



Community Preparatory School • *Respect, Camaraderie and Achievement*



by Mario Farone

Tucked away in Providence is a small and welcoming community of teachers and students redefining primary and secondary school education. The Community Preparatory School is home to a diverse group of 156 students who all share a common interest in higher education and a determination in working together to achieve their goals.

Community Prep offers students (grades three through eight) a rigorous academic education in an atmosphere that fosters self-actualization and mutual respect – an evident mission that is brought to life the moment you step through the doors. Students of different grades and ages all greet one another by name in the halls, in the classrooms and at the lunch tables in a manner that cannot be described in any way other than familial.

Boasting a typical class size of 18, students are easily able to develop personal relationships with their classmates as they grow together year by year. Smaller class sizes also means that each student will develop personal relationships with their instructors, ensuring individual attention to target their particular strengths and weaknesses. This philosophy of education, proven to accelerate and facilitate learning more so

than traditional methods of teaching, is known as the Responsive Classroom Approach.

The Responsive Classroom is an environment that places a student's social relationship with their peers at the same importance as the student's academic attention, allowing children to flourish emotionally, intellectually and socially. All students at Community Prep participate regularly and encourage their classmates to do the same. When attention is shifted less toward the right answers and more towards the raised hands, the result is a community of students empowering and learning from one another. This method of learning has been linked to higher academic performance in various areas of study, especially in math.

Overall, the approach provides students with a more positive outlook on school and a welcoming classroom environment, which is conducive to learning. While there exists plenty of empirical evidence to support this approach, there is little need to look further than Community Prep itself for proof of its success.

Since the school's foundation in 1984, 97 percent of Community Prep's 689 graduates have been accepted into college-preparatory high school programs, including highly competitive independent schools across New England. Of those graduates, 83 percent of college-aged alumni are attending or have graduated from college, which is double the average for most urban public schools.

Collectively, graduates have received more than \$19 million in scholarship assistance from the schools they are attending. In addition, 90 percent of students attending Community Prep will receive substantial tuition assistance, as well.

Outside of academics, Community Prep offers a wide range of extracurricular activities. Each day after 3 p.m., students can choose to participate in a silent study with teachers and tutors to get a head start on their homework or dive a bit deeper into subject matter. Also offered is an after-school enrichment program where students can take music lessons, join a sports team, work on arts and crafts or even join a chess team. All grades also participate in frequent field trips, giving students an out-of-the-classroom learning experience.

Community Prep is unique in that it is a school focused on both rigorous academic challenges and a community of mutual respect and camaraderie. It allows for students to not only learn the importance of the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in later pursuits of higher education, but also the importance of the smiles and laughs of their peers along the way.

For more information on the Community Preparatory School, visit CommunityPrep.org.