Annual Report | 2026

JULY 1, 2025 - JUNE 30, 2026



SCHOOLS *for* CHILDREN

Transforming Learning. Transforming Lives.

A NOTE FROM PAUL STEIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Schools for Children touches the lives of students and families in ways that leave them feeling embraced by their school community. Within these settings, students gain knowledge, build skills and forge strong relationships – all with increased confidence. Each school employs its specialized expertise to continuously enhance its offerings, and this year saw more of the same.

This, our first annual report, casts a spotlight on Schools for Children's diverse and inventive programming. I have come to increasingly appreciate how this diversity in programming affords a level of security, affiliation and collaboration that bolsters the individual schools. They count on each other to make things work, even in fiscally challenging times – something that has withstood the test of time. Although schools operate as separate entities, they share a common foundation which is solidly rooted in the belief that inclusion, the power of community, and personalized learning together build strong educational environments.

These environments are fertile ground for continued growth. There are so many individual stories which recount joyous moments of teaching and learning, deepened self-awareness, maturing interpersonal relationships and the attainment of individual milestones achieved in the face of adversity. That's where our success lies.

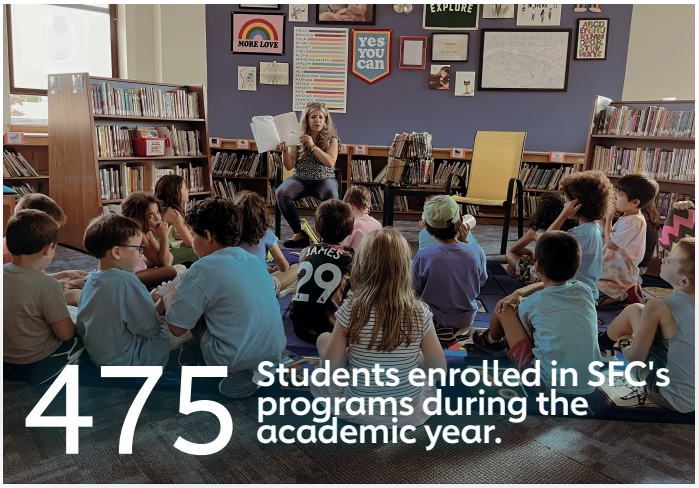
These pages note some of the new programming, added this past school year, that contribute to this success. We are proud of our achievements, particularly in a year that celebrated the 50th anniversary of the IDEA Act.

Schools for Children has enjoyed the support of a highly engaged Board of Trustees. The Board experienced a renewal as it welcomed 13 new trustees over a two year period – eight in the past year alone. They completed a strategic planning process which envisioned a financially resilient organization that welcomes change and innovation – one in which each school and program offers measurable, high-quality education that is strengthened by being a part of a greater whole.

We know that each of our schools is successful in its own right. Their achievements, collectively, are all the more impressive. This report offers a window on that collective achievement.

Paul Stein
Executive Director

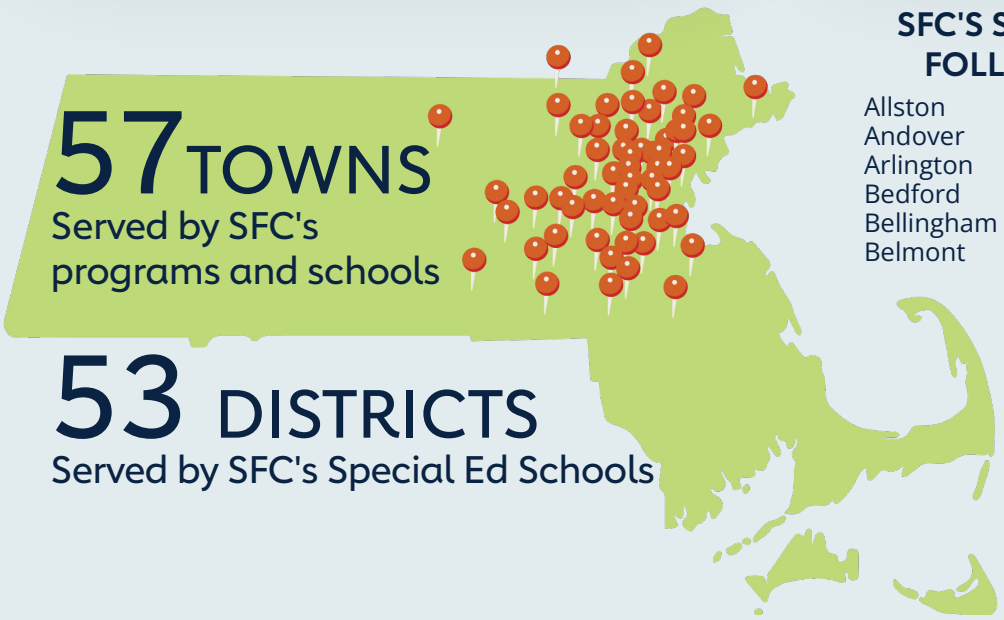
SFC'S IMPACT IN FISCAL YEAR 2026



475 Students enrolled in SFC's programs during the academic year.



426 Students enrolled in Lesley Ellis and Dearborn's summer programs



57 TOWNS
Served by SFC's programs and schools

53 DISTRICTS
Served by SFC's Special Ed Schools

SFC'S STUDENTS TRAVEL FROM THE FOLLOWING TOWNS/DISTRICTS

Allston
Andover
Arlington
Bedford
Bellingham
Belmont
Billerica
Boston
Brockton
Burlington
Cambridge
Canton
Chelsea
Concord/ Carlisle
Danvers
Dedham
Foxborough
Framingham
Gloucester
Holliston
Lexington
Lincoln
Lynn
Malden
Medfield
Medford
Melrose
Milford
Milton
Natick
Needham
Newton
North Andover
North Reading
Northborough/ Southborough
Norwood
Peabody
Quincy
Reading
Revere
Salem
Saugus
Sharon
Somerville
Sutton
Tyngsborough
Wachusett
Walpole
Waltham
Watertown
Wayland
Wellesley
Westborough
Westford
Weymouth



113 Students enrolled in SFC's Special Ed Schools



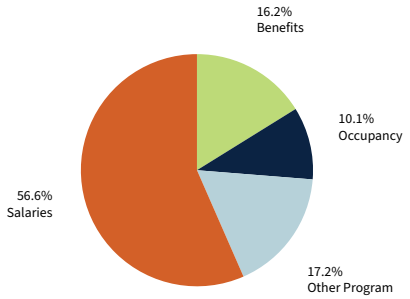
Schools for Children employed **170** teachers, counselors and staff in FY 2026.

FISCAL YEAR 2026 FINANCIALS

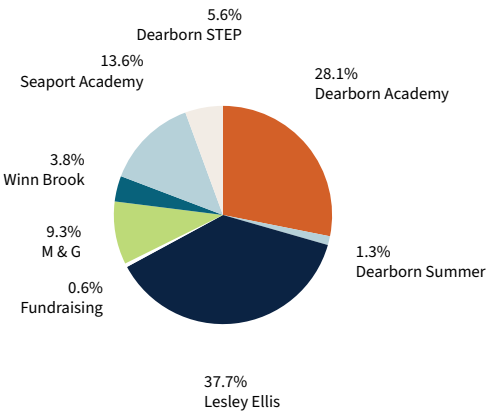
JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026

Revenue and other support	Without Donor Restrictions	With Restrictions	Total
Tuition, net of financial assistance of $1,162,743 and $1,078,797, respectively	$ 18,369,033	$ -	$ 18,369,033
Grants	139,169	-	139,169
Contributions	208,561	66,682	275,243
Investment Return	83,801	-	83,801
Other	182,812	-	182,812
Total Revenue	**18,983,376**	**66,682**	**19,050,058**
Net assets released from restrictions	74,885	(74,885)	-
Total revenue and other support	**19,058,261**	**(8,203)**	**19,050,058**

Total SFC Expenses	
Salaries	$ 10,712,537
Benefits	3,080,936
Occupancy	1,993,851
Other Program Expenses	3,255,815
Total Expenses	**19,043,139**



Expenses by Program	
Dearborn Academy	$ 5,356,261
Lesley Ellis	7,172,800
Dearborn Summer	250,208
Seaport Academy	2,593,244
Dearborn STEP	1,066,200
Winn Brook Extended Learning	722,723
Management and General	1,774,672
Fundraising	107,031
Total Expenses	**19,043,139**



DEARBORN ACADEMY EST. 1949

Student-to-staff ratio
12:1:1 - High School
8:1:1 - Middle School
Number of students served: 58

FY 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

Dearborn Academy has continued to expand its academically rigorous program with an emphasis on college and career pathways.

Academics

- Challenging curriculum includes Honors class offerings.
- In Dearborn's Aimsweb assessment, 82.7% of high school students scored average or above in Reading; 93.1% of high school students achieved average or above in Math.

Arts and Vocational Programming

- Dearborn added *Standards for News/Media Literacy, Ecology* and *Expressive Arts* to its already impressive array of electives, which includes woodworking, metal and jewelry shops, studio arts, pottery, ceramics, fiber arts, and music.

Career and College Placement

- Dearborn Academy became an Official MEFA Pathway School. The Massachusetts Educational Financial Authority (MEFA) is a state agency that helps students and families plan, save for, and pay for college.
- Every student who applied to college during the 2025-2026 academic year was accepted. Dearborn's graduates matriculated into Fitchburg State, Regis College, Roxbury Community College and Wheaton College.

Vision
Dearborn students know what it means to feel seen and valued for who they are. They take pride in overcoming hurdles that result from mental health, social and/or learning needs to set and attain bold academic and personal goals

Mission
Dearborn Academy helps students develop the knowledge, skills and tools needed to gain academic mastery and build meaningful friendships. This is accomplished within a uniquely responsive therapeutic educational environment that fosters academic excellence. With the support of caring, expert staff, Dearborn students learn to confidently manage their mental health, social and/or learning needs. Dearborn students set and accomplish goals that lead to post- secondary education, fulfilling careers, and becoming role models in their communities.

EVEREST COLLEGE COACHING FY26 HIGHLIGHTS

Everest College Coaching emerged as an independent program, providing personalized support to help students successfully transition to, through, and beyond college.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, Everest:

- *Hired its first program director, funded as a part-time role*
- *Provided 96 hours of coaching*
- *Program saw steady growth*
- *Expanded coaching team from 4 to 5 coaches.*

EVEREST
EXPECT. EXCEED. EXCEL.
A COLLEGE COACHING PROGRAM

DEARBORN STUDENTS TRAVEL FROM THE FOLLOWING TOWNS/DISTRICTS

Arlington	Medfield	Quincy
Belmont	Melrose	Revere
Boston	Milford	Sutton
Brockton	Milton	Wachusett
Cambridge	Natick	Walpole
Chelsea	Needham	Waltham
Concord-Carlise	Newton	Watertown
Dedham	North	Wayland
Foxborough	Andover	Wellesley
Framingham	North	Westborough
Holliston	Reading	Weymouth
Lexington	Norwood	Winchester

LESLEY ELLIS SCHOOL

THE JOURNEY IS AS IMPORTANT AS THE DESTINATION

FY 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

LES welcomed new Head of School, Rhiannon McElwee in July 2025. Before leading Lesley Ellis, Rhiannon dedicated 14 years to the Stevens Cooperative School in New Jersey, a school akin in philosophy and values to those at Lesley Ellis. She holds a Master of Arts from the University of Glasgow and a Professional Graduate Diploma of Education from the University of Strathclyde in Scotland.

LES unveiled the Deanne Benson Library, designed to support the school's continued growth and evolving approach to teaching and learning.

In November 2025, fifty LES middle school students participated in the ***Noetic Learning Math Contest***

- 7 students placed in the ***top 10%*** nationwide
- 17 students placed in the ***top 50%*** nationwide.



Regional Science Fair Awards: Ten student scientists competed in a regional science fair, earning Special Distinctions, including First Place in Physics and in Computer Science.

Lesley Ellis forged an exciting partnership with the Arlington Children's Theater (ACT).

The Illustrative Math curriculum was implemented in Grades K-4,and was very well received.

Lesley Ellis installed an entirely new, high-efficiency all-electric HVAC system

As a follow-up to the school's successful re-accreditation process, the school engaged in a highly productive self-improvement process that resulted in a report that was very well received by AISNE.

HIGH SCHOOL MATRICULATION (CLASS OF 2026)

LES graduating students (19 in total) were accepted into prestigious institutions across the region. Everyone had at least two choices and placed into their chosen school(s)

Independent & Private Schools

Cambridge School of Weston
Boston University Academy
Belmont Hill School
Buckingham Browne & Nichols
Concord Academy

Public Schools

Arlington High School
Somerville High School
Medford High School
Melrose High School

Student-to-staff ratio
8:1
Number of students served
207
Scholarships & Tuition assistance
$1,155,991

Vision

To inspire and prepare students to positively contribute to their local and global communities.

Mission

Lesley Ellis School fosters an environment of self-discovery, kindness and belonging through our engaging and challenging curriculum, as well as our anti-bias approach. Our students are inquisitive and inspired learners, prepared for every step of their educational journey.

TOWNS FROM WHICH STUDENTS TRAVEL

Andover
Arlington
Belmont
Boston
Burlington
Cambridge
Framingham
Lexington
Lincoln
Malden
Medford
Melrose
Milton
Reading
Somerville
Waltham
Watertown
Wilmington
Winchester

Dearborn STEP

FY 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

A Caregiver Survey conducted at the end of the 2025-2026 academic year revealed the following:

- 100% of respondents gave positive ratings to STEP's communication, staff investment in student success and well-being, and their overall experience with the program.
- 83% reported improved school attendance at STEP compared with their child's previous placement.
- Caregivers described STEP as a place where students felt safe, understood, and supported.
- Caregivers lauded STEP's individualized clinical support, trusting relationships between students and adults, and the program's ability to understand the "whole child", and STEP's comprehensive formulations and recommendations as providing valuable direction for their child's educational future.

Facilities Update: The newly completed sensory room has become a key therapeutic space. Students engage frequently and appropriately with the tools and activities, using the space for regulation.

GOOD TO KNOW!

STEP is one of the few programs in the state that is not affiliated with a school (Dearborn Academy is a separate program). STEP's assessment recommendations focus on the programmatic needs of students, which then are used to inform parent and district placement choices and decisions.

TOWNS/DISTRICTS FROM WHICH STUDENTS TRAVEL

Allston
Bedford
Belmont
Boston
Canton
Chelsea
Lexington
Lincoln
Melrose
Natick
Needham
Newton
Northborough/ Southborough
Reading
Revere
Salem
Sharon
Waltham
Watertown
Wayland
Westford
Winchester

"The entire experience at STEP was positive. My daughter found a school where she was comfortable, and it was incredible for her."

-STEP Parent

Student-to-staff ratio **4:1**
Number of students served **29**
Students per clinician **1 to 3**

Dearborn STEP (Short-Term Educational Placement) provides comprehensive assessments for students in grades 5–12 who require an extended evaluation and have struggled to make progress in their previous educational placement.

Mission:
To rekindle each student's spark for learning and engagement by creating a supportive, structured environment where they can rediscover the joy of being a student. We are committed to partnering with caregivers to provide guidance, understanding, and resources that strengthen the home-school connection. Through thoughtful observation and assessment, we work closely with sending districts to offer meaningful insights into each learner—empowering teams to make informed, compassionate, and effective decisions that pave the way for student success.

SEAPORT ACADEMY

Student-to-staff ratio 9:1

Number of students served 26

FY 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

This year, Seaport continued to crystallize its specialized programming to further enhance the impact and effectiveness of its core components:

- Students learn best when **academics** are student-centered and include intensive learning supports and hands-on, project-based opportunities.
- Student agency is key to their growth and development; **clinical services** help students focus on personal growth and self-regulation.
- **Collaborative problem-solving** is a core aspect of the partnership approach of Seaport's behavioral support system.
- Seaport students develop the life skills needed to successfully transition to life after graduation. **Transition planning** includes career preparation as well as college and/or vocational training guidance.

Seaport has continued to refine its specialized programming in support of the core components.

- ***Habits of Work and Learning (HOWLs)*** is a program unique to Seaport Academy. Each day, students assess themselves on three categories: classwork, time on learning, and participation, for a maximum total of 100 points. Teachers review and discuss these ratings with each student, creating an atmosphere of continuous assessment. They report that students are honest and perceptive within these conversations. Students and parents understand that HOWLs informs students' grades. As a result of this ongoing assessment, students better understand how they are graded academically, as opposed to the teachers just "giving" them a grade.
- ***January Academic Fair***: During this four-day intensive writing class, students pick a topic within a shared theme chosen by staff. Students explore their topic and learn how to craft a thesis, write topic sentences, denote quotations, cite sources, check resources for credibility, avoid plagiarism, and learn how to structure an essay.
- ***Vocational Education***: Seaport continues to offer diversified vocational programming, which in FY26 continued to be supported in part by the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association - one of SFC's oldest and most committed supporters, providing grants and equipment for nearly 40 years.

Seaport academy is an all-male, state-approved school for students in grades 8-12. We help students who have struggled to reach their potential, believe in their futures, trust in themselves, and succeed.

We know that each student is unique in their perspective, hopes, dreams, needs and expectations. With just 28 students, we are able to offer a highly effective program that combines academics with therapeutic support carefully calibrated to meet the unique needs of each of our students.

TOWNS/DISTRICTS FROM WHICH STUDENTS TRAVEL

Andover
Bellingham
Belmont
Billerica
Boston
Cambridge
Chelsea
Danvers
Gloucester
Lynn
Malden
Melrose
Newton
Peabody
Quincy
Revere
Saugus
Sharon
Tyngsborough

Food Drive:
In November, Seaport held a food drive in support of its own families facing food insecurity due to the disruption of SNAP benefits.

Winn Brook Extended Learning

a program of SCHOOLS for CHILDREN

Student-to-staff ratio **7:1**

Number of students served **155**

Winn Brook Extended Learning (WBExL) provides high-quality before and after school programming for children in Grades K through 3 at the Winn Brook Elementary School in Belmont.

WBExL, an EEC-licensed program, offers supervised and staff-directed activities that aim to enhance children's educational, social, physical and emotional development.

FY 2026 HIGHLIGHTS

Student Engagement: WBExL had a significant increase in students extending their stay from 5:00 to 6:00 PM due to student interest. Staff saw students asking their parents to pick them up later because they were enjoying themselves. This resulted in 20 to 30 extra students during the late afternoon, depending on the activities offered.

Two new partnerships generated programming that was very well received by staff and students:

- **Playworks**: Introduced a student leadership program where 3rd graders are invited to lead games and practice conflict resolution skills on the playground. The program teaches leadership strategies such as:
  - "Attention Getters" - methods for capturing everyone's attention to begin an activity.
  - Games that are easy to replicate on the playground
  - "Cool Downs" - breathing techniques to get everyone settled.

  Each one-hour activity includes a welcome activity, a role-play workshop with teachers, and a game. The program helps empower students to navigate social settings and mindfully engage with their peers.

- **Wicked Cool:** Brought weekly science and STEM-related activities to its students, including:
  - LegoBricQ Motion, which explores forces and motion using LEGOS
  - Frozen Science, where students concoct things such as frozen slime and crystals
  - Swiftie Science, where students can transform their love for Taylor Swift Music into a thrilling science journey.





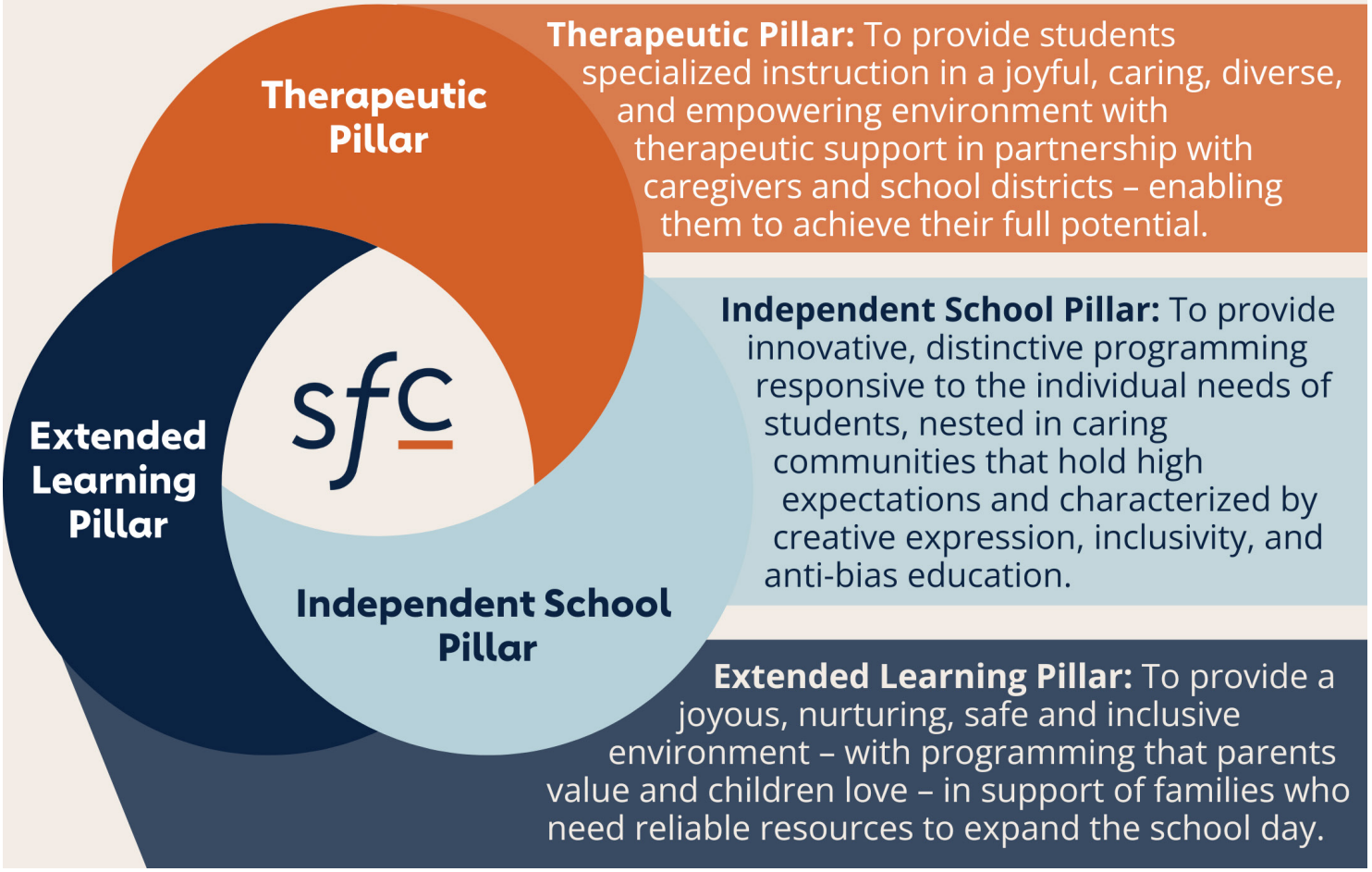
WBExL Flag Football Superbowl Fun!

Students spent several weeks learning plays and training weekly with a WBExL staff member, culminating in the ***WBExL Superbowl.*** *While some students competed in the game, others performed as cheerleaders, and one student even sang the National anthem at kickoff, with spectators consisting of the entire after school program. It was truly a community event!*

Mission Statement

SCHOOLS *for* CHILDREN

Mission Schools for Children is a non-profit organization that creates, operates and connects distinct pillars of independent, therapeutic, and extended learning programs and schools. Each of our schools and programs is designed to meet the unique learning needs of their students in a supportive community. All draw strength from a common foundation, with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging resting at its center. The elements of this foundation are echoed in each pillar's mission:



Therapeutic Pillar: To provide students specialized instruction in a joyful, caring, diverse, and empowering environment with therapeutic support in partnership with caregivers and school districts – enabling them to achieve their full potential.

Independent School Pillar: To provide innovative, distinctive programming responsive to the individual needs of students, nested in caring communities that hold high expectations and characterized by creative expression, inclusivity, and anti-bias education.

Extended Learning Pillar: To provide a joyous, nurturing, safe and inclusive environment – with programming that parents value and children love – in support of families who need reliable resources to expand the school day.

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Bev Beno, Chief Financial Officer
Rhiannon McElwee, Head of School, Lesley Ellis School
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