

“Not-So-Secret Third Grade Idea Factory” A Letter from Gabe Burnstein, Head of School

Dear CRS Community,

The eight and nine year-olds in Jamie Scavone and Kristin Jayne’s third grade class heard the writing prompt loud and clear. They nodded. They smiled at one another. Then they took out their writing journals and got to work boldly planning the future of Charles River School.

“In your opinion, what are some ways you would like to make CRS even better?”

“More field trips...”

“More opportunities to plant things...”

“More cooking opportunities in class...”

First, note the refrain of “more” in their writing. Third graders defined a better version of CRS by *more* of what they love, and specifically, the *more* they called for: field trips, planting, and cooking. The third graders value experiential learning, a core tenant of progressive education, and just like Chef Christian’s snickerdoodle cookies, they understand that when it comes to learning by doing, more is just plain better.

And although these young strategic planners may have started the exercise rooting their ideas in their lived experience, they quickly removed the constraints of their current reality and dreamed of an unseen future that included using AI as a tool to provide support and care for their classmates:

“Robots that ‘play with people that are new or lonely’, or even ‘help kids with homework’...”

And with boundless creativity, they pushed our collective belief in the “joy of childhood” to new heights... literally.

“A slide from the lunchroom to the playground...”

This was CRS strategic planning, third grade style. After our faculty and staff strategic planning work on February 16th, Jamie and Kristin wisely turned the question over to the students. The Class of 2029 took it seriously, had fun, and practiced their writing skills thanks to a prompt that was meaningful and relevant to their lives. (And they also got the Head of School measuring the distance between the dining hall window and the soft playground floor.)

Now, it’s your turn...

Launching an inclusive strategic planning process to harness the diverse perspectives of our community, embody our “everybody in, nobody out,” mantra, and direct our work for the next three to five years, is an important priority for the year. Please join us in following the example of our third graders at our ***Dream. Design. Do.*** night for all adults in the community on March 27th.

I can’t promise that we’ll build a slide from the dining hall to the playground, but we will build a shared vision for the future of CRS. And if the experiences of our third graders are any indication, it will be joyful and meaningful work to build it together.

Best,



March



CHARLES RIVER
SCHOOL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					10:30am 6th & Broadway Assembly 1	2
3	3/4 - 3/8 Hygiene Products Drive for Hope & Comfort 4	School Not in Session: Parent/Teacher Conferences 5	6	7	8:30am Sharing Assembly 8	9
Admissions Decisions Released 10	Spring Recess - School Not in Session					16
17	Spring Recess - School Not in Session					23
24	School Reconvenes 25	Spring sports begin 26	6:30pm Strategic Plan Community Feedback Night 27	28	Noon Dismissal Good Friday 29	30/31

