



February 1, 2016

Dear Creative Minds International Families,

As many of you know, CMI was founded five years ago with the vision of providing DC public school students a truly child-centered, international, and inclusive education that prepares them for success in a globalized world. Our various program components create a well-rounded curriculum in which every child has an entry point into engaging learning experiences, within a unique educational opportunity in the District.

As we look back on our achievements, we are thrilled that we have met so many of the early goals we set for ourselves. Our assessment results show high levels of student academic achievement within a nurturing and positive learning environment; we have met enrollment goals every year, with a long waitlist of students whose parents are interested in our program; we have found a unique long-term facility on the beautiful, historic AFRH grounds and obtained funds to renovate it into a wonderful educational space for our students. We acknowledge that there have been many sacrifices along the way to fund our multifaceted program with limited resources, and we are grateful to our wonderful teachers and staff, as well as to our supportive parent community, for all of your efforts in making our vision of an ideal education a reality for our students.

As we look forward to the next chapter for CMI, we have been very focused on continuing to ensure that our school has a secure long-term future, one that preserves the very best of our unique academic model and allows us to educate DC public school students for many years to come. Parents who elect to send their preschooler to CMI want to know that the school will be around and strong through their child's eighth grade year. Operating a school like ours, with our low student/teacher ratios and the depth of our student services and enrichment opportunities, is costly. Thus running our multifaceted and inclusive program within the budget provided by DC's per pupil funding creates a challenge. Having made a number of tough choices over the last four years to ensure that we continue to invest deeply in our children, we understand why so few public schools are able to offer the level of support and educational programming that we do. At the same time, our many successes have made us determined to preserve the very best parts of our model and continue to serve DC public school students for years to come.

Over the last few months, our Board has been looking into all the ways that we can ensure our school's financial health and sustainability for the long term. As a result of this planning, we are asking the DC Public Charter School Board to increase our enrollment ceiling from a total of 653 to 730 students over the next ten years as the school reaches full capacity. As part of this growth plan, we will be increasing our class size for grades Kindergarten through eighth grade to 20 students per class. Target enrollment for Preschool and Prekindergarten will be 18 students in each classroom. In order to ensure the same program quality, we will increase the overall number of instructional assistants, depending on each classroom's needs.

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The great news is that our financial projections show that this increase will provide financial sustainability for our program for the foreseeable future, and allow us to build a stronger administrative team and student support staff than we have had in the past. Based on a study of our School's ratio of administrative staff to students, we have been operating with 40 to 60% fewer administrators than schools of similar size, an increasing challenge as our school grows and becomes more complex. As a first step to bolstering our team, we have hired a new Director of Student Culture to strengthen the social/emotional support offered to students and the classroom support offered to teachers, starting next year. This is just one example of the positive changes that we can make with even modest additional resources.

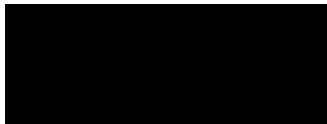
There is no doubt that change is not easy, but we do believe we were able to find a path that minimizes the impact of the necessary change, while ensuring that the school has the resources it needs to continue to implement our vision of providing a truly child-centered, inclusive, international, and arts-based curriculum to the public school children of DC.

As always, we are here to address questions or concerns you may have about any aspect of this decision. We will also hold an information session for the community on Monday, February 8, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Main Hall Annex. Thank you for the trust you have placed in our whole CMI team to be part of your child's educational journey. It is our pleasure to serve our students every day as they grow and learn.

Sincerely,



Golnar Abedin, Ph.D.
Founder/Head of School



Melanic Bowen, Chair
Board of Trustees

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