

## Vision

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As the leader of The Underground School, I am committed to my educating team of students, parents, and community stakeholders. Together we are providing an encouraging place for children to learn. Parents are always welcome, and our community is collaborative in our efforts, honors our goals, and supports our future. All of us agree that high expectations, student safety, and a positive learning environment equal student success. We are passionate and enthusiastic in creating a challenging and positive learning environment where students want to be and are willing to share their knowledge and expand upon their learning.

The Underground School is a non-traditional public school that serves 3rd-6th grade in Hometown, America. Our school is home to approximately 650 students located in a rapidly growing community. The Underground School student body represents an ethnically and economically diverse student population. Students do not have to be residents of the city to attend The Underground School. However, students are required to interview and provide a personal or project-based introduction or proposal with a team of grade-appropriate teachers, and parents must attend. Students take a student-interest survey to determine the student's learning style at the time of the interview to assess goals and get to know the child(ren) more upon meeting.

The Underground School is committed to creating a culture of intellectual curiosity where students have ownership over their learning. We intend to inspire students to think, innovate, create through a standard-based, learner-centered environment by designing challenging educational experiences for our students.

We believe that students are life-long learners who utilize their knowledge, skills, and influence to create a better place. That intellectual growth occurs when learners are genuinely engaged in their learning. Teachers use innovative assessment and reporting to communicate specific areas of excellence or need learning growth. We are committed to authentic assessment practices and provide teachers room and the time to design around the needs of each of their students. We also recognize and respect that students are more engaged when they solve real problems for a real audience. Therefore we provide opportunities that challenge passions and project-based learning.

We explore and pursue partnerships with our community stakeholders and organizations, to provide worldwide connections to our classrooms, equipping students to learn more about each other, and the opportunity of making a global impact.

We support learning anywhere and at any time. Therefore, we provide an off-campus learning procedure for families who take trips throughout the year, holding the families accountable for learning while away from the campus.

Our students will do challenging work. Therefore, we believe in reassessment. We recognize that what a child learns is more important than when a child learns it. We embrace failure, support a growth mindset, and assist in the development of perseverance.

Community members are valuable partners and must be involved in their schools; therefore, we partner with our PTO to leverage our community's volunteer opportunities. Initiatives like Hands On Minds On. A student-led community service project-based partnership with businesses to engage with our students through gardening for assisted living facilities, the elderly residents, or learning trades from various companies. A second initiative example is our partnership with our local universities. Universities assist our students in learning about engineering, reverse engineering, coding, and technology.

The Underground School supports the belief that all members of our school community are treated respectfully and like family. We create specific co-created classroom norms. We provide coaching on habits of the mind, utilize the restorative practices approach for behavior redirection, and social-emotional assistance is also implemented and supported by all stakeholders.

Our teachers are mentors, encouragers, and supporters of students and one another through the growing process of becoming better humans. We accomplish these goals through formal and informal mentorship opportunities, creating time and space for teachers to gather together, and providing environments for teachers to be authentic and reflect safely.

Teachers are creative designers, facilitators, and navigators committed to improving the student's learning experiences. We commit to providing teachers with high-quality professional learning that is focused and filtered through our mission.

Teachers are also our school's leaders. They are respected highly as experts and provides our students with a global perspective that positively impacts teaching and learning. They also participate in various organizations, attend conferences, and present their knowledge among other educators and through social media.

We value our student's voices. Students' voices are heard through appropriate student learning engagement opportunities and facilitated by mentors, teachers, and community members. Students have created interest-based learning opportunities through their proposals that provide their peers with

hands-on, real-world learning experiences. For example, the student-led school newspaper, podcasts, art, dance, and music enrichment, school news, creative celebrations, STEAM events, and poetry nights. Student leaders are encouraged to sit in on event planning. Student surveys are created and designed by teachers and students. The student surveys collect information on student interests, school climate, rigor or quality of instruction, student behaviors, and perception of their power to establish goals for themselves, peers, and the school's strengths and weaknesses.