



# Strategic Plan

2020-2023

# HISTORY

Our history is one of self-determination, self-discovery, and entrepreneurship. Founded in 1994, Bridges Academy initially hosted a small group of struggling students in an in-home tutorial setting. In previous settings, they had been failing their classes and, in some cases, dropping out of school entirely. Over time, the tutorial center came to understand their population as twice-exceptional (2e), students who are gifted and highly gifted but who also have learning differences. Bridges Academy, incorporated in 1998, was founded to educate this underserved population. Both the gifts and learning challenges of these 2e students make more traditional learning environments a difficult fit; Bridges Academy fills the unmet need.

In 1999, Bridges Academy joined the independent school world and was accredited by California Association of Independent School (CAIS) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), giving it the flexibility needed to design curricular and instructional frameworks with the 2e student in mind. In 2011, Bridges Academy purchased the property in Studio City, CA, where it is now located. Bridges Academy has steadily transformed the campus to meet the needs of 2e students. What was once a high school, now serves grades 4 through 12; what was once in a living room now occupies three buildings on 3.48 acres.

Bridges Academy educates over 180 students while maintaining small class sizes. This environment, coupled with Bridges Academy's approach to strength-based, talent-focused learning, its embrace of neurodiversity, and its flexible approaches to addressing challenges, provides supportive, stimulating, and nurturing spaces for 2e learners.

Recognizing the need to educate 2e students everywhere, not just those lucky enough to access the Studio City, CA, campus, Bridges Academy's Board and Administration saw an opportunity to evolve into a worldwide movement called the Bridges Education Group ("BEdG").

# ORGANIZATION

## BRIDGES EDUCATION GROUP (BEdG) INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- **BRIDGES ACADEMY** is a school serving students in grades 4 through 12, with learning differences who are amazingly bright, outside-the box-thinkers, capable of developing expertise at a very young age in wide-ranging fields, from robotics to religion, string theory to Sanskrit, politics to poetry. The school prepares students for the 21st century and its many opportunities, including university studies, and artistic and entrepreneurial endeavors. The school is the foundation for demonstrating the power of our 2e educational philosophy.
- **BRIDGES 2E CENTER** for Professional Development and Research was founded in 2006 after the Academy received multiple requests for information about 2e, the Academy's programming, and ways in which others could incorporate this knowledge in other educational settings. With the unique opportunities afforded by working with Bridges Academy as a demonstration and lab school, the 2e Center is now a multi-disciplinary hub where professionals, scholars, and practitioners combine expertise to enhance understanding of a growing awareness of 2e students.
- **BRIDGES 2E MEDIA** is the multimedia arm of BEdG that provides high-level information and perspectives about 2e education and cognitive diversity. 2e Media covers a broad range of topics that are essential for all educators, parents, and professionals. Bridges Academy acquired the 2e Newsletter from Glen Ellyn Media and in November, 2018 launched its website, 2eNews.com, to reach a broader audience. 2e Media also publishes a print magazine, Variations2e.
- **BRIDGES GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR COGNITIVE DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION** offers Ed.D and M.Ed programs in cognitive diversity, and also offers a Certificate program in twice-exceptional education. Bridges Graduate School was founded in 2018 in response to a demand from educators and other professionals for a more formalized course of study about teaching and advocating for 2e students. Bridges Graduate School's first cohort of students began study in January, 2019. This program encourages students to cultivate the skills, insights, and imagination required of those who will assume leadership roles as instructional leaders, researchers, administrators, and policy makers to promote cognitive diversity at home, school, and in the workplace.

# MISSION

- **BRIDGES EDUCATION GROUP**

an international leader in the field of 2e, aspires for students from all backgrounds to acquire the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed academically, personally, and professionally.

- **BRIDGES ACADEMY**

provides a rigorous, innovative curriculum that emphasizes the strengths, gifts, and talents of its students, while proactively offering options and tools to address their learning differences.

- **BRIDGES 2E CENTER** for Professional Development and Research provides professionals, scholars, practitioners, and parents access to resources, options, and opportunities that support optimal environments for 2e individuals.

- **BRIDGES 2E MEDIA** promotes worldwide awareness of cognitive diversity and the use of best practices for strength-based learning to inform all facets of 2e education and lifework.

- **BRIDGES GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR COGNITIVE DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION** celebrates the transformative power of strengths, interests, and talents through studies that cultivate an understanding of diverse learners.

# CORE VALUES



## **EMBRACE COGNITIVE DIVERSITY**

We embrace the opportunity to educate different kinds of minds. We know that each individual has within them the capacity to build a successful life and career, and to share their unique abilities and insights for the betterment of the world community.

## **EMPHASIZE STRENGTHS AND TALENTS**

We celebrate diverse learners by enabling and emboldening them to develop high-level skills in the areas in which they excel.

## **EMPOWER LEARNERS**

We inspire learners, providing them means to find personal success. We teach how to surmount learning challenges by not only using strengths but also discovering strategies that work best for them as individuals.

# GOALS

## Goal 1: PREPARE 2e STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

### Objectives

- Increase diversity of the Bridges Academy student body so that students of varied backgrounds, races, ethnicities and gender may have the advantages of a 2e education.
- Expand worldwide awareness of 2e education, including best practices for identifying and developing students' strengths in ways that help them overcome learning challenges.
- Offer additional programming for educators, other professionals, and parents through online courses, local workshops, seminars, and other professional development opportunities.

## Goal 2: OPTIMIZE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AT BRIDGES ACADEMY

### Objectives

- Expand physical facilities at the Bridges Academy campus to enable additional programming and meet the needs of our growing community.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of these environmental changes so they can serve as a model for 2e educators worldwide.

## Goal 3: SUSTAIN AND PROPEL FINANCIAL GROWTH

### Objectives

- Secure the resources necessary to meet the goals of this strategic plan.
- Establish an endowment.
- Grow the active alumni community of Bridges Academy.
- Identify third parties for whom BEdG's unique mission resonates and welcome them to participate in our mission and community.

## Goal 4: CONTINUE TO LEAD

### Objectives

- Develop additional innovative approaches to curriculum and publish where possible.
- Strengthen BEdG as a hub for exchanging ideas, resources, and support in 2e learning.
- Increase awareness of our mission and scholarship.