

Essential Elements of Successful Montessori Schools In the Public School Sector

This document was drafted and endorsed in the late 1990s by several Montessori organizations* wishing to help guide the growth of public school Montessori. It has been presented at a number of Montessori conferences since then and used by various school districts preparing to offer a Montessori option.

Montessori Teachers

- Employ Montessori teachers who have Montessori credentials for the levels they teach.
- Maintain an active and open recruitment for Montessori credentialed teachers.
- Budget for future Montessori teacher education for non Montessori-credentialed teachers.
- Provide professional Montessori in-service by experienced credentialed Montessori educators.
- Contract for on-going internal and periodic external Montessori consultation and/or professional support as a follow up to Montessori teacher education.
- Employ one paraprofessional per classroom, each having received Montessori orientation for that role.

Administration

- Employ an experienced Montessori teacher to serve as curriculum coordinator.
- Employ a building principal/educational leader who has knowledge of Montessori principles and curriculum through Montessori coursework, Montessori Administrator Credential and/or annual conference exposure.
- Maintain commitment to the core Montessori curriculum and instruction even with changes in administrative staff.
- Sustain the support of the central administration through high profile communications about program development.
- Recognize that the best implementation process is to begin with the 2.5-6 age group and add one age at a time for a gradual progression.

Recruitment/Parent Education

- Provide Montessori parent education programs that promote understanding of Montessori principles and curriculum.
- Develop an admission process that informs parents about the nature of Montessori and seeks the necessary commitment to the program.

Curriculum/Environment

- Offer a full complement of Montessori materials purchased from Montessori dealers.
- Develop a classroom design that is compatible with Montessori "prepared environment" principles.
- Create uninterrupted daily work periods of 90 minutes to 3-hours, considering the 3-hour work cycle as ideal.
- Integrate specialty programs (music, art, physical education, etc.) around the uninterrupted work periods.
- Apply the appropriate multi-age groupings: 2.5-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-15, 15-18 necessary for the diversity, flexibility, and reduced competition integral to Montessori.

Assessment

- Use a process of reporting student progress that is compatible with Montessori and includes parent conferences and authentic assessment tools such as observation, portfolio, performance assessment with rubric, etc.
- Implement state mandated assessments in such a way that the character of the Montessori program is not compromised.

Professional Development

- Budget for continuing education through Montessori workshops and conferences.
- Maintain membership with one or more of the professional Montessori organizations and seek Montessori accreditation to assure consistent quality.

**American Montessori Society, Association Montessori Internationale, North American Montessori Teachers' Association, Montessori Educational Programs International, and the Southwestern Montessori Training Center.*