

# Nokomis Montessori Elementary South

2022-2023 Family Engagement Plan DRAFT

## School Overview: overhaul

Students at Nokomis Montessori South campus, serving the east side of Saint Paul, learn in multi-grade classrooms. We are a Montessori School utilizing the Montessori method and blend in components of Reader's workshop and Writer's workshop. Students learn in a noncompetitive environment and use special Montessori materials that help them understand concepts and skills. Differentiated instruction is embedded in the Montessori methodology. Students in a Montessori environment learn strategies to think and work independently. The Montessori teaching style and classroom organization maximizes the school learning environment and promotes positive school behavior.

**Vision:** Nokomis students will be independent yet collaborative learners who will contribute positively to their communities.

**Core Values:** Multi-age classrooms, peaceful community, authentic relationships, independent learning, critical thinking, beautiful materials

## Special qualities:

- Montessori pedagogy
- All-Day Pre-K program started in fall 2019
- All-day Kindergarten
- Multi-grade classrooms
- ALC Extended Day Classes (twice a week)
- High parent/family participation

Nokomis Montessori expanded to a dual, mirror campus in fall 2013 as determined by Strong Schools, Strong Communities to accommodate expansion of this popular program. Both campuses have a building principal, Children's House (CH, PreK – K), Elementary I (E1, grades 1 – 3) and Elementary II (E2, grades 4 – 5). The Family Engagement Plan (FEP) is organized into four impact areas. We will be working together this year to build positive and goal-oriented relationships in each area. Families and staff at school developed this plan together.

Welcoming Environment	
<b>Our school has staff member(s) available for families to discuss this plan and ask questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Family Liaison: Abigail Felber-Smith, Principal</b></li></ul>
<b>Our school communicates with families in many ways.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Principal Felber-Smith will continue to mail two welcome back to school letters to all families in August 2022.</li><li>• Open House is scheduled on September 1, 2022 from 4:30-6:00 p.m. We will distribute a 2022-2023 Nokomis Montessori Family Handbook including the Title I Compact and Title I Family Engagement Plan.</li><li>• Children's House Montessori Teachers meet with all PreK and Kindergarten parents on September 8 &amp; 9, 2022.</li><li>• PTO meetings are held monthly.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When families call, email or send a note, we do our best to respond within 24 hours.</li> <li>• Important weekly information is sent home to families in backpacks in Nokomis Friday folders.</li> <li>• Principal Felber-Smith will send occasional messages via Connect Ed, email, &amp; text message to encourage family participation in school events.</li> <li>• Principal Felber-Smith will send a monthly Nokomis Montessori digital newsletter via email and will update the school website with important dates and announcements.</li> <li>• Principal Felber-Smith hosts “Coffee with the Principal” events monthly. Coffee with the Principal is organized as an informal conversation/feedback session between families and the school. Some sessions focused on special topics co-facilitated by a resident expert from the Nokomis staff. For example, the school counselor and social worker may join Principal Abby to facilitate discussions with families around social emotional health and supports at home.</li> <li>• Montessori teachers communicate with parents regularly to build authentic relationships, share student work, and encourage participation in school events using newsletters, See Saw or Schoology (E2 only).</li> </ul>
<p><b>The achievement gap, or rather the “opportunity gap,” between students of color and white students in Saint Paul Public Schools is unacceptable. Our school is working to change practices and systems by identifying the barriers that make it harder for students of color to succeed and for their families to support their learning.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2021-2022, staff at Nokomis South engaged in a book study of Zaretta Hammond’s <i>Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain</i>. This was paired with extensive staff-led professional development around culturally responsive teaching strategies and inclusive learning environments.</li> <li>• Nokomis has a highly functional Student Assistance Team that monitors student achievement data as a means to provide early academic intervention for students who are not making adequate progress.</li> <li>• Nokomis teachers are deeply engaged in professional development and guided practice through <i>English Learning in the Mainstream (ELM)</i>. The ELM framework at Nokomis has been developed in partnership with Hamline University, and provides us an ELM coach on site to work side by side with teachers to develop strategies to support our EL learners.</li> <li>• 1 full time Academic Support Teacher and a full-time WINN Reading Teacher will collaborate with classroom teachers to provide additional small group and 1:1 instruction at each grade level.</li> <li>• <b>For more about our work on racial equity, contact: Abigail Felber-Smith, Principal</b></li> </ul>

**Transitions between schools can be challenging, and we work to help families as their children start and leave our school.**

**For new students and families, we support the transition by:**

- Our PreK and Kindergarten students remain with the same Children’s House Montessori teacher for two years.
  - Principal communicates a “Parent Input” form in May inviting families to share input that will inform the class placement process.
  - New student registration scheduled **TBD** 4:30-6:00 p.m. Special education team supports IEP students during registration. This includes parent visits to CH classrooms. Clerk and Administrative team support registration of parents/students accepted after new student registration offering information about the school and tour of classrooms as they register.
  - At new student registration in Spring 2022 we asked new PreK and kindergarten parents if new PreK/Kindergarten students participated in Head Start, ECFE, ECSE or other preschool programs.
  - We encourage parents to bring younger siblings to school events to support a positive transition to school.
  - Nokomis is a popular choice for East Side parents/families. We usually begin our marketing season at our district **School Choice Fair** in December, however this year it was cancelled. In mid-January 2023 the principal submits an IT ticket to obtain a list of PreK (4 by 9-1-22) and Kindergarten (5 by 9-1-22) siblings and then reaches out to remind parents to enroll by SPPS priority application deadline.
  - Families come to an Open House in January scheduled for **TBD**. Principal communicates with all prospective parents offering multiple school day tours to promote our Montessori instructional methodology.
- For students and families moving to the next school in their pathway, we support the transition by:**
- Our school counselor facilitates five class lessons with our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to support the transition to Middle School. He reviews these skills to support a positive transition: Organization skills, reading a schedule, opening a locker/lock, peer pressure.

**Family Partnerships**

**Our school-parent compact establishes the shared responsibility for student success between the school, families, and students. Families and teachers work together to develop the compact.**

- **Copies of the compact are available:** Teachers distribute at the beginning of the year; school website; review at fall and spring parent-teacher conferences; and copies available in the school office.
- **The compact will be updated:** April 2023

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montessori Teachers will review with parents/families at the Montessori Family Education Night scheduled on TBD.</li> </ul>
<p><b>There are many opportunities for families to build connections to the school and to each other.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students stay with the same Montessori teacher in Children’s House (CH) for PreK-K; in Elementary 1 (E1) for grades 1-3; and in Elementary 2 (E2) for grades 4-5. This allows for stronger relationships to develop between teachers, students, and families. There is high student stability at Nokomis Montessori South campus.</li> <li>• Volunteer Opportunities- Family members are always welcome at Nokomis, and are encouraged to volunteer for projects and events in and out of the classroom such as- copy/cut projects, Fun Run, Fun Fair, Art Night, Field Day, Spring Concert, etc.</li> <li>• <b>Nokomis Family Room:</b> Slotted to open early in the 2022-2023 school year, there will be a dedicated family lounge adjacent to the library for families to work on classroom projects, share and access resources, access the internet using school computers, and connect with other families. The space will be cozy with comfortable seating, coffee, a microwave and refrigerator. The space will be decorated with student work and photos of Nokomis Families. We hope that this space will provide a comfortable space that welcomes and encourages families to get involved at school.</li> <li>• <b>Coffee with the principal</b></li> <li>• Bilingual Hmong &amp; Spanish speaking staff members are available during the school day.</li> <li>• <b>Title I Annual Meeting</b> where we will share information about school programs.</li> <li>• <b>PTO Fall Festival</b> is scheduled on September 30, 2022 including flu shot clinic from 5:00-7:00 p.m.</li> <li>• Interpreters are arranged for November and March Parent-Teacher conferences and school events as needed by ELL teacher team.</li> <li>• Digital monthly newsletter is translatable</li> <li>• <b>Hmong New Year</b> celebration is scheduled on <b>TBD</b> and hosted by our Family Engagement Committee</li> <li>• <b>Open House</b> is scheduled in January 2023. (includes classroom observations) or 6:00 p.m. tour to promote our program to new prospective parents.</li> <li>• <b>National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID)</b> is scheduled February 2023. We invite parents to come for lunch with their child, and guest speakers are brought in to present to each class.</li> <li>• Translations in Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Karen and other languages are available as needed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taxi transportation is available for school day or evening events.</li> <li>• Virtual meeting options are also available if transportation or childcare is an issue.</li> <li>• Our annual <b>Science Fair</b> is scheduled in the spring (aligned with parent-teacher conference week) with morning judging by parents/community members &amp; displays are open during evening conferences.</li> <li>• <b>Spring Fun Fair</b> is scheduled in Spring 2023. Our Fun Fair is in part a service-learning project for our E2 students and parents.</li> <li>• <b>Volunteer Appreciation</b> is scheduled in June 2023 and will include a light breakfast and certificates for volunteers.</li> <li>• <b>EDL Band &amp; Strings Concert</b> is scheduled in May 2023 with after school performance and afternoon performance (if aligns with EDL Band/Strings teacher schedule).</li> <li>• Students perform by class at <b>one of three assemblies</b> (International Peace Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day &amp; Earth Day) are planned during the 2022-23 school year. Parents and families are invited to attend each assembly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>We work to make these meetings and events available for every family in the school.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We distribute a <b>2022-23 Nokomis Montessori South School Family Handbook</b> including Title I Family Engagement Plan and Title I Compact at Open House.</li> <li>• We launch the school year with <b>Montessori Family Education</b> in September. We serve a light dinner and provide school-age childcare and interpreters to boost parent involvement.</li> <li>• The Principal writes and distributes a monthly newsletter to promote participation in our school activities including lunch menu, PTO newsletter and other important information. Our monthly newsletter and calendars are posted on our school website.</li> <li>• We have bilingual Hmong and Spanish speaking staff members available during the school day. We can use the online interpreter service as needed. Our EL teacher team coordinates interpreters for parent-teacher conferences.</li> <li>• The principal arranges Hmong and Spanish interpreters to assist with other parent events such as Montessori Family Education Night, New Student Registration and as requested.</li> <li>• We provide translations in Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Karen and other languages as needed.</li> <li>• We schedule day and evening conferences to promote parent participation.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taxi transportation is available for day and evening events.</li> <li>• Principal partners with the school clerk and school counselor to do outreach to parents of students recommended by teachers for Summer School who haven't registered in late April to encourage them to register for additional academic support in free district summer school programs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Our school supports families as advocates and provides opportunities for parent leadership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We encourage parents to contact their child's Montessori, EL, Special Education or Prep teachers as a first step. Phone numbers and email addresses are listed in our 2022-2023 Nokomis Montessori South Family Handbook.</li> <li>• The Principal is approachable, available and responsive to any requests from families.</li> <li>• We will continue home visits as applicable.</li> <li>• The Principal frequently embeds professional development about working with families at staff meetings, team meetings, and one-to-one conversations with all staff members.</li> <li>• We reviewed our 2021-2022 Title I Compact, 2021-2022 SCIP and 2021-2022 Family Engagement Plan at our June 7, 2022 Coffee with the Principal virtual gathering.</li> <li>• Principal schedules time at monthly Leadership Team and PTO meetings to monitor progress on the annual SCIP and Title I Family Engagement Plan.</li> </ul>

Teaching and Learning	
<p><b>Our school shares information about state standards, assessment and student achievement with families in multiple ways</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Report cards and progress reports will be distributed</b> at November 2022 and March 2023 parent-teacher conferences. We have a history of high percentage of parents participating in parent-teacher conferences at Nokomis Montessori South. Families can access all report cards through the Campus Student or Campus Parent Portal.</li> <li>• Parent-Teacher conferences are held in Montessori and Autism teacher classrooms.</li> <li>• Teachers will share FAST reading assessment data with our K-5 parents during parent-teacher conferences. Teachers focus on teaching guided reading groups and use FAST reading assessment data to inform instructional next steps. Our Academic Support Teachers and Reading Teacher provide targeted reading instruction to students. We do outreach to families of students that are not yet reading at or above grade level standards. We offer additional math and reading instruction to our grade 3-5</li> </ul>

students through the EDL after-school program. We offer home reading strategies to parents to strengthen students' reading achievement.

- Teachers share student's math progress at November and March Parent-Teacher conferences. Teachers focus on math instructional interventions, recommend students for EDL after school classes and offer home math strategies to parents to strengthen our students' math achievement.
- Our EL teachers share EL Progress reports at November and March Parent-Teacher conferences. Principal encourages EL teachers to participate in parent- teacher conferences of our highest need students. EL teachers share W-APT for Kindergarten ACCESS test data for grades 1-5 at November conferences. EL teachers provide academic language support to our grade K-5 students.
- Our Special Education teachers share Special Education Progress reports at November and March Parent-Teacher conferences. Principal encourages EL teachers to participate in parent- teacher conferences as much as possible.
- Montessori Family Education Night is scheduled in September with a family dinner between 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. Montessori Teachers facilitate presentations. Free school age childcare is provided.
- Our K-3 students bring home reading book bags to support daily reading at home.
- **Family Nights aligned with SCIP – Reading:** We are tentatively planning a family education event right after November parent-teacher conferences to share reading strategies to use at home with your child. Our CH Montessori teacher team plans to review Kindergarten book bags and reading strategies including sight word rings. Our reading intervention teacher funded by Title I will share reading strategies. **Math:** We are planning a mid-year CH, E1 and E2 family Math “make and take” event to support math learning at home. NOTE: These events might take place during “Coffee with the Principal” Sessions.
- **Elementary Schools (K-3):** Our K-3 teachers communicate regularly with parents about reading progress and share strategies to strengthen reading progress including completing weekly homework and reading practice. Our E1 teachers encourage students to participate in EDL classes for additional academic support. Our K-3 teachers encourage K-3 students to participate in Summer School to receive additional academic support.

<p><b>Our school will engage in personalized learning as a key strategy to accelerate student achievement. Parents can get more information using many tools.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent log-in information can be accessed at <a href="https://spps.org/onestop">spps.org/onestop</a> or by asking the school clerk Beth LeRoux.</li> <li>• We use iPads to support student learning at school. Student iPads go back and forth between school and home.</li> <li>• Seesaw – CH and E1 Montessori Teachers use Seesaw to communicate with families including sharing student work</li> <li>• Schoology – E2 Montessori Teachers use Schoology to communicate with families including student work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Many before- and after-school enrichment and support opportunities are available for students</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDL classes on Mondays &amp; Wednesdays for grades 3-5 only. Classes focus on math and reading.</li> <li>• EDL Band/Strings for grades 4-5 students.</li> <li>• Discovery Club is offered and is a fee-based childcare program (before, after, and no school day).</li> <li>• Hmong Language and Culture learning after school classes are offered to prepare our students to perform at the December Hmong New Year Celebration.</li> <li>• Hazel Park Recreation Center offers after school Rec Check and childcare on no-school days.</li> <li>• Collaboration with Conway Recreation Center and the Tony Sanneh Organization for free after school childcare and summer youth activities.</li> </ul>

**Community Partnerships**

<p>Our school develops community partnerships to provide additional support for students and their families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will look into continuing our partnership with Minneapolis Institute of Arts “Art Adventures” including parent art volunteers and field trips to MIA.</li> <li>• Collaboration with the Battle Creek Recreation Center to offer after school Rec Check free after school childcare and/or programming on no-school days.</li> <li>• Girl Scout troops meets regularly in 2021-2022 at Nokomis Montessori South.</li> <li>• An ongoing partnership with local artists has been created to provide annual arts-in-residencies in our E2 classrooms funded by school-wide fundraisers.</li> <li>• Nokomis Montessori South partners with the University of Minnesota Football Team, whose players volunteer in some E1 and Children’s House classrooms on a regular schedule.</li> <li>• In SY1819 Nokomis South entered into a partnership with Hamline University to implement <i>English Learning in the</i></li> </ul>
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	<i>Mainstream.</i> This framework continues to be at the center of our professional development.
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This plan is available as part of our school’s SCIP, or School Comprehensive Improvement Plan. It can be found on our school website at [nokomis.spps.org](http://nokomis.spps.org), and printed copies are available, hanging outside the main office door.