

Turning Point School: A Vocabulary of Visuals, Academics, Creativity

Description



Turning Point School

Turning Point School is a multi-faceted, developmental Preschool-8th grade school in Culver City.

Located on a gorgeously renovated movie studio, the campus has a hip, urban vibe, much like the famed Dalton School in New York City, where the classrooms are on multiple levels and stairs are used to access various levels within the interior of the building. Big windows flood rooms with light. Kids flow from the main building out onto an artificial turf athletic playing field, next to a garden and outdoor classroom.



Creativity starts here! A Kindergarten classroom

Turning Point™'s blueprint has inspired a school filled with colorful hues, spacious classrooms, dynamic teachers and a diverse student-body. The architecture of the campus is roomy enough for virtually every grade level to have its own space. Some areas, like the music room, are shared by multiple grades. The preschool has occupies a separate building.



Outside the kindergarten classroom

Walking through the school with Christian Davis, the associate director of admissions, I felt like I™d encounter something magical around every corner. As we visited classrooms, I learned a lot about each part of the school. Smart Boards are a feature in every class. Music is central to the curriculum, starting in Primary with the xylophone. Wind instruments are introduced in 5th grade.



All that Jazz! The Music Room

Touring with Christian, I quickly realized heâ€™s the kind of admissions director parents shouldnâ€™t be worried about calling to ask a question or just to touch base. Heâ€™s so nice! Easy going and accessible, heâ€™s well versed in the schoolâ€™s many programs. His manner instantly puts one at ease.



Outdoor field

Head of School, Deborah Richman, has been with the school since its early days. She has been the driving force behind Turning Pointâ€™s impressive expansion. Her vision has created a modern school, valued by parents for its sense of community. Nothing about the school is antiquated or outdated. Thereâ€™s a cutting edge-ness to it that I felt instinctively drawn to. From the kid-inspired kindergarten classrooms, to the language center and the outdoor classroom, layers of this energetic school unfolded before my eyes. It has a delightful, whimsical quality, reminiscent of an Alice in Wonderland adventure.



Talented Middle School artists

Turning Point is a developmental school with a Montessori based program for Primary and K-1. Mixed age classrooms are a key feature of the Montessori philosophy and Turning Point's Kindergarten and 1st grades are separate, but interact during portions of the day. Students in Primary and K-1 remain with the same teacher and classmates, per the Montessori method. This gives kids the chance to learn independently, while collaborating with their peers and older kids. Then, when they become the oldest in the class, they take on a leadership role by mentoring younger children.



An interconnected campus

The Smart Lab

There's definitely a "wow factor" when you walk into the The SmartLab. It is a highlight of the school and rather unique: it is one of two labs of its kind in Southern California. What is the SmartLab? It's a hub of new technology where students get hands-on learning experience.

From Turning Point's website:

"Students work in groups to exercise their creativity utilizing modern day technology while developing vital 21st century skills. The curriculum of the SmartLab emphasizes 8 systems of technology: science and data acquisition, mechanics and structures, robotics and control technology, circuitry, graphic design, multimedia and publishing, computer simulation, and renewable energy."

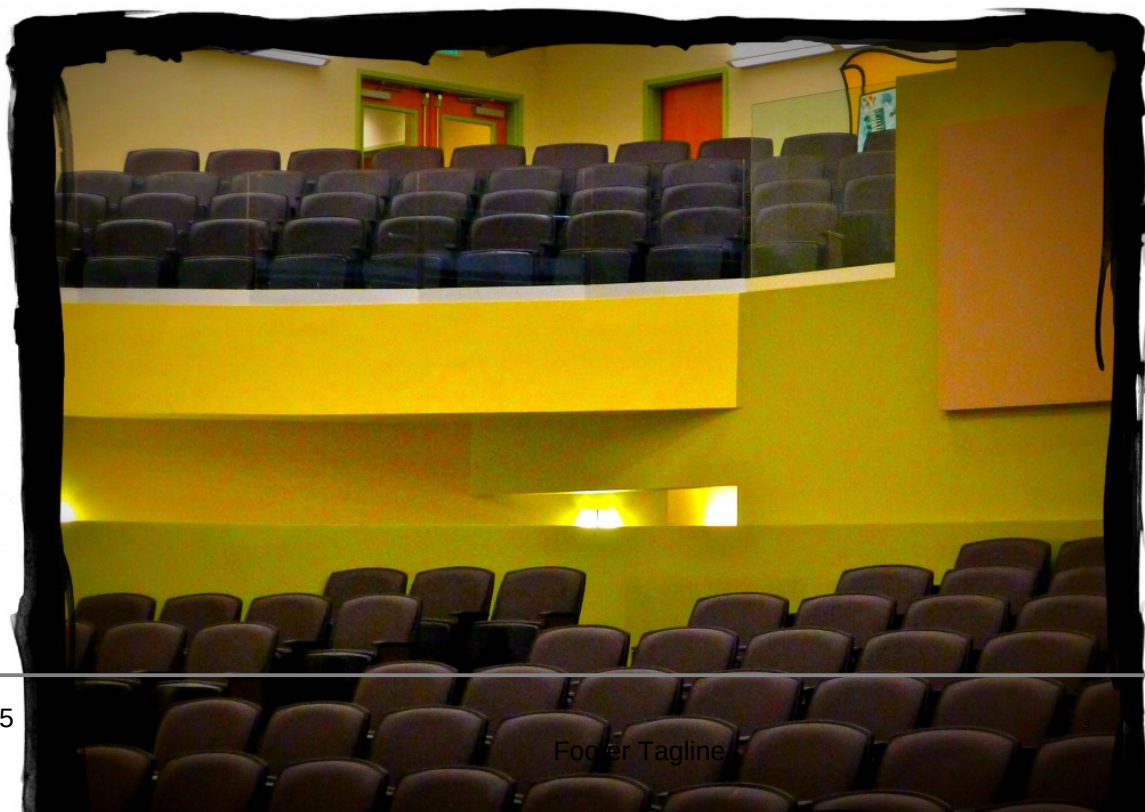


The Smart Lab

The Smart Lab teacher, a young guy named Travis, was enthusiastic as he talked to us about all the learning thatâ€™s happening in this mega-lab. SmartLab becomes part of the curriculum in 5th grade. It is offered as both an elective and a requirement in Middle School. It is also offered as an after school class and as an option in the summer specialistsâ€™ camp. Letâ€™s just say the SmartLab caught my attentionâ€”and held it.

Theater Arts

The new theater gives Turning Point serious bragging rights. Itâ€™s a place for the performing arts that hits all the right notes! Generous families, including a heavily tattooed pop-rock star whose name adorns the building (due to his generous donation), made the theater possible.



Lights out! The Theater

Turning Point offers students all the extras, within an environment rich with the classics to foster each student's talent. But, it hasn't lost sight of its mission, which is to educate and nurture each student, focusing on the whole child. Perhaps the school's mission statement says it best: "Turning Point provides a harmony between structure and freedom."

The best way to describe Turning Point is substance without pretense. It's a place where kids thrive in an effortlessly cool setting. It's very apparent that students at Turning Point are encouraged to be expressive, to get creative and challenge themselves in all aspects of their education. It's a school where one size *doesn't* fit all. That's sure to please prospective kids and parent alike!



Tomatoes growing in a corner of the school garden

Upper School Acceptances for the Class of 2012 include: Brentwood, Buckley, Campbell Hall, Crossroads, Harvard Westlake, Loyola, Marlborough, Wildwood, Windward and more.

See the school! Open House, Saturday, Oct. 13, 2012 10 a.m.-12 noon.

For more information, visit, www.turningpointsschool.org

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1. Culver City School
2. Developmental School
3. Turning Point School

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