



Vista Newsletter – Vol. 2, Issue 3
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Welcome to Vista Academy

As the calendar turns to August, we are coming down the proverbial “home stretch”, with new furniture in place, laptops configured, and partnerships planned. A big part of this summer involved penning the Vista student and parent handbook, which provided an opportunity to set forth policies on pertinent middle school topics like dress code, appropriate use of technology, and grades. I’d also like to take a moment to thank our new facilities manager, Mark Wadzinski, for spearheading the numerous Vista related projects this summer. Thanks to his help, from installing basketball hoops to arranging the landscaping of Vista Hill, we have a middle school facility to take pride in.

As I reflect back on all of the planning meetings, committee work, presentations, and other Vista related forums we’ve participated in over these many months, I’ve tried to never lose site of our core mission and philosophy. Vista Academy was created and built upon a unique understanding of the complexities, exceptionalities, and remarkableness of gifted children.

I was reminded countless times during the 2006-2007 school year why it is so important for Open Window to have a middle school program. With my office within earshot of the fifth grade classrooms and lockers, and having had the privilege of conducting a weekly seminar with these students, I witnessed firsthand their transformation from children to early adolescents. As the Eastside’s only middle school dedicated to serving the needs of gifted adolescents, Vista Academy is well positioned to raise the curricular floor and eliminate the ceiling in an environment where every student is truly known, valued, and understood.

I conclude with our school’s mission and philosophy statements, which serve as guiding lights as we continue the very important work of educating, nurturing, and bringing out the best in our students.

I look forward to joining you in the official opening of Vista Academy on September 5th.

Tim Costello
Middle School Head

MISSION STATEMENT

Vista Academy at Open Window School nurtures and challenges students of high intellectual ability and inspires them to new levels of academic excellence, creativity, and personal accomplishment for participation in a changing world.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

At Vista Academy, we believe that a deep understanding of the needs and passions of gifted adolescents is vital for fostering a spirit of inquiry and sense of personal responsibility in middle school students. Recognizing that Vista students are passing through a period of rapid physical, intellectual, social, and emotional change, our program is specifically designed to guide students through the critical developmental tasks of personal identity, independence, organization, and relationships. Vista offers a rich and dynamic academic program, with exceptional depth and challenge. With a curriculum that transcends grade level boundaries, Vista students are empowered to pursue their passions and to make important connections through problem-centered, interdisciplinary study and investigation.

Vista Academy's size provides a nimble and individualized middle school program, where outstanding educators partner with students in creating a sense of belonging and connection. This personal, nurturing environment allows faculty to promote all aspects of the middle school student's identity and development. Vista endeavors to provide students with relevant leadership opportunities, allowing for important connections to be made between their learning and the world around them. Learning is ignited through connecting classroom concepts to real life applications.

We strive to promote citizenship through the fostering of personal integrity, ethical awareness, and multicultural understanding. A Vista Academy graduate is a confident individual equipped with the habits and skills necessary for academic and personal success at every stage of life.