

Kite and Leaf...

The good news
email from TCS!

The Value of Reflection

Our Culture of Reflection Begins in the Classroom

From kindergarten through eighth grade, our students reflect after projects, field trips, learning new academic skills, or important interactions with others. We ask students to think over what they enjoyed, what they didn't enjoy, what worked, what didn't work. We ask them how would they change the activity next time if they did it again. We use reflection as a tool for learning, helping students synthesize, abstract, and articulate key lessons taught by experience.



Group reflection skills can apply to assessing and improving either academic work or play activities.

Such reflection helps build critical thinking skills and executive function. Sharing reflections with classmates also demonstrates how the feelings and thoughts of others can vary widely, even after the same activity. Reflection time gives kids the chance to hear, respect and have compassion for the experience of others.

Applying the Reflection Process as an Organization

TCS also uses reflection to learn and evolve as an organization. We use reflection both informally and formally. Here are our key reflection tools:

For Teachers: Our calendar always leaves room for a reflection day for teachers following the last day of school. We discuss what worked and what

didn't over the school year, allowing faculty feedback to help guide us in planning for the next year. Teachers also receive a survey from the board so that they can confidentially give feedback on policies, administration, board decisions, faculty support, or offer suggestions for organizational change.

For Alumni: Every 1-2 years we survey our alumni and their parents to see how they are doing in high school or college. We want to know more about both their academic and social experience in high school. We ask several questions about ways TCS prepared them well and things TCS could have done better.

For Current Families: During the final weeks of each school year, we send a survey to all enrolled families asking questions on what specific aspects of a TCS education were valuable to their child, and where we can improve. We include brief questions that give us quantifiable data that we can compare to other years. We also provide questions that give room for longer answers, so that parents can share specific experiences and suggestions. Each response is carefully reviewed by our administration and board, and key trends are shared with our faculty.



By the time students reach middle level, the reflection process often happens organically without need for teachers to initiate it as a formal activity. Students plan and discuss their work as a group, following previously learned group interaction skills that allow each student a chance to contribute.

2023 End-of-Year Survey Results

We continue to evaluate responses to this year's end-of-year survey. We had 34 respondents, many of whom took the time to give narrative feedback particular to their child's experience. As happens in most years, narrative feedback is often mixed. For example, we might get feedback that a child does not like going to the woods, while at the same time hearing from parents whose children love the woods. One family may feel that their child's educational experience with math is lacking, while another family may praise our math curriculum. We carefully consider both specific comments as well as any patterns that emerge.

How important are the following elements in your decision to send your child to TCS?

Our Families' **Top 3 Factors** for Deciding to Send their Child to TCS:



1. Excellent Teachers
2. Focus on Social-Emotional Learning
3. Academic/Intellectual Challenge

Least Important:

Freedom from a test-focused environment

How well did TCS meet your expectations in the following areas?

Here is the percentage of respondents who said TCS met or exceeded expectations in:

Focus on Project-Based Learning: **100%**

Opportunity for Creative Expression: **100%**

Play-Based, Developmentally Appropriate: **100%**

Excellent Teachers: **97%**

Freedom from Testing Environment: **97%**

Small Class Size: **97%**

Focus on Social-Emotional Development: **94%**

Student Voice and Choice: **91%**

Field Trips: **91%**

Woods Days: **90%**

Social Justice Curriculum: **87%**

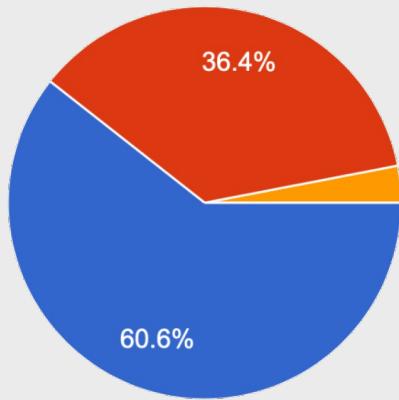
Partnership with Teachers and Admins: **85%**

Academic/Intellectual Challenge: **74%**



How would you rate the overall value

of the TCS education your child experienced this year?



60.6% Excellent Value: the cost was worth every penny for the educational experiences my child received this year.

36.4% Good value: the cost was fair for the educational experiences my child received this year.

3% Poor value: the cost was too high for the educational experiences my child received this year.

Parent Feedback:

"Kayaking has really benefitted my child."

"...our child understands that they have a voice in any discussion and are able to express their choice in an assertive manner."

"Older child in particular has become very aware of women's rights issues and history."

"The ocean students should have year-round gym classes."

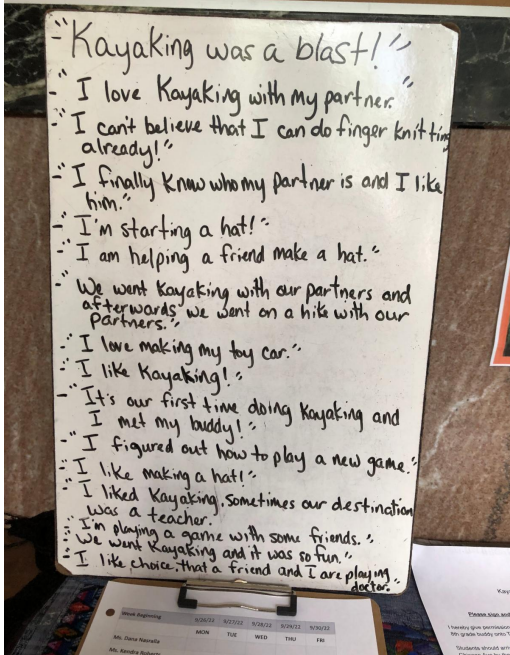
What ONE Word Describes a TCS Education?



Gathering, Listening, Researching, Discussing, then Implementing Suggestions

Reflection at its heart is a tool for constructive change. That's why we take our community survey feedback seriously. TCS has implemented several changes in recent years in response to survey feedback, including:

- Hiring bus transportation for



An example of our end-of-day "Suitcase" reflections in our early childhood classrooms.

Each year we count on participation in our surveys to make a more accurate assessment of where we can improve and where we are doing well. Wider participation gives us more reliable data. We sincerely hope that you will take the time to share your voice on TCS surveys!



Reflection fortifies the democratic process and decision-making in our classrooms.



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