.
- We include children, faculty and staff, family members, volunteers, and collaborating outside organizations in our community.
- We welcome learners of all ages to participate together in the learning life of the school.
- Our students learn in multi-age classrooms, where older students serve as role models and can assist younger students. Younger students can see what their own learning can and will become.
- We bring all ages together. From high schoolers and college age students who come to mentor, to our beloved senior citizens who impart their wisdom and caring, as well as

emergent preschoolers through our partnerships, the full life span is represented at TIS well beyond the traditional elementary school community of students, staff, and parents.

Lifelong learning:
- We strive to develop in students the tools of lifelong learning by modeling them every day as staff members and community volunteers.

Spirited citizens:
- We are committed to acquiring the knowledge, skills, and habits to be effective and empowered stewards of our community.
- We work together to make sound and principled decisions, and to communicate and advocate effectively for the community good. We apply our knowledge to improve our communities through service learning and other forms of community service.
- At the Intergenerational Schools we strive to exemplify a standard of excellence in school, in our partnerships, in community, and throughout our lives.

Instructional Design

Intergenerational Learning

One of our core beliefs is in the power and importance of intergenerational learning. Because of that belief, we are perpetually looking for opportunities to leverage intergenerational relationships to enhance learning within a nurturing and supportive community. The mentors who work with our students become another caring adult in our students' lives. But, there are mutual benefits to older and younger people engaged in an intergenerational community. Some of the value for older persons has been described as increased ability to remain productive, applied use of skills accrued over a lifetime, successful interaction with young people, development of new friendships, and decreased loneliness and isolation (Scannell and Roberts 1994). In particular, many older adults have expressed a sense of fulfillment from co-learning experiences and the chance to pass on life experiences and skills to others. In the area of literacy, for example, adults who participate in intergenerational family literacy programs show more growth in literacy skills than do adults who participate in adult only programs. The benefits to children are equally significant, as demonstrated in the many mentoring, tutoring and foster care programs across the country. The multi-age model proposed also has benefit for middle aged members of the learning community. Although the youth and seniors are the most direct participants, the middle aged teachers, researchers, parents, and members of the neighborhood are actively engaged in co-learning relationships that provide a multitude of benefits. Our schools have been recognized for and continue to evolve opportunities for intergenerational learning. Most notably, **The Intergenerational School in the Buckeye neighborhood, won the national Eisner Prize for Excellence in Intergenerational Programming in 2014**. Many programs are in place, and new ideas are continuously being actively explored and developed.

Non-graded, multi-age groupings

Our classroom groupings are based on developmental learning stage rather than on age (i.e., grade level). Since children vary in the age at which they master skills and competencies, developmentally based classrooms in our schools span several ages. Our classrooms also incorporate adult and older adult learners who are participating in the intergenerational programming. We make decisions about how to group students based on developmental needs and learning interests. These groupings are also flexible; students may move into different groupings as learning needs evolve.

Developmental Stages of Learning and Benchmark Indicators

In the Intergenerational Schools we organize instruction by developmental learning levels rather than by the more arbitrary age-based grade levels that are common in education. As a non-graded, developmental school, benchmarks are based on academic developmental stages that have only approximate correspondence to age/grade. Appendix A describes these approximate relationships between our clusters, stages of learning, and the Ohio K-8 curriculum.

We encourage students to progress through the developmental stages as quickly as is possible. However, we recognize that students cannot be successful if asked to learn ideas, strategies, and skills for which they are not yet developmentally ready. Our students who enter school lacking expected or desirable preparation must be given the time to acquire such prerequisite skills. Just as in other public schools, individual students may require a longer period of time to achieve a given level of proficiency. In each core curriculum area, we have established standards for what constitutes "expected progress." Students who fail to meet such standards may stay in a stage or cluster for additional time and may require more time to complete our curriculum than the expected 9 years (Kindergarten through 8th grade).

Similarly, we have students who show accelerated learning and may progress to advanced levels more quickly than would ordinarily be expected. These students are given opportunities to study topics of interest in depth, to develop independent learning projects and/or community service learning projects and to explore advanced topics such as Algebra I.

Transition from one stage to the next can occur *at any time of year* based on demonstrated attainment of stage benchmarks (generally at an 80% to 95% standard depending on the assessment). This is in marked contrast to traditional grade levels, where grade promotion or retention occurs only at the end of an academic year and students are often moved ahead without the necessary solid foundation for success. In such a structure, children may be forced to advance when not ready or repeat a grade when they have already mastered a portion of the required curriculum. In our schools, the learning journey is appropriate and continuous for each individual.

Specific learner goals and outcomes are developed to be consistent with the State of Ohio Learning Standards, as well as with the standards written by professional educational associations (e.g., NCTM,

NCTE). Although listed here as separate content, each strand of the curriculum is interconnected and woven into other strands.

Mastery based progression

At our schools there is no social promotion or moving ahead without being ready, rather, there is a solid foundation from which to build on meeting curriculum expectations. Our students move progressively through the stages, meeting objectives and benchmarks based on mastery, rather than simply based on birthdate and age. Mastery is determined by our benchmarks, which are annually reviewed to ensure they meet and exceed the rigor required by the Ohio Learning Standards. Because our students spend multiple years with the same teacher, after each academic year, learning starts up again where it left off, without the need to repeat a grade or accelerate to a level for which a student may not be fully prepared.

Mentoring/apprenticeship model

The teachers, other adults (including seniors) who participate in the school and more skilled peers all provide the model of a skilled practitioner. Through demonstration, explicit modeling, and mentoring, our teachers enable each student to create closer and closer approximations to the target competency.

Individualized learning and instruction in a workshop setting

Instruction and frequent assessment go hand in hand, so that teaching is directed to what each individual student needs to know in order to be successful on the particular task at hand. Our teachers use a workshop approach to instruction to meet the needs of the whole group, small similar-needs based groups, and individuals. Classes begin with a **minilesson** that (1) *connects* to previous learning (either as part of a unit of study or as part of the classroom curriculum), includes (2) a specific *teaching point*, an opportunity for (3) *active engagement* or practice of the teaching point, and a (4) *link* to the day's and future learning. Following the minilesson, students have extended time to **authentically practice**, whether it's reading, writing, or math. During that independent practice time, teachers *confer* with individuals, *teach small groups*, *facilitate* peer coaching, *assess* learning and respond as appropriate. Finally, learners have an opportunity to **share** with and teach their peers and other visitors to the classroom.

Intervention and Exceptional Populations

Our unique developmental curriculum helps meet the individual learning needs of all children whether they learn differently than most others, have a disability or not, or are accelerated or 'gifted.' In this approach our educational environment supports multiple learning styles and students are not relegated to an arbitrary age- and time-based lock-step system. Learning in our schools allows for human variations as opposed to taking the form of an industrialized factory where all children are expected to master concepts at the same rate. Our goal is for each child to receive instruction exactly where they are

in their learning and move ahead at their own pace, thus eliminating the need for many of the labels that are traditionally used, and often overused, in schools.

Students with disabilities

Identifying and labeling a student as having a disability is a *last* step in our intervention and monitoring process. We use a tiered approach to intervention. Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions are utilized in our classrooms based on formative assessment and close monitoring of student progress. We understand that, just as children do not learn to walk or talk at the same time, learning is also an individual process. Our classroom instruction utilizes a workshop environment so that each child is working within his/her Zone of Proximal Development as much as possible. Highly differentiated instruction is the norm. When a child is not progressing, that student receives more intensive classroom-based instruction, and more time during the school day to learn the needed skills. Our Tier 3 interventions may include additional one-to-one or small group work through the Title I program, delivered as push-in and/or pull-out intervention.

If Tier 1-3 interventions have been exhausted and the student is still not making adequate progress, we follow the formal evaluation process outlined by ODE and IDEA. Thus, we start with increasingly intensive interventions and close monitoring prior to considering a special education evaluation. We follow IDEA and adopt all procedures and practices (FAPE, confidentiality, procedural safeguards, evaluations, delivery of services, etc.) from the most current Ohio Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities. The Ohio Operating Standards identify the state requirements and federal Part B Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) requirements that apply to the implementation of special education and related services to students with disabilities.

The evaluation process rarely discovers any information about the student that the classroom teacher does not already know in greater detail from daily individualized instruction and assessment. Moreover, even with identification and development of an Individual Education Program (IEP), our approach to instruction is generally not changed much. Since the pedagogy is based on best practice teaching and individualization, this is still the best way to teach any child, disabled, gifted or typical. Generally additional services and working with the intervention specialist are specified in the IEP as well as classroom learning objectives.

We monitor progress for special student populations through assessments linked to the developmental stage of each child, and to the student's IEP goals. Our students and their families receive written progress reports based on individual IEP goals each trimester. If students are not making progress, or if

the IEP team determines that the IEP needs revision before the yearly review, the IEP is amended so that it meets the child's specific needs.

When walking into any of our classrooms, it is rare to see every child working on the same activity or lesson. Each classroom is composed of an average of 17 students across a several year age span. This makes implementing a true inclusion model seamless. Both students without disabilities and students identified to receive Special Education support and services are working within a developmental and individualized curriculum and cannot be distinguished from one another in the classroom setting. This also helps to instill tolerance and acceptance into the school culture.

The intervention staffing at our schools depends on the number of students found eligible for Special Education services in each building and is in keeping with state mandated staffing levels. Intervention specialists work with identified students in their general education classroom, small groups, and individually, to insure progress is being made on IEP goals. They also work closely with the general education teachers since Special Education students are educated within inclusive classrooms to the full extent possible. Contracted services also include a social worker, speech therapist, school psychologist, school nurse, ESL teacher/tutor and occupational/physical therapists, based on the services specified in the IEP and/or student needs.

Our Intervention Specialists, along with at least one administrator, maintain close links to ODE's Office for Exceptional Children to ensure access to all the laws, regulations, and compliance information. Classroom teachers and the Intervention Specialist work together in as a formal team to meet the needs of all students. All our teachers have access to professional development opportunities to help tailor the curriculum to each child. In the past year, there has been an increased interest in trainings focused on using technology to accommodate various learning styles, including children with special education needs.

English language learners

The majority of our students enter as Emerging stage learners (5-6 years old). All students are screened for language proficiency upon enrollment initially by having their families or guardians complete the Ohio Language Usage Survey. When families share that English is not the student's first language, the predominant language spoken at home is something other than English, or the student is new to the United States from a country where a language other than English is spoken, that student is then assessed using the English Language Proficiency Screener from the state of Ohio. If a student qualifies, the student's parents are notified that the child has been identified to receive language support services. If the parent agrees to allow the services, the school then implements the appropriate services to meet the English Language Proficiency Standards for listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Should a student be identified as having limited English proficiency, we seek to provide the appropriate services as determined by the screener. Part of the plan for instruction would include determining the

appropriate setting, such as push-in support within the classroom, small group instruction in or out of the classroom, or more intense newcomer support. Our teachers who provide this support and instruction within the Intergenerational School model are TESOL-certified, and the school provides partial financial support for teachers interested in this certification. Additionally, these teachers have the opportunity to attend professional development provided for teachers by the Education Service Center in Independence, as well as the annual Ohio TESOL Conference. Students who are identified and receive services are then assessed annually as part of the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA). Those results are shared with families and used to determine whether or not students qualify for continued ELL support.

Low-performing students

Each of our schools has been portfolio-based since the original school opened in 2000. Because students progress based on mastery of skills demonstrated on assessments at each stage, our teachers have long collected data to inform instruction for individual students. Recently, staff at each school has worked to develop a Response to Intervention (RTI) process for addressing students' needs when they are not making the expected growth. The staff is in the early stages of this work, but these meetings allow teachers to present a problem of practice and turn to colleagues for ideas and support when interventions are not working in homeroom classrooms. The three schools are working to have a standard form for teachers to bring to the meeting to streamline conversations and to insure teachers come to the meetings with information about interventions used in the classroom, rather than assessment information only. Our teachers are also working on developing more consistent ongoing progress monitoring practices. While all students complete sets of assessments at the beginning and end of the year, as well as some , such as NWEA MAP, at mid-year, consistent use of shared assessments for units of study that can be used to monitor student progress toward state standards and also used to inform shared conversations about instruction between teachers of the same content is a goal at each school, particularly in the area of math. These assessments will also help to support and inform the RTI process.

Gifted Students

Our developmental curriculum allows gifted students opportunities to move ahead naturally, once they have demonstrated mastery of appropriate Learning Standards. Children are not confined to a curriculum solely based on grade level and age. Gifted students can move ahead in any academic discipline and/or dive deeper into any content areas once they have met the benchmark for their stage of learning, without 'skipping' a grade into a new class. With an individualized design all students are being met where they are in their learning and guided to the next logical step in their own educational process.

Homeless students

In the event that our schools enroll homeless students or students in or entering foster care, each of the schools work to ensure consistency in the child's life. Staff are trained to provide educational supports and other available related opportunities as well as necessary referrals to health care, dental care, and other health and human services. Homeless and foster children will have the same access to an

education at our schools as other children. Once identified, barriers such as providing proof of residency required to enroll, will be waived until the family attains a stable residence or the necessary paperwork. Our contracted social worker provides training and assistance to teaching and administrative staff to support families in crisis, in addition to providing counseling for the child. Our team approach ensures students experience the least amount of disruption possible in these crisis situations, and that they feel supported and encouraged to accept any help that can be provided.

Authentic and normative assessment

Since a developmental learning model requires extensive knowledge of each student, we incorporate a great deal of assessment into regular classroom activity. In the earliest years, assessment is largely of an authentic and formative nature. By this we mean: assessment happens within the The Intergenerational Schools have incorporated key elements of the Ohio Screening and Diagnostic Tests into our assessment framework. From grade level equivalent of 2 through grade 8, students are also assessed three times a year using the NWEA MAP assessment in Math, Reading and Science (for grades 5 & 8). We also use the Bridges math curriculum and assessments. We use these scores and the Linking Data spreadsheet to determine the students who may benefit from intervention. Beginning at the third grade equivalent level, our students are also assessed by state tests as required by the Ohio Department of Education. Standards of performance for all assessments are included in our benchmark expectations. Finally, students in their last year in the Intergenerational Schools are expected to write and deliver a senior speech and complete a prescribed number of community service hours in addition to meeting academic benchmarks in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Thus students must demonstrate that they have attained the goals of the mission statement as a lifelong learner and spirited citizen.

Adult Lifelong Learning

Evaluation

Our schools utilize the Ohio Teacher and Principal Evaluation System (OTES and OPES) to develop and evaluate teachers, principals, and assistant principals. We use multiple parts of the eTPES system, including Professional Growth and Improvement Plans, Informal Observations forms, Formal Observation Performance Rubric, Student Growth Measures, and the Final Summative Rating. Teachers are supervised and evaluated by the principal with support from the assistant principal. The principal and assistant principal are supervised and evaluated by the Director of Education for the Intergenerational Schools.

All teachers and administrators complete a Professional Growth Plan annually or are placed on an Improvement Plan if there is a concern about performance. The Professional Growth Plan allows teachers to set goals for student achievement and for professional growth according to the teacher standards for performance. Teachers write their own goals, which are approved by the principal, as well as share how they will monitor their progress toward their goal. Teachers also include what support or resources they will need to meet their goal. This becomes another way that the principal identifies needs or opportunities for professional development.

The principal in each building conducts frequent classroom walkthroughs and gives feedback for those using the Informal Observation Form available on eTPES. The principal conducts some sort of informal walkthrough observation of each teacher at least once a month. The walkthroughs typically center around a certain concept. For example, she may visit classrooms to see a particular content, such as math or writing instruction. She may also visit each classroom to see whether the board displaying learning targets is up to date.

At least twice a year each teacher also has a formal observation, which includes a pre-conference during which the teacher shares the lesson plan for the lesson the principal will observe, the formal observation performance rubric with comments and rating, and a post conference where the rubric is shared and the teacher is provided an opportunity to reflect on his or her students' learning.

Professional Development

For 16 years the Intergenerational Schools utilized a developmental curriculum that was designed by the founders. Just as the school, the students and the staff are considered works in progress, so is the curriculum. It is a "living document" and will continue to be reviewed, revised, and improved over time. While the curriculum has largely been viewed as less than a "how to" manual, it is intended to be an empowering tool for teachers. It sets forth the broad strokes of the philosophy, pedagogy and learning, and goals and objectives of the school for this information. It is left to the teaching professionals to create the details of lesson planning that makes each classroom both consistent with the curriculum and school model, and a unique example of the curriculum being implemented.

Professional development is an area of growth for our schools. When the original school opened, it began with a small number of staff members—two the first year and four total the second year. This allowed for individual and differentiated professional development fueled by identified needs, personal interest, and individual strengths and challenges. Much of the professional development was delivered verbally with support directly from the principal, who was able to spend time in each teacher's classroom. As the school expanded from one to two and two to three, this model of professional development became increasingly challenging and ultimately impossible to keep up with.

There are a number of data sources that we use to determine the professional development needs of staff, including years of experience, staff surveys, informal and formal observations using the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), student performance, overall school and model performance, and informal teacher response to the current challenges of the school. The professional learning of our staff members aligns with our mission of fostering lifelong learning. Professional learning in our model is delivered in a variety of formats and takes on multiple forms throughout the school day, school year, and over the summer. We regularly use three main structures to deliver professional development, in addition to other opportunities that arise throughout the year.

Weekly staff meeting are staff learning time in all three of our schools. This time provides teachers with opportunities to engage with the Ohio Learning Standards, the testing blueprints, and the state release items; time for vertical articulation and professional learning about how concepts like number sense build from kindergarten math through middle school and high school; and time to develop understanding of the adopted curriculum and support it with fidelity of implementation.

In each of our schools teachers spend time in Cluster Meeting, or meeting of teachers who teach same or similar content, level, or population in the school. These groups, typically lead by a Cluster Director or lead teacher, provide space for teachers to learn from one another as they co-plan for instruction, review and respond to common assessments, and problem solve and brainstorm solutions to common challenges.

At least twice yearly, staff from all three Intergenerational Schools come together in one location to learn, collaborate, and improve our effectiveness as educators.

Model Logistics

Properly licensed or certified teachers and staff

We strive to ensure that each of our core curriculum classes, including English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies is taught by a properly licensed teacher who holds a license in the content and level they teach. Our primary teachers and any teachers who teach third grade level students each either hold a reading endorsement, a Master's in reading, or have passed the Praxis 5203: Teaching Reading: Elementary Education.

Class size

Based on 19 years of instructional practice in the Intergenerational Schools, we have found that a smaller number of students in each multi-age classroom is one component of students' success in our schools. As the Brookings Institute reports in their brief regarding research on class size, studies show a positive correlation between increased student achievement and class sizes of 13-17 students when compared to larger class sizes (Chingos & Whitehurst, 2011). While class size alone does not lead to student success, the other components that consistently do lead to increased student achievement rely on a smaller number of students. In his book, *Visible Learning*, meta-researcher John Hattie reviewed 138 influences on student achievement. Among the top ten positive influences that impact student

achievement? Timely and specific feedback. Our model of students staying with the same teacher for multiple years, combined with the small number of students in each classroom, means our teachers are better able to provide ongoing specific and timely feedback to their students. Because of the frequency with which they interact with their teachers and the small number of other students in their classroom, other benefits to students include an increased ability to take risks and to learn from errors, in addition to increased opportunities for teachers and families to develop lasting partnerships that positively impact students and their learning.

While there is limited research on the impact of class size, there are no studies regarding the optimum number of students for a multiage classroom. As are all teachers in the state of Ohio, our teachers are responsible for making sure their students meet or exceed the Ohio Learning Standards. Any one grade level includes English Language Arts Standards for Reading: Literature; Reading: Informational Text; Reading: Foundational Skills; Writing; Speaking; Listening; and Language, Range/Quality/Complexity. Each of these categories includes about ten individual standards. This means our teachers can have between two and three years worth of standards they are responsible for teaching, monitoring the learning of and the progression through for their classroom of students. Additionally, for our primary teachers, our recent Kindergarten Readiness Assessment results show that a majority of our primary students come to us lacking demonstrated readiness for school, requiring additional supports to meet the expectations for primary learning. Keeping class size at an average of 17 means teachers are monitoring the simultaneous teaching and learning of multiple grade levels of standards for similar ability groups of up to five to nine students within their classrooms. The ideal class size by level is 16 students for primary, 18 students for developing and refining stage, and 20 students for applying. For more resources on class size research and effective feedback, see Appendix.

Space requirements

Learning in our classrooms looks different from traditional classrooms. Our teachers do not spend long blocks of time standing in front of the classroom with students organized in rows with eyes and ears only on the teacher. Learning in our classrooms is socially constructed, and it takes on many different forms. At times teachers gather the whole group in a meeting area for Morning Meeting, for Number Corner (calendar), for a quick mini-writing lesson based on what the class of writers need to know next, an interactive read aloud exploring theme, or to gather around a model of the Earth's gravity. Students need space for long periods of practice--reading, writing, exploring math concepts, developing science investigations, or brainstorming the best way to remind passersby moving regularly past their classroom to walk quietly. Teachers need spaces to pull together small groups of students with similar needs--whether it's around a kidney table, on a rug, or near the classroom library. Students need space to access materials and collaborate with peers. Our brand of learning requires a flexible space with room for teachers and learners to engage in a range of activities.

Our current classrooms at the three schools range between 700 and 750 square feet. Ohio requires at least 30 square feet per child in each room. This requirement assumes students are staying in one spot in tightly arranged rows, not moving around the room. This scenario does not match our model of teaching and learning. In his presentation to the Intergenerational School Boards in 2017, Cleveland

architect Robert Maschke suggested that, to allow for the collaborative nature of our classrooms, at least 50 square feet per student was optimal. Currently, our classes of 17 students means that space ranges between 41 and 44 square feet per student.

In addition to classroom space, our schools require additional space--both for Specials classes such as Physical Education, Music, and Art, as well as additional Specials classes unique to the individual schools, and for outdoor play and learning. Similar to homeroom classrooms, the learning in these spaces is social and takes on varied forms, so it needs to be flexible and easily arranged to adjust to the learning objectives. Incorporating as much PE and other movement, as well as outdoor unstructured play time, is imperative to students' learning and well-being.

Calendar structure

When our calendar is drafted and adopted, we work to make sure that it values and addresses the needs of both our staff and the families of our students. While we believe as a leadership team in the power of a year-round school calendar, we recognize that the lack of childcare, including camps and other programming more widely available during the summer months, makes a less traditional calendar difficult or impossible for many of our families. For that same reason, as is possible, we will follow the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) calendar for beginning and ending the schools year, for Winter and Spring Break, as well as most other major holidays.

The state of Ohio began tracking school by hours instead of days years ago. Our school days are longer than CMSD and other neighboring districts. As a result, our students and staff are in school for more hours than other districts. To account for this difference in time, we include a Fall Break in early October. Our staff work days are consistently half work/half professional development, with three all-model full professional development days each year--at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.

Community Engagement

Since the original Intergenerational School's inception, we have understood that family involvement is an important part of our students' and our schools' success. Because of that, we work relentlessly to connect with our families and to involve them in the academic lives of our students. Since our first school opened in 2000, we have achieved 100% parent participation in conferences each year. This is possible because our teachers are not done with conferences until they have connected with each parent or guardian. We avail ourselves in the evenings and on a Saturday, in addition to our regular working hours to try to accommodate working parents with varying shifts. If parents cannot attend during the regular conference periods, our teachers will do everything in their power to catch them at a time that works. In connection with conferences, parents are surveyed at least once per year. Each school, and the model overall, develops goals and other responses to the data collected through these surveys. The voices of our parents are an important part of our work to continuously improve.

Each of our Intergenerational Schools use multiple events and ongoing groups to engage families and the community. Each school hosts a Curriculum Night at the beginning each year. Families have the opportunity to meet and get to know their child's teacher, learn about the curriculum, and learn about the school expectations at each level. Parent Teacher Conferences, in addition to those scheduled informally, are offered in the evening, during the day on a Friday, and Saturday morning to allow an opportunity for families to participate, regardless of work schedules. Celebrations of Learning happen twice a year and are paired with the all-school music programs. Celebrations of Learning are led by students, who take their family members to their classrooms and around the school to show what they have been learning, creating, and working on at school. Community Meeting is a whole-school morning meeting that happens the last Friday of every month. Hosted by a different pair of classrooms each month, families are invited to join. At these meetings the school publicly celebrates students who have made academic gains and moved onto the next level of their learning. Family group meetings happen once a month at the school, and two meetings are offered--one in the morning and one at night to honor all work schedules. Ongoing communication also happens daily through social media, automated phone announcements sent through School Messenger, and the school's communication platform, Jupiter. Other fun activities regularly bring families into the building who may not otherwise visit school. These events include: Fathers Walk/Donuts with Dad, Muffins with Mom, Class Mystery Readers, Friendship and Franks, and Family Dance Parties.

Each school works to develop a variety of partnerships with the community: elder centers, colleges, high schools, preschools, other community programming. Intergenerational programming is not restricted to the elders, even though that was our first partnership in 2002. We strive for partnerships that are mutually beneficial to both the schools and community partners. These partnerships are a part of our social curriculum and are the spirited citizens part of our mission. We have witnessed time and time again students who struggle with their peers socially who blossom with the elders and show their caring and thoughtful side. We would never have seen that were it not for the intergenerational experience.

Conclusion for now: March 2019

In his book, *Life in a Crowded Place*, Ralph Peterson writes about the importance of community and of creating space for a sense of belonging in a complex and often disjointed place. We know that in teaching our students how to be members of our school communities how important it is to be clear with our expectations. We know that it is also true for the adult learners in our community. This Educational Plan for the Intergenerational Schools is a living document, and our intention is to be more clear about the expectations for how learning and citizenship look in our schools. The exercise of revising this document has taught us that the core values of what we are and what we have always been haven't changed. At the same time, as we continue to reflect and grow as a learning organization, we will annually revisit this document to ensure that the pillars on which we were built continue.

Appendices: *Under Construction, Coming Fall 2019*

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Assessment Framework

Social Emotional Learning Resources

Nurtured Heart:

Responsive Classroom:
https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/principles-practices/
https://youtu.be/mhV6AcBxeBc

Instructional Material

Awards

Research participation

Historic test performance

Model Logistics

Space Requirements

https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/classroom-spaces-that-work/

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept12/vol70/num01/
Good-Feedback-Is-Targeted,-Specific,-Timely.aspx