

LA RIVISTA



2023-2024 / A RETROSPECTIVE

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LA SCUOLLA
International School • Preschool - 8th Grade

**Inspiring brave learners
to shape the future**



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Letter from THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



If you are anything like me—and as busy parents of school-aged children, I imagine you are—moments of pause are hard to come by. Quiet reflection is a luxury, and so I am always grateful when it is time to write this letter, and I have a reason to indulge in a look back.

What a year it has been! In many ways La Scuola grew up this year, at a rate faster than ever before. And yet I feel I have been saying this for quite some years now. With that, of course, can come challenges, but the opportunities and moments of celebration and achievement far outweigh them. Our milestones this year have been varied, but each of them speaks to our mission of **inspiring brave learners to shape the future.**

The La Scuola community has grown to 409 students over 3 campuses and continues to reflect our **globally-minded and locally-engaged community of learners**, with 34 languages spoken and faculty from 14 countries that bring the world to your child. An education that focuses both on the local and the global is needed now more than ever, as is an approach that focuses on **learning how to learn**, inquiry,

creativity, and innovation, all in more than one language. And let's not forget the warmth, the hugs, and the care we all feel for each other.

In the late fall, we **officially launched the California International Reggio Center (CIRC)**, our new professional development arm, in collaboration with the Innovative Teacher Project and with support from Reggio Children®. Through CIRC, we will provide world-class training in the Reggio Emilia Approach® to educators throughout the Bay Area and beyond. We held a number of successful workshops this year and cannot wait to see how this program will continue to expand in the years to come.

La Scuola's annual gala and fundraiser, **La Dolce Vita, broke records**: we sold out in record time and raised more than ever before, including funds going specifically toward the **Sliding Scale Tuition fund that 30% of our families have access to.** This fund also supports students that are a part of the SMART program (Schools, Mentoring, and Resource Team). SMART provides a unique 12-year continuum of support that starts in 4th grade and goes all the way through college, including school support, after-school enrichment, summer programming, and college preparation. SMART identifies curious and motivated 4th grade students who have the drive to learn, but face barriers to opportunity, and is one of the educational access organizations with whom we have a partnership. This year we joyfully admitted six SMART scholars that will be joining the La Scuola community for our 2024-2025 school year. It is wonderful to witness the generosity and support of our community and friends of La Scuola and I want to extend yet another heartfelt thank you to each person who participated in some way.

LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

In one of the truest signs of La Scuola's continued growth, this year **students from our first graduating class, the Class of 2020, are heading off to college** (this happens to be a personal milestone for me, as my youngest son is among them, leaving me a "free bird"). We feel so incredibly proud of the foundation built at La Scuola which led to their success in high school, and we cannot wait to see what this next chapter in their educational journey will bring for them.

We also are now just a short time away from **breaking ground on our new, Reggio-inspired K-8 Campus in the Mission**—the one and only of its kind! We have been preparing for this moment for years and when it finally arrives, I imagine we will all feel that a new chapter in our history has begun. Thank you for continuing this journey with us—I know it will be worth it in ways we cannot yet imagine.

In light of all of this growth and as we anticipate further expansion, it is important to remember that some things never change. **Our support to our talented and committed faculty and staff is unwavering**, and we were once again proud to provide numerous professional development opportunities, including sending several educators to Reggio Emilia, Italy, for the tenth year. It is my privilege as Head of School to support an environment where their talents can shine.

We continue to **evaluate our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging practices**, challenging ourselves to better serve our entire community. This work is never done, and this year these efforts included **partnering with Be the Change group** to provide DEIB-focused training to our faculty and staff, launching Somos La Scuola, an affinity group for Spanish speaking families at La Scuola, and hiring our first full-time DEIB Director.

Finally, as ever, we recognize the essential role that parents and families play in the work that we do. **Families are the essential third protagonist in Reggio education**. Your support and involvement made our past possible, brought us to where we are today, and will allow us to continue well into the future. I cannot thank you enough.

When you think back on this year, I hope you feel, as I do, that we have stayed true to our motto: **Niente Senza Gioia/Nothing Without Joy**. Again this does not mean that we expect to be happy every day, but it is a reminder to find joy in the small things and to always look for the light at the end of the tunnel. And if you cannot see that light, we are here for you.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in making the La Scuola dream possible every day.

Con stima e affetto,



Valentina Imbeni, Ph.D.
Head of School





BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE



MANY THANKS TO OUR AMAZING

leader, Valentina, incredibly committed faculty and staff, and our dedicated parent community and Board. We accomplished a lot this year. On behalf of the Board, we are excited to share with you all of the work we have been doing to make La Scuola an even better place for our children, teachers, and families.

While we will soon embark on our next 5-year strategic plan, we would like to provide an update on the 5 pillars (Permanence, Nurture and Grow, Heart and Mind, Community, and Thriveability) of our strategic plan that has just come to an end. We are so happy to report making significant progress across the board.

Courtenay Brown,
Board Co-Chair

Susan Lyon,
Board Co-Chair



1 PERMANENCE

To build a place that furthers the magic of our community, spaces, and programs



2 NURTURE + GROW

To nurture the professional growth of our team and continue to attract and retain the best educators



3 HEART + MIND

To integrate the richness and strength of the IB framework with the intentionality and creativity of the Reggio Emilia Pedagogy to ensure that our students understand the world and create their place in it



4 COMMUNITY

To preserve our unique multiculturalism and further diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within our community



5 THRIVEABILITY

To transition from sustainability to thriveability



PERMANENCE

Although we have found our permanent home in the Mission, we have made significant progress toward the new building and still have work to do.

NEW BUILDING UPDATE

Our long-awaited new building has been designed in collaboration with Italian architects Michele Zini and ZPZ Partners, and San Francisco architects Jensen & Associates. We have hired Build Group to construct the building, acquired the necessary San Francisco city permits, and have a financing strategy which involves a combination of charitable gifts, a community loan, and funding. We plan on breaking ground in Fall 2024 provided we reach our funding goals. We still need your support!

Please see pages 34–35 in this publication for new building designs that truly show the role of the environment as the third teacher. This will be a building like no other in San Francisco, and we can't wait for our students, faculty, families, and community to experience it.

SAN CARLOS HALL

In January 2024, we opened the remodeled gymnasium and auditorium for our students to play basketball and volleyball, enjoy PE classes, and host musical and drama performances. On the second floor, we are in the process of building out ateliers for the upper elementary and middle school students and space for teachers' offices. There will be four ateliers which will be ready for use when school re-commences in the fall. It's very exciting to see new spaces for students on the Mission Campus.



NURTURE + GROW

We have attracted and retained the best teachers in a highly-competitive environment, narrowed the compensation and benefits gap with our peer schools, invested in professional development, and established La Scuola as a leader in the Reggio Emilia Approach and the International Baccalaureate.

COMPENSATION

We strive to provide competitive salaries and benefits for our staff, which continues to be in line with the market and our peer schools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We continue to invest in our teachers by providing opportunities for certifications in the International Baccalaureate and offering visits to Reggio Emilia for further professional development.

CALIFORNIA INTERNATIONAL REGGIO CENTER (CIRC)

On November 6, 2023, we launched CIRC in partnership with the Mayor of Reggio Emilia, Reggio Children®, the Innovative Teacher Project, and La Scuola at our Mission campus.



HEART AND MIND

La Scuola has now graduated five highly-accomplished Grade 8 classes that have gone on to attend some of the best independent, parochial, and public high schools in San Francisco as well as abroad. This year La Scuola goes to college. Our first set of graduates will go to college in Fall 2024, an incredible milestone!

We continue to invest in technology to support student-teacher collaboration, student work, and administrative management.



COMMUNITY

DEIB STRATEGY:

We hosted regular events centered around community and the culture of belonging, worked closely with Be the Change group throughout the year and in professional development sessions, launched and completed a search for our replacement DEIB Director, who will join us during the 2024-2025 school year, and identified next year's goals.

We put support structures in place for faculty and staff to ensure protocols are understood and relied upon.



THRIVEABILITY

We ensured a strong, sustainable financial foundation by expanding enrollment with a goal of two classes per grade and increased and broadened participation and giving toward the Annual Fund, La Dolce Vita, and the Embrace capital campaign.

We have grown the Silicon Valley campus' student body. We continue to seek more families and look forward to ongoing enrollment.

In closing, we would like to share Board

member changes this year. We have several Board members leaving, some of whom have served multiple terms of service. We would like to thank them all for their stellar work on the La Scuola Board:

Jeff Kott - 2017 - 2024,
Facilities + Finance Committees

Loring Sagan - 2017 - 2024,
Facilities Committee

Robert Brown - 2021 - 2024,
Governance Committee

Dylan Lohonen - 2022 - 2024,
Finance Committee

Fong Marcolongo - 2022 - 2024,
DEIB Committee

Nick Errico - 2023,
Finance Committee

These Board members gave their time and expertise for many years, and were invaluable to the growth of La Scuola. All will be greatly missed. We are so grateful that Jeff and Loring will stay on the Facilities Committee in order to see us through the construction of our new building on the Mission Campus. We know that Robert, Fong, Dylan, and Nick will stay supportive of and abreast of exciting new developments as we move forward. We wish you all the best!

We are thrilled to welcome our new Board members joining us this summer:

Alberto Acito,

Director of INNOVIT

Cristina Cordova,

La Scuola parent, Preschool and Grade 1

Joe Farris,

Founding Board Co-chair of La Scuola K-8; La Scuola parent, Grade 6 and
Alumnus Class of 2024

Jason Goldman,

La Scuola parent, Preschool and
Kindergarten

Jordan Moncharmont,

La Scuola parent, Preschool

Monica Mosseri,

La Scuola parent, Preschool and Grade 1



THE CALIFORNIA INTERNATIONAL REGGIO CENTER (CIRC)

was inaugurated on November 6, 2023, with the participation of the Mayor of Reggio Emilia, Italy, Reggio Children®, Italian Consul General Sergio Strozzi, and the La Scuola community of faculty, parents, and students.

CIRC aims to deepen understanding of the Reggio Emilia Approach® to education through both professional development and research projects for those who are at the center of the educational and learning experience, including educators, parents, and children. The center offers many deep learning opportunities through workshops, seminars, conferences, and research on a local, national, and international level.

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an educational project born immediately following the Second World War, historically combining experimentation, innovation, and research, and founded on the idea of education as a common good. The Reggio Emilia Approach came directly from the will of the citizens of Reggio Emilia, especially women, who believed that the right to education exists for all girls and boys, and that schools should be built for even the youngest children.

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an educational philosophy that recognizes children as competent and with rights beginning from birth. This high image understands that the child grows in relationships with other children and adults, has great developmental potential, and builds learning through The Hundred Languages that belong to all human beings.

CIRC looks forward to fostering ongoing relationships with Reggio Emilia Children, and all educators interested in developing high-quality education both in the United States and abroad. ...



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH

in Action

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH IN ACTION
PRESCHOOL

Grandissimi Verdi



Grandissimi Azzurri



Grandissimi Azzurri



Grandissimi Verdi



Grandissimi Azzurri



Grandissimi Verdi



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH IN ACTION PRESCHOOL

Dogpatch Campus

Part of the magic of the La Scuola Preschool program is seeing the same unit of inquiry unfold in totally different ways in classes of the same grade side-by-side. This year in Grandissimi, two classes started our “how the world works” unit of inquiry with the idea: **curiosity fuels our pursuit of knowledge**. Teachers collected the childrens’ first ideas, thoughts, and previous knowledge around this concept in both classes. Curiosity became the engine that transported the children from what we consider ordinary towards new extraordinary perspectives.

While both classes began from the same starting point, their subsequent paths were very different. So many factors influence how an inquiry unfolds: the unique composition of children and teachers, contextual elements, previous knowledge and experiences, the intentionality that drives the teachers’ questions and provocations, and so much more.



Sometimes people know everything and sometimes there are people that don’t know everything and they teach them things. Everybody knows different things than other people. Curious is when there are 17 ways to know.

— Reehan, *Grandissimi Azzurri*

GRANDISSIMI VERDI

Grandissimi Verdi students had just finished the prior unit creating a book that tells the story of La Scuola—compelled by storytelling, building narratives, and sharing perspectives. Teachers observed that the children were not just interested in the book itself, so much as in the material it is made of: paper.

The teachers took this observation and decided to set up the mini atelier with different kinds of paper. Then, they added a special tool—a digital microscope—because they wanted to move away from the common idea of paper as a graphic material and instead look for new perspectives. The children used all their senses to explore the paper: they observed, they smelled, they played with it, they took advantage of the sunlight coming from the window, they played with shadows, they engaged with gravity and they used the digital microscope. And this is what brought us to a new “rilancio”.

Teachers then decided to project on the wall some pictures of the paper’s details that the children made using a digital microscope. Once again, they brought another perspective of this material: the children found connection with their everyday reality.



— **Interested and curious. Curious to us is when you want to learn something.... To learn new things.** (Ansel)

— **It looks like a waffle.** (Leo E)

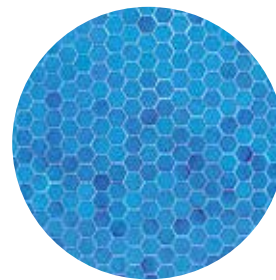
— **Or a hot dog.** (Audrey)

— **It looks like a waffle is turned onto its side to make that funny hole pattern.** (Jamie)

— **There are squares and lines on both.** (Leo E)

— **Because it is just paper. With no maple syrup on it.** (Mikayla)

— **It looks like rhinoceros scales.** (Hali)



GRANDISSIMI AZZURRI

Grandissimi Azzurri students built their understanding of relationships starting from discovering and connecting different materials: metal and wood, strings and paper, magnets and chains. In how many ways we can connect, in how many ways relationships can evolve? We observed how their curiosity and willingness to experiment was alive.

As Loris Malaguzzi said, there are 100 languages and more that children can use to learn about the world. Children began to share how robots like Alexa, Google, and Siri help us when we want to know more. But how do these robots work? This prompted us as educators to become researchers together with the children and learn about a new language: coding.

We set up the mini atelier with different unplugged coding learning contexts that teach coding concepts without using technological devices. It means learning to program without writing lines of code. During unplugged coding, children used their knowledge to enrich computational skills that help them understand the concepts they will use in coding projects. Patterns, Sequences, Numbers, Steps, are some of the concepts explored by the children.



— **No a hundred! perché ci sono tante nuove cose che noi non sappiamo. Si possono capire in tanti modi, aprire, andare là, oppure un percorso a ostacoli.** (Luca)

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH IN ACTION PRESCHOOL

Silicon Valley Campus

Our community has experienced remarkable growth this year, leading to the expansion of our preschool program into two distinct classes: Piccoli and Grandi/Grandissimi. The Reggio Emilia Approach[®] infuses every facet of our curriculum and teaching. An exciting introduction this year has been that of our “Atelier del Gusto” (Atelier of Taste), a space where our students explore the wonders of the natural world, environmental science, and the diverse cultural tapestry of our community through the exploration of different foods.



In the [Atelier del Gusto](#), our students have been immersed in engaging learning experiences, from nurturing our garden and harvesting fruits and vegetables to participating in cooking sessions led by parents. These activities not only deepen their connection to nature and food, but also foster invaluable opportunities for parental involvement and cross-cultural exchange.

The Atelier del Gusto exemplifies the collaborative spirit of our program, where parents and teachers come together to shape the curriculum and develop units of inquiry. Through the lens of The Hundred Languages, our children experience a rich, vibrant, and “flavorful” learning environment.



Mission Campus

Engaging The Hundred Languages



Elementary school is a time when students are exploring the world around them and making connections, while also developing their languages with which to express these new understandings. These are not separate processes, and one does not precede the other—they develop together, with each learning feeding the other.

In their Unit of Inquiry about Signs and Symbols, our Grade 2 students engaged in a transdisciplinary investigation of language and meaning. They explored the symbols of Diwali, and created them on paper using flower petals. They worked together to create a dance to represent each one of these symbols, and explored mathematical relationships connected to the movements. They presented their learning at an all-school assembly, with children speaking to the entire community in both Italian and English to explain the project and what they learned.



At the same time, the study of English and Italian language and spelling as well as math were all connected thematically through the lens of signs and symbols. They explored the history of number systems, deepening their understanding of the base ten system and supporting their fluency with numbers and problem solving. They analyzed and compared English and Italian spelling patterns and explored new languages and writing systems as well.



Transdisciplinary learning

LEARNING MODELS



Traditional



Transdisciplinary

“

Seek connections, not divisions. Our mind is used to separating. Categories are important, though it is important to keep in relation to one another.

— Vea Vecchi, *Founding Atelierista, Reggio Children*

As an IB World School, La Scuola commits to providing engaging, relevant, challenging, and significant learning experiences. This is achieved through a transdisciplinary learning framework—purposeful inquiry across different subject areas. Students across La Scuola programs are growing knowledge through both subject area skill development and conceptual understandings.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Social Emotions and Music

Explicit development of relationship skills and self-management—with the social emotional learning (SEL) specialist—are SEL concepts made real for students when learning to participate in the music class ensemble and committing to practice assigned parts by the Maestro.



Science Model and the Garden

Explicit investigations and evidence of the water cycle in the classroom are skills that are contextualized and understood in the school garden and on field trips. Teachers integrate reading aloud, assigning literature and writing experiences for students to learn personal stories or geography centered on water resources and their complexities globally. The Reggio Emilia Approach and International Baccalaureate framework are exceptional inspirations to activate and encourage the diverse capacities of students—"physical, social, intellectual, aesthetic, cultural." (ibo.org)

Taking action

Parents sometimes wonder how we reconcile the IB framework and the Reggio Emilia Approach® at La Scuola. The answer is, they are highly compatible. Reggio offers a philosophy and way of seeing children and life, without a prescribed set of rules. The IB, conversely, requires adhering to specific standards and practices. As Dr. Valentina Imbeni, our Head of School, aptly puts it, "Reggio is our heart, and IB, our head."

Both philosophies are student-centered, inquiry-driven, and focused on creating rich, engaging learning environments that empower children as capable and competent learners. The Reggio Emilia Approach, created in post-WWII Italy, aims to empower children through progressive, democratic, and liberating education. Similarly, the IB, founded in the late 1960s, seeks to equip young people with skills, values, and knowledge necessary for intercultural understanding and a more peaceful future.

At La Scuola, we hold a high image of the child, nurturing their agency and providing **opportunities to take action**, even from a very young age. For example, our Grandi (3-4 year old) students are learning to be "Protettori dell'acqua" (Water Protectors), inquiring into water conservation. First graders are designing sustainable cities, and second graders inquiring into sustainable landscapes. Third graders created their own market, manufacturing and selling sustainable products to raise funds for an Indigenous Peoples charity. Grade 4 students researched historical Black role models and shared their knowledge in the Mission Campus assembly.

This continues through the Primary Years Program (PYP), culminating in the Grade 5 **IB-PYP Exhibition**. This year, our largest-ever Grade 5 class of 24 students collaborated in groups to address global issues such as homelessness, women's rights, racism, LGBTQAI+ rights, mental health, testing on

animals in the cosmetic industry, protection of animal habitats, and water sustainability, presenting their findings and action plans to the community. Each group took direct or indirect action to address their researched topics.

Action is an essential element of the IB-PYP, nurtured throughout the primary years. Inspired by Reggio Emilia, we empower our students to take responsibility for their own learning and to make **a positive impact on the world around them**.



“

Pensare che il bambino nasce con cento linguaggi a disposizione è la metafora di una speranza, un sogno educativo e politico per il quale lavorare. Qualcuno ha detto: “ognuno cresce solo se sognato”. Il desiderio è quello di sognare in grande, avere rispetto e stima delle bambine, dei bambini, delle donne e degli uomini e di tutto ciò che ci circonda. Ottimismo o speranza, sulle possibilità che l’umanità ha di sviluppare tanti modi di comunicare di esprimere significa in effetti, sviluppare tanti modi di percepire e capire il mondo che ci circonda.

— Vea Vecchi, Founding Atelierista, Reggio Children

Thinking that the child is born with a Hundred Languages available is the metaphor of a hope, an educational and political dream to work for. Someone has said: “everyone grows only if dreamed”. The desire is to dream big, to have respect and esteem for girls, boys, women and men and for everything that surrounds us. Optimism or hope, on the possibilities that humanity has to develop many ways of communicating and expressing means, in effect, to develop many ways of perceiving and understanding the world around us.



“

As Vea Vecchi emphasizes, school is a place where a child can “mix with multiple languages at the same time.”

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH IN ACTION K-5

Silicon Valley Campus

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We've had an incredibly exciting year as we welcomed our first-ever kinder class to our Silicon Valley Campus.



One of the most remarkable examples of the IB and Reggio Emilia Approach® in action has been our students' exploration of light. Not only did we embark on a field trip to the Exploratorium in community with our Kinder peers in San Francisco to launch the unit, but we also had the privilege of hosting a very special guest, Helen Quinn, a renowned educator and particle physicist. Helen engaged our students in hands-on experiences in the atelier, including experiments with mirrors, torches, and shadow play, illuminating the world of light, how it travels and how colors mix.

Children also found their classroom set up as a **Light Atelier** where they could explore the different properties of light. Inspired by these encounters, provocations and field trip, our teachers with our students examined the theme of light through various disciplines, fostering inquiries across environmental studies, language arts, mathematics, robotics, and beyond.



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AND REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH IN ACTION

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Mission Campus



At La Scuola, the fusion of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB-MYP) with the Reggio Emilia Approach® fosters a vibrant and progressive educational setting for our students. A testament to this synergy is found in our engaging class projects, which highlight the efficacy of interdisciplinary studies, student-driven inquiry, creative thinking, and collaboration.

Interdisciplinary units are a key part of both the Reggio Emilia Approach® and the IB-MYP, promoting well-rounded and interconnected learning. By blending multiple subjects, these educational methods help students gain a deeper understanding and work collaboratively. For example, during our Grade 8 trip to Italy, students not only practiced their Italian language skills but also gathered material for a journalistic unit in Language and Literature, ultimately creating a documentary short film in their **Design** class. Similarly, in Grade 6, students combined **Science and Math** to explore data collection and different types of graphs, focusing on environmental issues and culminating in a digital presentation on how data can inform future civic actions.

The Reggio pedagogy accentuates the values of citizenship in a democratic society and the significance that beauty and culture play in a fully-developed life. This year we dedicated full days to our atelier of **Democracy and Culture**, an opportunity to have all our middle school students collaborate in creating culture. We engaged in a number of projects, including cooking and sharing meals, creating a school newspaper, putting on our yearly Carnevale, and creating social media content with our promotions team. In our final project of the year, students investigated different regions of the world

and expressed their learning through a wide range of the Hundred Languages, from teaching regional dances of South America and recording original songs, to performing an Indonesian inspired Wayang shadow-puppet show!

Our 8th graders dedicated this spring to their **Community Projects**, a comprehensive journey that included goal-setting, conducting expert interviews and research, peer education, and finally, local community engagement. This intersection between personal interests and passions with real-world issues is both a culminating project of the MYP and embodies the very essence of what we value at La Scuola—holistic education, global citizenship, and active community involvement. Our students' efforts to think globally while acting locally is a fundamental principle that nurtures the learning that happens here to transcend the boundaries of our school walls.



“

Students' interests and questions form the heart of transdisciplinary learning.

— *International Baccalaureate*



Our classrooms, inspired by both the IB-MYP and Reggio Emilia Approach®, offer rich learning experiences. By seamlessly blending diverse subjects and fostering student-driven exploration, critical thinking, and creativity, we equip our students with essential skills and a profoundly unique understanding of the world. This fusion of methodologies ignites our students' curiosity, fosters creativity, and instills in them a global perspective and compassion. ...



ITALIANO AT LA SCUOLA

Why Italian?

At La Scuola, we believe in fostering not just language proficiency, but also global citizenship and sustainability consciousness through our bilingual program. In the academic year 2023-2024, our students embarked on a remarkable journey during La Settimana della lingua nel mondo, exploring the theme "L'italiano e la sostenibilità" (Italian and Sustainability).

Across all grade levels, from Preschool to Middle School, each class delved into a unique aspect of sustainability through the lens of Italian language and culture. For instance, in Preschool, the youngest students repurposed discarded materials to create beautiful projects, demonstrating their understanding of sustainability through hands-on activities. Our kindergarteners focused on sustainable transportation methods, while first graders investigated sustainable practices in urban environments.

Second graders immersed themselves in the beauty of sustainable landscapes, and third graders explored innovative approaches to creating sustainable markets.

Meanwhile, fourth graders took a creative approach by examining sustainable cities through the art of creative writing, infusing their Italian language skills with imaginative storytelling. This interdisciplinary project not only honed their language abilities but also nurtured their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In Middle School, students offered another interpretation, focusing on making Italian sustainable and accessible to all. They rewrote excerpts from Italo Calvino's 'Invisible Cities' and read them aloud to the younger students during an assembly, demonstrating their appreciation for Italian literature and language while promoting its accessibility and relevance to a wider audience.

La Scuola and Italian encompass all of this—it's about research and creation, reading and interpretation; it's a window to the world and it's our community.

Through these initiatives, our students not only deepen their proficiency in Italian but also cultivate a profound understanding of global challenges

and their role as responsible stewards of the planet. This project exemplifies our commitment to providing an education that goes beyond language acquisition, empowering students to become informed, engaged citizens of the world.

La Scuola is recognized by the Ministero Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (MAECI) as a Scuola Paritaria, and supported by the Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco.



Consolato Generale d'Italia
San Francisco



“

Cosa ti piace dell'Italiano?

What do you like about italian?

Mio preferito parte di unità di indagine è acqua perché io e i miei amici ho fatto tanti disegni.

— Remi (Grade 2)

Mi è piaciuto scrivere la fiaba perché io mi piace scrivere libri.

— Sashi (Grade 3)

Io piace l'italiano come suona.

— Morgan (Grade 1)

Mi è piaciuto il progetto di Marcovaldo perché mi è sembrato che siamo più uniti.

— Leda (Grade 4)

Il libro La nuvola Olga, l'alfabeto. A come Albero Giovanni.

— Joshua (Kindergarten)

Fare di ogni lettera A,E,I,O,U e fare le sillabe.

— Nima (Kindergarten)

Mi è piaciuto scrivere le poesie e fare il progetto di Marcovaldo.

— Layla (Grade 4)





OUR ATELIERS

The atelier: Encounters, discoveries, wonders, and experiments



The atelier is a place for discussion, for planning, for building hypotheses, theories, and where to express different points of view.



The atelierista introduces the techniques and languages of art into the school, allowing children to experience the limits and possibilities. These experiments and explorations do not happen sporadically, but daily. Art is understood not only as a technique, but also as a compass, giving children the right to express their language through drawing, clay manipulation, photography, investigations of light phenomena, digital landscapes, music, design, nature, and much more.

ART
MUSIC
GARDEN &
ENVIRONMENTAL
STUDIES
DESIGN

ART ATELIER

Dogpatch Campus

For this school year, the Dogpatch atelier welcomed students to a magical place full of luminous experiments. Through light play, they touched upon the complex topic of physics. The visual arts have always had a close relationship with light, the protagonist of the research of numerous artists throughout art history. In modern art, however, we can witness an evolution; the light goes from being an instrument or protagonist of the work to becoming the work itself. In this evolution, **children's imagination and experimentation** have given life to suggestive and magical products.

In the latter part of the year the Preschoolers focused on researching sustainable learning paths. Some classes recycled old papers by creating

small sculptures and observed them under a microscope. Other classes made nature prints using flowers and herbs from our garden.



ART ATELIER

Silicon Valley Campus

During this year, the Silicon Valley atelier became a hub for open dialogue and continuous exchange. The main goal was to establish an "open" atelier, highlighting the idea of "openness" as a space for exploring possibilities and diverse expressive forms.

Piccoli children focused on exploring facial expressions, crucial for their social development at this stage. What do facial expressions convey? How can one communicate emotions to others effectively? Through surrealist art by Piero Fornasetti—an Italian artist and designer—children delved into the interplay between images and meaning, enhancing their ability to express themselves non-verbally.

The initial investigation unit on the topic of Family provided a platform for Grandi/Grandissimi children to engage with food as a language, connecting cultural identity with the act of sharing. The atelier evolved into a **Taste Workshop** (Atelier del Gusto), where members of the community shared their recipes, fostering a sense of community and unity akin to a large family.

One of the exciting transformations of our atelier included a clay workshop, where Kindergarten students explored the versatility of this material with Franco Valoppi, Kindergartener Luca's father. Clay emerged as a key element in the investigation on transportation, complemented by readings of the adventures depicted in Gianni Rodari's book "Giovannino Perdigiorno."



ART ATELIER

Mission Campus



This year in the Art Atelier, students considered ideas connected to both real and imaginary places, and what makes them special.

Students explored landscapes and skyscapes, rolling hills and starlit skies. They basked in Georgia O'Keeffe and Magritte skies, as well as NASA's images from the beyond, and created galaxies of their own. They imagined futuristic waterproof clothing, some with jet packs, and futuristic waterproof vehicles with various nimble functions, such as traction under water and the ability to transform when the weather changes.

They investigated wild spaces such as the desert, and busy urban spaces such as the center of town—the *piazza*—where people meet each other and exchange ideas. In their exchanges of ideas about place, the students considered Indigenous Peoples and their connection to the land. Just like you might see in the public parks of San Francisco,

they activated their atelier piazza with the expressive movements of tai chi, in particular, "cloud hands" and also "dragon" forms. Their studies included kinesthetic expressions (including ASL) and direct observations. They created "short, long books" (or long, short books) about expansive spaces, busy cities, and color explorations that express the voices of these special places.

Their inquiries also centered around inspiration itself, and where ideas come from. Students honored the sources of their inspiration in an atelier unit called **Honoring Our Ancestors**. They investigated how artists are inspired and thought about ways to honor others who inspire them. Their atelier conversations about inspiration moved toward ideas of treasuring and holding sacred, and they talked about the vitality and precious qualities of water, their planet, time, a sense of humor, their own beings, and they explored ideas and expressions of "tesori".

ART ATELIER

Mission Campus

How do different parts make a whole?

At the beginning of this year in Middle School Art, students explored the world of collages by investigating art movements such as Cubism, Dadaism, and Surrealism. They learned how at different turning points in history artists utilized creative expressions to document social changes. The leading questions for the explorations were:

> What is the history behind collage? How can we create original works and ideas by using existing works and ideas? To what extent can we use and manipulate someone else's images, photos, artworks, to create our own art? At the end of these explorations, the students created colorful and interesting collages inspired by the art movements studied. Each collage is unique and includes different mediums other than paper, such as oil pastels, markers, and paint.

In the second part of the year, they talked about identity and how the process of artistic expression can lead to self-discovery. Students explored the world of self-representation. These were some of the guiding questions behind this project:

> What is self-representation? How do I present my identity in visual art? How do we use abstract art to express our identity? The exploration led to the creation of wonderful realistic self-portraits and abstract ones. Each student tried to represent themselves both realistically and abstractly. In the realistic (life-like) portrait they learned about proportion, scale, composition, and structure lines. In the abstract portrait the students used colors, shapes, and different techniques to express their feeling, emotions, and identity. ...



OUR ATELIERS

MUSIC ATELIER

The music program at La Scuola

begins in Preschool and extends through the end of Middle School. Every child participates in the music program! As one of The Hundred Languages, children study music by listening, singing, playing, reading, and composing, from the start of the curriculum to graduation. We inquire into music as science, as culture, as history, as math, connecting through all disciplines. Our graduates speak the language of music—it is one more tool they have to express themselves. And when they make music together, they witness the beauty and impact of collaboration and the benefit of diversity, as students explore music and musicians from a variety of different cultures, communities, and countries.

In **Preschool**, a simple yet effective way to become familiar with music theory is through games and activities. Music theory is presented to preschoolers through the use of a variety of tools such as keyboards, a large floor piano, and other musical instruments that have similar layout structures. To get around the misleading visual effect—white and black keys of the piano or all the dark bars of the xylophone—colors are used as reference elements. This helps our preschoolers become familiar with the meaning of simple colored symbols, decoding them to create a melody.

The layout of these types of instruments gives children the opportunity to visualize and memorize the topography, thus understanding the key/note and sound/note concept.

Kindergarteners get an introduction to pitch using soffrage, vocal exercises, and body movements, with instruments

like boom whackers and xylophones. Students learn to recognize different pitches through engaging activities and games, and practice introductory activities into composition and song making.

By **Grade 1**, the focus shifts to reading musical notes and exploring rhythms with various percussion instruments, enhancing timing and coordination. As the year progresses, students start to create melodies on xylophones and perform using sheet music, as well as furthering their composition skills, in both written and digital form, using programs such as Chrome MusicLab.

In **Grade 2**, the curriculum evolves to more complex compositions and ensemble playing. Students work together in pitched percussion ensembles, exploring a variety of instruments and learning to collaborate to create harmonies and layered melodies. This approach allows them to deepen their understanding of musical structure, dynamics, and expression as they tackle more intricate pieces.

For rising **Grade 3** and **Grade 4**, it is a year when students switch instruments. In Grade 3, students receive their ukuleles, moving on from percussion. In Grade 4, students put down their ukuleles and discover whether mandolin, mandola, guitar, or bass is right for them. Their future years at La Scuola are focused on their chosen string instrument.

“

We inquire into music as science, as culture, as history, as math, connecting through all disciplines.



OUR ATELIERS **MUSIC**



MUSIC HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR SCHOOL YEAR:

October

- Visit from the Pertini Vocal Ensemble, a High School Choir from Genova, Italy.
- Performance of Non Temere Halloween for the entire school. Each year Grade 1 learns to sing the song, and Grade 5 musicians accompany the singers.
- Ambassador Ensemble performance for the Italian Heritage Festival.
- Ambassador Ensemble performance for the Italian Heritage Kickoff, hosted by Mayor London Breed in City Hall.

November

- Ambassador Ensemble performance for the California International Reggio Center (CIRC) ribbon cutting ceremony.

December

- Ambassador Ensemble opened up for the Italian Tenor, Pasquale Esposito, at the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi.
- Mission Campus K-8 Winter Concert at Herbst Theater.
- Silicon Valley Campus Kindergarten Winter Concert, accompanied by the Ambassador Ensemble.

February

- Performance at our annual Carnevale celebration. Student musicians learned pieces from the Renaissance, while students in Italian studied and acted as members of the Commedia dell'arte.

March

- Grade 3 students taught Claudia Giudici, renowned Pedagogista and former President of Reggio Children®, how to play a short piece on the ukulele.
- Ambassador Ensemble performance at La Dolce Vita gala.

May

- Musical performance across all campuses for World Cultural Diversity Day.
- K-8 Spring Concert at Herbst Theater.

July

- Ambassador Ensemble performance at the San Francisco Giants game, at Oracle Park. ...





OUR ATELIERS

GARDEN & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES ATELIER



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Our students value the caring, exploring, learning, and sharing in the communal riches of this ever-changing living classroom.

The La Scuola garden program provides students with a unique opportunity to be immersed in the environment while learning about it. They practice empathy, and touch, feel, and experience science and math firsthand, instilling within them a duty to steward the planet and to help others do so as well.

The natural environment quite often surprises children and provides them with the spontaneity that leads to new cognitive pathways, curiosities, and a sense of wonder. ...



OUR ATELIERS

DESIGN ATELIER

In the International Baccalaureate

Middle Years Program (IB-MYP) Design, the Design Cycle empowers students to be the protagonists of their learning journey, where failure serves as a valuable learning opportunity. Through the structured framework of the Design Cycle, students actively engage in problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration. They navigate through the iterative stages of identifying problems, generating ideas,

and refining solutions, fostering critical thinking skills along the way. As students encounter setbacks, they learn to overcome emotions and persevere, discovering alternative approaches and innovative solutions independently. By embracing the Design Cycle, students not only develop essential design skills but also cultivate resilience and independence in tackling real-world challenges.

DESIGN CYCLE / FOUR PHASES

Design is the subject where Middle School students learn and apply the concept of design thinking. Every project we engage with asks students to dive into one or more of the four phases of the Design Cycle:

Inquiring and Analyzing

This phase is brimming with research and analysis, aimed at understanding existing knowledge around the issue or design. Students immerse themselves in the challenge, probing its nature. What exactly is it? Why does it manifest? Where does it occur? Whom does it impact? This exploration of existing products and knowledge guides and informs our approach as designers.

Evaluating

During this phase, testing methods are devised by students to assess the efficacy of their designs and solutions against specified criteria. Feedback is collected to pinpoint areas for improvement and to measure the impact of their designs on the intended audience. While this stage often marks the culmination of the process, it can also serve as a catalyst to revisit parts of the cycle to enhance their designs.

Developing Ideas

In this phase, students begin contemplating a range of approaches to tackle the challenge. Typically, every student sketches and outlines one or two individual solutions. As these solutions are deliberated upon in a classroom environment, and often evolve or intertwine with peers' ideas, fostering extensive collaboration and attentive listening.



Creating the Solution

Once brainstorming concludes and feedback has been applied, a final design or solution is selected. Students create a detailed action plan and follow it to produce prototypes and models of their final designs, demonstrating their technical skills.

OUR ATELIERS DESIGN

Student Projects

This year, Middle School students were able to use the Design Cycle on various projects:

- **DESIGNING ETHICALLY-SOURCED FOOD PRODUCTS**

(Grade 7)

Students conducted research around existing products and ethical business practices in order to design a food product that was affordable, made of ethically sourced ingredients, and tasted delicious.

- **COLLABORATING WITH AN URBAN PLANNER TO REINVENT OUR GREEN SPACE AND PLAY SPACES**

(Grades 6-8)

Students had the beautiful opportunity to have alumni parent Ilaria Salvadori, an urban planner for the City of San Francisco, join them each week during this project. Students worked on designing adaptable green spaces and play structures as well as writing proposals for temporary street closures to create a potential space for our community during the upcoming construction.

- **CREATING EDUCATIONAL BOARD GAMES**

(Grades 6-7)

Students prototyped complete and original educational board games with partners. They engaged in a dynamic learning process of play-testing a variety of board games on the market - studying techniques, and identifying key strategies and modifications that improve the player experience. They then collaborated to design their own unique games. As they developed their games, students tested their prototypes, providing peer feedback on the player experience.

- **CREATING A FILM DOCUMENTING THE GRADE 8 TRIP TO ITALY**

(Grade 8)

In collaboration with the student's Journalism unit in Language & Literature, students were able to create mini-documentaries based on their film footage and learning while on the Italy trip.

- **INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION** with other classes on a range of projects, such as creating Podcasts, preparing for our yearly Carnevale, various ADC projects, and many more.





DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING

La Scuola is dedicated to advancing equity and inclusion within our community day in and day out. One notable initiative this year involved partnering with **Be the Change** group to facilitate capacity-building sessions for our educators. These sessions focused on enhancing teachers' racial analysis and deepening their understanding of restorative justice principles.

Additionally, the **Learning Development Department** spearheaded various events tailored to families, featuring leaders in neurodiversity who shared their valuable experiences. These gatherings provided a platform for insightful discussions and fostered greater understanding and support within our community.

These endeavors are just a few among many that have stemmed from the diligent work of the **DEIB committee**. Among the highlights of this year was the increased enrollment of students from the **SMART program** (Schools, Mentoring and Resource Team). This year we admitted six SMART scholars that will be joining the La Scuola community for the 2024 - 2025 academic year. SMART

—a groundbreaking 12-year continuum of support starting from 4th grade and extending through college. SMART encompasses a wide range of resources, including academic assistance, after-school enrichment, summer programs, and college preparation, aiming to provide comprehensive support to students at every stage of their educational journey. The SMART program stands as a testament to La Scuola's commitment to fostering equitable access to education.

Furthermore, the growth of **Somos La Scuola** has played a pivotal role in creating a supportive space for our Spanish-speaking families to come together, share experiences, and strengthen connections within our community.

Finally, we launched and completed a search for our first **full-time DEIB Director**, who will join us during the 2024 - 2025 school year.

Through these initiatives, La Scuola continues to pave the way toward a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all. .:.







MISSION NEW BUILDING *update*

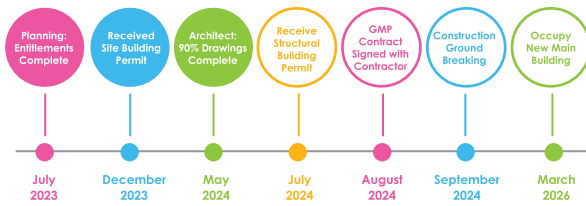
As we close another wonderful year at La Scuola, we are closer than ever to achieving our dream of building the first Reggio Emilia inspired K-8 school in North America, and the 2023-2024 school year was a momentous year indeed. Our classrooms and ateliers provided students with endless opportunities for exploration and inquiry, beauty and risk-taking, magic and wonder, all while asking

challenging questions and discovering extraordinary answers,

As our inquirers continue to explore the world around them, we spend every day working hard to create an environment that reflects their commitment to this inquiry and that will elevate our campus to meet their needs. The Embrace Campaign, the first of its kind in La Scuola's history, will do just this.



THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR ENCOMPASSED THE FOLLOWING MILESTONES:



- Renovated the San Carlos gymnasium, made cosmetic improvements, added some atelier spaces, and conducted a voluntary seismic retrofit of the building.
- The Historic Preservation Commission and City of San Francisco approved our project with overwhelming support from the Mission and La Scuola communities, completing Entitlements.
- Our Site Permit was approved by the City of San Francisco.
- Financial conditions created both challenges and opportunities, as we explored rebidding the project to optimize costs and benefits. As a result of this exploratory phase, we selected a new construction team, Build Group, chosen for their excellence, financial responsibility, safety, and quality.
- With all of our permitting with the City of San Francisco in place, we continue to work very hard to finalize our financing and funding to commence construction in September. As part of our funding, we have opened a community loan to bridge our philanthropic donations and financing.

Looking forward, we will welcome

the long-anticipated next phase of our Embrace campaign. We are thrilled to share that this September, we will be launching the public phase of our campaign. The public phase has been many years in the making: it is an opportunity for us to share insights into the campaign and to invite all La Scuola families to participate in the campaign with their own contribution.

The public phase launch is very purposefully aligned with our planned start of construction this fall. The construction schedule is projected to be 18 months, with an occupancy of the building by our students in March 2026. Fundraising will continue through construction until we reach our goal. ...

Thank you
**for all of your ongoing support.
Our new building is in sight
and we cannot wait to celebrate
with you all!**



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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We place a high value on professional development for our faculty and staff.

Talented and inspired teachers help create engaged and successful students. Here at La Scuola, we place a high value on professional development for our faculty and staff. As always, we offered many opportunities throughout the year for them to attend professional development courses, as well as scheduled in-school professional development days focused on specific topics from which all faculty and staff could benefit and find value.

Below are some of the incredible opportunities made available to our faculty and staff this year:



- Onsite, interactive DEIB learning workshops.
- In-person and virtual International Baccalaureate training sessions for our Primary Years Program and Middle Years Program educators, taught by internationally-accredited IB instructors.
- Our beloved annual trip to Reggio Emilia, Italy, to attend the Reggio Children® International Study Group at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center.
- The LEARNING & the BRAIN Conference, in San Francisco.
- A conference on the Reggio Emilia Approach®, presented by Claudia Giudici, a distinguished authority in the Reggio Emilia Approach and former president of Reggio Children®. The conference was hosted by the California International Reggio Center (CIRC) and La Scuola International School.
- Exchange programs with a variety of independent schools in the Bay Area.
- An in-person mathematics conference at Stanford University and online Singapore Math Teacher Institute training.
- English workshops on Science of Reading, including Phonics and Morphology.
- A longtime partner of La Scuola in the Reggio Emilia Approach, we participated in Innovative Teacher Project and CIRC roundtables held at various schools in the Bay Area, including three hosted at our very own Dogpatch campus.
- Participation and presentation at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.
- Participation at various national Head of School conferences throughout the year, including the NAIS and AAIE conferences.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT LA SCUOLA



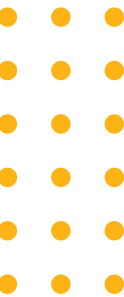
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At any Reggio Emilia school, the environment is the third teacher, and at La Scuola, our environment extends far beyond the classroom.

FIELD TRIPS & OVERNIGHT TRIPS

This year students from Preschool through Grade 8 explored the greater Bay Area during field trips to museums, nature preserves, cultural centers, libraries, and more.

They were also able to participate in overnight nature field trips, an important part of the Environmental Science curriculum and SEL growth of students. Students went to the NatureBridge retreat in the Marin Headlands, Yosemite National Park, CYO Camp in Caritas Creek, and a camping trip on Angel Island.



FIELD TRIPS & OVERNIGHT TRIPS





STUDENT LIFE

IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

At La Scuola, fostering a **supportive and inclusive environment** is central to the Middle School experience. This year, we hosted two standout events: **Spirit Week** in February and the **Middle School Dance** in May, both of which brought our community closer together.

In February, Spirit Week brought excitement and creativity to our school. Each day featured a unique theme, culminating in a lively **Carnevale** event on Friday, with games and other fun booths hosted by our Middle Schoolers for the Elementary students. The weeklong celebration boosted school spirit and camaraderie among students and staff alike.

In May, our newly-renovated gymnasium transformed into a vibrant celebration of the decades for our **"Dec-o-Dance"** theme – music and styles from the 60s, 70s, and 80s. Students dressed in outfits from various eras, enjoying an evening of music, dancing, and fun. Organized by our dedicated student dance committee, the event was a resounding success, creating lasting memories for all attendees.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

ATHLETICS

**A journey of growth, pride,
and community spirit**



Welcome to the exhilarating world of La Scuola Athletics, where our Middle School students embark on a transformative journey that fosters growth, instills pride, and ignites enthusiasm among all members of our community. Here at La Scuola, athletics are not just serious; they are also incredibly fun. It's a realm where skill, intelligence, passion, and, most importantly, heart, converge. Our student-athletes participate because they genuinely love their respective sports, deeply value their teammates, and take immense pride in representing something far greater than themselves.

La Scuola Athletics is a powerful force that nurtures a spirit of healthy competition, unwavering commitment, exemplary leadership, and true sportsmanship, regardless of the outcome. It cherishes and celebrates cultural diversity while promoting gender equity, ensuring that every individual feels welcome and valued.

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, our dedicated athletes had the opportunity to engage in an array of team sports across the Fall, Winter, and Spring seasons.

Representing La Scuola with immense pride, our student-athletes competed valiantly in the San Francisco International Athletic League (SFIAL), showcasing their skills and spirit against neighboring independent schools. This year, an astounding 80% of our middle school student body actively participated in at least one of our athletic programs, signifying the vibrant engagement and enthusiasm that courses through our athletic community.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of this year, we eagerly anticipate the continued growth and success of our athletics program.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is a central focus of the Grade 7 experience. Since the beginning of the year, students have been working in the food pantry at The Women's Building.

The Women's Building is a local non-profit organization focused on serving and empowering members of the Mission community. Their food pantry provides food for hundreds of families every week; it is an important source of healthy fruits and vegetables, in the middle of a food desert.

The work is impactful both to our students and to local community members, as it gives them an opportunity to interact face-to-face and access needed services.

This regular service work inspired a math project in which students applied their mathematical learning to serve the needs of the food pantry. Back in the classroom, students connected their work at The Women's Building with their academic unit on statistics and data analysis. Students analyzed data on food distribution and the demographics of the pantry's participants, looking for patterns and insights that could enhance the work the organization does.

This project allowed our students to apply mathematical concepts to real-world scenarios, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter and highlighting the impact

What does a typical day of volunteering at the food pantry look like?

- Our students arrive at 8:40 am, when other volunteers are already bustling around getting things ready.
- Students begin packing to-go bags filled with a week's worth of fresh groceries.
- When the doors open, community members come around with a small cart—the food is heavy!—to each of the food item tables, where one student is stationed to pass out the food.
- There is always a long line of people so students stay very busy.
- As the line starts to wind down, students go back to helping pack additional to-go bags with any leftover food.



that mathematical skills, such as data analysis, can have on local community organizations.

Our students did an outstanding job presenting their findings, offering insights and suggestions to improve the food pantry's effectiveness. The feedback from The Women's Building staff was incredibly positive, praising our students for their hard work. By combining academic pursuits with community engagement, we are preparing our students for thoughtful and impactful citizenship in their lives beyond La Scuola.



“

It is not necessary at home that we best encounter our true selves. The furniture insists that we cannot change because it does not; the domestic setting keeps us tethered to the person we are in ordinary life, who may not be who we essentially are.

— *Alain de Botton*



The purpose of our inquiry-based learning and social constructivist approach at La Scuola, from PreK to Grade 8, is to guide learners in becoming principled global citizens, independent inquirers, and effective multilingual communicators who can think creatively and critically to solve real world problems with balance and resilience. In this culminating trip abroad, our soon-to-be-graduates brought the academic learning that they have experienced throughout the Middle Years Program into broader historical, cultural, and political contexts. Our assignment was to apply what we “know” in spaces that are less familiar to answer questions like, “how do geographical shifts parallel a shift in understanding that informs not only our knowledge of the world, but also our knowledge of ourselves?”

The Italy trip represents a coming together of the three pillars of a La Scuola education: Learning as Action within the International Baccalaureate, the diversity of expression embedded in the Reggio Approach, and a fully immersive linguistic experience. Travel and activities were centered around integrating theoretical knowledge

and skills into real-world contexts and applications: students engaged in service at the Refettorio Antoniano, compared approaches to learning at Liceo Malpighi, and applied their understanding of contemporary Italian history in context in North Florence.

Students, for the first time in La Scuola history, visited the birthplace of the Reggio Emilia Approach® at the Centro Internazionale Loris Malaguzzi to aid in the ongoing research of students and faculty in the Middle School: how does Reggio inform the way we learn and provide new avenues for sharing our learning?

In each phase of the experience, students were tasked with observing, reflecting and connecting their lived experience abroad with their formation at school. Ultimately, the trip serves to remind students that the learning process is lifelong, and that, sometimes, seeking outward helps us better understand what is within.

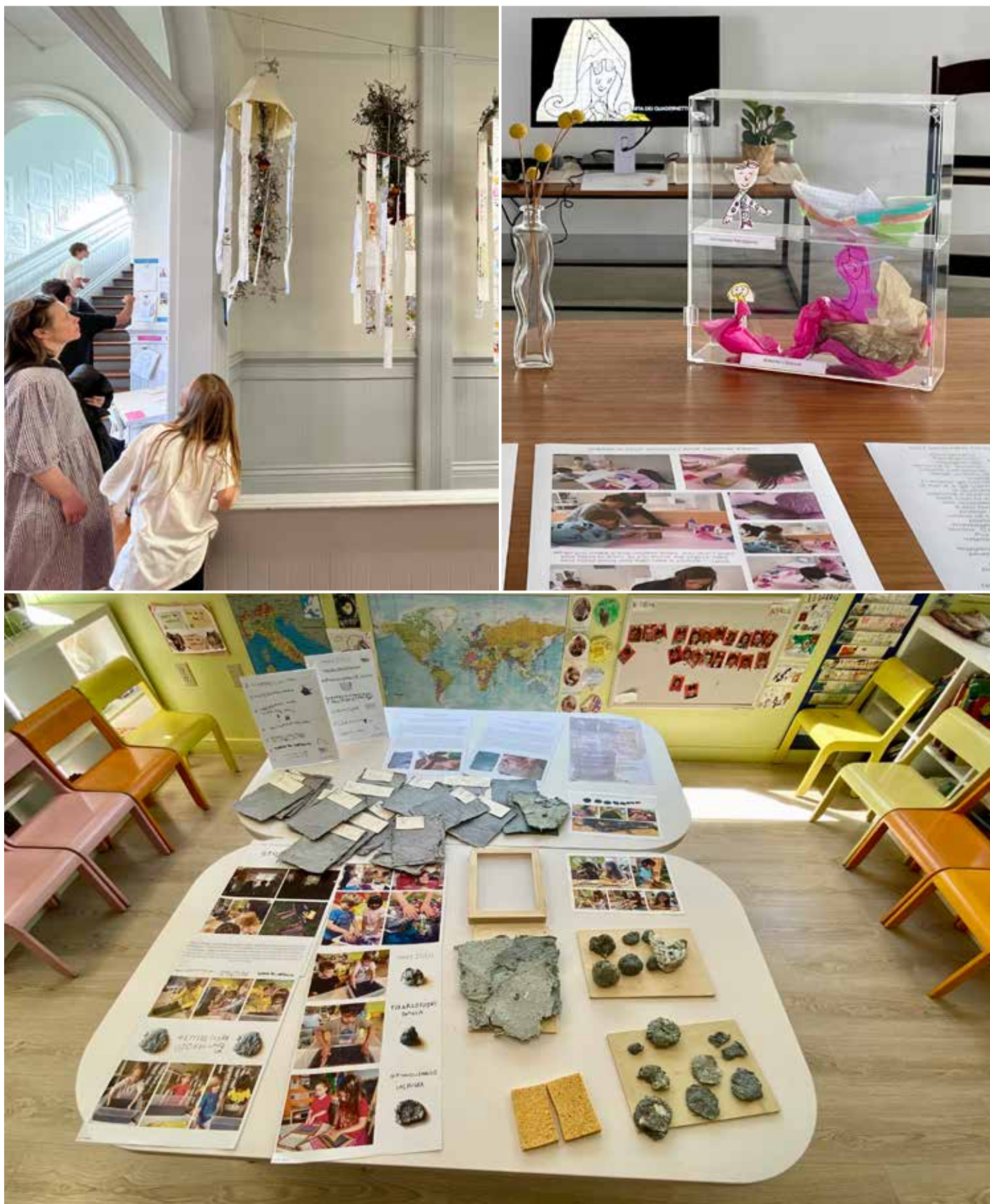


ITALY TRIP GRADE 8



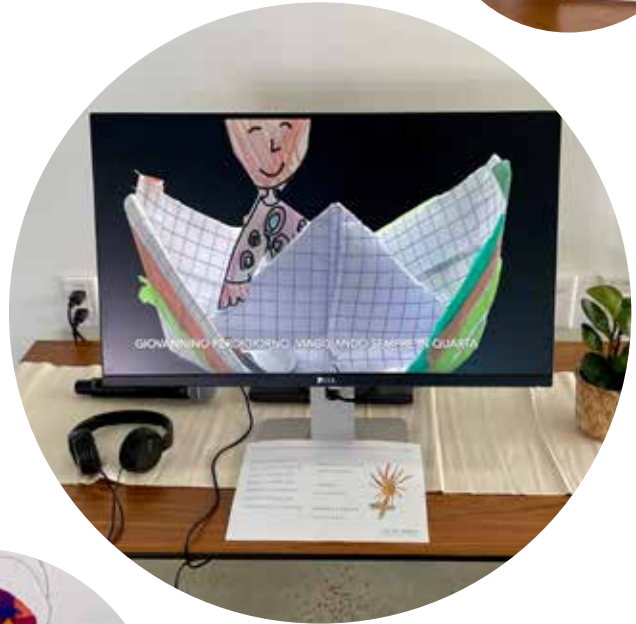


INSIEME *Exhibit*



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It's a collaborative effort, emphasizing the importance of working TOGETHER.



WINTER & SPRING CONCERTS





GRANDPARENTS AND SPECIAL FRIENDS DAY

Grandparents and Special Friends Day is one of the most special days of the year at La Scuola. This year was no exception, as we honored and celebrated the unique relationships that children have with adults other than their parents. Grandparents and Special Friends enjoyed a gioia-filled day, experiencing learning in action, participating in special activities with their students and friends, and getting a glimpse into daily life at La Scuola.



“

Learning and teaching should not stand on opposite banks and just watch the river flow by; instead, they should embark together on a journey down the water.

— Loris Malaguzzi







La Dolce Vita

This year's La Dolce Vita, La Scuola's annual spring gala and fundraiser, paid homage to magical, enchanting Venice as we celebrated Carnevale-style at the Conservatory at One Sansome. Our amazing Ambassador Ensemble wowed us by opening the show, followed by our very own faculty musical performances. For the first time ever, we honored a member of

the La Scuola community with the inaugural "Gioia" award, presented to long-time parent and community member Claudia Volpi. Claudia was the founding K - 8 Board Chair, and has been committed to the success and growth of the school since her family joined us in 2010.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our parents, friends, faculty, staff,

and community members, **we raised over \$850,000**—a new La Scuola record! Over \$470,000 of this total was raised specifically for our **Sliding Scale Tuition program**, which allows children who would not otherwise be able to afford full tuition the opportunity to attend La Scuola, and enriches our school community by honoring diverse points of view and experiences



that serve to create global citizens who are learners, creators, and innovators. Every dollar raised at La Dolce Vita is essential, also supporting our unique special programs and ateliers, including visual arts, music, design, and environmental science—our extraordinary arts and sciences that are at the core of a La Scuola education.

It takes a village to put on such a memorable event! This year's gala would truly not have been possible without the time and commitment of

our fantastic and passionate LDV Committee, including Co-Chairs **Helen Jones** and **Lorraine Mulvihill**, and committee members **Cecilia Colzani**, **Talia Kennedy**, **Kelsey McNellis**, and **Melissa Stephens**, in addition to all of the wonderful parent volunteers who helped to make our fundraiser a success.

A heartfelt grazie di cuore to our La Scuola parents, alumni parents, friends of the school, the Italian Consulate of San Francisco, and the Italian-American community for donating

your time and talent in support of La Scuola. Together, we make a great impact on La Scuola and in our community, and we couldn't do it without your generous support!



“

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

— Loris Malaguzzi

GRADUATES



GRADUATION CEREMONIES



Meet our **GRADE 8 GRADUATES**



“

In spring of 2023, I went with our then-seventh graders to visit a San Francisco high school. To welcome us, they had arranged a panel of current high school students who were also La Scuola alumni to present the programs, activities and experiences in their new place of learning. As we left I remember sharing with my colleague how proud I felt to see the growth of our past students and to feel, in some way, that we had contributed to it. We had, sitting in front of us during that panel, engaging, energized, intelligent, young citizens of the world who, when we last saw them, were still shedding the awkwardness and self-consciousness of those middle years. There was, of course, still learning to

do, but they were well on their way and had adopted the distinct global perspective and innovative attitude of a La Scuola graduate.

You, my dearest class of 2024, had stars in your eyes for what was to come during your eighth grade year! Tackling the responsibilities of your final year of middle school—high school admissions, community project, our trip abroad—was enthusing but foreign. And now, here we are, on the other side of all of it. You first came to me and I first came to you in fifth grade. Working with you for the last four years has been my special privilege. Even though we are still in the middle, your growth is as apparent and measurable as your physical growth measured in inches on

the doorframe of the language atelier. I am so grateful to have been witness to it, to know you all so well, and to know, with the utmost faith, what each of you are capable of as you embark on the next phase.

At every ending people like to cite a new beginning—it's cliché but true—this is just the start! You will take with you all the skills, learning and love you acquired here and leave with us irreplaceable memories of a truly unique La Scuola class.

Buon viaggio!

Carmen Gomez,
Middle School Director



HIGH SCHOOLS OUR GRADUATES WILL ATTEND IN THE FALL:

Ann Sobrato High School
Drew School
Halifax Central (Halifax, Canada)
International High School
Lowell High School
Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory
Saint Ignatius College Preparatory
San Francisco University High School
Stuart Hall High School
Urban School of San Francisco

“ All of this is a great forest. Inside the forest is the child. The forest is beautiful, fascinating, green, and full of hopes; there are no paths. Although it isn’t easy, we have to make our own paths, as teachers and children and families, in the forest.

— Loris Malaguzzi

Congratulazioni TO OUR CLASS OF 2024!

THE PARENTS ASSOCIATION OF LA SCUOLA (PALS) UPDATE

The Parents Association of La Scuola (PALS) had a busy year celebrating all things community!

We started over the summer matching our incoming families with "Welcome Families" to help ease the transition to the start of school and ensure each child had a friendly face when school started. We kicked off the school year with our Welcome Aperitivo, which was a smashing success. Parents mixed and mingled, kids played lawn games and soccer, and we chatted over Aperol spritzes and Italian sodas. We enjoyed Parents' Night out at Harmonic Brewery; participated in the Italian Heritage Parade; held our annual Holiday Party; had a Beach Clean Up; supported Carnevale, Autumn Festival, Annual Fund, La Dolce Vita; built the Yearbook; continued the enjoyment of the Dogpatch Library; and supported an amazing Admissions season!

We celebrated our phenomenal faculty and staff with Teacher Appreciation Fridays and closed it down with the Fiera, a festival of games and soccer. Overall it was a wonderful year of building community and making friendships that will last a lifetime and across all continents.

It has been our pleasure leading PALS this year and we thank all those parents who supported us and our events.

Melissa Ippolito,
PALS Chair

Sophie Scharf,
Pre-K Co-Chair

Katy Long,
K-5 Co-Chair

Courtney Minick,
Grades 6-8 Co-Chair

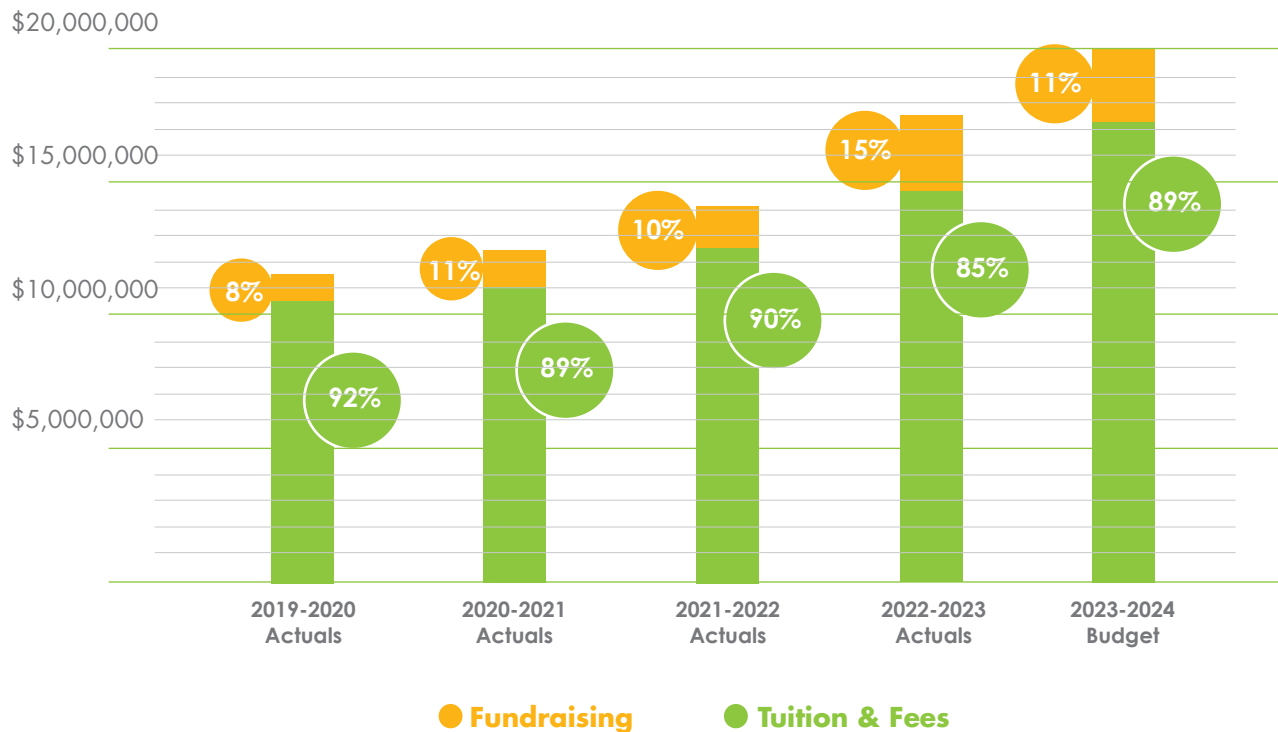




FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

La Scuola's finances are strong and balanced. We are in our fifth year of our robust strategic financial plan and remain committed to strengthening the financial sustainability of the school for years to come.

GROSS REVENUES

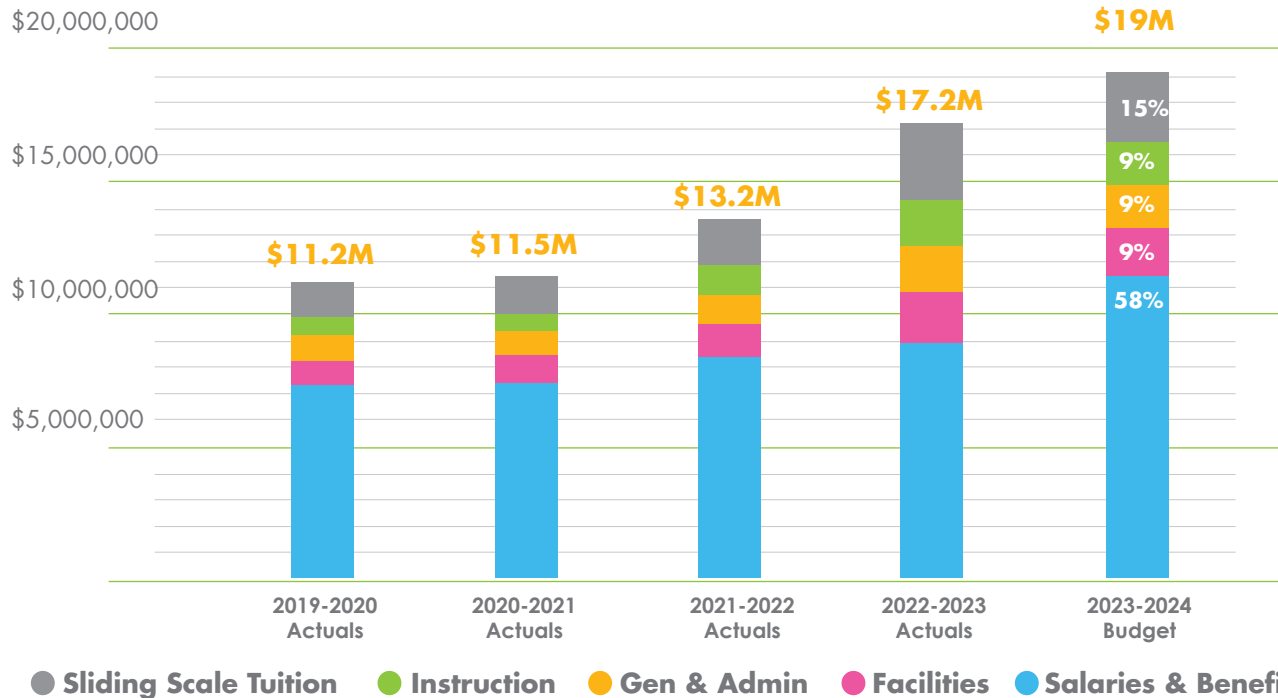


- La Scuola's finances are strong and balanced. We continue to strengthen our financial sustainability and invest in our programs and capital projects.
- We continue to increase the operational income, allocating resources to enhance and broaden academic offerings.
- 15.5% of the total gross tuition revenue is allocated for our Sliding Scale Tuition program.
- The enrollment for 2023-24 is 409 students, including Silicon Valley campus, which demonstrates a 12% increase over last year.
- We are projecting to increase our enrollment to 435+ students for next year.



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

EXPENSES



● The increase in the operating expenses reflect the overall program expansion and our investment in our quality academic program.

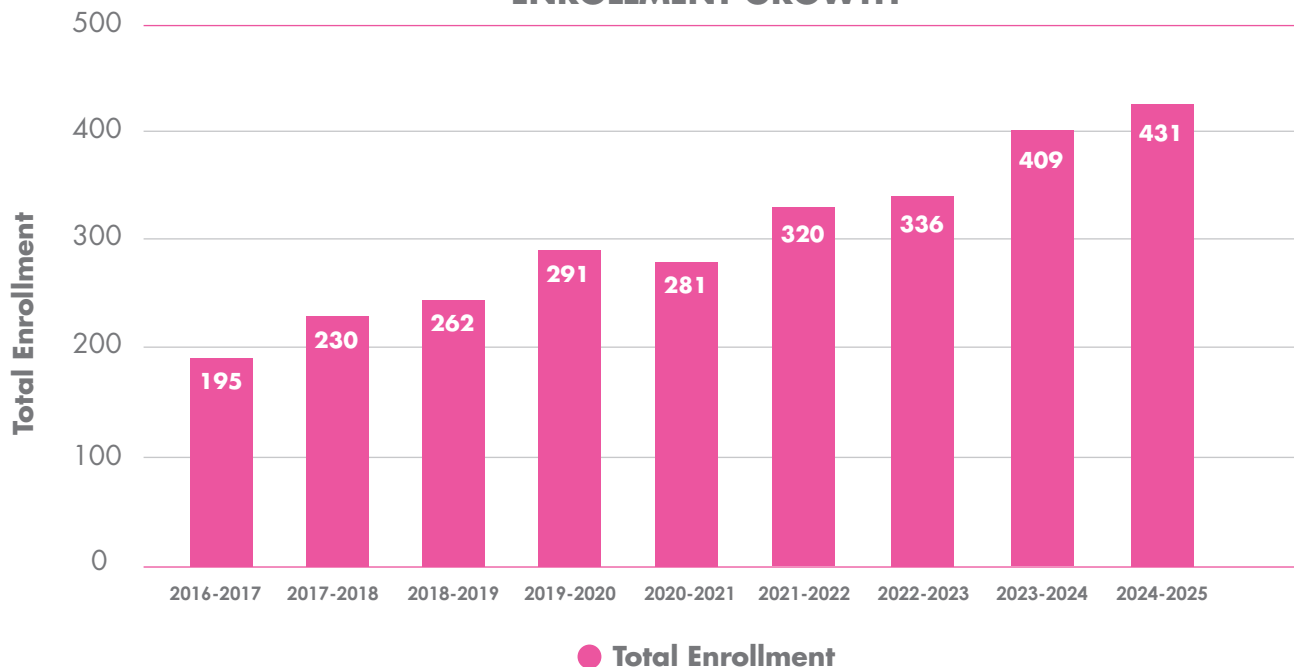
● Our biggest expense line is compensation and benefits. We continue to invest in our exceptional team. Retaining our amazing teachers and adding new talents is one of our priorities and key to the success of our program.

● Despite pandemic interruption, La Scuola demonstrated an enrollment growth of almost 50% in the last five years. We continue to increase our enrollment year over year.

● The enrollment for 2023-24 is 375 students, a 12% increase over current year.

● Our San Francisco PreK campus is operating at full capacity and our K-8 program is on a growth projection to reach maximum capacity.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH



LA SCUOLA *by the numbers*

409

Students

310

Families

Faculty to Student Ratio

Preschool	1:6 to 1:8
Grades K - 3	1:12
Grades 4 - 8	1:14 to 1:20

100+

Faculty
and staff

LANGUAGES

34

Languages spoken
by La Scuola families

17%

Families that have
at least one Italian
speaker at home

14

Languages spoken
by La Scuola
faculty and staff

83%

Families that do not
have at least one
Italian speaker at
home

GEOGRAPHY

39

Zip codes represented

17%

Students
of color

DIVERSITY

14%

Faculty
and staff
of color

3%

LGBTQ
families

AFFORDABILITY

30%

Families participating
in Sliding Scale Tuition







Niente Senza Gioia!
Nothing Without Joy!
Nada Sin Alegría!

LA SCUOLA
International School • Preschool - 8th Grade



SERVING THE BAY AREA IN THREE LOCATIONS

Dogpatch Campus Preschool

728 20th Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
415-558-9006

www.lascuolasf.org

Mission Campus Grades K - 8

3250 18th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-551-0000

admissions@lascuolasf.org

Silicon Valley Campus Preschool - Grade 1

2086 Clarke Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
650-800-9650

