

# BUILDING AN INNOVATIVE SCHOOL FROM THE GROUND UP

SYNAPSE SCHOOL

**SCHOOL**  
Synapse School  
Menlo Park, CA

**PRESENTER**  
Jim Eagen  
Head of School

**"I came to Synapse to teach, because Synapse teaches the way children learn."**

FACULTY MEMBER

**"At Synapse we get to know ourselves really well. We understand how we learn best."**

6TH GRADE STUDENT

## IMPERATIVE

Synapse was founded in 2008. The founders were dedicated to establishing a school that would redefine education by combining leading edge academic instruction with a **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING** curriculum. The school is committed to developing the **CHANGE LEADERS** of tomorrow, young people with the skills and mindset to shape the future, and the wisdom to make it one worth creating. The foundation of the school rests on three pillars, **BRAIN BASED ACADEMICS, INNOVATION AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING**. The school strives to integrate these concepts into everything it does.

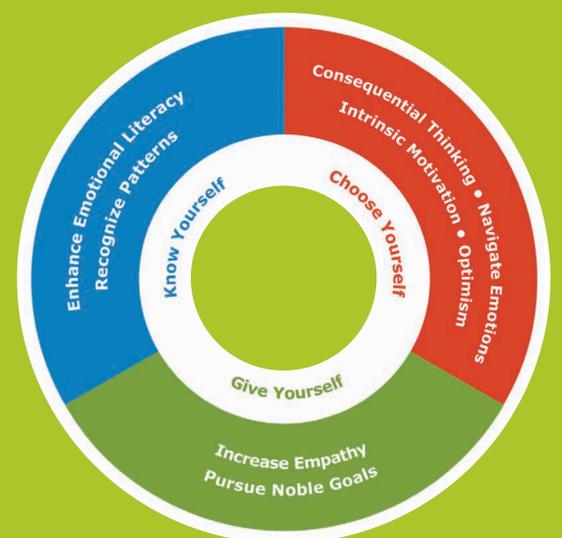
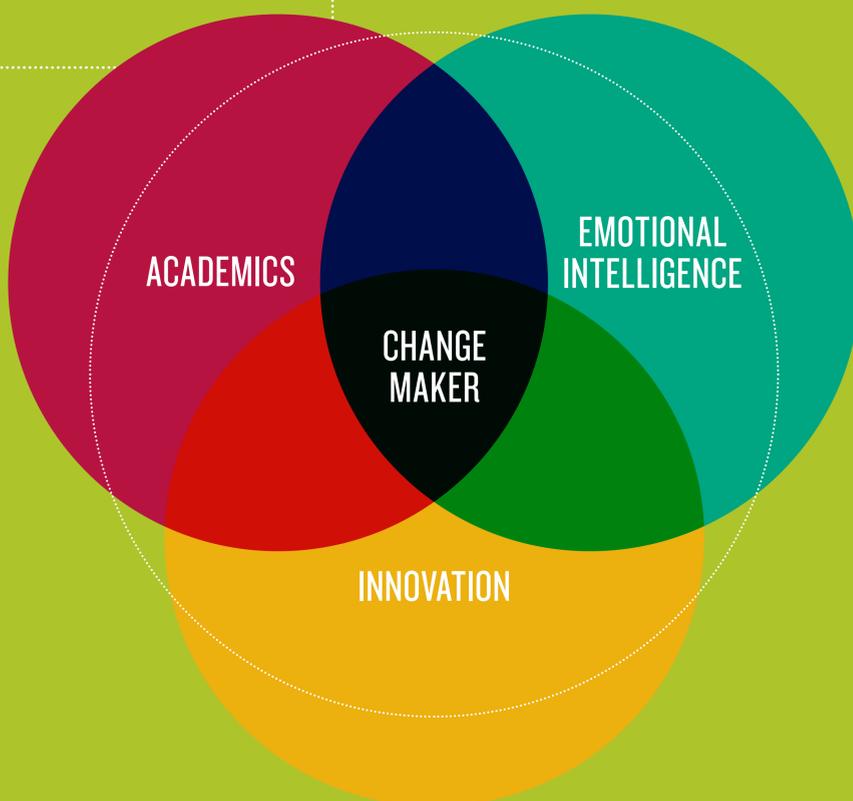
## IDEA

Synapse strives ultimately to educate children to make the world a better place. This aligns directly with **OUR MOTTO, EDUCATING CHANGEMAKERS**. We believe that changemakers impact the world in positive and authentic ways, are robustly prepared for real world challenges that require the integration of academic, creative and social emotional domains, and are not defined by numbers or scale. We strive towards this summit consistently providing each child with a vigorous academic, social, and creative experience uniquely designed by our staff to inspire each child to use their **HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS** in order to make positive change everywhere, all the time.

## IMPLEMENTATION

A snapshot of Synapse students in their classrooms, no matter what the grade or who the teacher, would capture eyes shining with curiosity and fingers busy manipulating pencils, scissors, cardboard, papers, clay or whatever else comes within their grasp. **EACH SCHOOL YEAR WE CHOOSE AN OVERARCHING THEME FOR THE CURRICULUM** that makes it meaningful and engaging for our students. This theme guides the students as they acquire knowledge and skills and work productively with their peers and mentors. This program envelops each student in its creative and world-relevant themes, fully engaging their minds in the learning process. We also choose a changemaker each year and students study in depth, the way that person was able to change the world.

**ROBUSTLY PREPARED FOR REAL WORLD CHALLENGES THAT REQUIRE THE INTEGRATION OF ACADEMIC, CREATIVE AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DOMAINS.**



## RESOURCES

**SCHOOL WEBSITE**  
[synapseschool.org](http://synapseschool.org)