



SEQUOYAH
SCHOOL

we are a community of learners



sequoyah is a place where students know their learning is honored and celebrated by an entire school community



a sequoyah education challenges the mind, nurtures the heart, and celebrates human dignity

In the late 1950s, while U.S. social and political norms were on the brink of fundamental change, a small group of determined Pasadena parents – college professors, a minister, and scientists among them – met to plan the ideal school. What mattered most to the group was that Sequoyah students would graduate with a deeper understanding of themselves, confident in their ability to learn, and prepared for active citizenship. The new school community would set a paradigm for innovative instruction and would continually hold itself accountable for maintaining excellence.

In September 1958, with an initial teaching staff of one, Sequoyah School welcomed a mixed-age group of eight students. They attended class in a building leased from the Neighborhood Church, the same location Sequoyah occupies today.

Sequoyah takes its name from a Cherokee silversmith who, in the early 1800s, developed the Cherokee syllabary, a set of symbols used for writing words. The school name honors an accomplishment that gave a native American people the means to express themselves in writing, and to preserve their culture and national identity. Innovation, literacy, and contribution to the community are all at the heart of a Sequoyah education.

Sequoyah School is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.





sequoyah is a place where you know that what you do at school has an impact on the world

Students at Sequoyah know that their voices matter in the world and that their acts of stewardship make the community a better place for all. Prompted to reflect on important issues and to consider the perspective of multiple viewpoints, they develop attitudes of understanding and act on their capacity to care.

With a broad range of backgrounds, we're a group of people committed to understanding the similarities and differences among us, treating each other with appreciation and respect. We honor and reflect the vibrant diversity of Southern California, aware that offering a rewarding context for engagement, exchange and inquiry fosters understanding.

Teachers, parents, and students created what we call our Habits of Mind by distilling the broad narrative of a Sequoyah education into essential customs for intelligent and meaningful living. To observe an event of any kind at Sequoyah – reading buddies, Friday Hot Lunch, a student-taught Options class – is to see Habits of Mind in practice. Our Habits of Mind inform what we teach, the way we teach and how we operate as an institution.

Habits of Mind

- PERSPECTIVE To seek, honor and reflect on multiple viewpoints in order to broaden understanding and solve problems
- INQUIRY To become curious, motivated, self-reflective learners who generate questions to deepen understanding
- COMMUNICATION To engage in constructive dialogue, value literature and language and express oneself effectively through a variety of modalities
- COLLABORATION To know when and how to lead, follow and work together as an active listener and meaningful contributor
- APPLICATION To integrate and apply acquired knowledge in and out of the classroom
- STEWARDSHIP To take care of people, take care of things, take care of the environment and seek to make the community a better place for all
- OWNERSHIP To do one's best work





sequoyah is a place where teachers discover you

Experiences at school shape who we are, what we do and the way we live. Because the years from Kindergarten to Junior High are a decisive period when students have the potential to become lifelong learners, encouraging a student's intrinsic motivation to learn is at the heart of Sequoyah's teaching.

At Sequoyah, learning is an active, social process. Students construct knowledge and meaning from their experience. Challenged to explore, deliberate, debate, and draw conclusions, they feel appreciated for their individuality. Confidence and intellectual risk-taking soar. What results is an energetic community of learners skilled at making great things happen.

For student and teacher alike, the process of learning is best accomplished simultaneously and side-by-side. When educators model themselves as lifelong learners – comfortable with uncertainty, questioning the familiar, and probing alternative possibilities – students follow. This approach to teaching validates students as individuals and replaces some of the traditional classroom roles with a sense of student ownership. Mentor-apprentice relationships – both student-student and teacher-student – encourage and perpetuate collaboration.

Sequoyah teachers continually rethink what it means to be a good teacher, evaluate how best to meet individual student needs and interests, and adapt to shifts in classroom dynamics.

Student learning experiences are enhanced by our specialists in Spanish, science, theater arts, visual arts, music, and technology. These skilled subject specialists collaborate with classroom teachers and students to further enrich classroom themes, bringing the subject matter to life. They come to know every student well, nurturing a student's individual interest in their area of expertise. Sequoyah parents are invited to share skills and resources with teachers and students to expand learning in relation to class themes.





Each of Sequoyah's nine multi-age classrooms is a balanced community with a low student-teacher ratio. Student placement is based on social, emotional and academic development. Because learning styles, personalities and interests vary, students learn through various modalities appropriate to their developmental levels and paces. Progress is evaluated in descriptive narrative reports, parent-teacher conferences, student self-evaluations, project exhibitions, and cumulative portfolios of work.

Collaboration among students of different ages within a classroom community is one of the invaluable benefits to students as they move up through Sequoyah's classes. One year a student may be among the youngest in a class, allowing the opportunity for observing and being guided by older classmates, while another year the same student may be among the oldest, which offers a chance for leadership and affirmation of skills.

Throughout Sequoyah, older students mentor younger ones in relationships designed as unique learning opportunities for both participants. Older students teach Options classes to small groups, and most students enjoy the role of reading buddy, befriending and encouraging the youngest students as they practice new reading skills. Ultimately, both participants gain confidence and perspective from these interactions.

Junior High is the culminating experience of a student's years at Sequoyah. During this time of important transition and transformation, emphasis is placed on preparation for a successful high school experience.



sequoyah is a place where learning is so engaging that day's end comes too soon



sequoyah is a place where reading is everywhere

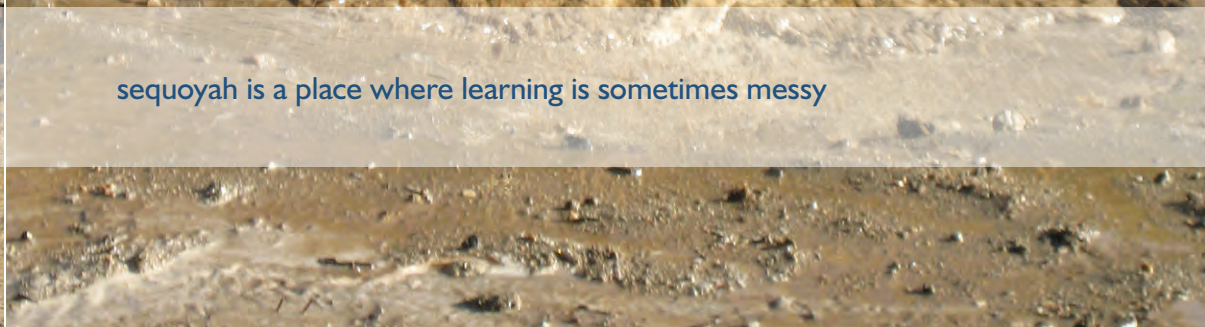
At Sequoyah, our library is the physical and philosophical heart of our school. Housing more than 16,000 titles, it has a welcoming atmosphere that allows the Sequoyah community a comfortable place for reading, reflection and research whenever time permits throughout the school day. Whether students read independently, tell a story in a group, write their own creative passages, or research a theme for a paper, our library is a place for engaging in all literary activities. Classes visit weekly for book selection and instruction from the library specialist in essential library and research skills.

Spanish is interwoven through the curriculum of all Sequoyah classrooms. Younger classes work with introductory vocabulary, listen to folktales, and learn traditional crafts. Older classes add elements of increasing complexity, including grammar and history.





sequoyah is a place where learning is sometimes messy



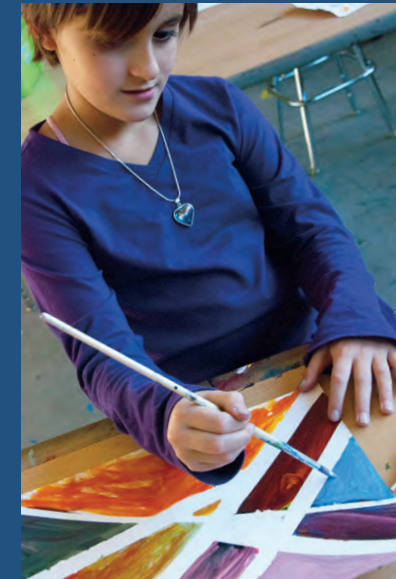
Sequoyah teachers value what it means to allow students to dive full-steam into activities, free from the sense that thought and action need to be tidy.

An integral part of daily life, Sequoyah's vibrant arts curriculum offers another way for students to stretch themselves to the fullest capacity for thought, feeling and action. Visual and performing arts provide students opportunities to see multiple perspectives, develop critical thinking, enhance coordination and concentration, and build self-confidence.

Encouraged to learn what motivates an artist and to find their own aesthetic preferences, students explore a wide variety of techniques and materials.

Every student gets the chance to express creativity through singing and playing instruments. The emphasis is on the technical aspects of music as well as the joy of listening and performing, both as an individual and as a member of an ensemble.

From their earliest days at Sequoyah, students use theatre, movement, costuming and writing to enhance various areas of study. Introduced to classical and modern drama and folktales from around the world, students thrive on stage and sometimes venture forth to create their own original performance pieces.





Field studies experiences, from local day trips to weeklong camping trips, teach vital life lessons of responsibility and cooperation. Entry-level classes begin camping at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. And even though the youngest students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, this first trip emphasizes self-reliance and responsibility to the group. Classes range out in ever-broadening exploration, venturing beyond California into other western states during Junior High.

Camping trips offer chances to apply skills learned in the classroom – such as planning and budgeting – to real situations. Away from the amenities of home, students connect to the natural world and develop a deeper understanding of themselves. Often on local day trips, students learn to navigate public transportation to visit area museums, historical and humanitarian organizations, and civic institutions.

Sequoyah's Daycare is a home away from home, with an extended family of staff and fellow students. Available before school from 7:30 a.m. and after school until 6:00 p.m., it provides a secure environment where students can play outdoors, read, study, participate in planned or impromptu activities, have a snack, or just stretch out in front of the fireplace on a rainy afternoon.

After-school programs also include team sports in which students compete with local independent schools while developing individual skills and teamwork which honors inclusion and fair play.



sequoyah is a place where our classrooms are the world



At the core of Sequoyah's mission statement is the belief that all humans are equal. In our celebration of human dignity we acknowledge that our own individual welfare is entwined with the welfare of others. Service learning projects teach students to realize and address inequities, organize their resources, and persevere in spite of frustrating challenges. Such projects give the sense of accomplishment that comes from being a meaningful contributor.

Advancing our sense of community, parent participation is encouraged and expected. Participation may include: cooking for Hot Lunch, writing articles for the school magazine, coordinating a committee for the Silent Auction, choreographing a dance performance, or painting a classroom, among many other activities. Indeed, across the arc of a child's schooling, parent involvement is critical for healthy communication and student success, but it also shows our students that we believe their education is worthy of everyone's time and involvement.

Sequoyah School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or family structure in the administration of its admission policies.



sequoyah is a place where you learn to value others

sequoyah is a place where each student is so well known that when
they move on, their absence is felt deeply and their legacy is never forgotten



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A community of learners

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