

## Proud to have a Learning Specialist at Hilltop



As you may remember, Wendy Lynde, our Learning Specialist was on medical leave before the winter break. She is now back at full speed and we wanted to take this opportunity to explain her role to some of you who might not have heard about the position in the past.

In 2014, Hilltop Montessori School hired Wendy Lynde as a Learning Specialist, a position we had been hoping to add to our faculty for many years. Wendy has filled this position beautifully for the past three years. Her responsibilities include:

- Doing regular, formal reading assessments of all students from their final year of Children's House through Upper Elementary.
- Identifying students who are "below benchmark" and need more intentional, direct instruction in small groups, with Wendy or another teacher.
- Teaching small groups of students who need a more intensive language instruction.
- Serving as a "case manager" for students who are receiving outside evaluations or support.
- Supporting teachers who have questions about how to best meet the needs of particular learners.

Wendy's time is split between the CH, LE, and UE programs, with more of her time being with the Lower Elementary, as those are the years for critical reading development. Wendy works with small groups of students to provide them additional support and instruction beyond that provided in the classroom. Students identified as needing intensive one-on-one reading instruction seek that level of support privately.

We are thrilled that having a learning specialist has enabled us to expand the continuum of learners that we serve at Hilltop. Some students who might need extra support or be on an IEP (Individual Education Plan) in a traditional school do not need unusual accommodations at Hilltop. Our multi-age, open work cycle environment focused on the needs of each individual child naturally accommodates different needs. However, some learners do need a bit more direct instruction with reading so as to not "fall through the cracks" and to enable them to be reading in order to access the language rich curriculum of the elementary years. The support of Wendy as our Learning Specialist has enabled us to better serve all the students at Hilltop Montessori School.

February 17, 2017