The Milwaukee Public Schools Montessori Strategic Plan FY20–FY27

March 14, 2019–June 30, 2027

The Montessori Advisory Committee, Founded October 2018

Revised May 12, 2022, Approved May 26, 2022

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Impetus for Revision

The Montessori Advisory Committee (MAC) requested a revised Montessori Strategic Plan (MSP) on February 10, 2022, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and other constraints, which made revision necessary for successful implementation. This revised and updated Montessori Strategic plan has been developed to ensure continual and appropriate guidelines to implement, support, enhance, and expand Montessori education within the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The specific tasks, items, and timelines have been revised based on the feedback from staff, families, and community stakeholders, to provide continual growth, development, and support of Montessori in MPS.

To ensure the continuation of this formal district level support and to support the MAC committee, it is the request that Montessori have a permanent position of district level support not tied to the time constraints of the strategic plan.

As the revised strategic plan draws to a close in 2027, the intention would be to analyze the need to review, revise, and extend the Montessori Strategic Plan for continued formal Montessori support within Milwaukee Public Schools.

Revised MAC Strategic Plan Priority List of Budgetary Recommendations

Requested Initiatives to be Funded	Estimated Budget
Montessori Coordinator	$91,263 salary, $48,370 benefits Total: $139,633 permanent position
Montessori planning assistant	$41,598 salary, $22,047 benefits Total: $63,645 (referendum paid)
Teacher certification sponsorships	$96,000 annually ($12,000 x 8 sponsorships)
Professional development (support staff certification, district-wide teacher PD, principal certification) MPS staff work groups	$40,000 annually
Montessori staff recruitment (conference attendance, visits to certification centers)	$15,000 annually
Montessori certification pathway (set up and maintain MPS Montessori certification classroom, recruit professor)	$100,000 annually
Montessori program support (consultations/coaching) by international, national, or regional Montessori organizations	$50,000 annually
Marketing/branding – MKE and MPS community	$4,000 annually
Evaluate expansion costs for new program (facility, materials)	~ $727,500 total startup (447,500 facility upgrades + $280,000 materials) FY26 (2019 estimate)
Secondary (adolescent) Montessori certification held in Milwaukee for those hired after fall 2022 and current employees opting to enroll	$200,000 FY27

Fiscal Year	Estimated Costs
FY23	$458,596
FY24	$458,596
FY25	$458,596
FY26	$1,186,096
FY27	$658,596

Revised MAC Recommendations
for Fully Implemented Montessori Education in MPS

Activity	Details	Milestone	Timeline	Status
Create permanent position of district level Montessori Support	Permanent position not tied to the timelines of this plan Coordinate, connect and support all Montessori programs within MPS Ensure implementation of the Montessori Strategic Plan	Permanent Position created	June 2022	
Create a Montessori planning assistant position	Assist Montessori Coordinator with administrative projects and work independently or as part of a team to support the Montessori Strategic Plan Position paid for through referendum monies, not MSP budget	Position created and filled	June 2022	
Investigation to reclassify current Montessori Coordinator position	Ensure job duties match the scope of the position	Job analysis conducted	July 2022	
MPS Montessori Essential Elements are honored	Continued support of implementation of the basic Montessori Essential Elements See Appendix C for document	MPS Montessori Essential Elements are honored with fidelity	Continuously	
Hold monthly Montessori meetings	Montessori Advisory Committee meetings Montessori principal meetings Montessori assistant principal meetings Montessori school support teacher meetings	Montessori Coordinator develops meeting schedules, agendas, facilitates meetings as needed	Monthly	

Office of School Administration representation for Montessori	Office of School Administration representative attends MAC meetings Office of School Administration participates in informed support and communication of Montessori program needs	Office of School Administration representative confers with Montessori Coordinator	Monthly	
Montessori teacher recruitment	Encourage paras to become Montessori teachers through sponsorship model Develop relationships with Spanish language Montessori groups, state bilingual associations, etc., to meet the expanding needs of Riley Dual Language Montessori School Communicate and provide support while candidates are in the hiring process Work with local universities to provide Montessori information to their teacher certification programs Establish relationships with volunteer organizations Educate the community about Montessori education and recruiting diverse population of Montessori teacher staff and parents Communicate with Montessori certification programs to recruit new graduates	See details	Ongoing	

	Encourage schools to host University field students, etc., as a way to get adult learners in traditional education programs interested in Montessori Both monolingual and bilingual focus			
Montessori teacher certification pathway	Maintain MPS elementary Montessori teacher certification classroom environment for future certification program Set up MPS primary Montessori teacher certification classroom environment for future certification program Recruit Montessori professor to come to MPS to provide Montessori teacher certification through their already established organization The goal being to increase the accessibility of Montessori certification for our adult learners	See details	Ongoing Fall 2023 Ongoing, fall 2023	
District initiatives to be aligned to Montessori curriculum and pedagogical approach to the largest extent possible	MPS Montessori schools meet standards within the Montessori approach as outlined by the MPS Montessori Essential Elements and curriculum/standards alignments Montessori pedagogy and curriculum will be used to fulfill district initiatives Tier 2 academic support implemented through a Montessori-based	PBIS, EE, district walkthroughs documents, etc., should be viewed through a Montessori lens at Montessori schools	Ongoing	

	approach			
District professional development through Montessori lens	Montessori PD session provided during New Educator Institute for new Montessori teachers School-based professional development should align to Montessori curriculum and pedagogy specific to each school's need based on their data Opening week PD includes review of Montessori Strategic Plan	Professional development aligned	Ongoing	
Supporting current program expansions	Ensuring that MPS Montessori Essential Elements are understood and honored Keeping Montessori at the forefront of school decisions Support fidelity of implementation of Montessori program	Montessori Coordinator works closely with leadership team	Ongoing	
Encourage Montessori-certified teachers to pursue administrative certification	Indication of interest is included in retention survey Encourage those interested to apply to the district's internal training program: Aspiring Leaders	Follow up after retention survey Notify staff of Montessori administrator openings	Ongoing	
Prioritize the hiring of Montessori-certified trained administrators	Work with the Office of School Administration to have all Montessori schools staffed with Montessori-certified administrators Montessori administrator (principal or AP) job description created with Office of School Administration	Job description created	June 2022	

	Montessori administrator interview questions developed for Human Resources	Interview questions created	June 2022	
	Human Resources training for interview committee on a Montessori administrator position	PD developed and provided to interview committee	As needed	
	Montessori principal on district level interview team		As needed	
Continued development of Riley Dual Language Montessori School	Phase one: Work sessions with Riley staff, Montessori Coordinator, and staff from the Department of Bilingual Multicultural Education to create a pilot unit as entry point for the development of Dual Language Montessori curriculum	Sessions completed; goals met	June 30, 2022	
	Phase two: Riley staff implements pilot unit and provides feedback to the team; work sessions with Riley staff, Montessori Coordinator, and staff from the Department of Bilingual Multicultural Education continue to create subsequent units for the development of dual-language Montessori curriculum	Sessions completed; goals met	June 30, 2023	
	Phase three: Riley staff implements subsequent units and provides continuous feedback to the team; work sessions with Riley staff, Montessori Coordinator, and staff from the Department of Bilingual Multicultural Education continue to revise and	Sessions completed; goals met	June 30, 2024	

	complete subsequent units for the development of dual-language Montessori curriculum Dual-language, Montessori-specific report card created Dual-language Montessori materials sourced and/or created Funding sourced to pay stakeholders for input	 Primary, lower el Upper elementary Funding secured	 Fall 2019 Fall 2022 Ongoing March 2022	
Define expectations for the implementation of Montessori secondary (adolescent) framework for grades 7/8	Expectations based on the Essential Elements of Montessori secondary programs Framework will be developed through a committee and stakeholder input and will include prepared environment (materials, furniture, general resources), prepared adult (certification, PD), creation of Montessori-specific secondary (adolescent) report cards, delineation of key pedagogical programmatic features	 Committee created Full implementation	 June 2022 Fall 2024	
Montessori record keeping	Continue to utilize standards-based Montessori-specific report cards Continue to work with Infinite Campus company and the Department of Research, Assessment, and Data for Montessori-specific record-keeping solutions that include standardizing procedures across the MPS Montessori	Practice is continued Solutions developed	Ongoing July 2022; ongoing as needed	

	community, planning/ tracking/recording individualized lessons for students in each subject area, and understanding which lesson the child is ready for next and in which lessons the child needs additional support during a three-year lesson/grading cycle Analyze the need to revise the Montessori-specific report cards and record keeping		Annually in winter	
Montessori staggered-start procedure	For new students to have a successful introduction to school Five-day phase-in process Day one: all K5s Days two through five: phase in new K3/K4 students until all students are in attendance on day five Once student attends, they continue every day	Phase-in process outlined by stakeholders, communicated clearly to families, and enacted	Fall 2022	
Montessori PD sessions for Central Services staff working with Montessori schools	Anyone working with a Montessori school (department leaders, SPC, PBIS coaches, facilities, SPED, regional superintendents, curriculum specialists, ILD, etc.) Orientation to Montessori curriculum, pedagogy, and philosophy Tour of a Montessori school	Session developed: asynchronous orientation with synchronous/in-person tour of Montessori program	October 2022 Ongoing sessions for new hires	
Shift from scholarship to sponsorship model for Montessori	Tuition for Montessori certification is paid in full up front for each individual adult learner	Sponsorship model created and implemented	November 2022	

certification	Books, materials, and travel not included Payment amount is specific to the particular certification path of that learner Recruit and award sponsorships to those not currently district employees with condition of hire prior to sponsorship payout Learner agreement stating terms of service and repayment clearly communicated			
All classroom teachers in Montessori schools need to be Montessori certified	Extend current Montessori hiring practice to teachers of grades 7–12 All current secondary (adolescent) teachers are exempt from certification; professional development presented by Montessori Coordinator necessary Condition for new hires, must have either AMI or AMS certification with the caveat that certification courses will be held here in Milwaukee Secondary Montessori certification provided by contractor every five years here in Milwaukee Montessori Strategic Plan pays the tuition cost of Montessori certification	Relationship established with secondary (adolescent) certification provider	Winter 2023 Summer 2027	
Establish a framework for Montessori materials, classrooms, and facilities	Develop a minimum Standard of Care of Montessori materials to be included in each MPS Montessori classroom (inventory) K3–grade 6	Montessori Material Standard of Care created	December 2021	complete

	Develop a minimum Standard of Care for Montessori classrooms and building facilities	Montessori classroom and building facilities Standard of Care created	June 2023	
	District to develop systems/structures to ensure that each classroom meets the minimum district requirements	System of equitable funding for schools to meet district minimum requirements according to their needs for classrooms, facilities, and materials	March 2024	
	Annual review of existing facilities needs based on the minimum Standard of Care for Montessori classrooms and building facilities		Annually	
Exploration of Montessori school expansion	Conduct analysis to see whether expansion is needed and feasible (considering underrepresented and high-demand locations and teacher and administrator availability)	Analysis conducted	Winter 2024/2025	
	Develop parameters for school expansion process (initial and ongoing facility needs, Montessori support during expansion, Montessori principal group input throughout expansion process)	Parameters developed	Fall 2025	
	Begin expansion process if deemed necessary to open fall 2027	Preparation process begun if deemed necessary	Fall 2026	
Montessori program support	Consultations/PD by international, national, or regional Montessori organizations	Consultations/ PD contracted	Annually: spring planning, fall implementation	
	Support fidelity of program implementation			

	Funds to be shared out among schools based on needs each year identified by the Montessori principal group Includes Montessori-trained mentor coach provided to Montessori teachers of record enrolled in Montessori certification	Money shared among schools based on needs		
Standardized Montessori professional development for paraprofessionals	Done in modules by individual schools with schools providing time for paras to attend Cost per school for unlimited attendees included in Montessori Strategic Plan budget All current paraprofessionals attend New hires receive district-level professional development upon start until next module	Relationship with provider is established	Annually: fall Ongoing as needed	
Onboarding professional development for non-Montessori support staff	Professional development session created Provides an overview of the Montessori Method of education Supports an integrated and inclusive instructional approach	PD held for support staff new to Montessori settings	Annually: fall	
Equitable implementation of the identification process and formal instruction of English learner (EL) students	Collaborate with the Department of Bilingual Multicultural Education to provide guidance on the identification process as well as effective instruction for ELs in all Montessori classrooms	All newly enrolled students are administered a home Language Survey A language screener follows for surveys reflecting a language other than English Students who score	Annually: fall	

		below level 5 on the screener and subsequent ACCESS test are identified as English learners Teachers of identified students work with the Department of Bilingual Multicultural Education for instructional support	As needed	
Implement retention survey	Retention survey for Montessori program employees To determine recruitment needs for the following year	Survey conducted and analyzed	Annually: November	
Montessori all-staff professional development day	Bring all Montessori staff together for professional development and cross-district collaboration Full day or half day as allowed within current district PD hours	Montessori PD day (or half day) held during regular district allocated day	Annually: December	
Establish staffing needs	Determine school needs for staffing based on retirements, resignations, classroom expansions, etc.	Projections created with principals, HR, Montessori Coordinator	Annually: January	
Continue Montessori student enrollment practice	Developed in collaboration with student services Clarifies Montessori enrollment practices consistent among all MPS Montessori schools See edited Appendix F	Continue current practice	Annually: winter	
K3/K4 enrollment communication	Montessori enrollment practices on district web page Montessori presence at Kindergarten Enrollment Fair to provide information to	Montessori Coordinator attends fair, communicates with families, plans and facilities Montessori Summit	Annually: during K3/K4 enrollment window	

	prospective families Provide information about available Montessori seats in the event of a waitlisted family Hold Montessori Summit event to provide information to prospective families as well as retaining current families; visitors observe what a typical day is like in the Montessori environment at all levels			
Funding provided for K3 students	K3 students are the foundation for Montessori enrollment in our multi-aged classrooms Due to the nature of budgeting K3 enrollment, Student Services, regional superintendents, and budget analysts will work with each individual principal and the Montessori Coordinator to ensure that the school's needs are met	Collaboration by all areas during budget season to ensure each school's needs are met for K3 enrollment	Annually: winter	
Provide Montessori overview to district administrators enrolled in internal training programs	District administration internal training programs: Aspiring Leaders, new APs, new principals, emerging leaders, deans of students, etc. Allows variety of admins to become familiar with Montessori Potential for those enrollees to become interested in Montessori administration	Overview is provided at each of the cohorts	Annually	
MPS Montessori marketing and branding	Continue to update previously created Montessori branding and	Marketing reviewed	Annually	

	marketing materials, including print and digital Delivered to internal and external stakeholders Schools needing enrollment support will have postcards sent to families in the school's transportation regions to provide information about Montessori opportunities in their area	Postcards created and sent	Annually as needed	
Principals or assistant principals at Montessori schools are recommended to complete Montessori certification	Principals or assistant principals at Montessori schools are recommended to complete Montessori teacher certification or Montessori administrative certification Montessori Strategic Plan provides financial sponsorship of administrative certification	Administrators at Montessori schools are Montessori certified	As needed	
Montessori principal group provides support and input to district-level Montessori programmatic decisions	Montessori principal group is part of the initial regional development process as the district, constituents, and/or schools look to expand of change existing programs or start new programs Montessori principal group support with hiring of Montessori administrators	Montessori principal group is part of identified processes	As needed	
Montessori materials, furniture, and resources replenished during district textbook adoption cycle	Individual schools inventory their Montessori materials using the district-approved minimum Standard of Care to determine purchasing needs Montessori Coordinator authorizes school-based	Inventory completed	As needed	

	Montessori purchases identified Option to purchase additional copies of district-approved textbooks as a supplemental Tier 1 and Tier 2 resource as needed			
Montessori coaching course	All Montessori administrators and school support teachers trained in Montessori coaching The use of Montessori coaching tools during the district's coaching cycles Montessori Strategic Plan pays for course	New administrators and SSTs complete coaching certification	As needed	
Support research on MPS Montessori programs	Guided by the Department of Research and Data, Montessori Coordinator supports research within MPS Montessori	Support provided to researchers	As needed	

Revised Appendix C – MPS Montessori Essential Elements

MPS Montessori Essential Elements

An authentic Montessori school will implement a philosophical approach that is consistent with educational methods and areas of instruction as defined by the observations, research, writings, and instruction of Dr. Maria Montessori. A school must allow the child to develop naturally—children are able to learn at their own pace and follow their own individual interests, learning primarily through the hands-on use of manipulative materials (e.g., beads, blocks, geometric shapes) and interacting with the environment under the guidance of a specially trained adult. A Montessori environment promotes the child's ability to learn and discover independently, enabling motivation, knowledge building, and concentration. The Montessori pedagogical approach supports individualized student growth, executive functioning, intrinsic motivation, and learning while fostering a positive and productive whole-school community.

In addition, an authentic Montessori school will apply the following pedagogical elements. It is critical that all these elements be present for the Montessori approach to be successfully implemented. Montessori schools will do the following:

1. Implement the Montessori curriculum, which must include the following:
    a. The school day consists of uninterrupted Montessori daily work periods, with three-hour work periods being ideal.
    b. There are mixed-age groupings of children within a classroom: K3–K5, 1st–3rd grade, 4th–6th grade, 7th–8th grade, and 9th–12th grades.
    c. The full complement of Montessori materials based on the MPS Montessori materials Standard of Care is available in every classroom.
    d. Instruction is characterized by a high degree of freedom with responsibility given to the student to choose what to work on, where to work, how long to work.
    e. Instruction is primarily delivered in small groups (elementary and secondary) or one-on-one (primary).
    f. Curriculum is implemented with fidelity in accordance with Montessori certification.
    g. Specialty programs, such as music, art, and second languages, are limited in interruptions to the three-hour work cycle.

2. Have appropriately trained instructional staff:
    a. All classroom teachers have Montessori credentials from an accredited certification program of Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) or the American Montessori Society (AMS) for the age group they teach in addition to any required licenses or credentials by the state or district.
    b. All auxiliary staff (special education, physical education, art, music) are Montessori oriented. Each classroom teacher is supported by a paraprofessional/assistant who has received Montessori-specific orientation for that role.
    c. All adults, whether or not they are Montessori certified, embrace core Montessori principles that include respecting the process of human development and supporting children's independence, freedom, responsibility, and growth.

3. Create classroom designs that are compatible with the Montessori "prepared environment" principles:
    a. The learning environment offers ongoing access to real-world materials and activities.
    b. The learning environment offers appropriate access to a prepared outdoor environment.
    c. Students with special needs are fully included and supported within the classroom according to their IEPs.
    d. Students who are English learners are included and supported within the classroom according to their needs.
    e. Classroom communities feature no fewer than twenty-four students supervised by no more than two adults (start-up programs may have fewer students, and secondary (adolescent) communities may include more adults).

4. Assess student progress through the following:
    a. Assessment protocols follow state and district requirements; assessments are delivered in the least intrusive manner possible.
    b. Ongoing, personalized formative assessment with multiple indicators of success supported by Montessori observation and detailed record keeping, occurs regularly, which drives all instructional decisions.
    c. Children are increasingly involved in monitoring their own progress as is developmentally appropriate.
    d. Montessori practice is supported by a clearly defined Montessori curriculum aligned with state standards.
    e. Families are informed of student progress through a Montessori specific report card.

5. Implement strong leadership and organizational development:
    a. An experienced Montessori educator (principal, assistant principal, school support teacher, or instructional coach) guides the implementation of the school Montessori program.
    b. The school has a clear vision for how it delivers Montessori education and has an active cycle of reflection and self-review.
    c. The school develops relationships with one or more Montessori professional organizations to ensure consistent quality with potential accreditation.
    d. The district actively recruits, trains, hires, and retains high-quality Montessori teachers.
    e. All adults engage in ongoing Montessori professional development.
    f. Adults treat one another with respect and model grace and courtesy in their interactions.

6. Effectively engage families and community:
    a. A strong partnership between home and school is evident in all formal and informal communications.
    b. The school provides ongoing opportunities for family education in Montessori, including information sessions, discussion groups, observation of classrooms, and parent-teacher-student conferences.
    c. The school cultivates a strong school-home association in which parents have authentic opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the school's mission and communicate with school leadership.
    d. There is a robust family induction process, including open houses, orientation events, and networking experiences with families.

Revised Appendix F – MPS Montessori Enrollment Practice

Students shall be enrolled in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Montessori Schools at age three (K3) and age four (K4) through the MPS kindergarten enrollment process.

THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

In addition to the regular kindergarten program, the board may establish three- and four-year-old kindergarten programs at selected locations. The establishment of any such program shall be in keeping with budgetary limitations and the needs of the community.

1) A child entering the three-year-old kindergarten program must be three years of age on or before September 1.
2) A child entering the four-year-old kindergarten program must be four years of age on or before September 1.
3) A birth certificate must be shown at the time of application/enrollment in order to verify the child's birth date. Parents will be notified by mail of their child's acceptance in the program.

MONTESSORI ADMISSION PROCESS

Students older that four years (K4) may be enrolled in MPS Montessori schools as seats are available at each three-year multi-grade developmental level using the following specifications:

1) Students with verified continuous, previous Montessori experience shall receive Montessori enrollment preference.
2) Students without Montessori school experience, and students with limited Montessori school experience, may be enrolled as seats are available at each year multi-grade developmental level following an intake conference with the school principal.

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ORIGINAL MPS MONTESSORI STRATEGIC PLAN

The Milwaukee Public Schools Montessori Strategic Plan FY20–FY24

March 14, 2019–June 30, 2024

The Montessori Advisory Committee Founded October 2018

March 14, 2019

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Introduction

This plan offers a strategy to protect, enhance, and expand Montessori public education within Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), and more broadly, a strategy to reverse the trends of decreased enrollment and buildings sacrificed occupants in MPS. The flagship excellence of Montessori education can become a rallying frontier for re-energized confidence and faith in public education in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the nation. While this claim seems bold, we think bold ideas are needed to continue to change the perception of MPS in Milwaukee, Madison, and beyond.

Executive Summary

Purpose: The Montessori Advisory Committee (MAC) formed in response to the resolution passed by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors (school board) in October 2018. The Montessori Strategic Plan (MSP) supports the fortification of existing Montessori programs and expansion to underserved communities. To guarantee a collaborative process, parent leadership engaged Montessori parents, teachers, principals, MPS administration, school board directors, and community members in the formation of MAC.

Evidence shows the Montessori Method works for Milwaukee's children (Appendix A). The rigorous, project-based or social-emotional learning with near-universal literacy in the Montessori program prepares students for innovative middle and high school programs. Despite the growing number of Montessori schools and classrooms in MPS, waitlists show the demand far exceeds supply (Appendix B). This untapped demand costs MPS money every year. Strategic planning, implementation, and growth of Montessori education will lessen MPS's budget shortfalls by reversing enrollment trends.

Process: Once MAC was established, the creation of three work groups formed, ultimately developing the following themes:

1. **Facilities, Enrollment, and Expansion:** To serve the continued Montessori demand, MPS must update facilities with buildings that are safe, functionally support the Montessori curriculum, and meet the needs of the community to serve our students for generations to come.
2. **Staffing and Leadership:** School leaders and classroom teachers provide mentored experience and Montessori credentials to their students, improving student outcomes, nurturing a unique environment, and building active, supported, and peaceful communities.
3. **Curriculum and Evaluation:** The Montessori Method has specific, rigorous curriculum and evaluation standards, which must be carefully considered and utilized to sustainably maintain

and grow the enrollment of MPS and produce high-quality student outcomes.

Overall Goals and Recommendations of the Montessori Strategic Plan (MSP)

The MPS Montessori program will have essential elements of Montessori education that include the following:

1. Staffing and leadership with proper Montessori certification and/or training
2. Materials, furniture, and facilities that support Montessori education
3. Curriculum and policies congruent with Montessori principles
4. Evaluation and development of students, teachers, and schools that are congruent with Montessori pedagogy
5. Implementation of a marketing and outreach plan to sustain and expand Montessori programs

Implementation Recommendations

The MSP timeline is organized through action items, prioritized in years one (1), three (3), and five (5).

The recommendations in this plan could be fully implemented by **2024** and include the following:

- Adopt Montessori Essential Elements, creating definition of Montessori within MPS
- Seek and hire a Montessori coordinator position to support programing
- Implement a new teacher certification and/or training pathway to supply demand for growth
- Create and execute an adolescent teacher certification and/or training by 2021
- Expand program offerings with equity, growing schools and enrollment.

MAC seeks to add at least one Montessori school to MPS schools and create a process for the development of future expansion of the program in a sustainable, innovative, and impactful fashion by 2024**.**

Reversing MPS Declining Enrollment and Revenue

Since 2005, Milwaukee Public Schools has lost an average of 1,288 students annually. Demographic changes account for a small proportion of some of that loss. However, non-MPS charters, school choice options, cross-district enrollment, and homeschooling account for lost enrollment. 1,288 students at an estimated $10,000 each is $12,880,000 in lost revenue each year (See Appendix E “MPS Montessori Program Statistics Report”). During this decline, the expansion of Montessori schools has created notable enrollment growth.

Opportunity to Reverse the Trend

Since 1976, MPS has become the global leader in Montessori public education. MPS's eight tuition-free Montessori schools and enrollment of 3,500 students generates approximately $35,000,000 a year for the district. Montessori programs retain 87% of the students who begin at K3, resulting in a payback to the district by grade 3.

Milwaukee's public Montessori community, the largest in the U.S. except the territory of Puerto Rico, is not at a sustainable point as demand far outstrips supply. Rather, MPS loses millions of dollars per year when those families choose open enrollment, charter (including at least two other charter Montessori schools outside of MPS), choice, or the four private Montessori schools in Milwaukee. An MPS Montessori Strategic Plan offers the opportunity to capture a population that already initially seeks out MPS by continuing to build world-class Montessori programs.

The Montessori curriculum has demonstrated its ability to attract and retain families and their children within a district where enrollment is on a general decline.

The Cost of Non-Planning

Since the inception of Montessori in MPS forty-three years ago, the development and overall support of Montessori programs in relation to specific pedagogy and implementation have been initiated by the teachers and the Montessori community. These trained Montessorians continue to work individually to provide education and an overall understanding of the needs of the Montessori schools in MPS. Over the years, and much more recently, more integration of ideas between the Montessori leaders and community and MPS administration in regard to implementation of programming has developed. However, this has been a fragmented approach that does not fully support the development and expansion of the successful Montessori program in MPS. If strategic planning is implemented going forward, it provides a structured outline within district administration and the Montessori communities to systematically support quality implementation and expansion to its maximum potential for students, families, staff, and all of MPS.
The MPS school board requested a study of Montessori education in 2001 by Professor Joseph Prococcini, providing an initial framework to support this globally leading system of quality, credentialed, no-tuition Montessori programs. This study has provided insight over the years in ways to support and expand Montessori programs in MPS.

Clear planning increases teacher and principal satisfaction resulting in retention of qualified teachers. An effective plan also helps regain student enrollment through parent satisfaction.

Montessori programs have demonstrated the ability to attract and retain students while generating parent engagement. The result of that engagement is evident in the current enrollment in the existing MPS Montessori programs and the extensive K3 and K4 waitlists at the majority of the eight MPS Montessori schools.

K3 and K4 student waitlists demonstrate the demand for the MPS Montessori programs (Appendix B). On average, 30% of the K3 waitlisted students do not attend another MPS school for later grades, decreasing the potential enrollment in MPS. Montessori education is a system that consistently provides enduring and sustainable education and continues to address enrollment loss and student achievement in MPS. Montessori school expansions will alleviate these waitlists and expand district enrollment and revenue.

Montessori Education in MPS

Montessori education, based on the scientifically developed pedagogy of Dr. Maria Montessori, is a holistic approach to natural human development. Academic, social, and emotional aspects of development are fostered within developmentally appropriate, multi-aged classroom environments (ages birth–3, 3–6, 6–9, 9–12, 12–15, 15–18). Scientifically based manipulative materials support a conceptually based curriculum, which guides students through a sequential process toward abstraction, application, and integration of concepts. Natural human tendencies and specific "sensitive periods" of developmental concept acquisition provide guidance for adult instruction and student learning within an approach of student interest and choice. The three-year, multi-aged classroom communities support positive and peaceful peer interactions within an integrated academic and social curriculum focus. Intrinsic student motivation and the love of learning (in all areas of the curriculum and life) is developed through an individualized learning approach within a social and collaborative classroom environment. Student choice within an adult-guided environment provides the opportunity for each child to reach their natural potential and show overall growth and success. The Montessori pedagogical approach supports individualized student growth, executive function, and learning while fostering a positive and productive whole school community.

Montessori Student Achievement

Montessori programs in MPS as a whole have historically performed above district levels and some above state levels on the district and state assessments (See Appendix A). The Montessori pedagogy and concept-based (not individual grade-level) curriculum provide an opportunity for students to grow beyond their grade-level expectations and perform at high levels. The Montessori curriculum and method supports and allows for accelerated academics for those students who show the ability for advanced

academic achievement. The integrated Montessori curriculum within a socially powered classroom community encourages the development of critical thinking and executive functioning skills that translate into an intrinsically motivated student who shows engagement and joy in learning. This development of the whole student supports overall academic achievement while integrating the necessary social skills to be successful in life.

Montessori Standards

The Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the American Montessori Society (AMS) have established standards for Montessori programs throughout the U.S. and the world. The National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector (NCMPS) and Montessori Public Policy Initiative (MPPI), working with both AMI and AMS, have developed "Montessori Essential Elements" summaries for public schools (see Appendix C). When these Essential Elements are followed, the science behind the method is fostered and implemented in an authentic manner. Given that public Montessori programs are susceptible to district and state mandates, it is crucial the Essential Elements are followed. It is further recommended that MPS Montessori programs receive consultations from either AMI or AMS. These periodic reviews provide the staff with reflective practices and administrators are reminded and informed why Montessori pedagogy and philosophy must be adhered to in order to fully implement Montessori programs. MAC considered these elements in creating the MSP.

NCMPS Essential Elements for Public Montessori Schools

See Appendix C.

MAC Strategic Plan Priority List of Budgetary Recommendations

Requested Initiatives to be Funded	Estimated Budget
Montessori coordinator position	$131,580 annually FY20–24
Teacher certification and/or training sponsorships	$84,000 annually FY20–24 ($12,000 x 7 sponsorships)
Additional trained teachers (use as Montsubs if no vacancies) to fill anticipated vacancies following hiring cycles	$120,000 up front annually ($40,000 x 3 teachers) reimbursed by centrally allocated teacher funds
Montessori principal administrative professional development	$16,000 ($8,000 x 2 principals) FY20
Adolescent (middle/high school) Montessori certification and/or training for current teachers in Milwaukee summers 2020–21	$200,000 FY21
Montessori program support (consultations/PD) by international, national, or regional Montessori organizations	$25,000 annually (funds matched by individual schools) FY20–24
Marketing/branding – MKE and MPS community	$4,000 annually FY20–24
Expansion costs for new program (facility, materials)	$727,500 total start-up (447,500 facility + 280,000 materials) FY23

Fiscal Year	Estimated Costs
FY20	$380,580
FY21	$563,080
FY22	$370,080
FY23	$992,080
FY24	$497,580

MAC Strategic Plan Priority List of Structural System Recommendations

1. **Communication System** for Effective MPS Montessori Program Functioning
    - Create Montessori coordinator position (program support, not supervisory)
    - Designate district administrator "Montessori point person"
        - Attend monthly principal and MAC meetings
        - Collaborate with Montessori principals and coordinator
        - Engage in Montessori PD (with principals, conferences, etc.)
    - Schedule monthly principal meetings as part of monthly district principal PD
    - Schedule monthly MAC meetings
    - Communication system flow: MAC/principal group/Montessori coordinator –> district point administrator –> departments/leadership/superintendent
    - Principal group role with district leadership for programmatic Montessori items
        - Principal group advocates for Montessori-certified administrators
        - Principal group is part of the interview and selection committee for Montessori coordinator position
        - Principal group is part of regional development process in relation to Montessori programmatic decisions for school expansions and growth
2. **Staffing and Leadership** Certification and/or Training Systems and Supports/Recruitment
    - Establish annual recruitment procedures and timelines between HR and Montessori coordinator/principal
        - Coordination of recruitment with hiring timelines
        - Principal, coordinator, or designee attend AMI and AMS conferences
        - Recruitment materials to Montessori certification centers, MPS staff, local community
        - Mono- and bilingual recruitment focus
    - Establish teacher certification and/or training process
        - Teacher certification and/or training sponsorships—work with HR to define details
        - Additional trained teachers (use as subs if no vacancies; first preference in Mont. schools)
        - Para teacher certification and/or training process through MPSU (supplemental teacher status)
    - Principals without Mont. certification attend Montessori PD
    - MPS Montessori teacher-to-administrator process

3. District Administration Support for **Curriculum/Program Fidelity**
    - Adopt the nationally accepted Montessori Essential Elements for program implementation
    - Prioritize hiring Montessori-trained principals as preferred choice
    - Recommend administrators without Montessori certification to begin AMI or AMS teacher/ administrative certification and/or training within first year of beginning position (and complete); attend Montessori PD
    - Continue AMI or AMS teacher certification requirements, and recommend adding Montessori adolescent teacher certification and/or training requirement
    - Continue currently defined enrollment practices (Appendix F)
    - Montessori program support (consultations, PD) by recognized Mont. organizations
    - Adolescent (grades 7–12) curriculum expectations defined and supported
    - Work with appropriate departments to align district initiatives to Montessori curriculum/ approach to the largest extent possible
    - Montessori specific school-based PD sessions (district PD days and staff meetings) as appropriate
    - Advocate for annual all-MPS Montessori full-day PD session
    - District department support staff (SST coaches, curriculum coaches, etc.) knowledgeable of Montessori curriculum approach (relevant Montessori PD provided)
    - Work with appropriate departments to potentially extend phase-in for K3/K4 students
    - District textbook adoption funds utilized for Montessori material replacement during textbook adoption cycle
    - Work with appropriate departments to develop a process, including Mont. representation, to support approval of national Mont. research in MPS
4. Montessori Program **Facilities Expansion 3–5 Year Plan**
    - Work within the regional development plan to develop process to determine timing, location, and implementation of program expansion, considering, but not limited to the following:
        - Underrepresented and high-demand locations (equity and enrollment)
        - Mont. teacher and administrator availability (staff/program viability) and hiring
        - Initial and ongoing facility needs during expansion until full program implementation
        - Mont. support during expansion growth (staff PD, principal group recommendations)
        - Montessori principal group input throughout expansion/growth process
        - Emphasize supporting current program expansions at Bay View and Riley prior to new program expansion

MAC Recommendations for Fully Implemented Montessori Education in MPS

Year 1				
Activity	Milestone	Input	Timeline	Estimated Budget
1. All MPS Montessori schools will have staffing and leadership with proper Montessori certification and/or training				
Create a Montessori coordinator position for central office to coordinate, connect, and support all Montessori programs within MPS. *Coordinator to be hired with input from principal group and Montessori principal representatives on the interview committee.	Position filled	Human Resources	July 2019	131,580/yr
Analyze the costs of current Montessori teacher certification and/or training investment. ● Determine timelines for recoup of MPS-sponsored teacher certification and/or training and credentialing. Implement MPS-sponsorship model. ● Determine length of contracted time the teacher would have to commit to MPS.	Analysis complete and shared with stakeholders (Montessori principals and MAC)	Finance, Human Resources	August 2019	84,000 total (12,000 x 7 sponsorship/ year)
Develop and implement a retention survey for Montessori program employees to be completed by December of each year. This survey will be used to determine recruitment needs for the following year.	Survey developed and administered	HR Mont. principals	December 2019	N/A
Additional teachers in cycle A. If any extra teachers, be substitutes. Post jobs before winter break and hiring done by May.	Processes developed and implemented	HR Mont. coord.	August 2019	120,000 Total (40,000 x 3 teachers)
Annually establish teacher needs for existing programs and expanded programs…create projections, retirements.	Data analyzed	Mont. coord., HR	March annually	N/A
Recommend that non-Montessori-trained principals take Montessori administrative or teacher certification and/or training.	Certification and/or training enrollment and completion	Non-Mont. principals	August 2019	16,000 (8,000 x 2)
2. All MPS Montessori schools will have materials, furniture, and facilities that support				

Montessori education				
Establish a rating system for Montessori facilities, classrooms, and materials.	System developed	Mont. coord., Facilities and Maint., Mont. prin.	August 2020	N/A
Montessori materials replenished during district curriculum textbook adoption cycle, utilizing district textbook adoption funds that the school would have received. Individual schools inventory their Montessori material needs.	Inventory developed and complete	Mont. coord., Mont. SSTs, Mont. prin.	August 2020	District textbook adoption funds
Determine retention rate of students transitioning from K-3 to K-4, K5 to elementary, 3rd to 4th, 6th to 7th, 8th to 9th, for all sites.	Report complete and shared with all stakeholders	Accountability and Efficiency	Annually in October	N/A
3. All MPS Montessori schools will have curriculum and policies congruent with Montessori principles				
Work with administration, MTEA, and appropriate departments to implement annual full-day all-Montessori PD, to bring all the Montessori staff together for unity and common support.	Confirmed date with district admin. approval	Mont. principals, district administration, MTEA	August 2019	N/A
Explore opportunities for providing equitable implementation of ELL interventions for ELL students in Montessori classrooms.	Potential opportunities defined	Bilingual; Mont. prin.	August 2020	N/A
Develop opportunities for Adolescent certification and/or training for current and future Montessori Adolescent staff through AMI, AMS, or Great Work Incorporated.	Certification and/or training date and funding approved	Mont. coord., district admin., HR	By August 2019	200,000 in summer 2021–22
Define expectations for the implementation of the Montessori middle and high school curriculum.	Curriculum defined expectations created	Mont. prin., Mont. coord., MAC	August 2020	N/A
Continue Montessori enrollment practice, developed in collaboration with Student Services, clarifying current enrollment practices consistent among all Montessori schools.	Continue current practice	Student Services, Montessori principals	August 2019	N/A
Continue to provide funding for K3 students as the foundation for				

Montessori enrollment and developmentally appropriate Montessori education.	Continue funding annually	Finance	Ongoing	N/A
Continue to support implementation of the basic Montessori Essential Elements (multi-aged class arrangements, three-hour integrated curriculum work cycle, material curriculum implementation).	Continue Mont. essentials implementation	Dist. admin., Mont. principals	Ongoing	N/A
Develop and implement a Montessori onboarding professional development for non-Montessori support staff members in Montessori schools that provides an overview of the Montessori Method of education.	PD implemented	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., Mont. organizations	August 2019/20	Included in consultation costs
Begin annual consultations with international, national, and regional Montessori agencies to support fidelity of program implementation.	Consultations contracted	Mont coord.; Mont principals	August 2019	25,000 with school matching
Align primary report cards with Montessori curriculum.	Aligned report cards completed	Mont. coord., Mont teachers, Student Services	August 2019	N/A
4. Evaluation and development of students, teachers, and schools that are congruent with Montessori pedagogy				
Develop and adopt MPS Montessori Essential Elements.	Essential Elements adopted as a part of the Montessori Strategic Plan	Milw. Board of School Directors	August 2019	N/A
Work with appropriate departments to facilitate increased research on MPS Montessori program.	Begin collaborative work with appropriate departments	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., MAC, research dept.	August 2019	N/A
Hold monthly principal meetings and monthly MAC meetings with consistent representation from administration.	Meeting schedule developed, agendas, sign-in sheets	Reg. sup., Mont. prin., Mont. coord., MAC	Monthly	N/A
District administration representative for MAC and principal group meetings will participate in ongoing Montessori orientation for informed support and communication of program needs.	Meeting agendas, informed communications	Reg. sup., Mont. prin., Mont. coord., MAC	Monthly	N/A
Begin to develop and implement systems of communication between the district, the	Organizational			

Montessori principals' group, and MAC. *Principal group provides recommendations for program expansion/new program implementation decisions.	structure developed and communicated to all district leadership	Reg. sup., Mont. prin., Mont. coord.	August 2019–2024	N/A
Identify options and budget for consultation with AMI, AMS, or NCMPS for each program.	Schedule developed for all programs to receive consultation	Mont. coord.	June 2020	N/A
5. MPS will implement an Outreach Plan to support expansion of the successful Montessori program				
Work with MPS Foundation where charitable giving can get allocated equitably to all Montessori schools.	FUND board identified	Mont. coord.; Mont principals, MPS Foundation	June 2020	N/A
Develop marketing that improves communication with prospective parents about Montessori K-3 and K-4 kindergarten enrollment and provides parents with information about available Montessori seats when they are waitlisted.	Development of plan, communication structure developed and communicated with schools and school leaders	Mont. coord., Mont. prin.	June 2020	N/A
Work with appropriate departments to provide information to all families in the Montessori programs' transportation regions with the purpose of providing information about Montessori opportunities to diverse parent populations.	Development of plan communication structure developed and communicated to schools and school leaders	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., Student Services, Transportation, Communications	Jan 2020	N/A
Develop marketing and branding for the MPS Montessori program from K-3–12 that can be delivered to internal and external stakeholders.	Plan developed and communicated to stakeholders	Mont. coord., MPS media, Mont. prin.	Jan 2020	4,000
Evaluate the school performance of each Montessori school based on academic, fiscal, and operations to measure impact of MPS MSP.	Academic, fiscal, and operational performance review and report to Milwaukee Board of School Directors annually	Appropriate departments	Annually	N/A

Year 3				
Activity	Measurement	Input	Timeline	
1. Recommend MPS Montessori schools will have staffing and leadership with proper				

Montessori certification and/or training				
Work with school administration to have all Montessori schools staffed with Montessori-certified administrators, if possible, with approval of chief school administration officer and superintendent.	Certification from AMI or AMS	School admin., Mont principals	August 2024	N/A
Continue current practice of hiring AMI- and AMS-certified and/or trained teachers.	Certification and/ or training from AMI or AMS	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., HR	August 2019	N/A
Work with local and regional Montessori organizations (example: Wisconsin Montessori Association, Montessori Institute of Milwaukee) to establish a standardized certification and/or training for all paraprofessionals and support staff and implement a PD together for networking and collaboration.	Event scheduled and held	Mont. organizations, Mont. coord.	By August for onboarding	Included in consultation funds
Encourage Montessori-certified teachers who are interested in pursuing administrative opportunities to apply to the Aspiring Leaders program.	Teachers joining program	Mont. coord., Mont principals, teachers	2020	N/A
Create and offer an optional module on Montessori leadership for interested candidates enrolled in the Aspiring Leaders program.	Module created and offered to MPS aspiring leader program	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., school admin.	2021	N/A
Montessori coordinator will continue to explore external funding sources for professional development.	Funding sources identified	Mont. coord.	Ongoing	N/A
Montessori principals will work with appropriate departments in the selection of the Montessori coordinator.	Collaboration implemented	Mont. prin., Office of Academics	Ongoing	N/A
Inform and encourage interested paraprofessionals to join teacher certification pathways in MPS.	Employees enrolled	Mont. coord., Mont prin., HR	Ongoing	N/A
Develop relationship with Puerto Rico AMS National Organization and U.S. bilingual-certified and/or -trained teachers to meet the expanding needs of the bilingual Montessori program.	Relationship established	Mont. coord., HR	Dec 2021	N/A
Develop relationship with the AMI Mexico certification center to recruit bilingual Montessori	Relationship	Mont. coord.,		

teachers.	established	HR	Dec 2021	N/A
Confirm that all current middle and high school teachers have attended the AMI, AMS, or Great Works/NAMTA Montessori Adolescent Orientation, offered locally and paid for by MPS.	Certification and/or training complete	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	July 2022	N/A
Work with HR to extend current primary and elementary Montessori certification and/or training practice to adolescent (7th–12th) positions.	Practice extended	HR, Mont. coord., Mont prin.	July 2022	N/A
2. All MPS Montessori schools will have materials, furniture, and facilities that support Montessori education				
Through the regional development process, review facilities that could accommodate Montessori expansion, prioritizing underserved student populations, areas of the city that do not have a Montessori school, and areas of high demand.	Facilities list complete	Mont. coord.; regional development	July 2022	N/A
Solidify and implement Montessori materials and furniture replenishment recommendations related to textbook adoption, including an annual review of existing facility needs (technology, furniture, materials, etc.).	Needs assessment completed and implemented	Mont. coord.	July 2022	N/A
3. All MPS Montessori schools will have curriculum and policies congruent with established Montessori principles				
Annually establish PD training. Establish annual timelines for the delivery of a city-wide Montessori PD based on the MPS calendar with topics-related data and staff input from surveys. Individual school PD aligns to specific program needs based on their data that also enhance cultural responsiveness within a Montessori approach.	Scheduling and agendas	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	August 2021	N/A
Implement specific Montessori PD for special education teachers and non-Montessori support staff throughout the year (in conjunction with staff PD) to support an integrated (and				

inclusive) instructional approach, and to support student transitions to the next Montessori classroom "level."	PD planned and completed	Mont. coord.; Mont. principals	August 2021	School based and included in consultation funds
Offer to provide Montessori PD to district administrators who supervise or work in Montessori schools (e.g., regional superintendents, SST support administrators, special ed. supervisors, etc.). Offer orientation to Montessori curriculum, pedagogy, and philosophy. Continue offering orientation with new hires.	Orientation offered	Mont. coord.; Mont. principals	August 2021; ongoing	N/A
Work with departments to explore new Montessori early childhood K-3 and K-4 phase-in best practices, with input from all stakeholders, potentially increasing the phase-in period to two weeks in order for students to have a successful introduction to school.	Survey conducted; results implemented	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., district depts.	August 2021	N/A
Continue annual consultations with international, national, and regional Montessori agencies to support fidelity of program implementation.	Consultations contracted	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	August 2019	$25,000 with school matching
4. All MPS Montessori schools will have evaluation of students, teachers, and schools that are congruent with Montessori principles				
Montessori leaders work with the appropriate departments to facilitate approval and implementation of Montessori research, support overall recruitment and retention goals, and increase MPS's visibility in the national Montessori community.	Leader identified, connection made with appropriate departments	Identified Mont. leader	Dec 2021	N/A
Explore Montessori evaluations that are aligned to Montessori curriculum, based on the state standards, to replace district-required assessments.	Evaluations identified	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	Dec 2021	N/A
Investigate Montessori-specific classroom rating scales to use as teacher support and evidence for district-utilized evaluation system.	Rating scales identified	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	Dec 2021	N/A

Strengthen/unify/improve existing programs through Montessori consultations, individual school staff PD and community involvement (to ensure that all schools are enrolled to their capacity).	Consultations in place; all schools enrolled at capacity	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	Aug 2021	Included in consultation funds
Continue monthly MAC meetings, and principal/ administration meetings. Maintain communication systems between MAC, the Montessori principal group, and district administration.	Meetings held; ongoing	Mont. coord., Mont. principals	Aug 2021; ongoing	N/A
Maintain class sizes that are aligned with AMI and AMS guidelines.	All classes enrolled at acceptable sizes	Mont. principals	Aug 2021	N/A
5. MPS will implement an Outreach Plan to support expansion of the successful Montessori program				
Work with higher education to explore development of a certification and/or training opportunities in conjunction with MPS University for paraprofessionals and others aspiring to become a Montessori teacher	Joint plan created	Mont. coord.	July 2021	N/A MPSU
Develop relationships (through MAC and district administration) with neighborhood organizations and city leaders to continue to educate the Milwaukee community about the benefits of Montessori education in MPS.	Relationships developed	MAC, Mont. coord., Mont principals	June 2021	N/A

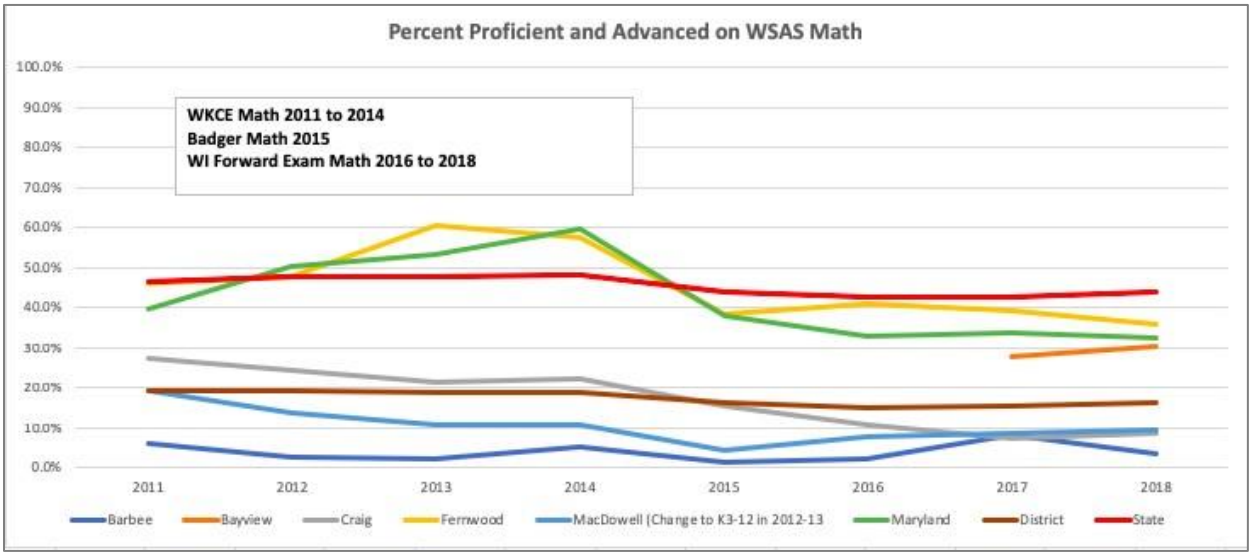
Year 5				
Activity	Measurement	Input	Timeline	Estimated Budget
1. All MPS Montessori schools will have staffing and leadership with proper Montessori certification and/or training				
Continue to work with school administration to have all Montessori schools staffed with Montessori-certified and/or trained administrators, if possible, with approval of chief school administration officer and superintendent.	Certification and/or training from AMI or AMS for all certified staff	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., HR	August 2024	N/A
Maintain the Montessori coordinator position.	Position filled	HR, MAC	August 2024	$131,580

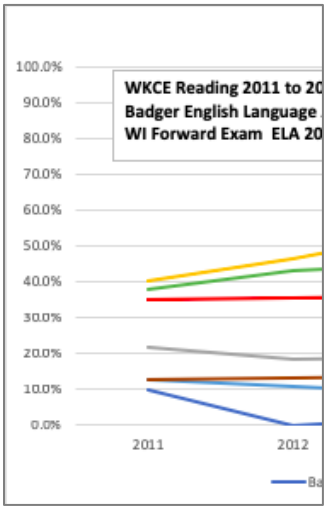
Develop an affiliate relationship with AMI or AMS Montessori certification centers in Puerto Rico and Mexico for dual-language trainees and build pathways for international recruitment and hiring.	Pathways for recruitment of international staff established and Spanish-language Montessori certification and/or training options available for MPS teaching candidates	HR, Mont. coord.	August 2024	N/A
Continue to work with HR to recruit and retain Montessori-certified teachers at all grade levels (K-3–12th).	Practice continued	HR, Mont. coord., Mont. prin.	August 2024	N/A connect to sponsorship funds
Continue facilitation of paraprofessionals utilizing district pathways to become Montessori-certified and/or -trained teachers.	Paraprofessionals in pathway	HR, Mont. coord., Mont. prin.	August 2014	N/A
2. All MPS Montessori schools will have materials, furniture, and facilities that support Montessori education				
Based on regional development plan, open one expansion Montessori school by 2024 and create a timeline to analyze enrollment for future expansions by 2029 and every five to ten years thereafter to the extent possible.	Needs assessment, including school and student performance indicators, supportive of expansion. Facility and area of city identified for expansion program.	Regional development team, Mont. prin.	June 2025	Estimated $447,500 facilities + $280,000 materials start-up costs dependent upon facility
3. All MPS Montessori schools will have curriculum and policies congruent with Montessori principles				
Continue to review and implement a dual-language immersion curriculum within the Montessori pedagogy during the development of the dual-language Montessori program at Riley Montessori School.	Needs assessment clear curriculum for biliteracy delivered through the Montessori pedagogy	Bilingual dept., Mont. prin., Mont. coord.	June 2025	N/A
Continue to have professional development facilitated (and potentially administered) by the Montessori coordinator.	Yearly timelines developed and implemented each year	Mont. coord., Mont. prin.	August 2024	N/A
4. Evaluation and development of students, teachers, and schools that are congruent with Montessori pedagogy				
Continue to fully implement Montessori curriculum, including Montessori three-	AMI/AMS	Mont. prin., Mont. coord.,	August	

grade classroom groupings.	accreditation	reg. sup.	2024	N/A
Evaluate and implement district school improvement plans and initiatives through the lens of the Montessori pedagogy, supported by the designated regional superintendent or leadership specialist, that support Montessori programs.	School plans created, approved, and implemented	Mont. prin., reg. sup.	August 2024	N/A
Implement the use of Montessori coaching tools for observation to improve teacher efficacy.	School coaches trained and implementing the model in all schools	Mont. prin., Mont. coord.	August 2024	N/A
Research normed universal screeners for use in Montessori schools that are aligned with Montessori pedagogy and inclusive of Montessori English language learners.	Research for inclusion of a screener in an RFP at the district level	Mont. coord., Mont. prin., Research and Eval., reg. sup.	August 2024	N/A
5. MPS will implement an Outreach Plan to support expansion of the successful Montessori program				
Establish relationships with professional organizations, higher education institutions, and volunteer organizations for the purpose of educating the community about Montessori education and recruiting a diverse population of Montessori teacher staff and parents.	Relationships developed and strategic outreach for the purpose of community education and recruitment of families and potential staff	Mont. coord., MPS media, induction dept.	June 2025	N/A

Appendix A – Montessori Achievement Data

	WKCE Reading				Badger ELA	Forward ELA		
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Barbee	9.8%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	5.9%	8.0%	6.4%	6.3%
Bayview (Howard)							44.4%	36.8%
Craig	21.6%	18.6%	18.8%	20.4%	27.1%	17.6%	17.0%	11.4%
Fernwood	40.4%	46.6%	54.3%	55.0%	50.1%	63.7%	60.2%	52.2%
MacDowell (Change to K3-12 in 2012-13	12.7%	10.7%	8.9%	11.2%	21.4%	14.7%	18.5%	14.8%
Maryland	38.1%	43.1%	45.3%	55.7%	58.5%	44.5%	52.4%	52.2%
District	12.6%	13.2%	13.5%	14.1%	26.0%	19.4%	20.1%	19.0%
State	35.1%	35.4%	35.8%	36.2%	51.3%	42.7%	44.4%	42.4%
	WKCE Math				Badger	Forward Math		
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Barbee	5.9%	2.6%	2.4%	5.2%	1.5%	2.3%	8.2%	3.6%
Bayview							27.8%	30.3%
Craig	27.1%	24.5%	21.2%	22.3%	15.3%	10.5%	7.3%	8.6%
Fernwood	46.1%	47.9%	60.3%	57.5%	38.4%	40.8%	39.0%	35.7%
MacDowell (Change to K3-12 in 2012-13	19.3%	13.5%	10.6%	10.7%	4.5%	7.6%	8.7%	9.3%
Maryland	39.8%	50.4%	53.3%	59.5%	38.0%	32.9%	33.5%	32.6%
District	19.2%	19.2%	19.0%	18.6%	16.1%	14.8%	15.4%	16.2%
State	46.4%	47.8%	47.8%	48.3%	43.9%	42.5%	42.8%	43.8%
Graduation Cohort			Students that spent K5-5th or K5-8th grade					
School	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2027**	**2018**		
Barbee								
Bayview								
Craig								
Fernwood								
MacDowell								
Maryland								
Riley								

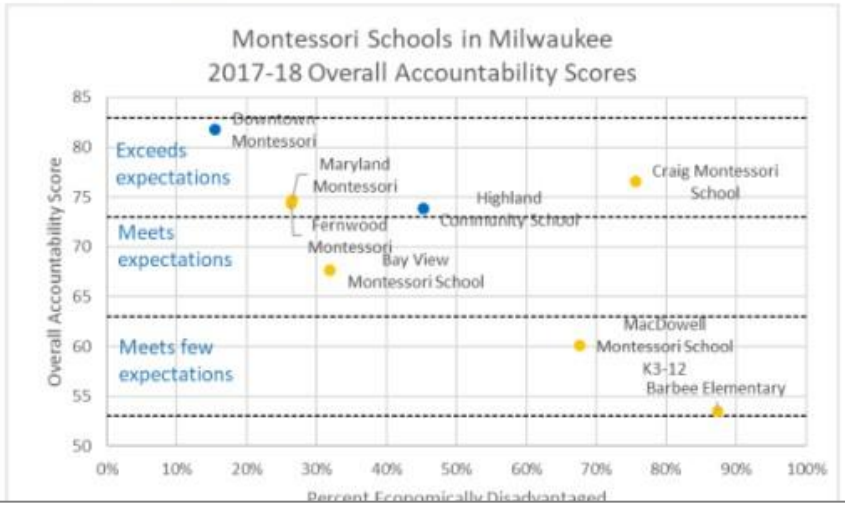




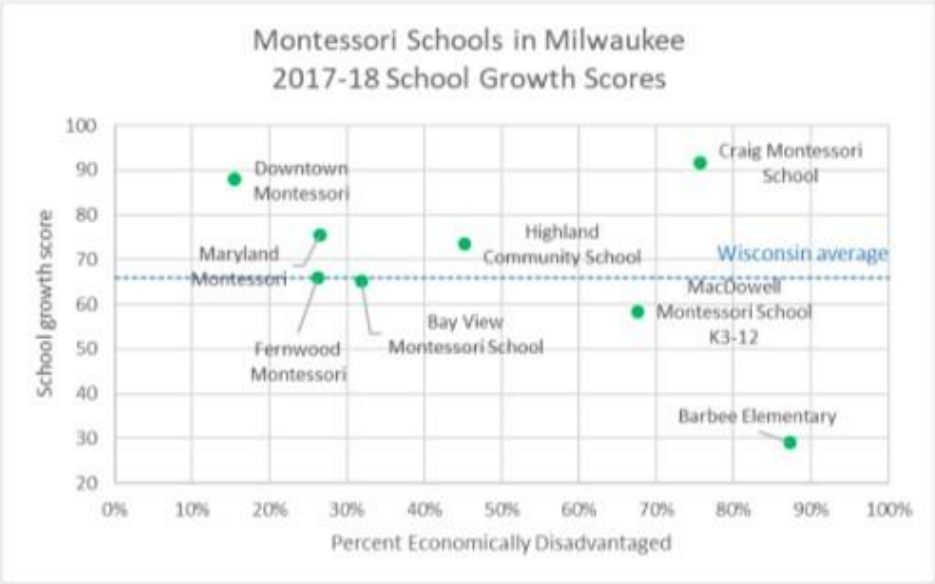
DPI Report Card Data from Montessori Schools in Milwaukee—2017-18

These calculations are based on a spreadsheet that DPI publishes every year showing data used in "school report cards" for all schools in Wisconsin that receive public funds.

The chart below compares the Montessori schools' overall accountability scores to the percentage of students defined as economically disadvantaged. The noncharter MPS schools are shown in yellow; the two charter schools in blue.



This plot compares the overall growth scores of the Montessori school to the percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged. The dotted line shows the average growth of all Wisconsin schools.



Appendix B – Waitlist Information from MPS Montessori Programs

Year/Grade	Fernwood	Bay View(Howard)	Maryland	Craig	Barbee	Macdowell	Riley	Total for year
14-15 K3 Waitlist	73	110	72	93	17	29	NA	394
15-16 K3 Waitlist	71	67	51	31	19	2	NA	241
16-17 K3 Waitlist	69	90	87	41	29	66	NA	382
17-18 K3 Waitlist	71	85	92	28	64	55	NA	395
18-19 K3 Waitlist	62	58	62	43	86	24	8	343
Total K3	346	410	364	236	215	176	8	1755
Average per year	69.2	82	72.8	47.2	43	35.2	1.6	351
14-15 K4 Waitlist	44	31	34	21	1	9	NA	140
15-16 K4 Waitlist	54	8	27	9	7	5	NA	110
16-17 K4 Waitlist	58	21	40	30	16	30	NA	195
17-18 K4 Waitlist	46	28	44	46	4	24	NA	192
18-19 K4 Waitlist	32	23	41	16	27	12	15	166
Total K4	234	111	186	122	55	80	15	803
Average per year	46.8	22.2	37.2	24.4	11	16	3	160.6

Appendix C – MPS Montessori Essential Elements (MPPI and NCMPS)



The Montessori Public Policy Initiative
Montessori Essentials

An authentic Montessori school will implement a philosophical approach that is consistent with the educational methods and areas of instruction as defined by the observations, research, writings and instruction of Dr. Maria Montessori. A Montessori school must allow the child to develop naturally—children are able to learn at their own pace and follow their own individual interests, learning primarily through the hands-on use of scientifically prepared auto-didactic materials, and interacting with the environment under the guidance of a specially trained adult. A Montessori environment promotes the child's ability to find things out independently, enabling motivation and knowledge-building through internal development rather than external teaching or rewards.

In addition, an authentic Montessori school will apply the following pedagogical elements. It is critical that all of these elements be present in order for the Montessori approach to be successfully implemented. Montessori schools should:

1. Implement the Montessori curriculum which must include:
   a. A classroom design that is compatible with Montessori "prepared environment" principles.
   b. A full complement of Montessori materials for each class and age group.
   c. Uninterrupted Montessori daily work periods, with 3-hour work periods being the ideal.
   d. Instruction characterized by a high degree of freedom given to the student to choose what to work on, where to work, how long to work.
   e. Instruction that primarily takes place in small groups (Elementary & Secondary) or one-on-one (Early Childhood).

2. Have appropriately trained instructional staff defined as:
   a. Having a lead teacher in each classroom with an AMI, AMS, NCME, and/or MACTE accredited teacher education program credential at the level being taught.
   b. Having staff members engage in ongoing Montessori professional development.

(Over)

3. Have classrooms:
    a. With the appropriate multi-aged groupings: 2.5/3-6, 6-9, 9-12, or 6-12 years of age. Children from birth to 3years of age and 12-18 years of age may be grouped in varying multi-age configurations.
    b. With class sizes and adult/child ratios that align with Montessori principles. Montessori classroom standards require larger class sizes and higher student to teacher ratios than is typically seen in traditional classrooms. Adding additional teaching staff to a Primary classroom can interfere with, rather than encourage, child-directed learning. It would not be uncommon to see 30 or more children in a classroom at the early childhood and elementary levels.

4. Assess student progress through:
    a. Teacher observation
    b. Detailed record keeping

The above statement was created by the Montessori Public Policy Initiative,
a collaborative project of Association Montessori International-USA (AMI-USA) and American Montessori Society (AMS).

For more information visit
www.montessoriadvocacy.org

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Essential Elements for Montessori in the Public Sector

Fidelity Elements

Adults

- Teachers have Montessori credentials from a MACTE- or AMI-accredited training program for the age group they teach in addition to any required licenses or credentials.
- Each teacher is supported by a paraprofessional/assistant given Montessori-specific orientation for that role.
- All adults, Montessori trained or not, embrace core Montessori principles, respecting the process of human development and supporting children′s independence, freedom, responsibility, and growth.

Environment

- Children are grouped according to Montessori age groupings:
    - 2.5 to 6
    - 6 to 9
    - 9 to 12
    - 12 to 15
    - 15 to 18
- Learning environments provide uninterrupted three-hour work periods.
- Specialty programs such as music, art, and second languages are integrated into the three-hour work cycle.
- The environment supports a high degree of student choice in what to work on, where to work, and how long to work.
- The full complement of Montessori materials is available in every area, representing the majority of materials on all shelves. Additional materials conform to Montessori standards of order, beauty, and simplicity.
- The learning environment offer ongoing access to real-world materials and activities.
- The learning environment offers appropriate access to a prepared outdoor environment.
- SPED students are fully included and supported within the classroom.
- ELL students are fully included and supported within the classroom.

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Sustainability Elements

Leadership and Organizational Development

- An experienced Montessori educator guides the implementation of the Montessori program, as Principal, Program Director, Curriculum Coordinator or Instructional Coach.
- The school has a clear vision for how it delivers Montessori education, and has an active cycle of reflection and self-review.
- The school maintains membership in one or more Montessori professional organizations, and seeks accreditation to ensure consistent quality.
- The school has a pipeline for recruiting, training, hiring, and retaining high quality Montessori teachers.
- All adults engage in ongoing Montessori professional development.
- Adults treat one another with respect and model grace and courtesy in their interactions.
- Montessori practice is supported by a clearly defined Montessori scope and sequence, integrated with (but not driven by) state standards.

Family Engagement

- A strong partnership between home and school is evident in all formal and informal communications.
- The school provides ongoing opportunities for family education, including information sessions, discussion groups, observation of classrooms, and parent-teacher-student conferences
- The school cultivates a strong school-home association, in which parents have authentic opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the school's mission and communicate with school leadership.

Assessment

- Assessment protocols integrate measures of academic achievement with measures of executive functions such as self-regulation, initiation, and cognitive flexibility.
- Ongoing, personalized qualitative assessment, in the form of observation and documentation, drives all instructional decisions.
- Assessments are delivered in the least obtrusive manner possible
- As students mature, they are increasingly involved in monitoring their own progress

NCMPS gratefully acknowledges the work of national Montessori organizations which have guided and influenced this document. The recommendations and guidelines presented here are those of the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector.

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Appendix D – Overview and Mission of The Montessori Advisory Committee

For 43 years, MPS has been an international leader in tuition-free public Montessori education. Over 3,500 students now attend eight Montessori programs, with strong academic achievement, parent satisfaction, and consistently growing enrollments.

The Montessori Advisory Committee (MAC) began in the spring of 2018 as an informal working group of MPS Montessori parents. MAC expanded to include parents from all eight MPS Montessori schools, engaging teaching faculty, principals, and community partners. They identified the need for a unified strategic plan to increase MPS enrollment by coordinating faculty, facilities, families, and finance, with a goal of increasing Montessori options while maintaining high academic, arts, and cultural standards.

In October 2018, the MPS school board unanimously passed resolution 1819R-004, formally creating the Montessori Advisory Committee (MAC). MAC was tasked with creating and coordinating a long-term Montessori Strategic Plan (MSP). The board called for representatives from all eight MPS Montessori schools and senior MPS administration to formulate the MSP on an aggressive timetable, to accommodate inclusion in the 2019–2020 budget, teacher certification and/or training, facility build-out, and community outreach during the 2019–2020 school year.

From inception, MAC addressed equity of both access and academic achievement within and among Montessori schools and Milwaukee neighborhoods. Areas of the city remain with insufficient Montessori seats. While Montessori academic achievement exceeds MPS standards, economic and ethnic disparities remain a challenge.

Immediate objectives for MAC include:

- Collaborate among administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students
- Coordinate faculty, facilities, finances, and leadership to maintain quality education
- Improve equity by expanding Montessori options to underrepresented and high-demand communities

In five months of work groups, research, data compilation and monthly coordinating meeting, MAC submitted a draft report to The Student Achievement and School Innovation (SASI) Committee on February 14, 2019. The committee charged MAC to bring back a finished MSP at their March meeting, for action at the March board meeting.

Once adopted, MAC will shift function to coordinating and overseeing MSP implementation, in keeping with the goals with which it began:

- To enhance MPS Montessori schools through uniform quality standards
- To improve MPS Montessori by addressing equity
- To expand MPS Montessori for both equity and increased enrollment

Appendix E – MPS Montessori Program Statistics Report

According to the district enrollment and demographics on the Milwaukee Public Schools website, since 2005, MPS has lost 18,041 students. This is an average of 1,288 annually. When one student leaves the district, it is a collective revenue loss = -$10,000 plus -10,000 x 1,288 lost students = **-$12,880,000 at least lost district revenue annually.**

If we estimate $143,000 earnings per student over the entire course of the students' education x 1,288 lost students = $184,184,000 per year when a family chooses a school outside of MPS. (1. MPS District Enrollment and Demographics)

Given MPS's fixed costs for buildings, retirement liabilities, central office, and other non-school-based personnel, unchecked enrollment losses put MPS on a troublesome financial path.

However, the Montessori Method within MPS has historically grown and sustained enrollment, creating waitlists and lower attrition rates than other programs. It has also created proven and promising student achievement outcomes (Appendix A).

Milwaukee Public Schools' eight tuition-free Montessori schools now enroll 3,500 students, generating $35,000,000 a year for the district. MPS Montessori enrollment has increased by 46% over the past twelve years (1,883 students), creating additional revenue for MPS. No other program has historically created this proven, sustained growth for MPS.

Enrollment History for the MPS Montessori Programs and the Revenue Generated

Year	Total NET enrollment	Annual Revenues
2006	1,614	$13,791,549
2007	1,630	$14,900,319
2008	1,632	$14,918,602
2009	1,694	$15,485,362
2010	1,770	$17,216,772
2011	2,046	$20,485,780
2012	2,129	$20,327,458
2013	2,512	$24,339,044
2014	2,512	$24,785,879
2015	2,694	$26,994,527
2016	2,832	$28,665,816
2017	2,909	$29,445.218
2018	3,497	$35,395,690

K3 students not included

MPS District Enrollment and Demographics. http://mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/en/District/About-MPS/School-Board/Office-of-Accountability- Efficiency/Public-Items-Emjay/District-Enrollment.htm

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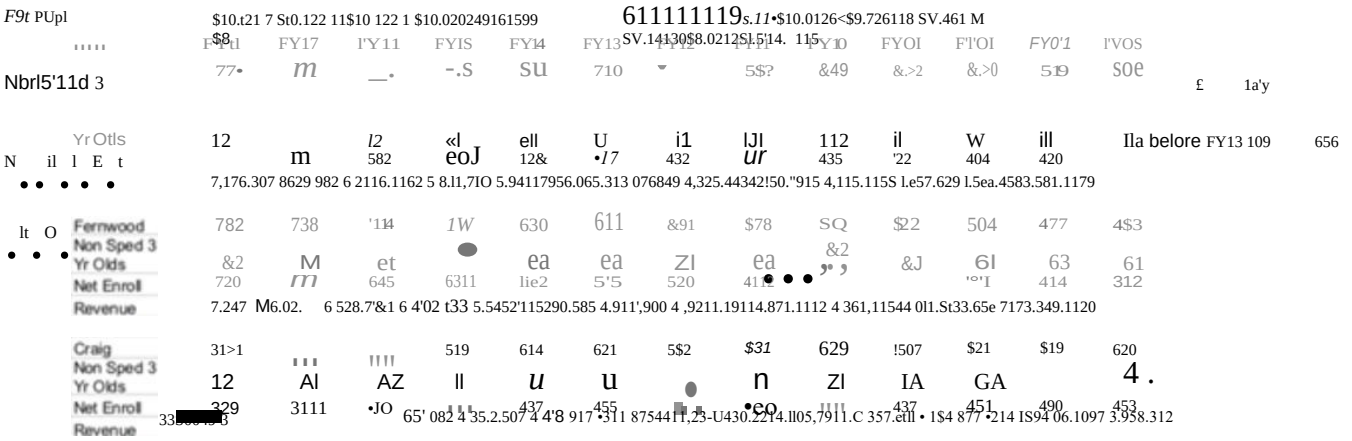

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Revenue 2,783,476 2,834,191 2,641,871 2,434,918 2,101,669 2,257,563 2,033,701 2,082,621 2,101,030 2,318,180 2,586,988 2,526,187 2,589,120

Howard/ Bay Vi	282	257	226	183	144	106							
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Net Enrol	243	218	189	147	104	106							

Revenue 2,459,580 2,206 ,620 1,913,079 1,472,975 1,026,167 1,027,046

Riley	498	477	535	566	559	588	551	545	563	604	644	663	635
Non Sped 3 Yr Olds		Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q	
Net Enroll													

Q Start FY18 635

Revenue 4,554,779 4,828,246 5,415,329 5,671,456 5,515,647 5,697,197 5,260,887 5456,867 5,476,295 6,715,024 5,886,997 5,856,160 5,426,043

Greenfield Is not a Montessori School Nol a Montessori School

Please Note: The revenue amount Is based on the DPI per pupil for each year.This amount must cover all costs of the Dlslrlcllncudlngutlll les,building costs and upkeep, lransportallon,centralservk:es,centra zed school staff and debt. Although Montessori schools receive allocatbns for 3 yearoldslhe District doesnol receive revenue for lhese students.

Appendix F – MPS Montessori Enrollment Practice – Policy Draft

Students shall be enrolled in the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Montessori schools at age three (K3) and age four (K4) through the MPS kindergarten enrollment process.

THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

In addition to the regular kindergarten program, the board may establish three- and four-year-old kindergarten programs at selected locations. The establishment of any such program shall be in keeping with budgetary limitations and the needs of the community.

1) A child entering the three-year-old kindergarten program must be three years of age on or before September 1.
2) A child entering the four-year-old kindergarten program must be four years of age on or before September 1.
3) A birth certificate must be shown at the time of application/enrollment in order to verify the child's birth date. Parents will be notified by mail of their child's acceptance into the program.

MONTESSORI ADMISSION PROCESS

Students older than four years (K4) may be enrolled in MPS Montessori schools as seats are available at each three-year multi-grade developmental level using the following specifications:

1) Students with verified continuous, previous Montessori experience shall receive Montessori enrollment preference.
2) Students without Montessori school experience, and students with limited Montessori school experience, may be enrolled as seats are available at each year multi-grade developmental level following an intake conference with the school principal.