



GARDEN SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Richard Marotta, Ph. D., Headmaster

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Thoughts for the week

By Richard Marotta, Ph.D., Headmaster



This Friday, we held our fall Faculty Workshop Day at Garden. Throughout the day, teachers participated in various group discussions of particular issues facing the school, of specific plans for the next several months and during our morning sessions the teachers were asked to engage in an analysis of the mission statement.

For independent schools such as Garden, the Mission Statement outlines the guiding principles for what we do as an educational institution and is a concise expression of the schools values, goals and vision. As part of the school's expression of its identity, our Mission Statement expresses those educational elements that we consider to be the foundation upon which we base of daily pedagogical approach and upon which we base our long-range planning.

Our Mission Statement contains a number of beliefs and goals that informs our school community of what we provide to our students:

Garden School, in the Independent tradition, affirms the primacy of learning. We empower every student in our educationally diverse community to meet responsibly the challenges of everyday life by promoting academic achievement, personal development and social involvement. We further believe that by recognizing each student's individual identity, Garden School fosters the self-worth necessary succeed.

In reading this statement, it becomes apparent the some key ideas emerge: learning, individuality, achievement, social involvement, self-worth and success. These ideas, or goals, embody the aspirations of our community for the manner in which we educate each student and the outcomes that we expect for each student.

Today's work with the faculty centered around each phrase of the statement; the faculty divided into groups and each group examined one particular phrase to analyze its meaning as an idea, and then to articulate the ways in which we act upon that idea in daily instruction and decision making. The most important part of this exercise was to determine that the ideas in the statement are being put into action in our classrooms, hallways, trips, in fact, in every aspect of life at Garden School.

The conclusion reached was that we do embody these ideas in our curricular and extracurricular programs and that we could design even further ways to expand those practices. A school, like its children and teachers, is a work in progress.