



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 2016-17

### **What does Triumph believe about teaching and learning?**

Triumph has produced remarkable gains for students in the ten years it has been open. We believe that every child, regardless of ability, has the right to fully participate in a school experience that honors his or her interests, learning styles, life experiences, culture and individual needs. Our teachers work intentionally toward uncommonly high standards and achieve measurable results that prepare all children ages 2 to 5 to excel socially and academically in elementary school. Over 80% of Triumph's students go on to kindergarten having exceeded pre-k standards and in 2015, 61% of Triumph's students entered kindergarten already writing at a mid-year kindergarten level.

### **What curriculum is used?**

Triumph has adopted several curricula that align with our philosophy of learning. Our program balances teacher-directed small and large group experiences with ample time for children to make choices. We also believe that utilizing high quality literacy practices is integral to our students' success.

As we seek to proactively teach critical social skills, we utilize the research-based *Second Step Early Learning* curriculum. *Second Step* teaches essential social skills, such as problem solving, emotion management, impulse control, and empathy through engaging hands-on, activity-based lessons. We have also adopted the California Teaching Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. The CA Teaching Pyramid is focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5. It is based on evidence-based practice originally developed by the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (CSEFEL), authorized by California Department of Education (CDE), and aligned with California's Early Learning and Development System.

### **Who are Triumph's teachers?**

All Triumph lead teachers hold a bachelor's degree, something less than 25% of preschool teachers in Sacramento County hold. Our teachers' charge to deliver the highest quality education to every child requires that they be experienced, committed, and go above and beyond for our students and our school.

Triumph teachers are skilled facilitators who engage with children in activities, wondering aloud and posing questions to extend their reasoning. Our small group size and teacher-student ratios allow teachers time for longer, more stimulating conversations with each individual child.

### **How is my child's progress monitored?**

Our teachers assess each child's development on a regular basis by observing, questioning and interacting with him or her and recording their observations. In addition, each child is assessed using the Desired Results Developmental Profile multiple times each year. Teachers use this information to plan for the group as a whole, and each student individually. Teachers and parents collaborate regularly around assessment information via written reports and in-person conferences.

Because families are their child's first and best teacher, we ask all families to complete an assessment questionnaire when they enroll their child. This information helps teachers get to know his or her strengths in problem-solving, motor skills, communication and social development. This also serves as a screening tool, as

recommended by the California Department of Education, to ensure all students are supported in the learning process.

### **What is the typical day like at Triumph?**

The daily schedule balances children's need to make choices and be self-directed with small group teacher-guided instruction in math, language arts, music, art, movement and science. Each day includes a class community meeting where children greet each other, sing, share stories, and read. Daily large and small group instruction includes shared reading, journal writing, storytelling and dramatization, calendar math and more. Throughout the day children choose among learning centers that provide opportunities for language arts development, math and science exploration, art, music, movement and dramatic play.

The play yard is designed as a second classroom and children spend up to 30 percent of their day outdoors. Each day includes healthy snack time, as well as lunch and rest time for full day students.

Before and after school extended care (our *Early Bird* and *Later Gator* program) includes art projects, music, outdoor games and more. Triumph is a media-free program by design, and does not show television or movies.

### **Will my child have homework?**

Beginning in pre-k, students are given a homework binder and home learning activities Monday through Thursday. These activities are directly related to the themes and learning happening in class, and serve a few purposes. First, by engaging in a short, hands-on activity with a parent, children can proudly show and tell what he or she is learning at school. This creates an important ongoing dialogue and helps children feel strong connections between home and school. Homework also supports children in building positive study habits and a level of responsibility that will serve them well throughout their K-12 schooling.

### **What is Triumph's discipline policy?**

At Triumph we use the CA Teaching Pyramid Model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in students. *Our priority is that all children, regardless of their individual needs, feel physically and emotionally safe at school.* The model focuses on prevention and proactive strategies for teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors. For more information on the pyramid model, look up <http://www.cainclusion.org/teachingpyramid>.

You can read more about our model in our *Approach to Social-Emotional Development* included in this packet.

### **How does Triumph support children in the transition to kindergarten?**

St. HOPE Public Schools offers a high quality college preparatory preschool through high school education. A child who begins his or her education at Triumph can choose to continue within the St. HOPE Public Schools system until his or her graduation from Sacramento High School.

The transition to kindergarten is an important time for families and children alike. Triumph works closely with pre-k families through a series of activities and events to ensure you and your child are well-prepared for this transition. Our exceptional kindergarten bridging program includes family workshops, kinder teacher visits, parent opportunities to observe kindergarten, a trip to a real kindergarten and more! We support both families and children successfully transition from preschool to kindergarten.

### What are some of Triumph's special events?

We have many, and at each and every one we are proud to have over 90% of our families in attendance. Our school wide special events include our Welcome Back Visit Day and Potluck in July, Potluck and Puppet Show in December, Pajama Literacy Night in February, and our Annual Triumph Day of Service in April.

In addition to these, your child's classroom hosts very specific and special events that are now long standing Triumph traditions and get better every year!

Preschool Special Events		
<b>Harvest Festival</b>	Hooray for harvest! Pumpkin painting, bales of hay, lots of games and a whole lot of fun for our youngest learners.	Late October
<b>Winter Luncheon</b>	Contribute a favorite family dish and add your recipe to the Preschool Cookbook. Come hear your preschooler sing winter songs, and enjoy food and friendship with preschool families and staff.	Mid-December
<b>Preschool Family Picnic</b>	Celebrate the end of the preschool year with a sandwich-making picnic the last week of school.	Early June

Pre-Kindergarten Special Events		
<b>Green Shirt Ceremony</b>	Students celebrate their official entry into Pre-K at a small celebration where scholars perform a special song, receive their Pre-K green uniform shirt and their homework binder	Late August
<b>Friendship Feast</b>	Students prepare, cook, and participate in a feast to celebrate family, friendship and the fall season	Late November
<b>Spring Performance</b>	Students put on a play by creating costumes, scenery and learning lines all based on a favorite children's book. Preschoolers and families are invited to be part of the audience	Late March
<b>Celebrating Mothers Around the World</b>	Pre-K celebrates moms and the other special women in our students' lives with food, songs, and special gifts from around the world	The week before Mother's Day
<b>Celebrating Fathers Around the World</b>	Pre-K celebrates the dads, brothers, uncles, grandpas in our students' lives with specially made treats, songs, and games from around the world	Late May or Early June
<b>Stepping Up Ceremony</b>	Pre-K students and their families participate in a special evening ceremony to mark their official Stepping Up to Kindergarten and their achievement during the year. This 'dress-up' event is a highlight and culmination of our work together in Pre-K	The evening of the last day of school (early June)

### **How do parents and families get involved?**

Since its inception in 2007 Triumph has prioritized strong partnerships with families. We believe that our first and most important priority, the social and academic success of every student, happens best when *all* adults in the Triumph community are involved in meaningful ways with our children's education.

The Triumph Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is one meaningful way for parents to be involved, empowered advocates for their child. PAC is a committed action-oriented group made up of Triumph families with a focus on strengthening the school program through school events; fundraisers; community outreach; and other initiatives. By contributing to projects and initiatives, and giving feedback, the group directly supports the school to live out our vision and meet our ambitious goals for students.

All Triumph families go above and beyond in their commitment to their child's education. From attending Triumph events to exchanging regular emails with their child's teacher, our families exemplify true partnership. Upon enrollment, families sign a contract formalizing their commitment to attend student conferences, events, and workshops at Triumph. We hold family literacy night, and have a series of parent workshops that focus on child behavior and social emotional development. Parents are encouraged to contribute their time in support of their child's classroom. A variety of involvement opportunities exist to fit all parents' talents and schedules. Parents make the commitment to engage in no less than 20 hours of involvement in their child's education by the end of the school year.

### **How diverse is Triumph?**

Triumph considers "diversity" broadly to include the full range of differences in identities and backgrounds, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, class, home language, ability, and family structure.

We find nearly every kind of diversity in our school community. Our student body reflects a wide range of family structures, home languages and socio-economic statuses. Approximately 15 - 20% of our student body includes students with identified special needs.

### **How safe and secure is the Triumph campus?**

As any school in any neighborhood must, we make our students' safety our first priority. Our building remains locked at all times - all visitors must be buzzed in and show photo identification to enter the building. Our school building has existed in the same location since 1992. As such, we have positive relationships with our neighbors, including area schools, churches and family homes. Similarly, we have a strong working relationship with Oak Park's police sergeant and neighborhood fire department. All of our teachers carry walkie talkies at all times to facilitate staff and family communication in the event of an emergency.