

Our Philosophy

welcome to Laurel Academy

The Laurel Academy Philosophy is as old as Aristotle and the Ancient Greeks. We believe the purpose of education is to help children be good -- good people and good citizens -- by encouraging them to use reason; in modern terms, to develop their intelligences.

For children are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with facts and information. Rather, as the Latin roots of the word education imply, they are a set of possibilities and potentials waiting to be drawn out, so they can grow and blossom forth.

Through the ages, people have used many terms to describe how such an education should work. In the Middle Ages, a liberal education taught language and reasoning skills through the trivium of rhetoric, grammar and logic; while scientific and cultural skills were taught through the quadrivium of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Modern educators like Howard Gardner speak of training a person's multiple intelligences -- of language, logical-mathematical analysis, spatial representation, moral thinking, the use of the body to solve problems or make things, of an understanding of other individuals and an understanding of ourselves.

But whatever terms different times and traditions have used to describe education, they have all agreed on one thing: a sound education develops a love of knowledge for its own sake. The notion that the purpose of education is to secure a child's place in a chosen high school, university or career is a narrow view. It may be a fortunate side effect of a good education, but the true goal of education is to enrich a person's intellect and character, to develop in the young person an ability to question, think and understand; to expose a child to a broad range of ideas, concepts and information, which knowledge will lay the foundations for a future full of possibilities; to recognize in the child and young adult his or her natural talents, and to allow him or her to excel in his or her areas of strength -- and to give him or her the support needed to work through areas of weakness.

In short, the purpose of education is to develop intellectual and moral virtue by encouraging good habits, in study, thinking and social behaviour and by exposing children to all that it is good, and not merely useful, to know. As Socrates said, good teachers are the midwives of the soul, bringing out, "the pleasures that go with learning.... and moderation and justice and courage and freedom and truth".

At Laurel Academy, we believe that such an education is the greatest gift one generation can give another.