

Hello Parents and Guardians of Lower IS Students-

I'm writing to announce that I will be your child's teacher for the upcoming school year. I am very excited to meet new students and make deeper connections with those students I already know. Although we may have met you might not be aware that I have been in the education field for over 10 years. This will be my sixth year teaching at the K-2 grade level with four of those in multi-age classrooms. I earned my Masters in Education and credential from UCSC and have taught in several schools throughout the county but Pacific School is my favorite by far ☺

I find it serendipitous and fortunate that I had the opportunity to be a parent in the Lower IS Program last year. I was able to witness the structure of the day and the many different ways that the parents collaborate with the teacher to provide a supportive, caring and high quality education for all of the children in class. As a teacher I strongly value my relationships with parents viewing it as a partnership where compassionate communication, assessment of your child's needs and strengths and collaborative goal setting occurs to ensure student happiness and success in and out of the classroom. I'm very much looking forward to working with each and every one of you!

I'm sure many of you are wondering about my teaching style and the type of learning environment your child will experience when in the classroom. I promote a student-centered classroom and strive to create an atmosphere of positivity, mindfulness, competence, collaboration and respect for the community (both personal and global). To build a strong classroom community I have a teaching style that fosters a positive and safe learning environment. I support activities where we can learn to appreciate each other and take notice of the kind acts that we do for one another each day. I also bring training and a passion for mindfulness in education and a belief in using compassionate/non-violent communication to nurture responsible global citizens and caretakers of the Earth.

I favor a teaching pedagogy that values constructive conversation in the classroom, critical thinking and inquiry. I'll do my best to infuse students' interests into the work that we do and let them contribute to what we choose to learn. Not all activities can lead to project based learning but I think we all appreciate it when we can create lessons together as a group that allow us to dive deeper into a subject. Most importantly I like to make learning fun and engaging and am always assessing student interest and motivation to guide the flow.

Please feel free to contact me through email if you have any more questions about me or what the upcoming year will look like. I'd also love to chat about your child if you want to share with me their particular learning style or needs. I will be in communication with Mrs. Cross should I need extra support transitioning into the position so rest assured things will go as smoothly as possible. I feel lucky to be in such a supportive, collaborative community and am grateful for the upcoming year. We're going to have fun.

Warmly,
Kara Nickel

