Overview of Progressive Education

...and what it looks like at Spectrum School

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What is "unique" about Progressive Education?

- "Insists on the importance of the emotional, artistic, and creative aspects of human development" - in response to a more "scientific, factory" model of education
- Focuses on students' interests, strengths, and experience of learning
- Orientation to planning, preparation, instruction, and assessment focuses on knowledge of students, context, and community (rather than a standardized, published curriculum or scope and sequence)
- Relevance to the learner, authentic engagement, curricular integration, and meaningful assessment are critical
- Social justice and taking action as a member of the community are frequently highlighted (*I am significant. I can make a difference.*)

What is unique about Spectrum School?

- Historically rooted in the experiential learning approaches of **Dewey**, the cognitive developmental theories of **Piaget**, and the multiple intelligence model by **Gardner**. Thematic and integrated units are the instructional norm.
- High Scope's ***Plan-Do-Review*** model is adopted in early childhood, fostering decision-making, independence, and reflection in young children.
- Spectrum's model remains flexible, incorporating best practices as they emerge, rather than adherence to a program for its own sake
  - Montessori, Waldorff, International Baccalaureate, Design Thinking
  - Importance of inquiry, student ownership of learning, innovation, environmental citizenship, and community involvement
- To ensure personalized learning and support all learners, **multi-age classrooms**, **small class size**, and **team-teaching** have solidified in our school and professional culture.

Spectrum's Current "Progressive" Work

- Annual school wide theme to integrate learning and connect community
- Interest Groups
- Project-based learning
- Personal Projects, Passion Projects, Future Problem Solving
- Technology integration where it advances meaningful learning
- Environmental and Outdoor Education
- Design Thinking, Makers Spaces, Tinkering, Genius Hour
- Ensuring the arts, physical and mental health, world language, and community service are embedded into our program
- 2020-21 professional study and implementation of John Spencer's *Vintage Innovation*

Spectrum During COVID

- Strong cohorting, handwashing, social distancing, and masks
  - Split levels to not mingle cohorts
  - Virtual specialists and schoolwide online literacy programs
  - Smaller class sizes limited by room space
  - Outdoor education
- Appropriate attention to cleaning, sanitizing, individualizing or cohorting "stuff"
- *Spectrum at Home -* virtual learning with schedules, menus, full participation in literacy, math, and project activities
  - Teaching assistants to support in-person and virtual learning, due to the extra toll and demands doing both puts on teachers