Cari Amici,

This will be my 10th year at La Scuola and I marvel every day at how much La Scuola has grown from a small family day care in lower Pacific Heights to a two-campus thriving PreK-8 Independent School that begins Middle School next year!

So much happened this past school year that I cannot possibly list everything, but here are a few highlights of what we accomplished in the past academic year, together with you all:

- La Scuola was authorized as San Francisco’s first school offering the International Baccalaureate (“IB”) Primary Year Program becoming the only Reggio/IB Italian Language Immersion World School in the world. This was the culmination of three years of hard work integrating the IB curriculum framework with our Reggio Emilia pedagogy. A huge ‘thank you’ to our committed faculty for making this happen! We were also accredited by CAIS (California Association of Independent Schools).

- We are maintaining our strong commitment to professional development (PD), a core value of La Scuola and a fundamental value of both the Reggio Emilia and IB pedagogies. We believe that this directly impacts the quality of education offered to our students, and we therefore embraced it fully by increasing the PD budget to 4% of our tuition income.

- We continued to invest in our faculty through keeping pay and benefits inline with comparable schools. During the past years La Scuola has achieved a sustainable level of financial stability while almost reaching parity with its peer schools in the areas of tuition and salaries, both for faculty and administrators.

- Our annual fundraisers, the Annual Fund and La Dolce Vita gala, were immensely successful, and allowed us to raise our tuition assistance budget allocation to 10% of our annual net tuition revenue and to continue to be an inclusive school and increase our diversity.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to supporting La Scuola on our journey from a small playgroup into a PreK-8 independent school! None of the above achievements and the type of educational experiences we wish to offer would have happened without our world-class teachers, dedicated leadership and administration team, our vibrant community of parents and our inspiring La Scuola children.

Con Stima,

Valentina Imbeni, PhD
Head of School
How do we support our students and prepare them for this rapidly changing world?

As one year ends and a new one begins, we reflect on the past year and look ahead to the new one. You are probably looking at your children with a mixture of hope and worry: hope that they will change the world for the better and worry because of the future that awaits them.

So how do we support our students and prepare them for this rapidly changing world?

At La Scuola we believe that high-quality education is rooted in a very high image of the child. A competent, intelligent, strong, curious and beautiful child, whose independence, curiosity, creativity and thirst for learning are nurtured and encouraged every day.

Today the world’s most influential organizations are achieving their goals by offering a rich blend of culture and work that deeply engages employees in the mission, values and purpose of the organization. To foster creativity and innovation they look for highly motivated and committed individuals that desire to contribute and also make a difference. For example, the ‘migration’ away from traditional career points to the desire of millennials (and possibly Gen Z, your children) to be part of a ‘story’ and to change the world. We should also remember that 47% of existing jobs will disappear in the next 10-20 years because of technology.

The type of education our students need is one that takes into account the new meaning of knowledge and the new contexts and purposes for learning this knowledge. Our students will need to be resilient, adaptable, creative and innovative, and to be able to have a clear 10,000-foot view of the problems they face. Most importantly, they will need to be able to think and learn for themselves, by themselves. The ‘old’ social constructivist approach that is at the heart of an IB education and the Reggio Emilia approach has, in fact, never been more relevant. It is no longer viable to ‘fill up’ students with all the knowledge they need beyond school or to see them as empty vessels. And we can no longer rely on ‘one best way’ of knowing or doing things.

We believe that La Scuola’s education is one that will give the students a life-long love of learning, the ability to keep discovering on their own, and to find solutions to problems they have not faced before.
LA SCUOLA OPENS ITS DOORS TO THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

THE IB PYP GRADES 5-6
THE PYP’S TRANSDISCIPLINARY THEMES — along with the programme’s strong commitment to collaborative teaching — provide a strong foundation for interdisciplinary study in the Middle Year Programme. Both programmes reflect the depth, breadth and balance that characterizes the IB continuum of international education:

- Inquiry-based learning
- Meeting Math, Language, Science & Social Studies standards for 5th and 6th grade and beyond
- International mindedness

In Spring 2018 La Scula will become a candidate for the MYP programme. The MYP is a curriculum framework that emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world.

 LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IN MIDDLE SCHOOL
WE TEACH LANGUAGE ORGANICALLY by immersion in the context of classroom subject matter. Language instruction is 70% English–30% Italian.

- Language and Literature (Italian and English), Language Acquisition (Italian)
- Social Studies (Individuals and Societies) (English)
- Math, Science, Technology (English)
- Music (English), Art (Italian)
- Spanish: twice a week

 MATH IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL
WE DESIGN OUR MATH PROGRAM on promoting both inquiry and application. Learners acquire mathematical understanding by constructing their own meaning through ever-increasing levels of abstraction, starting with exploring their own personal experiences, understandings and knowledge.

- Relevant, realistic contexts that promote engaging problem solving
- Differentiation that recognizes the student’s learning continuum
- Growth mindset classroom that honors the learning process
- Number, Algebra, Geometry & Trigonometry, Statistics & Probability

 EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY: INNOVATE TO EDUCATE
WE OFFER A CULTURE OF CREATIVITY that inspires teachers and students to think differently, explore confidently and adapt skillfully. A progressive approach to education and a school-wide commitment to innovation.

One-to-one Chromebook Program, Computer Science, with robotics and non-visual programming such as Java, and Digital Media with movie creation and photo editing.
SCIENCE IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL YEARS

THE SCIENCE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

• Next Generation Science Standards (science practices and core ideas)
• Field Studies through a multi-day trip to a National Park
• A Tinkering Atelier for hands-on learning of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) concepts
• Biomimicry design to integrate science, engineering and the life sciences collaborations are in the works!
• Curriculum from the Oceanic Society and organizations that study the SF Bay

VISUAL ARTS

THE VISUAL ARTS CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

The artistic perception, processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to the visual arts. Students perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events and the environment. They also use the vocabulary of the visual arts to express their observations. Children will develop perceptual skills and visual arts vocabulary.

MUSIC

MUSIC AT LA SCUOLA IS VERY IMPORTANT.

All students specialize in guitar, bass, mandolin, mandola or mandocello, also developing proficiency in reading music, composition, arranging and conducting. Several performances are planned throughout the year.
As all parents do, Jeff and I went through the process of finding a name for Giulia when we found out we were having a girl. While Jeff and I are both Bay Area natives (Jeff was born and raised in Tiburon and I was born and raised in San Francisco), I am also a first-generation Italo-Americana. My parents were both born in a small town in Calabria called Verbicaro (population approx. 3,000), and my brother and I grew up speaking our Verbicarese dialect while making frequent trips back to Calabria to visit i nonni, gli zii, i cugini, etc. Jeff’s maternal grandfather was also Italian from Catanzaro. We knew that with a last name like Brill, we wanted to give her a first name that showcased her Italian heritage. That is why we chose to spell her name as we did. So, while she will likely endure a lifetime of people misspelling her name J-U-L-I-A, we felt the benefit of the Italian spelling outweighed any negative aspects.

We have always been excited for Giulia to grow an appreciation for her heritage and to be able to share it with others. When we heard about La Scuola, we were immediately sold. We are big believers in the benefits of bilingual education and Giulia had already been taking an Italian class as I did in school.

When I picked Giulia up from school last Thursday, I observed the impact La Scuola has had on her. That “joy” often talked about was alive in her as she watered plants, ran around the playground, played with her classmates, spoke in Italian about what she was doing and took her fratellino Enzo’s hand. It was wonderful to watch.

Seeing her so happy has made us very appreciative of the home we have found in La Scuola. Every day we see why the language immersion and Reggio approach has been a critical combination for Giulia’s growth. As parents, we have also found a lot of joy in the La Scuola community. Not just on the dance floor at the recent LDV, but every day. The faculty, staff and parent community has been so welcoming and wonderful. We are very grateful for what La Scuola has given Giulia and our family thus far and we are very excited to see how our brave learner will continue to flourish in the years to come.
NIENTE SENZA GIOIA!

A SCUOLA IS TRUELY A PLACE OF JOY and a sense of well-being. Our environment reflects our pedagogy in which children, parents and teachers are participants in learning. We are building knowledge with our children each day as the faculty reflects on their daily research along with children. A key to a successful school is a commitment to the value of ongoing professional development that values inquiry in teaching. La Scuola has been designing the professional development each year in a systematic, organized way. Our faculty attends weekly meetings and our pedagogical team plans four professional development days a year and a parent education series. Our faculty attends conferences throughout the United States that include IB, Reggio Approach, language immersion and other important topics related to recent research on learning.

A school must avoid being self-referential, meaning a school must be open to the community of educators for collaboration in learning from other colleagues. Each year La Scuola organizes a roundtable with The Innovative Teacher Project to invite teachers from the Bay Area to learn about the education at La Scuola. We are part of a network of schools in Northern California and the US inspired by the Reggio Approach. La Scuola faculty visits Bay Area schools and San Francisco organizations for the reciprocity, relationship and collaboration in education, art, science, technology and community service.

This year, our faculty had the opportunity to participate in a seminar with the Exploratorium in which an ongoing research has been established. Our faculty this year is participating in international conferences in Reggio Emilia, Italy. This is an opportunity to meet many other educators from around the world and understand La Scuola’s context and contribution in relationship to our dialogue with Reggio Children. We are building multiple dialogues with schools, organizations and academia to facilitate teaching and learning in our well-designed professional development to maintain and always improve the quality of teaching and learning at La Scuola.

We are interested in sharing our education experience at La Scuola locally, nationally and internationally. At the end of the year, La Scuola exhibited at the Minnesota Project, beginning a wonderful collaboration among participants of the SF arts. The exhibit required collaboration among faculty, children and parents during the year. This initiative gives meaning to the ongoing co-constructivist approach to learning that La Scuola values.

As an educator for over thirty years, I enjoy very much building La Scuola with the children, teachers, and parents. I believe we are making history. I hope you agree!

Susan Lyon Ed.D
Education Chair, La Scuola Trustee

OUR VALUES

WE BELIEVE THAT CHILDREN ACTIVELY CONSTRUCT THEORIES about their world and test their hypotheses through meaningful hands-on experiences as well as social interactions and relationships with their teachers and peers (The Social Constructivist approach).

- We foster children’s imagination, curiosity, inquiry, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving to shape a lifelong passion for learning
- We educate children to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world where the ability to problem-solve, innovate, learn independently and cooperate is of paramount importance
- We offer an Italian immersion program
- We believe in Global Citizenship and an International Mindedness
- We believe in a lifetime of education and learning
- We believe in fostering healthy eating habits and in sharing the earth’s resources
On a Roll with

CARLO DEAN
MUSIC COORDINATOR

BORN IN New York, and spending his youth in New York and New Jersey, Carlo is a second generation Italian-American, with family emigrating from Lombardia. After receiving his Bachelor’s Degree in Music in Pennsylvania, Carlo moved to Los Angeles to obtain his Master’s Degree in Music at the California Institute of the Arts. After spending time working and teaching in Los Angeles, he and his wife decided to give San Francisco a try, where Carlo became one of the most sought-after private and classroom music instructors in the Bay Area. In addition to teaching, Carlo regularly composes pieces for various individuals and ensembles (his most recent Three Pieces for Oboe and Vibraphone was premiered last summer at the Vu Symposium in Park City, Utah), has arranged music for rock bands, conducted orchestras and ensembles for recording sessions with Grammy-winning artists, and scored several films and animations. Carlo is also developing two music training applications and is writing a plucked string method book. Despite his many musical projects, Carlo’s number one focus and priority is teaching children, and bringing music to as many children as he possibly can.

Carlo is in his fifth year as music teacher at La Scuola and has two children enrolled at La Scuola: Ottavio in Kindergarten and Serafina in 3rd grade.

LA SCUOLA’S MUSIC PROGRAM

From Preschool through 8th grade, the music program at La Scuola explores music through singing, playing, composing and analyzing. In Preschool and Kindergarten, students learn the basic concepts and components of music. They read and compose rhythms using basic notation, and they sing and compose music using solfeggio. We bring musicians from the community and other schools to perform for the children. Last year, we had the world-renowned Mandolinist Carlo Aonzo perform for us, a string quartet accompanied us in our Halloween song, a big band from a local Middle School performed, and more!

Schoolwide, our past field trips have included: performing on stage with the SFCM Graduate Percussion Ensemble, visiting the SFCM Tech Lab to learn how music for apps is made, visiting the San Francisco Symphony, and seeing Cinderella at the Conservatory.

Starting at the end of Kindergarten through 2nd grade, students explore percussion. Half of each student’s class time is dedicated to their grade’s percussion ensemble, learning to read music, and understanding basic techniques of snare, xylophone, cajon, handbells and other percussion instruments, and the other half is dedicated to singing, composition, analysis and movement. All music is individualized to allow each student to work on the aspects of musicianship that need developing while ensuring full inclusion.

Where to Buy an Instrument for Your Child
Amazon Music Wishlist
http://a.co/8nyDuNb
In 3rd through 8th grade, children explore plucked string instruments. In 3rd grade students learn the ukulele, which serves to develop the basic fine motor skills for the following years. In grades 4-8, students learn guitar, mandolin, mandola, mandocello or bass, and participate in the Elementary or Middle School’s “Orchestra a Plettro”. Last December for our Winter Performance, our elementary school performed at the elegant Herbst Theater, accompanied by a String Quartet.

Elementary and Middle School children perform in two concerts per year. Our Spring Performance took place on Wednesday, May 31st at the beautiful Herbst Theater.
La Scuola Exhibit
INSIEME / TRACES

ON MAY 17TH, we opened the Insieme / Traces exhibit, a showcase of art from our children at La Scuola. The exhibition was held at the beautiful San Francisco Arts Education Project on Minnesota Street.

The exhibit was magnificent — an experience based on the many voices, many hands and many different ways of thinking. It was an unforgettable moment for our school, our children, their parents and all of the other participants.
WHAT'S NEW?

WE JUST COMPLETED the application process for CIS (Council of International Schools) membership — we are not officially accredited yet, but hopefully will be soon!

Affiliation to a reputable accrediting body gives staff and parents a reassurance regarding the quality of our school and confirms our commitment to excellence.

PARIFICAZIONE

LA SCUOLA RECENTLY submitted its application to become a “Scuola Paritaria,” that is, a school fully recognized by the Italian Ministry of Education.

This accreditation, supported by Italian Consulate in San Francisco and the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C., is a great opportunity for La Scuola, whose families are Italian citizens, Italian in heritage or just enthusiasts of Italian culture.

A student enrolled in a Scuola Paritaria can transfer to any Italian school, public or private, to the corresponding grade without additional assessment. This privilege will give our students the possibility to spend a period of time in Italy or to continue their studies there. This recognition will also reinforce the high quality of our Italian language curriculum.

Currently there are 43 Scuole Paritarie around the world, outside of Italy, 17 of them in the Americas yet only 1 in the United States. La Scuola is certainly a very strong candidate to be just the second Scuola Paritaria in the US.

In addition, this network of schools is a great resource for reaching Italian qualified teachers, receiving grants and funds sponsored by Italian Ministry of Education, and promoting the exchange of innovative ideas within the network.
Eleonora was born in Legnano, Italy, a historical town located near Milan. Eleonora has followed in the footsteps of a family of educators. Her grandfather was the director of education at Mosè Bianchi in Monza, Milan. Her aunts and uncles were all teachers, professors and directors of schools throughout Italy. Since receiving her teaching credentials in Italy in 1993, Eleonora’s passion is working with elementary age students. Eleonora has taught in public and private schools, 1st through 5th grade. For the last 9 years, she has been a primary school teacher for a project-based private elementary school in Busto Arsizio, Varese. After almost 20 years of educating young students in Italy, she moved to America to join her husband, a native of the Bay Area.

For Eleonora, teaching isn’t just a job, it is a vocation. She shares her passion for education with her students; she believes that when a teacher is passionate about teaching, students become passionate about learning. She strives to guide each individual student, helping them achieve their learning goals. For Eleonora, education is a gift of love and a passion for life.

“This is my second year teaching with La Scuola. Working within the PYP/IB curriculum, I strive to bring learning to our students with the interaction of the world around them. The goals we set at the beginning of first grade are to read, write and speak in Italian. We begin by using simple Italian words and sounds, then expand each week increasing their vocabulary. My heart melts when the switch goes off in their minds and they start to read and write in Italian.”

Leticia Dias was born and raised in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Since she was little, Leticia was intrigued and dazzled by cultural diversity and developed a passion for learning about different cultures and languages. Observing this interest, her parents enrolled her at Fundação Torino, an Italian International School, where Leticia was immersed in Italian language and culture, and also learned English and Spanish.

After finishing high school with two diplomas (Brazilian and Italian), she went to college to study Languages. After studying at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Brazil, she went to King’s College London in England, where she spent one year on a scholarship for merit. When Leticia graduated she earned the certification for language teacher.

When she returned from overseas, she was hired as a support teacher at Fundação Torino and fell in love with Education. As a lifelong learner, she decided to go to college again to study Pedagogy (Education Sciences). This took place as she became a full-time K-5 teacher at Fundação Torino. It was a tremendous challenge being a full-time teacher and student, but she felt it gave her a fully different perspective when studying the theory and seeing in practice on a daily basis. Things just made more sense and gave both sides benefits during the experience.

In 2015, after six years of teaching at Fundação Torino, Leticia moved to San Francisco to join us at La Scuola and to pursue a Master of Arts in International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco (USF). Currently you can find her in grade 2-3, where she co-teaches with Annalisa Locatelli, or in grade 4-5, where she teaches Italian and co-teaches inquiry with Michael-James Palazzo. She is also a member of our Italian Language Committee, engaged in developing and improving our language policy, assessment and differentiation.

Her areas of interest are language and culture, sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, learning disabilities, neurosciences and their contribution to education, cognitive sciences, human rights education, gender and education, and how all these topics are interwoven. These subjects are at the root of who she is and the things in her life that she holds most dear.

When she is not teaching at La Scuola or studying, you might find her wandering through Golden Gate Park or Ocean Beach, hiking in different places of the Bay Area, or at soccer and beach soccer tournaments with her partner, an Irish-American lad born and raised in Marin County.
I was born and raised in Chiari, a town in northern Italy. I started to discover the world through the pictures my father was taking and objects he carried with him returning from business travel to Holland, China, Vietnam, Syria, Lebanon, Spain, France, Russia and many others.

Those objects, and those pictures, were the first symbols of a wide world to discover.

Among the most vivid memories of my teenage years was the arrival of two of my new friends from the war in countries of Yugoslavia. By that time I realized that acceptance and empathy are universal languages that belong to all human beings and must be made the highest priority.

I approach the field of education with passion and curiosity for interactions between humans.

After graduation, I was able to transfer from Italy with my wife Sara to Moscow, Russia. In the Italian School Italo Calvino, I discovered and experienced the beauty and desirability of the bilingual curriculum. The school becomes a place of exchange and cultural and linguistic construction.

My Moscow experience has highlighted the need to better understand the education of children from 0-6 years, the principles that govern it, and the teacher’s role in a construction context of socioconstructivist learning.

In 2014 we moved to San Francisco and found La Scuola as a place that welcomes children and where together we learn to think and wonder.

Loris Malaguzzi has left us all a great source of inspiration in the poem *The 100 Languages of Children* that suggests a biological heritage belonging to everyone, the 100 languages, and a practical invitation to re-interpret reality through the desire for active learning of the children, respecting their needs and desires.

So every day we grow with the children protecting their right to learn and the joy of learning in an environment where everyone is important.

I strongly believe that quality education that respects children is a strategic skill for any society that wants to build a better future for humanity. This way, we will be ready to accept and understand ourselves and others in a world that is increasingly complex, interconnected and multicultural.
ON MARCH 25TH, LA SCUOLA HELD OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA, LA DOLCE VITA. This annual event brings together families, alumni, people from the Bay Area Italian Community, and others who just believe in the La Scuola mission.

This year nearly 400 people participated in the event and it was another fantastic success for La Scuola. After enjoying great food and wines, the auction started with the blessing and kind words from of Lorenzo Ortona, the Consul General of Italy.

The enthusiasm and generosity of the attendees surpassed all expectations, and our Fund-A-Need program dedicated to tuition assistance reached nearly $130,000! Thank you so much to all of our families and the community for your continuous support to La Scuola.

A special thank you also to the Committee, Brook Sheahan, Stephanie Franco, Jen Dizio and Megan Storti, whose hard work and dedication resulted in a beautiful night enjoyed by all.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
San Francisco's *first* IB Reggio Italian Language Immersion School