

## THE ROEPER SCHOOL

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### I. THE ROEPER PHILOSOPHY

The Roper City and Country School was founded by George and Annemarie Roper in 1941. The philosophy of education which they developed is the foundation of the school and this constitution is adopted for the purpose of insuring that the Ropers' legacy to us, their philosophy, continues to guide the school in the decades to come. In 1981 Annemarie Roper prepared for the school a statement of the Roper philosophy, derived from their writings and speeches. This statement was adopted by the Board of Trustees. The following summary of the Roper philosophy has been prepared only for the purpose of summarizing this earlier statement and not to replace it.

Roper City and Country School exists to educate gifted students in accordance with the Roper philosophy. The central tenet of this philosophy is a commitment to justice and to human rights for all. This is a philosophy of life and not simply a philosophy of education. Education and life cannot be separated and attempts to separate them only limit the goals of education. This philosophy of life is the framework for living and learning within the school.

The commitment to justice and human rights demands a pluralistic community, with all racial, religious, and economic groups represented in all parts of the community.

The commitment to justice and human rights requires recognition of the fact of our interdependence. Interdependence requires that we all learn the skills of cooperative action. We must avoid the traditional overemphasis on confrontation and destructive competition. Children are educated by their whole environment and the school environment must be a model of cooperative action and must teach the skills of cooperation.

Today's children will be tomorrow's leaders. Individuals who have been educated with a global point of view have a greater potential for positively influencing the world. Those who are educated in the skills of cooperation will be better prepared for leadership.

All members of the Roper community are models for each other. All community members must learn the skills and attitudes necessary for cooperation--the ability to see the whole, to understand their rights and obligations within the community, to see others as cooperators rather than as competitors. Community members must see themselves first and foremost as members of the Roper community rather than as a student, a staff member, or a parent. Community members of all ages must learn to be concerned

about the whole institution rather than its individual parts, to respect the rights of every individual, to communicate openly and honestly, to trust each other, to be cognizant of complexity, to recognize and appreciate individual diversity.

Our governance model is not hierarchical. Leadership cannot be based on power but must be founded on the confidence of the community. There must be open communication and participation in decision making. People who are affected by decisions have the right to participate in making those decisions. Responsibility and cooperation can only be taught by those who are themselves assuming responsibility and working cooperatively together.

Decision making is a skill which must be learned along with other more traditional academic skills and concepts. To learn this skill the students must have a school environment where they can participate in decision making, can become aware of complexities, can take risks, and can learn to see themselves as valuable links in the chain of interdependence. The school atmosphere must be open and supportive and communication between members of the community must be free and restrained only by the bounds of mutual respect and sensitivity to the feelings of others.

The school seeks not to control students but to help them to develop self control. As they develop self control external controls must diminish.

Roeper recognizes the individuality of all students. It seeks to provide them with a flexible learning environment which allows them to grow in their own individual styles. Educational goals must be tailored to meet the needs of the individual student, within the framework of the school's goals. The school educates the whole person and provides opportunities for growth in all areas; academic, moral, creative, emotional, physical and social.

## II. OPERATING PRINCIPLES

### Pluralistic Community

Roeper seeks out gifted students from all racial, religious, and economic backgrounds in order to promote diversity in the student body.

Roeper seeks out staff from all racial, and religious backgrounds in order to promote diversity in the staff.

Roeper maximizes the amount of scholarship assistance available so that gifted students who cannot afford tuition may benefit from a Roeper education and so that the Roeper community can benefit from a diverse student body.

### Educational Principles

The needs of individual students and families are recognized and taken into consideration.

The individuality of each student is respected and teaching focuses on each child's individual needs, within the overall context of the school's goals.

Roeper recognizes giftedness in many forms.

Roeper seeks to develop self control in students rather than to control them.

Roeper provides education in all areas, including academic, moral, creative, emotional, physical and social.

### Education About the Philosophy

The Roeper philosophy is a part of the curriculum at all levels of the school and is taught as well to parents and staff.

The Roeper philosophy is communicated in the school's literature, advertisements, and other publicity.

### Shared Decision Making

Shared decision making is a fundamental aspect of a Roeper education.

All members of the community are given the opportunity and encouraged to participate in decision making regarding matters which affect them.

It is up to the individual community member to determine whether he wishes to be involved in decision making regarding any particular matter and others do not have the right to tell that individual that he cannot participate because he is unaffected.

Input is sought at the earliest phases of decision making in order to make such input meaningful.

There is frequent and open communication about decisions which are being considered, unless a need for immediate action or confidentiality precludes such communication.

Decisions and their rationales are communicated to all affected members of the community.

### Community Involvement

Members of the community have an obligation to understand their rights and responsibilities and those of others.

Members of the community have a responsibility to keep informed about the issues affecting Roper.

Members of the community have a responsibility to share their knowledge and talents with the community.

### Implementation

The decision making structure is written and communicated to all parts of the community.

The administration, in developing and implementing procedures and practices, insures that they are consistent with the philosophy and guiding principles.

The Roper Board of Trustees is the guardian of the philosophy. On a regular basis, with the participation of the community, it examines the decision making structure to insure that the procedures and practices are consistent with the philosophy and guiding principles.