

A Recap of School Open House Presentation – 9/20/18

Welcome to our 5th year!

Courtney welcomed the group to our 5th year! She shared a little about our history and where we come from but also shared more about where we are today and where we are headed.

She reminded us about getting ready for our first school year... and noted, “that’s when this community really grew. It went from just a board and some committees to actual children and families. It was an incredibly busy summer as we inherited the lower school fully furnished and had to make room for our things. Garage sales, work weeks, fundraisers... all of these were important for the operations of the school but they were more - they were the beginnings of this family coming together.”

“Over the past 4 years, we have started many traditions.” Courtney recapped some of those including - vocabulary parade, watch me work days, annual fund, happy hearts dance, etc.

And she reminded us that there is so much that is unique about FSMA... “that’s really important to remember, we are unique, we are different. It’s the foundation of why we created FSMA... to do something different. Sometimes we will hear people say things like... other schools do x, and we go back to... *does it align with our mission and the core values of FSMA*. That’s how we make decisions, that’s how we’ve gotten to where we are today, that’s why we are so successful.”

So fast forward to today... Courtney recapped some stats about FSMA

- Listed as top charter schools in DelawareOnline... we are #1 in K-8 charter schools in ELA, and #2 in math. Overall, we rank #5 and #6 when compared to all charter schools K-12.
- One of 2 charter schools that showed improvement in both ELA and Math last year

- Fully implemented Montessori Elementary (6-9) and (9-12) as well as Montessori Middle School (12-14)
- 28 Montessori trained and certified staff members
- 2 certified teachers in every classroom (one of those “but other schools do it differently that definitely is a huge advantage)
- 560 students... incredible staff, huge support team, strong board.

Courtney then spoke about how so much of our success is due to the foundation that is created and the FSMA Family culture. “Using the word family is much more than a word. It is one of those places where we remember we have built something unique and different, something based in our authentic Montessori roots and we want to continue to build on that in our work around our school community.”

She continued and shared work that the Safety Committee had done over the summer. “This summer, I had the privilege of attending a workshop with Frank DeAngelis, the principal at Columbine High School during the awful tragedy that took place there almost 20 years ago. He shared with us many of the details of that day and shared with us how much has changed in our safety responses since then. For example, he talked about the protocols around school shootings and not to get too heavy with the details, but that if this event occurred today, the casualties would not be the same.”

She recapped his presentation, highlighting his work for the past 20 years and his lessons learned - He shared that the greatest thing we can do to prevent tragedies in our school is to care for each other - to care for everyone, to find the person (student or family) on the outskirts and build a connection with them, to help break down walls between cliques, to find ways to support one another and to make sure that everyone in our community knows that we are all connected... as a family.

Courtney then shared some of the things FSMA is doing to help children develop new ways to care about each other and build our “family.” This included the 8th

grade “AlwaysLinked campaign,” Sandy Hook Promise’s Start with Hello Program, and Beau Biden Foundation Cyberbullying presentations as well as classroom activities.

Courtney ended the night by saying to families, “We are so grateful to have each of you in the FSMA Family. Each of you are important and each of you are linked to us forever. And, let’s all help our children (and each other)... because you never know when your words might be what changes someone’s life. It’s that simple... and it’s that important.”