



## Why Pre-K – 8?

One of the primary benefits of choosing a pre-K – 8 school for your child is that the school can focus all of its energy and resources on the needs of students age 3-14. The developmental needs of this age range are complex, and having a school that can focus exclusively on those needs is an advantage for students.

With the multitude of upper school offerings available in the metro Atlanta area, you have the opportunity to provide an outstanding education for your child for preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and as you learn more about your child's interests and needs, Cliff Valley School will work with you individually to find the best school for your child for grades 9-12, public or private.

Research on the needs of adolescent learners (ages 10-14) also supports the pre-K – 8 school model. Here are some key findings:

- Adolescents face emotional, physical, and social challenges and can benefit from not having a school transition at middle school.
- Middle School students have an extra transition to a new school that K-8 students do not. K-8 students benefit from spending the middle grades as the "top dogs" in the school, building greater confidence, maturity, and leadership.
- Middle grade students in K-8 schools behave differently than in a middle school. They take on the role of protector and role model as opposed to having to establish new reputations upon entering middle school.
- Compared to adolescent boys and girls who remain in a K-8, adolescent girls experience a drop in self-esteem, extracurricular participation, and leadership behaviors following a transition to middle school. Boys experience a decrease in extracurricular participation and grades.
- Students with transitions at 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> experience greater achievement loss than students from K-8 schools.
- Compared with students in 6-8 middle schools, students from K-8 schools demonstrated higher SAT scores, were 11% more likely to be enrolled in selective high school programs, and demonstrated a higher GPA in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Students and parents who remain in a K-8 school for nine years are more likely to build and maintain positive relationships with teachers over time and maintain higher levels of parent participation than in middle schools.
- Early grade teachers know all students, middle grade teachers can communicate with them regarding students' histories and learning styles.
- K-8 schools allow students to get to know classmates and teachers better. Smaller size is a factor in the stronger sense of community experienced by K-8 schools.
- Smaller class and school size result in higher levels of student participation, increased sense of belonging, and more comfortable student-teacher relationships. It also allows students and teachers more opportunities to access community resources and learning opportunities outside of the school.