

The Wolf School: Building a Vision

Sometimes it's best to just go with your gut and do it

That's what happened in 2016 at The Wolf School, when space restrictions began impacting optimal instruction for its students. Head of School, Anna Johnson explains, "Our students have complex learning needs requiring individualized instruction and movement to regulate sensory and educational needs. With increased enrollment, it got to the point where we had to turn our library into a classroom. Space for small group instruction was so limited it spilled into the hallway and our library became books on a cart rolled between classrooms."

Instead of engaging in a lengthy capital campaign involving expensive brochures, consultants and committee meetings, Wolf jumped in, gathering a small team to reach out to potential donors for Leadership Gifts and conducting a Crowdfunding Campaign. From January 2016 when these efforts began, until the end of the school year in June, Wolf raised over \$700,000 towards a building project that includes new classroom space, new faculty room/office suite, a library, and a sensory courtyard.

"The whole process went incredibly fast," comments Johnson. "Parents, alumni families, and community members were completely understanding of our needs and responded immediately with amazing generosity. The town of East Providence was great to work with, we put together a stellar volunteer building committee, and our architects (Imai Keller Moore Architects of Watertown, MA) and contractors (Chapel Building Corp. of East Providence, RI) got into gear and started making things happen over the summer."

Wolf also received in-kind support from one of their current families to remodel the school's old faculty room into a beautiful community room that families and staff can use for meetings, resources or to socialize. In addition, this November the school proudly obtained a James Patterson and Scholastic Reading Club grant for its library.

By January 2017, when Wolf students return from their winter break, the building project will be completed. In just one year, The Wolf School made its dream a reality. Johnson believes 2016 will go down in the record books for The Wolf



Wolf student, with Head of School Anna Johnson, presents what they're most looking forward to about the new additions to the school.

School. "We didn't know if this would work, but we just decided to go for it! With no campaign overhead, every dollar went directly to the building project. And without using a traditional timeline, we just pushed forward hoping it would happen! We have incredible families and supporters who stepped up with generosity and talent. Without all their help, and their belief in The Wolf School, this never could have worked."

But the best part of this whole experience for Johnson was the reactions of the students. "The kids have been so excited watching all the changes take place, and seeing the joy on their faces when they used the library for the first time – that's why we do this!"

The Wolf School is a nationally recognized private special education school for children with complex learning differences. The school's mission is to inspire Complex Learners to discover confidence, compassion, and a love of learning to reach their full potential.

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Interested in seeing if The Wolf School might be a fit for your child?

**Join us at our Winter Open House
Thursday, February 9, 8:00 – 9:30 AM**



From left to right: Rebekah Ham, Scott DiChristofero, Al Verrecchia, Tamara McKenney, Katherine Harrison Pelson, Leslie Lorber, and Joe Mardo attend groundbreaking ceremony at The Wolf School



Wolf students observe construction for the 6th grade classroom



The new 6th grade classroom addition completed.