



Hello!

Congratulations on your admission to GDS! As one of the co-chairs of the Parent Service Association, I have made GDS my second home. My love of and commitment to GDS run deep, and are sustained by the warm environment and deep connection each member of our family feels with the GDS community, as well as the significant and holistic growth I've witnessed in my children. I know you have an important choice to make about your child(ren)'s next school, and I hope that by sharing my experience, I can make that decision an easy one.

My husband and I have two children at GDS, in 11th and 5th Grade, who are as different as night and day. They have different academic strengths and challenges, extracurricular interests, and outlooks on the world. Amazingly, GDS is the perfect place for both of them. This is true because GDS is not just a building; it is a warm, welcoming, and inclusive community full of children and adults who take care of each other. From the front desk to the classroom, GDS faculty and staff are committed to the social, emotional, and academic development of our children.

On my first visit to GDS, I was struck by the warmth and real joy that infused the school. I saw firsthand the wonderful way teachers and staff interacted with students as well as with each other. The joy we witnessed was authentic; it was clear that this was a place where students felt comfortable, appreciated, and at home.

It's amazing what students can achieve when they feel seen, supported, and safe to take academic risks. At GDS, my boys have become strong writers and capable problem-solvers who appreciate art, music, and history. They are learning to listen with open minds and hearts, think critically, and engage in dialogue that is both civil and rigorous. They have learned to self-advocate and to speak up for others, especially in the face of injustice. This combination of deep learning and service to others perfectly aligns with our family's values. Plus, we have great dinner conversations!

Beyond the classroom, I have built a new family within the GDS community. Through various parent volunteer opportunities, I have had the pleasure of connecting with families across all three divisions. In addition, each of my children has their own personal village of GDS families they feel connected to and trust deeply; families who can be counted on for rides, hugs, and fun. As my husband recently reflected, "The GDS community has supported our family during some of the most pivotal moments and periods in our lives." We are grateful to have our children learn and grow in a place where they are challenged and nurtured by both the teachers and the parent community.

We recognize making the decision about your child's education is among the most important a parent can make and we're happy to be one of your options.

Once again, welcome to GDS. I look forward to meeting you in person!

Sincerely,
Sonia Shelton
Co-Chair, GDS Parent Service Association

WHERE STUDENTS LOVE TO LEARN AND LEARN TO CHANGE THE WORLD.