

CO-EDUCATION AT SF DAY



THE VALUE OF CO-EDUCATION AT SF DAY

San Francisco Day School was founded on the belief that students are best prepared to learn in an environment that embraces diversity. In 1981, our visionary founders created a school with a robust educational program where all children could learn and thrive together. As a result, SF Day became the first K-8 co-educational independent school in San Francisco. Nearly four decades later, our school continues to champion gender inclusivity and the benefits of a co-educational program.

Every day, we provide a highly intentional, inclusive, mixed-gender educational program that thoughtfully serves all learners. We do not group nor label children according to gender stereotypes; we recognize students as individual learners who each have unique personalities, dispositions, interests, and orientations. SF Day faculty, staff, and administrators work together to:

- *Promote and practice our school's values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging*
- *Guide all students to practice leadership roles in a variety of settings*
- *Teach students to notice, examine, and disrupt gender-stereotyping of all kinds, including fixed gender roles*
- *Model positive and productive relationships across genders*
- *Advance our own learning by pursuing professional development pertaining to identity, gender diversity, and how all children learn best*

OUR WORLD IS NOT MADE OF A SINGLE GENDER



We are passionate advocates for co-education because the world we are preparing our children for is incredibly diverse and increasingly complex. Thus, our educational program deliberately teaches all students how to collaborate, problem-solve, listen to, and learn from each other. Our teachers are purposeful about crafting experiences that support all of our students' individual and collective growth in a gender-inclusive environment.

WE PROMOTE AND PRACTICE OUR SCHOOL'S VALUES OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ('DEI')

In 2019, SF Day introduced its first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement. The statement was the culmination of many discussions about SF Day's vision, purpose, approach and commitment to DEIJB, involving our entire community: students, faculty, staff, administration, parents/guardians, alumni, and trustees. Our statement outlines how and why our community practices DEIJB, concluding with the following commitment: "We are teaching our children to be active participants in a democracy and preparing them to recognize systemic injustice and know how they can advocate for equity for themselves and others." To prepare our students to carry out these actions beyond the walls of SF Day, it is essential to teach these skills in a co-educational, gender-diverse environment reflective of the world in which we live.



WE GUIDE ALL STUDENTS TO PRACTICE LEADERSHIP ROLES IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS



At every grade level, we provide opportunities for our students to practice and demonstrate positive gender-inclusive teamwork and leadership. At SF Day, Student Congress adopts the structure of U.S. government with representatives, and our student leaders are elected into mixed-gender and mixed-grade committees to collaborate, set, and achieve realistic goals in service to their community. Instilled with a sense of civic duty and empowered to enact positive change, Student Congress representatives of all genders learn how to use their platform to advocate for what they believe in and inspire their peers to take action in service to our community.

WE TEACH ALL STUDENTS TO NOTICE, EXAMINE, AND DISRUPT GENDER-STEREOTYPING OF ALL KINDS, INCLUDING FIXED GENDER ROLES



At every grade level, we provide opportunities for our students to practice their leadership skills. Our robotics team, the Digital Dolphins, is a wonderful example where our students are encouraged to develop and hone skill sets that may often be attributed to one gender. Our robotics team is co-education at its best, with children of all genders working side by side to design solutions to complex global issues, using coding and technology as tools. In 2019, the Green Team, comprised of multiple grades and genders, won the Presentation Award at the FIRST LEGO League Championship Tournament. The judges recognized the team's clear and creative presentation of their collaborative project work.

OUR ADULTS MODEL POSITIVE, PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS GENDERS

Our faculty, staff, and administration are comprised of caring adults who identify with a range of gender identities. It is important for our students to see their teachers model the same commitment to respectful and supportive collaboration that we ask of them. Although science, math, and technology are often cited as areas that may lack opportunities or role models for female students, our diverse community intentionally provides “mirrors” that ensure all of our students can see themselves in these roles. Every day, our students interact with, observe, and are taught by passionate, knowledgeable, and engaging teachers of all genders.



WE ADVANCE OUR OWN LEARNING BY PURSUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PERTAINING TO IDENTITY, GENDER DIVERSITY, AND HOW ALL CHILDREN LEARN BEST

At SF Day, all faculty, staff, and administrators have participated in meaningful professional development work. Our school's significant investment in professional development has enabled our community members to attend several conferences and workshops dedicated to issues of diversity, including the *Equity & Inclusion Institute* and *The Art of Teaching Gender*. SF Day also hosts a *Universal Design for Learning Symposium* to teach and inspire faculty and staff to practice a variety of tools for a diverse range of learners, ultimately ensuring all students have access to learning.

ALL ARE WELCOME

We aspire to create a welcoming environment where each person feels that their whole identity is known and respected. We believe the community, culture, and climate of SF Day prepares all children, in an equitable and inclusive way, for the diverse world they will be a part of. Because of how they are raised and educated, our students will not only be prepared to lead, but will actually do so because they will have the first-hand experience of how all of us should respect and support each other.

Ultimately, the choice between a single-sex and co-educational school is a personal family decision. Following are some questions you might consider as you contemplate school options for your child:

- Are all genders provided with leadership opportunities or does there seem to be a gender bias in leadership?
- In class, are all genders actively called upon and encouraged to participate in class?
- How do teachers ensure they are including all students?
- Are there visible, engaged role models of all genders for students?

At San Francisco Day School, every day we are committed to achieving the standards above. We are always happy to meet and discuss these goals as you consider what is right for you and your family.

Peter McCormack, M.Sc. Interim Head of School
 Kaili Hwang, Ed.D Lower School Head
 Kristina Krzywonos, B.S. Upper School Head
 Homa Hanjani, Director of Admission
 Josephine Saunders, B.A. Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 Maya Rodelandier, LMFT, School Counselor

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/02/coed>

<http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/single-sex/single-sex.pdf>

<http://feminist.org/education/pdfs/pseudoscienceofsinglesexschooling.pdf>

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-case-against-single-sex-classrooms>

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/50/42843625.pdf>

RESOURCES WE USE AT SF DAY

Our library houses a collection of nearly 21,000 titles for children and adults, and we are fortunate to host a vast multicultural collection full of diverse stories and perspectives. Here are just a few recommendations:

It Feels Good To Be Yourself by Theresa Thorn
I Am Jazz by Jessic Herthel & Jazz Jennings
My Princess Boy by Cheryl Kilodavis
The Only Boy in Ballet Class by Denise Gruska

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Decades of research from around the world demonstrates no difference in academic performance between students in single-sex versus co-educational schools. The largest and most recent report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, and concluded, "the results are equivocal."¹

Girls can perform as well as boys in math and science in coeducational schools. Single-sex classes are not necessary and do not improve girls' performance in these subjects. Despite popular belief, there is little evidence that removing boys from the campus or classroom improves girls' math and science skills.²

It is not the gender composition of a classroom that determines girls' success in math and science but the quality of their instruction and resources, such as laboratories, and students' own motivation and belief in hard work (as opposed to inborn talent) as the key to success. Teachers, parents, and peers of both genders can encourage or hinder such beliefs.³

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2005). Single-sex versus secondary schooling: A systematic review. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/other/single-sex/single-sex.pdf>

² Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and Program for International Student Assessment. (2009). Equally prepared for life? How 15-year-old boys and girls perform in school. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/50/42843625.pdf>

³ Van de gaer, E., Pustjens, H., Van Damme, H., & De Munter, A. (2004). Effects of single-sex versus co-educational classes and schools on gender differences in progress in language and mathematics achievement. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 25, 307-322.