PS1 MISSION STATEMENT...

PS1 Pluralistic School is a diverse community committed to an ever-evolving model of pluralistic elementary education. On a path to self-knowledge, students engage and become the best versions of themselves.
They develop critical academic and interpersonal skills to be confident and passionate contributors to an increasingly connected world.

PS1 PLURALISTIC SCHOOL 1225 Broadway Santa Monica, CA 90404 www.psone.org

PS1
PLURALISTIC SCHOOL ONE

Uncovering The Genius In Each Child

What Is
An Elementary School's Job?

Since 1971, PS1 Pluralistic School has learned that every young child comes to elementary school with his or her spark, motivation for learning, and enthusiasm intact.

What is an elementary school's job? It is to keep that spark alive and to UNCOVER THE GENIUS that exists within each and every child!

The fundamental purpose of elementary school should be to build upon the uniqueness of every child that has taken five years to develop.

Elementary school is the time for children to feel connected to their own education, to build upon the zest for life they are born with, to foster their curiosity, to LOVE school, to believe in their drive and their ability to take on new challenges, to be fully *engaged* in learning, to make friends of all types, and to collaborate with, rather than compete against, their peers.

Your child is only young once! Create a powerful foundation for learning, and emphasize *engagement* in these early years. That's the unbeatable path to achievement, success, and fulfillment.

Fitting In
Is About Being Yourself

PLURALISM IS...

A founding value of PS1 Pluralistic School, pluralism is the belief that a community is enriched when individual differences are respected and welcomed.

PS1 begins with the commitment and practice that *Fitting In Is About Being Yourself.* Often in other schools and social situations, kids learn that fitting in means being just like others. The PS1 difference is that EVERY child knows "I AM SOMEBODY!"

The richness and uniqueness of our lives can best be realized when we recognize that there is an element within each and every one of us that defines our own piece of genius. Respect that element and help to uncover it.

Pluralism builds upon a child's passions, interests, talents, and uniqueness. We value each child for who she is and what she brings to everyday life experience, inside and outside the classroom. In turn, we get to work with a motivated, engaged, confident being — strong in herself, open to knowing others, and ready to take on new challenges. Through a pluralistic education, a child uncovers, understands, values, and celebrates her unique contribution to the world. Not only that, she learns to do the same for others.

> Treat a child as though he already is the person he is capable of becoming.
>
> –Haim Ginott

Here's How
Pluralistic Education...

Honors
The Innate Intelligence in Each Student

At the beginning of the year, every teacher writes what she honors, values, and cherishes about each student in her classroom. This is the starting place to uncover each child's genius.

Respects and Values
The Differences and Similarities of Others Through Open Dialogue

By exploring self in relation to others, PS1 promotes respectful dialogue between students of all ages.

Embraces
Varied Teaching Modalities Through Co-Teaching And Specialists

Reaching a diverse community of learners means employing diverse teaching modalities. Having two lead teachers in every classroom allows students more access to the curriculum in a setting where teachers model collaboration and meet students' needs with a range of learning approaches.

Encourages
Partnership With Parents

Students are most successful when parents have a stake in the school community. By participating in the life of the school, parents model for children how to shape the community and become an integral part of it. Students, moreover, gain the confidence to express themselves in that community and make the school their own.

Promotes
Community Based Learning

PS1 encourages learning outside the "4 walls" of a classroom. Students connect with people beyond the school community (both locally and globally) to learn about the world around them.

Welcomes
A Living Curriculum

Defined by the landscape of the times and the current resources of the collective community, a Living Curriculum is adaptive by nature, ensuring that each year is new and meaningful to the students and their teachers.... in turn, allowing different students to extract different knowledge from a group experience.

PLURALISM IS...

By Studying Our Children
We Best Discover How They Learn

What distinguishes the learning at PS1 is the conviction that every child has his or her own best path. Pluralistic education recognizes that children learn in different ways, at different rates, and at different times. By studying our children we best discover how they learn. That learning is guided by two lead teachers in every classroom who create an academic framework with clear and challenging short and long term goals. This enables age-appropriate skill development in every aspect of the curriculum.

Students master traditional academic skills such as literacy, mathematics, history, and science through investigations in reading, writing, scientific discovery, mathematical fluency, social responsibility, design thinking, art, music, and physical development. Through these investigations we emphasize the development of creativity, resilience, compassion, and civic-mindedness.

This challenging and comprehensive approach to education is based on:

- Engaging children (by getting to know what really interests them and truly understanding their strengths and stretches)
- Interdisciplinary thinking (project-based learning that explores connections within and between subjects)
- Experiential learning (learning by doing, collaborating, practicing, and hands-on encounters)

We want students to cultivate their own passion and curiosity for learning... to have an internal confidence that gives them the ability to speak up — no matter the environment. PS1 students are personally inspired to learn so they can answer their own questions arising from their own work. They learn because they want to find solutions to their own questions and solve their own problems.

What Would You Do
If You Knew You Couldn't Fail?

From my first day of school in Youngers to my last day in Olders, teachers often asked me, 'What do you think?' It appears to be a very simple question but it carries thoughtfulness, and always made me reflect... Although PS1 does not give out letter grades, every year I found myself evolving as a student and wanting to do my best work. Not for my teachers, not for my mom and dad, but for myself.

– PS1 alumnus

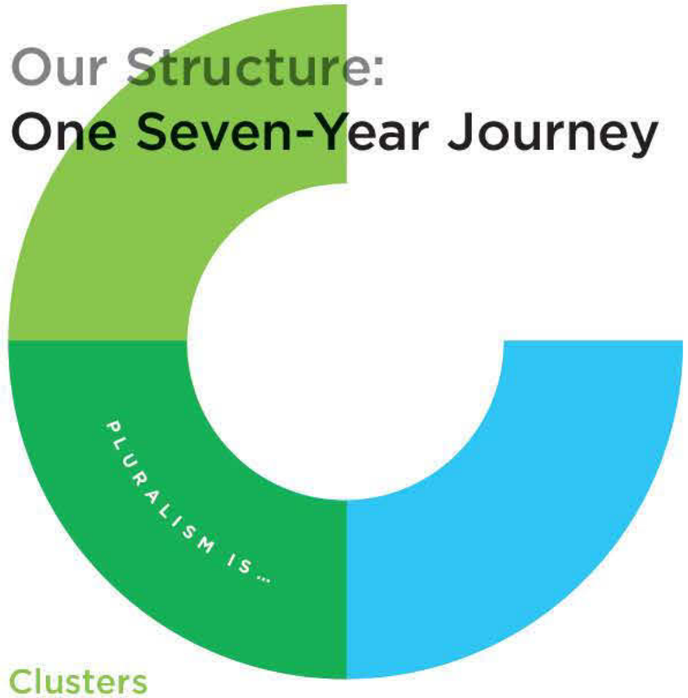
We know that students focus much more on the process of learning when they are not consumed by letter grades or rankings that inevitably compare students to each other. Research shows that grades diminish interest in the learning, decrease the quality of students' thinking, and create a penchant for the easiest possible undertaking.

We assess students holistically without the use of letter grades. Formative assessments are incorporated into classroom practice – during a project or lesson – to give teachers a clear sense of how a student is learning (and how the teaching should be adjusted to enhance that learning). Three times yearly, teachers write narrative assessments of the child's growth in all subjects as part of the ongoing communication process. Formal parent-student-teacher conferences are conducted throughout the year to form, follow, and assess student goals, progress, and achievement.

When the life science curriculum connects to one's own passions, the result is inspired! Olders students use research to investigate their own wonderments such as "Why does a stomach growl?" as a way to refine their expertise in essay writing.

On the road to becoming an "expert" on their topic, students draw from a variety of primary and secondary resources, both print and digital. After outlining and producing a first draft, they incorporate feedback from their teachers and classmates to produce multi-paragraph essays with a clear hypothesis, introduction, body and conclusion. To share their findings, the writers may choose to display their work on bulletin boards, create a personal textbook entry with an illustration, or make a formal presentation to their peers.

Our Structure:
One Seven-Year Journey



Clusters

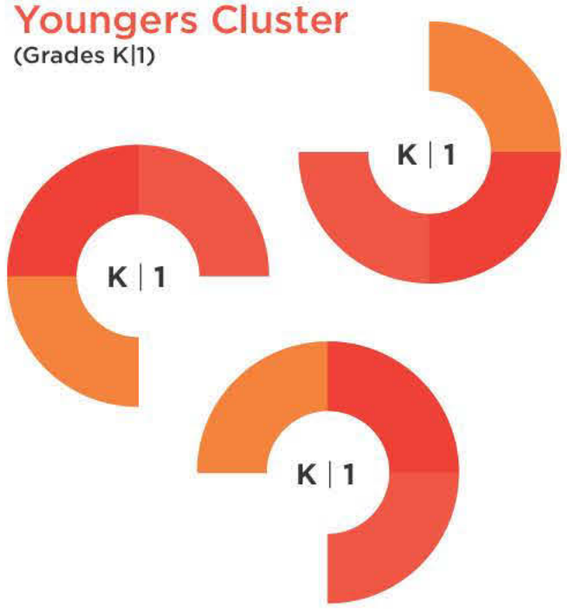
Children learn to feel empowered, safe, and connected in our small school setting, not only within their classrooms, but also as part of a grouping of multi-age classrooms that we call Clusters. We have four Clusters: Youngers (K|1), Bridge (1|2 and 2|3), Middles (3|4), and Olders (5|6). There is a shared retreat space between every two classrooms to emphasize collaboration — students on either side of the retreat are the same basic grade equivalents.

Interacting with groups large and small allows each student to know every teacher and every other student in the school. Within these *circles of belonging*, PS1 students become self-assured individuals and confident learners.

Multi-Age Grouping

We have a two grade-level equivalent range in all of our classes – (K|1, 1|2, 2|3, 3|4 and so on through 6th grade) – creating opportunities for changing peer groups and expanding circles of friends. In this way, each child has opportunities to be both an older and a younger student in different years through his or her school experience. This structure fosters resilience, flexibility, and connection — lifelong skills that help students thrive in many different kinds of environments. Parents, year after year, and generation after generation, come back and tell us that a two year age range was the most important piece that made their children the well-rounded, well-spoken, confident, comfortable, agile people they became as adults.

Youngers Cluster
(Grades K|1)



Learning about oneself, relationships with others, and exploring family;

Developing curiosity about science through experiments and testing hypotheses;

Practicing active listening, building on each other's ideas, listening to others with care, and public speaking;

Discovering the three stages of mathematical thinking (concrete, symbolic, and abstract) through hands-on math experiences;

Problem solving with algorithms, patterns, sorting, data collection and analysis, geometry, graphing, addition and subtraction, and measurement;

Guided reading instruction surrounded by a print-rich environment;

Teaching phonetic patterns, spelling, and handwriting;

Writing and illustrating stories about small moments;

Learning through symbolic, sociodramatic, and functional play.

Bridge Cluster
(Grades 1|2 and 2|3)

Practicing stewardship, responsibility, and caring for the community;

Active listening and conflict resolution, participating in collaborative conversations;

Understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

Learning map skills and discovering local government;

Inquiry-based explorations of ecosystems, food webs, and life cycles;

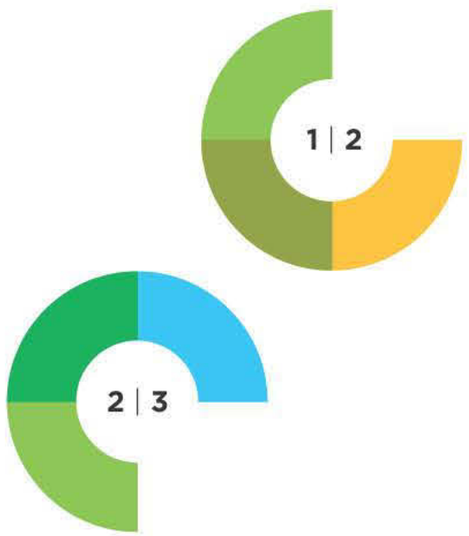
Using manipulatives (pattern blocks, base ten blocks, and calculators) to investigate numeration, operations and computation, functions and algebra, geometry, data, and probability;

Examining mathematical reasoning questions and multi-step word problems;

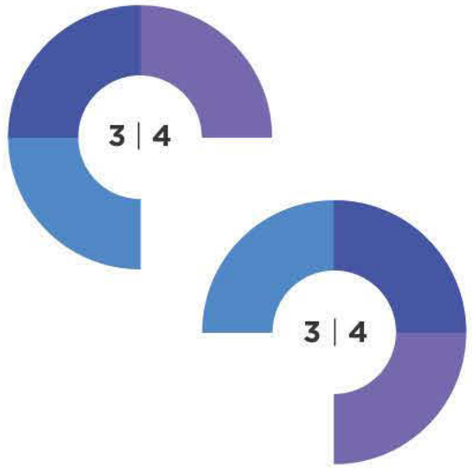
Strengthening reading fluency and comprehension through word study, guided reading, book clubs, and read aloud;

Delving into personal narratives, poetry, nonfiction, information writing, persuasive speeches, petitions, letter writing and fairy tales;

Developing writing through planning, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing.



Middles Cluster
(Grades 3|4)



Expanding on cooperative skills and building productive learning teams;

Developing self-discipline and taking ownership of their learning process;

Reflective listening and understanding multiple points of view;

Exploring a variety of genres, including informational text and fiction to identify literary themes and elements, such as characterization, key details, main idea, and story arc;

Developing critical thinking and comprehension skills (predicting, summarizing and inferring) through discussions and written assignments, using text to support ideas under discussion;

Writing as a tool for communicating ideas, information, and feelings;

Writing integrated within all curricular subjects (in math, social studies, science, and reading);

Practicing public speaking strategies, such as projection, eye contact, speaking clearly, engaging the audience, and wrapping up;

Investigating the number system, multiplication and division, decimals and fractions, and problem solving;

Integrated approach to studying the first people to populate California and how they adapted to, and impacted, their environment. Analyzing oil spills, ecosystems, and plant adaptation.

Olders Cluster
(Grades 5|6)

Building community awareness, forming identity, making connections;

Taking on leadership and service roles within the school community;

Media literacy: accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and creating media;

Refining grammar, sentence structure, and parts of speech to enhance writing complexity;

Reading investigations through book clubs, directed reading, text and website research. Drawing inferences from texts, comparing and contrasting ideas, concepts, and information from multiple texts;

Studying and applying vocabulary terminology from science, social studies, and math in written and oral communication;

Debating current events, using facts from various sources to support arguments;

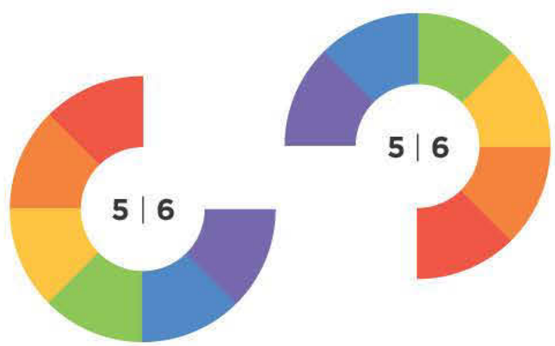
Examining systems of the human body and how these are impacted by the environment;

Discovering, exploring, and developing an understanding of early humans and ancient civilizations;

Honing research and presentation skills, using multiple sources to build knowledge through investigating multiple aspects of the topic;

Interpreting and graphing mathematical data, rates and ratios, using variables and formulas to describe number patterns;

Crafting a personal textbook, a meta-reflection of accumulated knowledge in all subject areas.



The Creative Process

PLURALISM IS ...

The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences.

– Louis Malaguzzi

PS1 students attend classes with our specialist teachers throughout the week, often in half-class groups, to allow for more individualized instruction both in their classrooms and with specialists. Specialist teachers in Art, Music, Library, Physical Education, and our Makers' Studio continuously work with classroom teachers to integrate the learning, resulting in projects that span many different subject areas. By offering many modalities by which to express themselves, specialists give students the opportunity to expand and connect their learning, take risks, experience the world in new ways, and feel empowered by their many capabilities.

Youngers students in the Art Studio learn about endangered animals while focusing on line drawings. Students take time to discuss how art can empower and educate others, and benefit endangered animals all over the world.

Working with clay, these artists then create their own molds to design nature relief habitats. As they engross themselves in a study of nature and animals, students connect to their Life Science curriculum, while simultaneously preparing for the whole school's annual camping trip to Leo Carrillo Beach State Park.

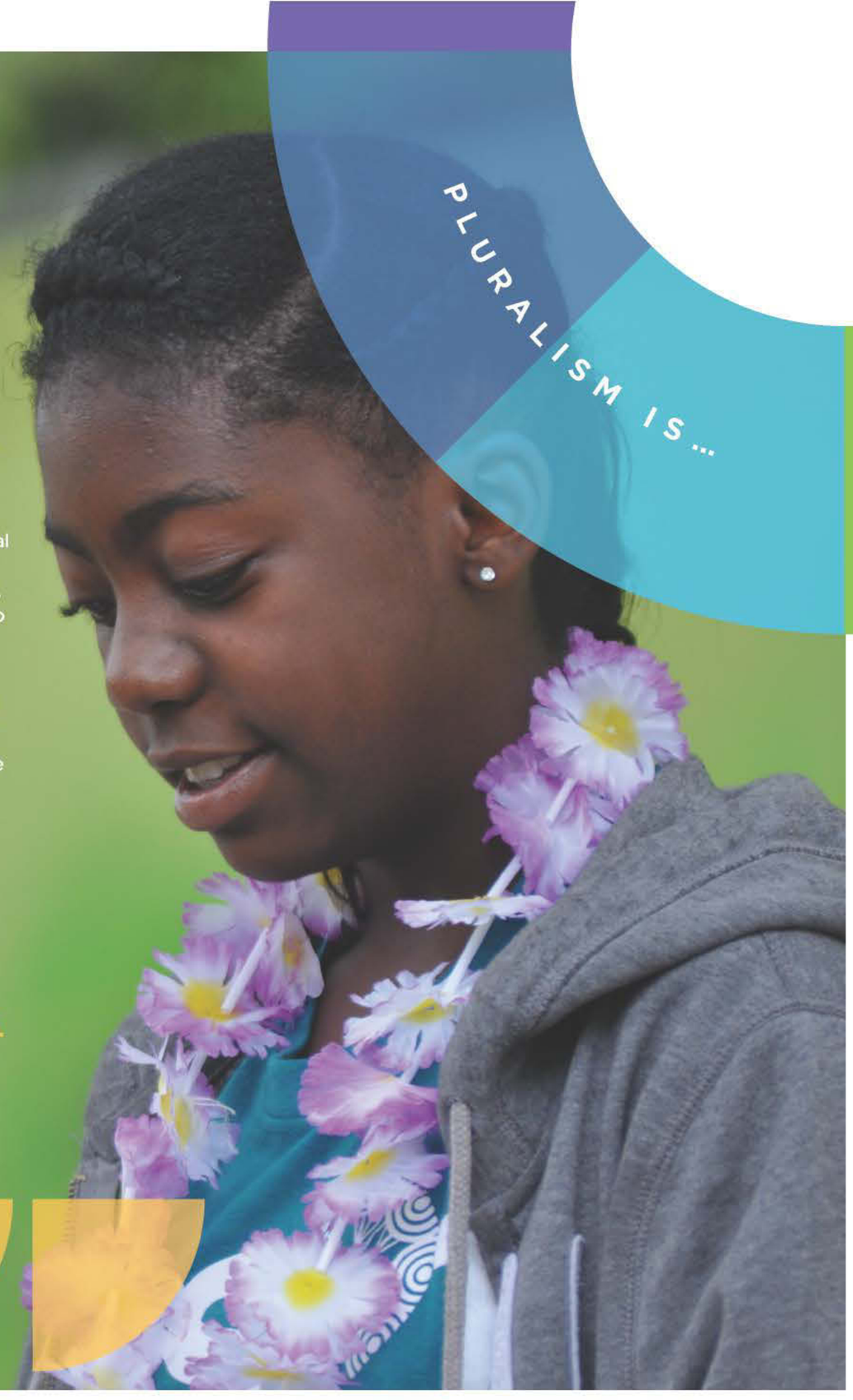
Environments
Made For Learning

PLURALISM IS...

Joy in discovery and emphasis on community are supported by our award-winning, sustainable architecture and beautiful campus in Santa Monica. We take advantage of our ideal climate with an open campus. Bright, spacious classrooms designed to bring learning to life feature their own outdoor areas, shared workrooms and easy flow to Library, Art, P.E., Music, and our Makers' Studio.

PS1's play area is one of the most innovative elementary school playgrounds in Southern California. Our Field of Dreams is designed to engage every child: from the athlete to the dreamer. A park-like setting with ball court, soccer field and climbing structures, it also has a bamboo forest and two stages for imaginative play. Deck areas beneath our landmark oak tree provide a shaded space for performance, reading or conversation. From the ground up, PS1 encourages exploration and interaction.

Life After PS1



Throughout their elementary years, students at PS1 understand and appreciate that the journey of knowledge is a celebration of discovery. They learn to value their own ideas and bring curiosity and confidence into the learning process.

We end at 6th grade intentionally because it is the ideal time for students and families to step back and decide the next best fit for their middle and high school years. By this time, students have a well-defined sense of who they are as learners, leaders, and human beings — and we want them to choose the school that fosters these qualities in their next educational phase. For PS1 graduates, that *next best fit* comes to be a traditional school just as often as a progressive school. Each student has a unique path to success and fulfillment — that's why we have sent students to over 30 different middle schools over the last decade!

> One of the great things about having been at PS1 is that you get to focus on yourself as an individual. In the middle school admissions process, I learned to search for the best place for me.
>
> – PS1 alumna

PLURALISM IS...

Celebrate the Many; Build One

Our School's Vision Statement reads: "Celebrate the Many; Build One." At PS1, we develop the individual but not at the expense of the community. You have to be and feel celebrated first — recognized and acknowledged and valued for your strengths – before you will want to participate in the building of the One.

PS1 is a school for parents, too! Opportunities abound for parents to participate in the life of the school — from helping on field trips and in the classroom, to teaching a Parent-in-Residence class after school, to volunteering on the Parents Guild, or serving on the Board of Directors. Here, students, parents, faculty, and staff are honored for the complexity and richness they bring to the community. In doing so, PS1 creates a cohesive learning community among all.

Our Three Core Values:

Ready For The Next Step?

What if you could enroll your child in a school that honors her for who she is, cultivates strength and conviction in her learning, and empowers her to reach her highest potential?

Join Us On a School Tour...

Contact our Admissions Office:
310.394.1313 x107
admissions@psone.org

Visit Us:
PS1 Pluralistic School
1225 Broadway
Santa Monica CA 90404

www.psone.org