

# Cedarwood Waldorf School Strategic Plan

2019-2022



## **CEDARWOOD'S MISSION**

Cedarwood School brings Waldorf Education to life and strives to instill a love for learning. Our curriculum weaves together the arts, academics and movement, with a reverence for the developing child. We nurture our children's spirituality, cultivate their ability to think imaginatively and inspire them to seek the truth.

## **OUR VISION**

Cedarwood's true purpose is to create a collaborative community that strives to learn how we as human beings can create a better world.

## **OUR GOAL**

To continue shaping Cedarwood into the best possible Waldorf school, educating and preparing our students to meet the changing world around them.

## **OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**

We are pleased to present Cedarwood's three-year strategic plan. This plan is the culmination of a year's work, and incorporates feedback from faculty, administrators, parents, and alumni. Members of the committee met with parents at courtyard coffees, and held many individual faculty and staff meetings. Input was solicited through a comprehensive online survey, which allowed for extended commentary as well as ratings in each area. The committee worked to process and integrate this feedback, with additional input from key stakeholders. This strategic plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in September, 2019.

## **THE QUESTIONS WE ASKED**

What do you value most about Cedarwood? How can we continue to strengthen our school? How can we share our unique approach to Waldorf education with even more families in the Portland area.

## WE IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS:

### Preparing Our Students to Meet a Changing World

In order to ensure that our students are prepared for the social and technological challenges of high school and beyond, taking their places as global citizens, our school will create and implement a developmentally-appropriate approach to digital technology education throughout the grades, providing exposure and instruction that protects the imagination while ensuring our graduates are ready for their future educational experiences.

### Global Citizenship: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Cedarwood and its Board-mandated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee are committed to developing strategies to increase diversity as it pertains to race and ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, neurodiversity and socioeconomic diversity across all the domains at Cedarwood. We recognize this is both a challenge and a growth opportunity that will involve a significant commitment of resources.

In order to guide our students on the path to global citizenship, our school will:



- Examine our curriculum and delivery of pedagogy and explore best practices at other schools for opportunities to build a more inclusive curriculum.
- Review and improve our marketing and outreach to build a diverse faculty, staff and student population.
- Foster awareness of equity and inclusion best practices for faculty, staff, board and parents, in order to support children from diverse backgrounds.

## Pedagogy and Program: Steady Enrollment and Meeting Student Needs

Cedarwood Waldorf School is often described as a “progressive urban Waldorf school”. This means that while our teachers teach to meet the needs of the children in front of them using Waldorf pedagogy and their knowledge of the developmental stages of the child as the core of their work, they are also willing to draw on resources from the community and other educational resources to do so.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD:

We celebrate our Waldorf early childhood program as the cornerstone of our school. This is where the journey begins for our children. We offer a program designed to nurture our youngest students through their first classroom experiences. The children are invited to live fully in their imagination. Each day allows for ample time to play, both inside and outside. Children absorb the beginnings of scientific exploration and develop a deep curiosity for the world around them. A love of creativity is fostered in the kindergarten through pre-literacy and pre-academic activities such as storytelling, puppet plays, poetry, and sorting and counting.

In order to grow the healthy foundation of our school, it is our goal to:

- Share Cedarwood’s rich education with more early childhood students.
- Establish strong connections with neighborhood Waldorf preschools.
- Recruit robust pre-school classes and re-establish a third kindergarten class.
- Strengthen our outdoor play space for the Early Childhood

### LOWER GRADES:

Our goal is to provide appropriate educational support to all of our students so that they can thrive across our dynamic curriculum. This includes offering both appropriate opportunities to advanced students as well as increasing our capacity to identify and respond early to learning differences.

In order to maintain excellence and ensure our students’ needs are identified and met, the school will:

- Build faculty capacity with professional development and additional teaching strategies.
- Review and enhance the curriculum to ensure rigor, consistency, relevance, and future value.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL:

We recognize the transition into middle school marks a significant and exciting time for our students and parents. Our program is designed to support and guide our students through the challenges emerging teens face. Our goal is to develop our students’ capacity for critical thinking balanced with practical and experiential learning, while continuing to





ensure our students leave Cedarwood ready for the new challenges of this next step in their academic journey.

Cedarwood will study and implement improvements to all aspects of the middle school curriculum, starting with a thoughtful program of how to introduce and best approach the use of media. We will support our students' development as digital citizens, scientists, artists, mathematicians, musicians, and writers. Cedarwood will continue to seek new practices to engage and support middle school students and their parents through the important transition to high school, ensuring that students are both academically and technologically prepared for the next educational chapter in their lives.

## Community: We Heard You!

### PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Our parents are our best ambassadors and supporters, and are in many ways the creators of our school's warm culture. Our school will provide proactive parent education that covers the predictable developmental and programmatic changes that take place throughout childhood and adolescence, including the transitions from parent-child class to the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten to grade school, and on through middle school.

### VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

What sets Cedarwood apart from other schools is our deep sense of community. Our children make strong connections with one another because we as parents have them. Our school depends on volunteerism, and we want to help all parents find ways to fully engage in our community. Volunteering is one of the best ways to make friends, support your child and teacher, and to have fun at Cedarwood! We will reexamine and expand the volunteer experiences available at Cedarwood and develop a community program that uses each parent's skills & interests and identifies other avenues for parent involvement.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

In our community survey, we heard about the love our community holds for Cedarwood and many excellent suggestions for improvement.



In order to provide the best overall experience for our families, we will consider these possibilities:

- Provide opportunities for parents to learn about the Waldorf approach to literacy, science, and math
- Broaden partnerships with other organizations to provide living science learning opportunities
- Consider how to better utilize our outdoor spaces
- Build relationships with area private and public high schools to enhance opportunities for placement of our students
- Develop additional student and family opportunities for community service
- Explore different wants that parents have identified, such as: feasibility of a hot lunch program, possibility of a later school day start time, consistent daily release, and/or improved traffic flow at drop-off.
- Provide support for students with learning differences
- Explore support for alternative transportation options

## The Future: Expansion and Growth

Cedarwood has established an excellent Pre-K to Grade 8 school. In addition to maintaining our commitment to our past and further sustaining this excellence, we face important decisions in order to meet the evolving needs of students, families and the community. Primarily, should Cedarwood's campus expand? Various possibilities include: Cedarwood's immediate opportunity to expand our Lair Hill campus by purchasing the old Lair Hill Children's Museum; securing connection and/or ownership of a rural property to expand our outdoor education; or increasing use of our present facilities. Other opportunities may emerge

as well, and our work over the next few years will be to explore all possibilities, and then, with commitment from our community, Cedarwood will plan and implement the resulting vision.

Explorations for Cedarwood's future will include:

- Expand the campus to provide additional space for:
- Improved facilities for tutoring students with learning differences and providing therapeutic services
- A birth to 3 year child care program
- Subject-specific classrooms
- Develop a plan for investing in and enhancing our indoor and outdoor educational spaces, to be consistent with our long-term vision
- Consider the purchase of property or establishing use agreements with other entities for outdoor education, including partnership with a working farm or garden, and the establishment of a living science lab.

