

On Saturday, October 27, 2001, Chairman Jim Richardson announced at the Family Weekend Harvest Dinner that the Board of Trustees had officially adopted a revised statement of mission and philosophy for Eagle Hill School. The announcement served as the culmination of several months of work with the faculty in an effort to create a new, more specific statement of mission. Jim was quick to point out, however, that the new language did not represent a shift in the school's mission. Rather, he suggested that the new statement of mission and the supporting statement of philosophy were a natural progression for a school community that has done a tremendous amount of reflecting on its purpose, its beliefs, its values, and its place within the greater field of education.

While purposefully more succinct, the new statement of mission speaks volumes about our core beliefs as a school. For example, we chose to put the prefix "dis" in parentheses in the word "disabilities" to highlight the fact that although we do recognize "disabilities" as a common word used for diagnosing children, we do not accept the idea that our students are disabled in an objective sense. Rather, we choose to focus on the "abilities" part of the word (dis)abilities. In addition, we use the term "learning diversity" to refer to the multiplicity of learning styles without suggesting that one style is better than another (even the word "differences" suggests a deviation for the "norm"). And finally, reflecting our responsibility as educators, the new school slogan in our statement of philosophy, "learning differently demands teaching differently," suggests that our students can and will learn if they are taught properly (or differently in some cases).

The mission statement represents the guiding principles of our work with our students. We are pleased to present to the entire EHS community this revised statement of mission and philosophy (see insert) that we believe captures the essence and importance of an Eagle Hill education.

Statement of Mission

Eagle Hill School educates students with learning (dis)abilities by providing an intimate and encouraging community that honors the individual, values learning diversity, and fosters personal and social growth.

Statement of Philosophy

Eagle Hill School believes:

- that every student can learn.
- that every person who interacts with a student is a teacher.
- that learning differently demands teaching differently.

- that the foremost responsibility for pedagogical decisions lies with individual teachers.
- that all teachers should have the necessary resources for implementing the curriculum.
- that parent partnerships are an essential component in the pursuit of academic and social development.
- that we must encourage students to learn *about* learning and to form their own beliefs in a search for intellectual autonomy.
- that the exploration of the arts and exposure to athletics are essential components in the development of independent, curious, and critical thinkers.
- that we must impart to our students a sense of moral responsibility for their thoughts and actions in the hope that they will strive to be citizens tolerant of the differences in the world that they will inherit.